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Roland Breeur
Ullrich Melle *Editors*

Life, Subjectivity & Art

Essays in Honor of Rudolf Bernet

LIFE, SUBJECTIVITY & ART
ESSAYS IN HONOR OF RUDOLF BERNET

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ROLAND BREEUR AND ULLRICH MELLE

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Preface

Et même si elle est pauvre, Ithaque ne t'a pas trompé.
Sage comme tu l'es, avec une expérience pareille,
Tu as sûrement déjà compris ce que les Ithaques signifient.
Constantin Cavafis

En tant que philosophe, Rudolf Bernet a toujours beaucoup voyagé. Il a visité pratiquement toutes les universités et les institutions qui revendiquent et respectent la phénoménologie. Discipline dont il est lui-même un des représentants les plus respectés.
Mais outre cela, il a lui-même régulièrement comparé l'activité philosophique à un voyage. La pensée vise perpétuellement un ailleurs, un au-delà, et l'attitude un peu distante, voire désintéressée qui caractérise celle du voyageur à l'étranger peut très bien décrire celle du penseur.
Or, qu'est-ce que voyager ? Un vrai voyage, écrivait un bon nombre d'années Rudolf Bernet, connaît un départ, un séjour à l'étranger, et le retour. Analogiquement, son propre voyage philosophique, pourrait-on avancer (et pour faire vite), connaît un départ chez Husserl, un séjour à l'étranger, et un retour au Maître.

Etonnants voyageurs, pourtant, que ces philosophes, qui bercent leur infini sur le fini des mers. . .Le plus étrange, en effet, ce n'est pas leur départ enthousiaste, ni ce séjour « ailleurs » qui rafraichit et délivre l'esprit des routines : le plus étrange c'est le retour. Car on part pour revenir. Sans cela, le départ est un exil ou une fuite. Mais que signifie retourner à son point de départ ? A son *locus natalis*, voire *naturalis* ? Question pénible à résoudre, d'autant plus que non seulement la vie dans ce lieu en question ne s'est pas arrêté en notre absence, mais qu'en outre, l'appréhension qu'on en a

change à mesure que notre périple se prolonge. Le voyage-même rend le lieu aussi méconnaissable que l'Ithaque retrouvée l'était pour Ulysse. Le temps l'avait devancé.

Rudolf Bernet a régulièrement abordé cette question. Comme lui-même le souligne dans plusieurs articles, Kant avait déjà remarqué combien le « Heimweh der Schweizer » avait quelque chose de particulier. A cet effet, Rudolf Bernet renvoie lui-même aussi à ce passage savoureux du *Dictionnaire de la musique* dans lequel Rousseau explique que le célèbre « Ranz-des-Vaches », cet air « si chéri par les Suisses », fut défendu dans l'armée sous peine de mort, tellement il fit « fondre en larmes, déserter ou mourir ceux qui l'entendaient, tant il excitait en eux l'ardent désir de revoir leur pays ». N'ayant lui-même pas quitté son poste académique, il faut croire qu'il n'a pas dû l'entendre souvent aux Archives Husserl de Leuven. Mais qui sait, cet air résonne-t-il peut-être secrètement dans la plupart de ses écrits…

Les textes de ce volume rendent hommage au riche parcourt de ce penseur inlassable. Ecrits par des compagnons de route, des amis, des collègues, ou des chercheurs ayant eu le privilège de travailler avec lui, ce livre est bien entendu lui-même comme une excursion qui illustre l'espace intellectuel parcouru par Rudolf Bernet. Ou mieux encore, ce livre est comme une petite halte, un air de repos, le temps de quelques réflexions, avant de reprendre la route.

r.b.
Hout-si-Plou, Mars 2011

Vorwort

Lieber Rudolf,

Eine lange Reihe von Freunden, Kollegen, Weggefährten und Schülern bezeugen Dir in und mit dieser Festschrift zu Deiner Emeritierung ihre Hochachtung, Wertschätzung und Dankbarkeit. Die Begegnung, Freundschaft und Zusammenarbeit mit Dir, das Studium bei Dir und auch der Streit mit Dir haben bei allen Autoren auf vielfache Weise und in allen Modalitäten des Bewusstseins zumindest erkenntnisfördernd gewirkt, nicht selten aber auch darüberhinaus Einfluss auf die persönliche Entwicklung und Lebenshaltung geübt. Was Letzteres betrifft denke ich vornehmlich an Deine Schüler, aber auch an mich selbst. Als ich Anfang 1979 als wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter ans Archiv kam, warst Du die rechte Hand des damaligen Direktors des Husserl-Archivs, Prof. Dr. Samuel IJsseling. Später bist Du sein Nachfolger geworden. Du hast das Archiv zehn Jahre mit großem Einsatz und Erfolg geleitet. Unsere mehr als dreißigjährige Zusammenarbeit im Archiv war anfangs nicht immer unbeschwert und pflegeleicht. Dafür sind wir beide zu eigensinnig. Aber wir haben uns zusammengerauft, sind gute Kollegen und Freunde geworden und leben nun schon seit Längerem im glücklichen Zustand einer harmonischen Altersbeziehung, die durch gegenseitige Achtung und Milde geprägt ist.

Vor allem in Sachen Husserl habe ich viel von Dir gelernt. Das fing an mit Deiner leider nie publizierten Dissertation, in der Du die Entwicklungslinien von Husserls Göttinger Phänomenologie rekonstruiert hast. Deine immer an den Texten orientierten scharfsinnigen Analysen zum Noema, zur Reduktion, zum Zeitbewusstsein, zu Wahrnehmung und Erinnerung haben mein Verständnis von Husserl gefördert und vertieft. In den

legendären Doktorandenseminaren des Archivs, an dem die Mitarbeiter des Archivs und die Gastforscher teilnahmen, haben wir unter deiner Leitung die klassischen Texte der französischen Phänomenologie, aber auch Texte von Heidegger und Cassirer gelesen, solange bis eine neue Edition in der *Husserliana* herangereift war. Der definitiven Textauswahl ging dann jeweils ein Seminar voran, in dem die zu edierenden Texte unter das Messer der philosophischen Kritik gelegt wurden. Für viele beginnende Doktoranden hatten diese Seminare einen initiatorischen Charakter, um den sich bei ihnen später mythische Erzählungen rankten.

Angesichts der glücklichen Tatsache, dass Du noch in vollem Schwung bist, darf die philosophische Öffentlichkeit, wenn Du erst einmal von den universitären Funktions- und Betriebszwängen befreit bist, noch viele wichtige philosophische Entdeckungen und Anregungen von dir erwarten. Der große und bedeutende Kreis der Autoren, die zu dieser Festschrift beigetragen haben, und die thematische Breite der Beiträge ist ein Beweis für die hohe Anerkennung deiner bisherigen philosophischen Arbeit auf ganz verschiedenen Gebieten und in unterschiedlichen Richtungen. Donn Welton, John Brough, Jeff Bloechl und Hanne Jacobs sahen sich aufgrund unvorhergesehener widriger Ereignisse und Umstände nicht in der Lage, zu dieser Festschrift beizutragen. Sie bedauern dies außerordendlich.

Carlo Ierna hat eine perfekte Druckvorlage der Festschrift erstellt. Du weißt, dass er so was kann. Wir sind ihm sehr dankbar dafür, es hat uns viel Mühe und Zeit erspart.

Roland und ich hoffen, dass dir "deine" Festschrift gefällt. Bevor sie als gedrucktes Buch "deine" wird, war sie während ihres Entstehens unsere und hat ihre segensreiche Wirkung im Hinblick auf meine Zusammenarbeit und Freundschaft mit Roland geübt. Auf Roland war immer Verlass.

Voilà, c'est tout.

Herzliche Grüsse von nebenan

Dein Ullrich

How Aristotle and Husserl Differ on First Philosophy

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Many of Rudolf Bernet's essays juxtapose Husserl's thought with that of other contemporary writers. Such juxtaposition enables us to better understand each of the parties, but it also brings us more adequately to the things themselves, to the topic that is at issue in both of them. If we successfully put two such things together, we get a third that is distinct from each but sheds light on both. For my contribution to this volume, I would like to follow Bernet's example and put Husserl in contact, not with a contemporary thinker, but with Aristotle, and to do so on the topic of first philosophy.

The term "first philosophy" was originally used by Aristotle but it also occurs in the title and preface of Descartes' *Meditationes de prima philosophia*. We would not be surprised to find a close resemblance between Husserl and Descartes on this topic, but we might be surprised to find similarities as well as differences between Husserl and Aristotle. I hope that this study will shed light on both authors, and that it will help us understand what philosophy is and what the differences are between the modern and the ancient approaches to it.

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1. The direction of Aristotle's first philosophy

Aristotle's term for first philosophy occurs most often in the *Metaphysics* in chapter 1 of book Epsilon. In the last part of that chapter (1026a16–32), the term *prōtē philosophia* and cognates such as *prōtē epistēmē* or simply *prōtē* or *protera* occur six times.[1] The primary sense of the term is that the science will be "first" because it will focus on a highest or first kind of being; it will deal with the kind of being that is separate from matter and not subject to motion. First philosophy is contrasted with physics and with mathematics. In one passage Aristotle calls it theological (*theologikē*) philosophy because, he says, the divine (*to theion*), if it occurs anywhere, will occur in the kind of being studied by this science. In this understanding, first philosophy is first because it examines separate being.

This focus on a particular genus (*genos*) of being is in some tension with another meaning of the science that Aristotle develops in the *Metaphysics* at the very beginning of both Gamma and Epsilon. Here the science examines being as being (*on hē on*) and thus seems to be universal in scope. In contrast with partial sciences, which cut off a part or a kind of being, the science of being as being will focus on all things insofar as they are beings and on whatever attributes belong to them as such. This tension in the meaning of first philosophy is brought to a head at the close of chapter 1 of Epsilon, when Aristotle asks whether the science is universal or partial, since it seems to limit itself to one genus. He replies that if there are no separate substances physics will be the primary science, but if there is changeless, separate being, the science that studies it will be prior and first, and it will be "universal because it is first (*kai katholou houtōs hoti prōtē* [1026a30–31])."[2] This resolution is somewhat paradoxical, because the science of being as being originally seemed to be universal because it examined not a part of being but beings as such; but here it is said to be universal *because* it is first, because it restricts itself to the study of the first being or beings. The

[1] See also the paraphrase of this passage in chapter 4 of Kappa (1061b19), where the term "first philosophy" is used for the science that examines axioms. Physics is sometimes called second philosophy, as in chapter 11 of Zeta (1037a15).

[2] The paraphrase in Kappa 7, 1064b13–14, says that the science is universal because it is "prior (*protera*)" to physics, and that it is universal because prior.

science is said to be universal because it is partial. The problem is resolved, very likely, because although being is said in different ways, it is always said in reference to something primary: first in reference to substance (*ousia*) and ultimately in reference to the highest and best kind of substance, separate being.

In Aristotle, first philosophy is made to be first by virtue of what it studies. Its dignity depends on its object, the being that it thinks about, which is substance and the highest substance. Because its object is first and highest, the science is first and best. The dignity of the science comes from the preeminence of what it knows. Husserl's direction of focus is very different. His first philosophy turns to the subject and the life of consciousness as its domain, and not to things that are known by the subject. Whether the things known are higher or lower does not determine the primacy of the science; rather, the focus on the domain of conscious intentional activity is what makes his phenomenology the "first" science because this focus gets at what underlies and validates all the other sciences. Phenomenology uncovers activities, patterns, and forms that are not the highest in a hierarchy of beings, but that are correlated with whatever can be known and identified by the knowing subject. This change of focus seems to make Husserl's first philosophy radically different from that of Aristotle: Aristotle deals with beings and Husserl deals with intentional consciousness.

And yet, there is a kind of turn to the knowing subject even in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle. The first topic Aristotle discusses in the *Metaphysics* is not being but an ancient version of the conscious subject; he begins the work by declaring that all men by nature desire to know. In the first two chapters he describes the grades of knowing, starting from sensation in insects and animals and culminating in a kind of theoretic knowing that he calls wisdom (*sophia*), which he refers to as "the science we are seeking (*hē epistēmē hē zētoumenē* [I 2, 983a21])." He does not begin the *Metaphysics* as he begins his other treatises, by marking off a domain of things that he wishes to study, such as living things or rhetorical arguments; instead, he turns to the knower and to the science, and only subsequently does he arrive at the object of the science. He cannot approach the science

straightaway. Aristotle needs to proceed in this oblique manner because this science explores the whole, and so he cannot partition off its object as something we are already familiar with as differentiated from the whole. Aristotle begins with man's desire to know and shows how it can be most fully satisfied. Husserl's first philosophy will develop in an analogous way but he will proceed in the opposite direction. He will start with the objects we know and offer a long argument to turn us to the true target of his philosophy, the knowing subject. Instead of moving upward Husserl moves behind and below. But before going further into Husserl, we need to explore more of the material in the *Metaphysics*.

2. Four ways in which being is said, with addition of a fifth

The core of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is found in Epsilon to Theta. The overall structure for these books is outlined by a fourfold division that Aristotle makes at the beginning of chapter 2 of Epsilon (1026a33–b2). He says that "being" (*to on*) is said in many ways and he narrows them down to four. Being is said first as the accidental; second as the true (with the false as nonbeing); third as the figures or schemata of predication; and fourth as that which is potentially and actually (*to dunamei kai energeiai*). Aristotle here enumerates four ways in which things *are* and four ways in which they are said (*legetai*). His distinction does not refer simply to verbal usage but conjointly to the way things are and the way they are said (expressed in speech). Words are not separated from things, nor things from words. He treats being as the accidental in the rest of chapter 2 and in chapter 3 of Epsilon, and he discusses the true and false in chapter 4. The third sense of being, the figures of predication, is treated throughout Zeta and Eta. The fourth sense, the potential and actual, is treated in Theta after having been anticipated in Eta. At the end of Theta, in chapter 10 and to some degree in chapter 9, he returns briefly to being as the true.

(1) Aristotle begins with being as the accidental because it provides the margin or the extreme against which he determines the other senses of being. Accidentality is the weakest manner of being and it is of very great philosophical interest. It provides the foil for the other ways of being, and

there is nothing, no further or weaker way of being, beyond it.[1] It is at the margin of being. The accidental is not nothing even though it is nearly nothing. It is real and it does exist. For example, if a doctor happens to be a violinist and he cures a patient, it is a fact that a violinist has cured a sick man, but it is only *per accidens*, *kata sumbebēkos*, that he has done so. He has cured not as a violinist but as a doctor. The event is real but accidental. Such accidentality provides the foil for Aristotle's entire treatment of substance or entity (*ousia*). It plays a strategic role both in Gamma, where Aristotle refutes the speaker who denies the principle of noncontradiction, and in Zeta, where he says that when we predicate essentials we do so by excluding the accidents of things. Substance comes to light, with its internal necessities, precisely by not being accidental. Substance needs the contrast with the accidental – it needs to be distinguished from it – if it is to be philosophically understood.

Aristotle also observes in Epsilon that there is no knowing or science of the accidental (the accidental is not substantial enough to support understanding), and no causation of it either; there is no necessary explanatory reason why this or that accidental instance occurs. There is no internal intelligibility that will show why a violinist cures a sick man. The accidental, however, might itself be a cause for other events: once it takes place, it can cause other things to happen and it will explain why they happened. For example, the man who was cured by the physician violinist might thereafter go to concerts and listen to recordings of violin music precisely because he was cured by a violinist. In this respect the accidental seems to be a dim parody of the unmoved mover or the uncaused cause. We should, however, not underestimate the weight of the accidental; there are millions of coincidences at any place and time and, after all, the great power of evolution is thought to rest on it. The accidental is ubiquitous

[1]The use of the accidental in first philosophy is analogous to the use of the brutish man in book VII, chapters 1 to 10, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The brutish (*ho thēriōdēs*) is the man whose moral reason is destroyed or corrupted, so that he is not even responsible for the terrible things that he does. A criminally insane person would be an example. The brutish is the extreme in human conduct; there is no human agency beyond him. He sets the margin from which the other moral characters – the vicious, the weak, the self-controlled, the virtuous, and the godlike – can be defined. The accidental provides this margin in metaphysics but without the frightening overtones.

but usually insignificant, but on occasion an incident can be considerably consequential.

(2) The second way being is said is the true (*to hōs alēthes*), with nonbeing as the false, and Aristotle discusses this topic briefly in Epsilon chapter 4. He says that being as the true depends on combination and division, on putting together and taking apart (*synthesis kai diairesis*). To express this in Husserlian terms, being as the true depends on categorial form or syntax. Aristotle observes that in such an assembly we must think the parts together "not just successively (*ephexēs*) but in such a way that something 'one' (*hen ti*) is generated" (1027b24–25). This is a remarkable formulation of what Husserl means by a categorial whole, in which a new kind of thoughtful unity is achieved, in which we are elevated from perception to intellectual activity. When we achieve a categorial whole we make a statement; we do not merely extend the process of perception and experiencing; we make a transition from the thoughtless continuum of experiencing to the discreteness of categorial wholes, for which we are in some way responsible. For both Aristotle and Husserl, thinking is not just having a succession of ideas; it is the constitution of asserted judgments that are capable of being either true or false. Aristotle observes, however, that because the combination and division involved in judgment occur in thinking (*en dianoiai*) and not "among the things (*ouk en tois pragmasi*)," being as the true cannot be the primary (*kuriōs*) sense of being.

(3) The third sense of being occurs when being is taken as the figures of predication (*ta schēmata tēs katēgorias*). This theme is treated in the notoriously complex book Zeta, which has been called the Mount Everest of ancient philosophical texts.[1] At the very beginning of the book Aristotle briefly mentions the various categories, such as the "what it is" of a thing, the quality, the quantity, and so on, and he adverts to them again briefly in chapter 3, but he does not examine them systematically and in detail, as he does in the *Categories*. Instead, in Zeta he works out something more elementary; he develops the metaphysics behind predication. He discusses substance (*ousia*) but he treats it as it shows up when we predicate features of things, and he does this by displaying the interplay between substance

[1] Myles Burnyeat, *A Map of Metaphysics* Z (Pittsburgh: Mathesis Publications, 2001), p. 1.

as substrate (*to hupokeimenon*) and substance as essence or what the thing is (*to ti ēn einai*, "what it was [for the thing] to be"). Substrate is needed for predication; it is the receiver of all that is said, the basket into which the predicates are piled. The essence of a thing, "what the thing is," is one of the "things" lodged in the substrate; it finds its place and its being there, but it is not dissolved into the substrate: it remains the essence over against the substrate, and there will remain a kind of electromagnetic tension – both attraction and repulsion – between the substrate and what the thing is. Zeta is a philosophical treatise on predication and it brings to light the contrast and strain between substrate and essence.[1] It contains some of Aristotle's best philosophical writing but it also contains bewildering, intractable passages. It is highly aporetic and it certainly does not arrive at the definitive sense of being.

In fact, at the start of chapter 17, the last chapter in Zeta, Aristotle explicitly says that he wishes to make a new beginning. He remains for a moment with predication, but he uses it as a means of transition that will lead into the theme of the potential and the actual. The transition occurs because the substrate and the essence, the matter and the form, need to be seen, respectively, as the potential and the actual ways of being, and when they are so understood the difficulty concerning their unity vanishes, as Aristotle shows in chapter 6, the concluding chapter of Eta. Aristotle does not *answer* the problem of how the substrate and essence are one; he *dissolves* the problem by showing that if we understand what the terms mean there will be no problem.[2] The tension between substrate and essence is resolved because the matter *is potentially* what the form *is in actuality*.

Zeta, therefore, examines being as substance, but it examines it as substrate and essence, and it points out the perplexities that occur when these two dimensions of being come to light in predication.[3] Zeta, along with its conclusion in Eta, thus provides the metaphysics behind predication.

[1] A valuable treatment of substrate and essence in chapters 3 and 4 of Zeta can be found in Rudolf Boehm, *Das Grundlegende und das Wesentliche: Zu Aristoteles' Abhandlung 'Über das Sein und das Seiende' (Metaphysik Z)* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1965).

[2] One might ask whether Aristotle dissolves this philosophical problem in the way that Wittgenstein dissolves his.

[3] One of the crucial problems in chapter 4 of Zeta is the ontological place of properties. They belong essentially to the thing in question but do not belong to its definition.

This study of the figures of predication goes deeper into the issue of being than does the treatment of the true in chapter 4 of Epsilon. Predication and its metaphysics are thus a condition of possibility for the combining and dividing that occur in the judgments that rise to the possibility of being either true or false. Aristotle's third sense of being (the figures of predication) underlies the second sense (the true). Both senses, however, concern thinking and speaking and not yet being as such.

(4) The fourth and final sense of being, the potential and actual, is examined in Theta, after having been anticipated in Eta.[1] In chapters 1–5 Aristotle examines a kind of potentiality that we are commonly familiar with: the power of an agent to bring about changes in something other than itself. Examples of such powers are the art of building houses and the art of medicine. The actualities correlated with such powers are the construction of a house and the healing of a someone who is sick, which occur respectively in the bricks and stones and in the sick person, not in the builder or the doctor. Aristotle begins with this obvious kind of potentiality, which operates between an agent and a patient; we could consider it a prephilosophical sense. In chapters 6-9, however, he tropes or modifies this kind of potentiality to produce a more philosophical sense, the potentiality that occurs as the internal material constituents of an entity, such as the bricks and stones of a house or the flesh and blood of an animal. Flesh and blood *are* the animal, but only as matter, substrate, or capacity. They do not define the animal. They *are* the animal – but only in capacity. Despite being the animal they do not make it to be the animal. The essence or form of the animal, its definition, that which is analogous to the house being built and the patient being healed, is the *energeia* of the entity and makes the entity to be what it is. In this case there is no transaction between agent and patient; there are simply principles and causes within the thing itself, which deal, not with a change in something else, but with the being of the thing.

The essence or form also connotes the work, the *ergon*, of the animal

[1] An excellent recent study of Theta, which I have used extensively for this essay, is Jonathan Beere, *Doing and Being: An Interpretation of Aristotle's* Metaphysics *Theta* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

(the term *ergon* is found in chapter 1 of Theta [1045b34], where it is associated not just with *energeia* but with *entelecheia*). The form of the animal at work is that for which the animal is; the being-at-work of the animal shows what it is (the animal asleep does not show its entity). The form caps, defines, unifies, and perfects the thing, but more ultimately it lets the thing be in its proper activity. The thing acting in its maturity is *why* the thing is, and it is, therefore, prior to the matter or substrate: an animal exists in order to be and to act in this way. If we are able to understand and appreciate the excellent activity of the animal, we will know why the animal exists. We will know what it is about. The animal at work is the splendor, the *kalon*, of this particular thing, its brilliant necessity.[1] The form constrains this patch of matter for a while into being something distinct, identifiable, and active through a span of time. Aristotle explains *energeia* and its relation to its material *dunamis* especially in chapter 8 of Theta, which is one of the most beautiful chapters in all of his writings. In fact, we might apply Aristotle's metaphysical principles to his own work and say that if we appreciate the elegance of chapter 8 of Theta, we will understand why Aristotle is. We will know his *ousia* and his *ergon*, which is not just his definition but himself at work. We will also know why Greek philosophy is, and what and why philosophy is.

To study the true and false, as well as predication and definitions, is to philosophize primarily in regard to speech and thinking and hence to work *logikōs*, as Aristotle puts it several times in Zeta.[2] But when we turn to the potential and the actual we turn to causes. In chapter 17 of Zeta Aristotle says he will make a new beginning and will examine *ousia* not just as involved in predication but as a principle and a cause (*archē kai aitia* [1041a9–10]). When we begin to think philosophically about causality, we start thinking about being and coming into being and we no longer remain primarily with speech and thinking. But Aristotle's treatment of potentiality and actuality is not unrelated to speech and thinking. Just as the metaphysics of predication in Zeta underlies the true and false of Epsilon 4,

[1] On what is meant by brilliant necessity, see Robert Sokolowski, *Moral Action: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), pp. 186–89, which discusses the admirable and "splendid necessities."

[2] On *logikōs* see *Metaphysics* VII 4, 1029b13, 1030a25; 17, 1041a28.

so the deeper metaphysics of Theta underlies the predication and definition discussed in Zeta. The causation introduced in Theta reverberates into the "logical" treatments that preceded it and clears a place for them in being. Because entities are actualized and can perform their proper actions, we can define and speak about them. They themselves become knowable and also activated as known.[1] The fourth sense of being thus explains the third, which in turn explains the second. The first sense of being, the accidental, is simply left over, a residue outside the necessities and definability of things. But it is the only place from which we could have started our investigation into the several ways that being is expressed.

(5) We have gone through the four senses of being as they are projected in chapter 2 of Epsilon. In doing so we seem to have lost sight of one of the two aspects of first philosophy that we distinguished earlier. We have been looking at themes in the science of being as being, but we have said practically nothing about separate entity, the genus of immaterial and unmoved being that gives "first" philosophy its name. In fact, however, Aristotle's treatment of *energeia* in Theta provides the platform for his move toward separate entity. As Jonathan Beere says, in agreement with Myles Burnyeat, "Theta is preparation for the discussion of non-sensible substance in Lambda."[2] If form or *energeia* is the principle of actual being in relation to matter, then in discovering *energeia* in our philosophy we have come upon a dimension of being that could be an actual entity just by itself. Because *energeia* causes being, sheer *energeia* can simply be, and we have discovered the understandability of separate entities. As Beere puts it, Aristotle's use of *energeia* allows us "to understand perishable and eternal beings together in a new way. Both for perishable and for eternal beings, being turns out to be above all, but not exclusively, being-in-*energeia*."[3] Aristotle has found a way to escape the radical Platonic segregation of the world into the flux of change on the one hand and the stability of forms on

[1]Beere claims that chapter 10 of Theta does not fit into the argument of the book (*Doing and Being*, p. 4, n. 4), but it seems to me that this chapter concludes Aristotle's treatment of being as the true, and what he says in this chapter could not have been said before he had described the status of *energeia*, which gives intelligibility to things and allows them to be taken in by the intellect.

[2]Beere, *Doing and Being*, p. 22, n. 5.

[3]Ibid., p. 285.

the other.

We do not perceive the separate and changeless entities that Aristotle arrives at in Lambda, but they are indirectly manifested to us: they cause the perpetual and regular motion of the celestial bodies, which we can see. To determine the number and order of such motions and of their movers we need to turn, Aristotle says, to the branch of the mathematical sciences that is most akin (*oikeiotatē*) to philosophy, the science of astronomy (*astrologia*; XII 8, 1073b4–5). Astronomy differs from the other branches of mathematics because it theorizes an entity (*ousia*) that is sensible even though eternal; the other parts of mathematics, such as arithmetic and geometry, do not deal with substances at all. This reference to astronomy is important, because here Aristotle introduces a science that is added to physics and mathematics, even though it is here described as a kind of mathematics. In Epsilon 1 physics and mathematics were the two alternatives to first philosophy, but here we have a kind of mathematics that is almost philosophical and that studies a new kind of "material" substance, the celestial bodies and their motions. They are different from the bodies and motions of the sublunary world and they enjoy a placid necessity.[1]

These bodies in motion are an indication to us of the entities that move them in such a sublime way. If the motions are so magnificent, how much more intense is the being of the entities that guide them. We cannot perceive these entities, but they are present to our intellect, and we understand them as the first causes of everything that is, and without such substances everything would be perishable (chapter 6, 1071b5–6).[2] Aristotle concludes: "It is necessary that there be such a principle, whose substance is *energeia*" (1071b19–20). These entities must be without matter and without the potentiality that matter entails (1071b20-21). Here in Lambda, therefore, Aristotle justifies his use of the term "first philosophy." He describes the first causes and principles and identifies the genus of being

[1] It is often said that when modern astronomy showed that the laws of nature were the same on the earth and in the heavens, the earthly was projected into the celestial. But it is also true to say that in Descartes and Newton the Aristotelian contrast between celestial matter and pure spirit, between the heavenly bodies and the separated minds of their movers, was brought down to earth, with matter determined only by mathematical, mechanical motions and our minds resembling the closed separate intellects.

[2] As Aristotle says in Theta 8, 1050b19, "If these did not exist, nothing would exist."

was that was anticipated in Epsilon 1.

3. Husserl on first philosophy

Husserl gave a course at Freiburg in the winter semester of 1923–1924 under the title *Erste Philosophie*. The course was comprised of two parts, the first ending before the Christmas vacation and the second following it. The two sections were published as *Husserliana* VII and VIII in 1956 and 1959.[1] The first part is called "Critical History of Ideas" and the second "Theory of the Phenomenological Reduction." At the very beginning of the first volume, Husserl admits that the name "first philosophy" was introduced by Aristotle, but he distances himself both from Aristotle's usage and from the tradition of "metaphysics" that derived from him. He still thinks, however, that the name can be useful as an indicator of the "theoretic purpose (*theoretische Absicht*)" that he has in mind. Husserl's own allegiance lies with two other philosophical sources, with Plato (or rather the *Doppelgestirn* Socrates-Plato) and with Descartes.[2]

Socrates and Plato had to deal with sophistic skepticism. Socrates, says Husserl, did so as a practical and ethical reformer while Plato took on the task of scientific and theoretic reform; both thinkers sought to bring about an authentic rational humanity, aware that the issues they were dealing with affected human destiny.[3] Because the sophists denied the possibility of reason, its possibility needed to be critically confirmed; reason could no longer be simply taken for granted. Reason, the best and most specific thing in man, needed to be secured. Husserl wishes to adopt this same philosophical intent: to show critically the legitimacy of reason and to formulate a way in which we can be ultimately responsible as rational human beings. He wants not just to be rational but to justify rationality,

[1] Edmund Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24): Erster Teil, Kritische Ideengeschichte*, ed. Rudolf Boehm, Husserliana VII (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1956); *Erste Philosophie (1923/24): Zweiter Teil, Theorie der Phänomenologischen Reduktion*, ed. Rudolf Boehm, Husserliana VIII (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1959).

[2] Boehm suggests that Husserl got the term "first philosophy" from Paul Natorp, who used it in a 1901 review of the first volume of Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*. See *Erste Philosophie I*, p. xix.

[3] Husserl, *Erste Philosophie I,* pp. 8-9.

because such justification of reason is itself the most basic and complete way of being rational. It is the highest form of human responsibility. He adopts the term "first philosophy" to express this moral and humane purpose, even though Socrates-Plato did not use the word. Husserl later speaks of the *Unsterblichkeit* of sophistic skepticism; it recurs perpetually as "anti-philosophy" in ever-new forms, a hydra sprouting new heads and forever calling for a revival of philosophy.[1]

What way of thinking, what science, can satisfy this humane, ethical demand for the radical justification of reason? Platonic dialectic and Aristotelian logic cannot do so, because, Husserl says, they deal only with the correlation between judgments (propositions) and things, and they are limited to things in the real world. They do not cut deeply enough; they are ontic and not epistemological. Consequently, they do not cover every thinkable object and they do not examine the various ways in which objects can be presented and thought. Husserl also complains that dialectics and traditional logic deal with consistency but not with truth, and they do not examine the subjectivity that achieves truth.[2] They leave the most important part of the issue of truth unexplored. In one of his lectures, Husserl admits the fact that Aristotle turns to the knowing subject in his science of psychology, where he examines man as one living species among others and as one kind of thing within the world, but he asks how the strict necessities of logic and cognition could possibly depend "on the accidental facticity of man (*die zufällige Faktizität des Menschen*), this factual animal species *homo* within the factum of this world-whole (*dieses Weltalls*)."[3] Would logical validity not be reduced to "the validity of zoological laws"? If such laws hold just for this particular living species, perhaps another species might be discovered for whom they do not hold. Another kind of science is needed, one that transcends psychology and traditional logic, that does not take the world for granted, and that deals with the very possibility

[1]Ibid., p. 57.

[2]Ibid., pp. 42–43.

[3]Ibid., pp. 54. One might note the role of accidentality or contingency in this quotation from Husserl. The world and the human species, as well as individual men, are marked by *Zufälligkeit*.

of the achievement of truth (*Wahrheitsleistung*).[1] Husserl calls for a science – an appropriate way of thinking – that deals explicitly with truth and with our involvement in it.

This, in Husserl's staging of the history of philosophy, is where Descartes comes on the scene. Descartes is brought in not simply because Husserl wishes to turn to the subject, but because he wants and needs a deeper justification of human rationality and its achievement of truth. We should recall that even in Aristotle's biological works an appeal had to be made to something that came in from outside (*thurathen*) in order to account for human rationality.[2] The human soul as the animation of the body of a natural species of animal was not enough to explain the kind of activities that we are capable of. The mysterious active intellect of *De anima* III 5 had to come into play, at least from offstage.[3] This is the problem that Husserl wishes to address. In fact, Aristotle had an easier task in dealing with cognition and truth than Husserl did. He was able to draw on a perceivable part of the cosmos. He could turn to celestial phenomena and to separate, divine entities to complement the sublunary world and the natural species among which the human race is located; these resources allowed him to readily distinguish human knowing from biological process. When we enter into intellection, we are affected by the kind of being that transcends our simply natural human condition but whose effects we can glimpse in the heavens. This cosmic kind of "something more" was, however, not available to Husserl, nor is it available to us, and yet we recognize the fact that we human beings are rather eccentric as a natural kind; the processes of nature seem insufficient to resolve our way of being, particularly in regard to its involvement with truth and the freedom and responsibility that follow upon it.

Descartes introduces a *cogito* and a *sum* that open the way to a new science. We should note this conjunction – thinking and being – and

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[1] Ibid., p. 55.

[2] Aristotle, *Generation of Animals* II 6, 744b22. Husserl uses the Greek term *thurathen* in *Formale und transzendentale Logik*, ed. Paul Janssen, Husserliana XVII (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974) §99, p. 257.

[3] Thomas Aquinas brought the active intellect on stage, arguing that each human being has his own agent intellect because each does his own thinking (*Summa contra gentiles* II chapters 76–77). He also argued that Aristotle held this view (chapter 78).

should note also that in Descartes the two are joined syntactically by "therefore," *ergo*. Aristotle also makes use of the equivalent of such an *ergo* when he thinks about separate entity and concludes that its only internal activity is to think, *noein*, but Aristotle is speaking in the third person when he uses this conjunction; he is reasoning not about himself but about the nature of separate entity.[1] The separate entity itself, the *noēsis noēseōs*, does not need to say "*ergo*" because it thinks without reasoning and, therefore, without any "therefore." Descartes uses the *ergo* when speaking about himself, and by turning to himself as a thinking subject, he opens a prospect for a science that will express the conjunction of thinking and being in himself and not in the heavens. Husserl describes this prospect with great enthusiasm as the beginning of transcendental philosophy: it is "the discovery of the transcendentally pure subjectivity, absolutely closed in on itself, which can at any time become aware of itself in absolute indubitability (*Zweifellosigkeit*)."[2] It is almost like finding the self-thinking thought right here at home.

But, Husserl says, Descartes was knocked off balance by his discovery. He could not master what he found. He was like Columbus, who had no idea of what lay in the enormous continent on which he had landed. Behind the "apparent triviality" of the *ego cogito* there are "dark depths (*dunkle Tiefen*)" of which he had no clue.[3] When Descartes turned to the subject, he went beyond the presupposition of the world, which he put into question and even into methodological doubt, but he accepted some other assumptions and so did not carry out the radical critique of reason needed to deal with the modern form of skepticism. He assumed a mathematical type of deductive science as a norm and tried to infer the truth and objectivity of things from axioms that he considered unquestionable. In other words, instead of starting from a clean slate he assumed the validity of certain forms of science and subjected himself to their norms. He could not secure the sciences because he took one of them (as well as logic) for granted. In addition, he was not able to clarify the very sense of "existent

[1] Equivalents to *ergo* are the conjunctions *gar* and *hōste* in *Metaphysics* XII 7, 1072b15, 21–23, 29.

[2] Husserl, *Erste Philosophie I*, p. 63.

[3] Ibid.

objectivity (*seiende Gegenständlichkeit*)."[1] Along with his failure to clarify what objectivity was, he was unable to unravel scientifically the multiple but structured intentional activities that are correlated with the varied kinds of objects that are given to us, in both our simple and our categorial intending. Descartes thought of the subject as a leftover part of the world from which he could infer the world that he had lost through his radical doubt. This procedure indicates that he did not question the world and our belief in it in the way they need to be questioned. The "first philosophy" that is mentioned in the title and preface of Descartes' *Meditationes de prima philosophia* is not, therefore, really first in itself; it needs to be preceded by something much more primary that Husserl proposes to achieve.

Husserl goes on in his "critical history of ideas" in volume one of *Erste Philosophie* to examine other modern philosophers, with special attention given to the British Empiricists, and he concludes with a lecture on modern rationalism, closing with remarks about Leibniz and Kant. He shows how each of these thinkers anticipate and yet fall short of the science that he is seeking to formulate.

4. Turbulence in Husserl's first philosophy

Volume two of *Erste Philosophie*, which presents the part of the course that Husserl gave in the second part of the semester (starting on January 8, 1924), is a systematic treatise called the "Theory of the Transcendental Reduction." Here Husserl intends to deliver the philosophical science he described as anticipated by the thinkers he studied in volume one. He turns from historical interpretation to the more theoretic issue, and the theme that arises in the first lecture is that of establishing a beginning (*Anfang*) in philosophy. The theme of securing a beginning was touched on in the first volume mainly at the start of the course. The first volume emphasized intellectual responsibility in science and the radical justification of knowledge, but the second brings the issue of a new beginning to the fore. The science that Husserl wishes to establish has to be built up, not

[1] Ibid., p. 69.

just as a complement to other forms of knowing, but from the ground up. The beginning itself needs to be justified.

But as Rudolf Boehm points out in his introduction to *Husserliana* VIII, things fell apart for Husserl during these lectures. Boehm describes the text of this volume as "problematic through and through (*durch und durch problematisch*)," so much so that one might ask whether it should even be published.[1] The difficulties in the text reflect difficulties in the issues that Husserl was dealing with. But as we know from Aristotle, problems or *aporiai* are endemic to first philosophy and prove fruitful for it, so we should rather enjoy Husserl's discomfort than be distressed by it. The persistence of *aporiai* is compatible with the attainment of philosophical insight.

Before exploring these difficulties, we might review the contrast between Aristotle and Husserl on the meaning of "first" philosophy. For Aristotle, this science derives its name chiefly from the fact that it treats the highest, separate entity; it is called first because of the dignity of its object, which we come to at the end of our exploration (in Lambda). For Husserl, in contrast, first philosophy deals with the start, the *Anfang* of a new kind of science. It needs to clear the ground and secure its own beginning. It will need to show that it enjoys a special kind of evidencing that other sciences do not and that consequently it can serve to justify all of them as well as itself. The others are essentially limited in scope and inevitably take some things for granted, but this new science will escape these deficiencies. For Husserl, it is not enough to be resolute and to decide to be absolutely responsible; we need to show that such an ultimate clarification is meaningful and possible. We need to explain as well as to choose, if we are to show that our decision is rational. The "firstness" of Aristotle's science comes at the end, that of Husserl's at the beginning. In this respect, Husserl's first philosophy seems more like Aristotle's science of being as being than like his science of the first and highest beings.

Husserl begins to formulate his philosophical beginning at the start of the fourth lecture of volume 2 of *Erste Philosophie*: "We are standing before

[1] Boehm, editor's remarks in Husserl, *Erste Philosophie II*, p. xi.

the great question of the beginning."[1] His procedure is to explain the kind of evidencing that our phenomenological reflection gives us; he calls it "adequate" evidence. When we turn reflectively to the subject, everything we intend is actually given; it is *vollständig Wahrgenommenes*, to use a term from a related manuscript.[2] There are no "other sides" of what we intend (as there always are in the experience of bodies in space), no absences, nothing is doubtful or provisional, there is not the slightest lack of clarity and distinctness. "We call an evidence that enjoys this indicated ideal perfection 'adequate' Evidence."[3] Connected with such adequate evidence is another kind of evidencing that Husserl calls "apodictic." Apodicticity is the unthinkability that things might not be as they are being presented. Husserl calls apodicticity a "property (*Eigenschaft*)" of adequate evidence.[4] Apodictic evidence, therefore, flows from adequate evidence and hence depends on it. Husserl repeatedly says that every adequate evidence is apodictic and vice versa, but this reciprocity does not destroy the subordination of apodicticity to adequacy.

The interplay between the adequate and the apodictic is interesting and important. The bond between the two is weakened in the course of this volume of *Erste Philosophie* and it is broken by the time Husserl wrote *Cartesianische Meditationen*. There, in the First Meditation, as he is establishing the features of his philosophy, Husserl again distinguishes two kinds of evidence, the adequate and the apodictic, but he concedes that the perfection of adequate evidence may lie "at infinity." It is no longer available to support the beginning of a "first" philosophy. He still claims, however, that the perfection of apodicticity – indubitability (*Zweifellosigkeit*) – is required in philosophy and that it can be critically established. As before, apodicticity is said to be the evidence of the *Unausdenkbarkeit* of the non-being of what is known in philosophy. Thus, in *Cartesianische Meditationen* Husserl admits that the two kinds of evidence can be separated from each other and that adequacy can be dismissed: "If [philosophical evidences] should turn out to be inadequate, they would have to possess at least a

[1] Ibid., p. 26.
[2] Ibid., Beilage XV, p. 408, which is dated 1924.
[3] Ibid., p. 33.
[4] Ibid., p. 35.

recognizable apodictic content...."[1] But if apodicticity was a property of adequacy and hence dependent upon it, what can it be based upon now? Husserl seems to want the property without the substance from which it flows.

The issue of adequacy and apodicticity is not a minor matter in *Erste Philosophie*. The whole point of the work is the establishment of a self-justifying kind of science, and these two forms of evidence were to provide the justification. As the course of lectures go on, Husserl gradually stops talking about adequate evidence, but he never gives up on apodicticity. In fact, he introduces the theme of an apodictic reduction. He says that the phenomenological turn to the subject is first carried out in a kind of naivety that needs to be critically examined.[2] The phenomenological reduction needs to be secured by an apodictic reduction, which brings to light the kind of evidence that is at work in phenomenology or philosophy itself. Husserl maintains his allegiance to apodicticity till the end of his work. He uses the term many times in a manuscript from 1936 that Walter Biemel added as the conclusion to his edition of *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften*. There Husserl speaks of "being called to a life in apodicticity" that is made possible by his philosophy.[3]

We might be inclined to dismiss Husserl's concerns with adequacy and apodicticity as problems that arise from the rationalism that he inherited from Descartes. He might seem, in *Erste Philosophie* itself and in the supplementary texts given in the book, to be hopelessly tangled up in a badly formulated problem. But he is tangled up because has gotten hold of something peculiar about philosophy. To shift the metaphor, he has touched a live wire. In fact, philosophical statements do seem to be rather curious. They seem to have a kind of force and validity in themselves, which does

[1] Edmund Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen*, ed. S. Strasser, Husserliana I (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1950) §6, p. 56; translation from *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977) §6, p. 16. On the previous page Husserl says, "This perfection is 'apodicticity,' and it can occur even in evidences that are inadequate."

[2] On the apodictic reduction and the apodictic critique of transcendental experience, see *Erste Philosophie II*, pp. 80, 169. On p. 80 Husserl says that the apodictic reduction is made possible by the transcendental reduction: we could not comment on the peculiarities of philosophical discourse until philosophy had come on the scene.

[3] Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie*, ed. Walter Biemel, Husserliana VI (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1954), p. 275.