

Heidegger's Ontological Difference in Light of Aristotle's Dynamis and Energeia:

Some Theological Implications

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Heidegger is indebted in a profound fashion to Aristotle. This article employs Heinz Happ's analysis of Aristotle to propose that, whereas Joseph Owens' *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* neglects the Aristotelian "Material-Series" (ὕλη) of "many", "other", "unequal" and "unlike", Heidegger neglects the Aristotelian "Form-Series" (εἶδος) of "one", "same", "equal", and "similar". This is because Heidegger reads "matter" (ὕλη) in the Aristotelian sense not as "stuff" but as "possibility (δύναμις). As a consequence Heidegger stresses the "situatedness" of "thrown Being-in-the-world" as the place where possibilities are experienced to the exclusion of the eidetic of actuality and mere static "presence". Two theological implications are drawn from this analysis: 1) Aristotle's "unification" of the Material- and Form-Series in the Unmoved Mover suggests the inseparability of possibility and actuality and allows the contemplation of "God" as possibility above actuality. 2) A theological recovery of the "Form-Series" can aid us in understanding the Pauline Christian notions of "being in Christ" and "possessing the mind of Christ".

There is no doubt of Heidegger's indebtedness to Aristotle.¹ Hugo Ott quotes from Heidegger's letter of June 27, 1922, to Jaspers in which he encourages Jaspers ever more intently to be "[s]erious with philosophy and to make its possibilities [one's] principle research, to set about the 'critique of ontology heretofore in its roots in Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle.'²" Heidegger's proposal is clearly to focus on Aristotle's ontology. This is significant, for the first question to be asked when one is concerned with Aristotle is: which Aristotle? Are we concerned with the Aristotle who Theophrast situated within the framework of theology and

1. Hans-Georg Gadamer reports in "Erinnerungen an Heideggers Anfaenge," *Dilthey-Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Geschichte der Geisteswissenschaften* 4 (1986/7 July) that Aristotle was perceived by Heidegger to be an "opponent" (ein Gegenfigur). Aristotle's significance for Heidegger, then, functioned under Heidegger's ground rule: "one must make the opponent stronger." (22) Gadamer proceeded to maintain that what Heidegger sought "Das war mehr Paulus oder das *Alte Testament* als Aristoteles." (23)

2. *Martin Heidegger. Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1988), 33: "'Ernst mit Philosophie und ihren Möglichkeiten als prinzipieller Forschung' zu machen, die 'Kritik der bisherigen Ontologie an ihrer Wurzel in der griechischen Philosophie, und besonders des Aristoteles' ins Werk zu setzen."

was defended by Philip Merlan, Nogales Gómez, and Joseph Owens in our century?³ Or with the empirical Aristotle of Nominalism of the 14th century? Or with the materialist Aristotle in reaction against German Idealism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries?⁴ Or with the ontological Aristotle championed by Paul Natrop, among others, in this century?⁵ In addition, at the end of the 19th century there was a general and vehement attack against Idealism by the “Critical Realists” (Georg von Hertling, Clemens Baeumker) who rejected as “empty concepts⁶” everything that was mere logic or everything that was incompatible with or went “beyond” the actual.⁷ In the spirit of anti-Idealism Werner Jaeger contrasted the “empirical” Aristotle with the “ultra-realist” Plato.⁸ Although Heidegger’s letter to Jaspers makes clear that it is Aristotle’s

3. For Theophrast, see Heinz Happ, *Hyle. Studien zum Aristotelischen Materie-Begriff* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971), 320 and n. 38; for Merlan, Gómez, and Owens, see *ibid.*, 407.

4. See Happ, *Hyle*, 12f.

5. See Happ, *Hyle*, 407.

6. See Happ, *Hyle*, 11-12.

7. Heidegger explicitly rejects Critical Realism as a “Mißgeburt.” See Martin Heidegger, “Phänomenologische Interpretation zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation)” in *Dilthey-Jahrbuch* 6 (1989): 256.

8. See Werner Jaeger, *Aristoteles. Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung* (Berlin: Weiman, 1923), 201-216; from Happ, *Hyle*, 313 and n. 10. Endre v. Ivánka challenges in detail Jaeger’s “mis-reading” of Aristotle in “Die Metaphysik in Jaegers ‘Aristoteles’” in *Scholastik* 7 (1932): 1-29. See as well Pierre Aubenque, “Aristoteles und das Problem der Metaphysik” in *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 15 (1961): 321-333, who also criticizes Jaeger’s reading of Aristotle.

Happ denies that one may maintain a contrast between “an ultrarealist platonic abstraction and a nominalist Aristotelian abstraction.” See Happ, *ibid.*, 634: “Obwohl Aristoteles seinen Lehrer Platon fast ultrarealistisch interpretiert, kann von einem Gegensatz zwischen einer ultrarealistischen platonischen ‘Abstraktion’ und einer nominalistischen aristotelischen ‘Abstraktion’ keine Rede sein. Diese Klischees sollte man bei der Deutung der aristotelischen Erkenntnislehre möglichst ganz vermeiden und so die wirklichen Unterschiede und Gewichtsverlagerungen zwischen Platon und Aristoteles ... vorurteilsloser und wenige schematisch sehen lernen.” Happ observes that the Ultra-Realists are a “Seitenweg” in the Platonic Academy (see *ibid.*, 180, n. 528), and he thoroughly questions whether Plato was an Ultra-Realist (see *ibid.*, 631).

There is more continuity than discontinuity among the pre-Socratecs, Plato, the Platonic Academy, and Aristotle. Happ proposes that there is much in common between the pre-Socratics and Aristotle (e.g., parallelism between medicine and philosophy, teleology, distinction between ὕλη and εἶδος/λόγος, ὕλη is nothing merely passive, *ibid.*, 555-558). Happ proposes that there is more that unites Plato and Aristotle than divides them. Even Aristotle’s frequent, vigorous attack on the “static” Platonic Doctrine of Ideas is “not historically justified” (*ibid.*, 506, n. 167), and Aristotle’s notion of abstraction is unthinkable without Plato’s, for they are essentially the same (see *ibid.*, 634, see especially, 644: “... die platonische Denkweise -- Priorität des Allgemeinen, Idealsein der Genera -- [besteht] im wesentlichen weiter ...”). Above all, Happ maintains that Aristotle’s notion of ὕλη is impossible without Plato’s notion of ἀορίστος δυάς, and reflection over matter commenced with Plato and the Academy (see *ibid.*, 88, 257-258, 290, n. 49). However, Happ does not reduce Aristotle to either Plato or the Academy. Although Aristotle’s notions of πλῆθος and ὕλη are unquestionably dependent upon Plato and the

ontology of possibilities that interested him, Theodore Kisiel summarizes Otto Pöggeler's account of a series of conversations with Heidegger between 1959 to 1963 in which Heidegger is reported to have listed the influence of Greek thought and particularly Aristotle on Heidegger through 1923 as 1) "Philosophical truth is truth which is 'seen;'" 2) "time as a series of nows;" 3) "οὐσία for the Greeks means constant presence, and so is oriented toward only one dimension of time, the present, after the model of things 'present at hand;'" and 4) these failures of Greek thought and Aristotle resulted "for the first time in that temporal sense of the 'question of being' which occupied Heidegger for the rest of his life."⁹ One wonders where Aristotle is in this list.

In light of the extensiveness of Heidegger's engagement with Aristotle and Aristotle's identification of three kinds of οὐσία (Unmoved Mover, super-lunar world, and sub-lunar world), his corresponding three divisions of science (theology/metaphysics, astronomy, and physics¹⁰), and his division of metaphysics into four components (ontology, usiology, theology, and causality¹¹), there is reason to wonder whether Heidegger has acknowledged in Pöggeler's list all of his indebtedness to Aristotle. The narrow task of what follows with respect to the relationship between Heidegger and Aristotle is to propose that a fruitful source for reflecting on Heidegger's "ontological difference" is Aristotle's ontological notion of matter. Heinz Happ's *Hyle. Studien zur aristotelischen Materie-Begriff* allows a recovery of an Aristotelian ontological difference by emphasizing the notion of matter (ύλη) as possibility over against form (εἶδος) as actuality for Aristotle that provides a means for getting underway with Heidegger¹² without being limited to Heidegger's way.

Academy (*ibid.*, 471), although both Plato's ἐν and Aristotle's Unmoved Mover can both be only indirectly contemplated (*ibid.*, 659), although for both humanity as spirit/mind (Geistwesen) is oriented toward a "first οὐσία" and comes to itself through pure νοῦς (mind/Geist) (*ibid.*, 659, although both understand abstraction as κατ-ἀφάρισιν (subtraction) (*ibid.*, 349, 673), although both understand the order of Being in terms of sequential order (*ibid.*, 267, 349, 353, 374), although for both teleology (*ibid.*, 207, 362) and privation (στέρησις) play a significant role (*ibid.*, 208), and although Aristotle is dependent upon the notion of "necessity" from the Academy (*ibid.*, 268, nevertheless Aristotle re-worked most of these notions, including that of ύλη, in an original way (*ibid.*, 268-269). Furthermore, Aristotle gives a much less significant role to mathematics than did Plato and the Academy (*ibid.*, 352, n. 204), for he substituted the supra-lunar world for Plato's mathematics (*ibid.* 794) in the order of Being. However, it is not inappropriate to propose that, precisely those elements separating Plato and Aristotle, are elements that united them.

9. Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 229-230.

10. See Happ, *Hyle*, 380, n. 343.

11. See Happ, *Hyle*, 430-431; 386, n. 368.

12. Getting underway is the highest task of philosophy. Heidegger wrote in *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. by Fred d. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, Pubs., 1968), 168-169: "Thinking itself is a way. We respond to the way only by remaining underway. To be underway on the way in order to clear the way--

At the very beginning of his intellectual career in 1907, Heidegger read Brentano's *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle* thanks to a gift from his mentor, life-long friend, and later Archbishop Conrad Gröber.¹³ Brentano had described matter (ὕλη) as "potentiality" (dynamis) in contrast to form (εἶδος) as ἐνέργεια (actuality).¹⁴ By highlighting the distinction in Aristotle between possibility (δύναμις) and actuality (ἐνέργεια), Brentano provided Heidegger a framework for his own distinction between das Sein-des-Seienden ("possibility") and das Seiende ("actuality").¹⁵ Hence, Heinz Happ's analysis of Aristotle's notion of matter as possibility not only offers an insight into a similarity between Aristotle and Heidegger with respect to the ontological difference, but also Brentano's emphasis on the difference between

that is one thing. The other thing is to take a position somewhere along the road, and there make conversation about whether, and how, earlier and later stretches of the way may be different, and in their difference might be incompatible--incompatible, that is, for those who never walk the way, nor ever set out on it, but merely take up a position outside it, there forever to formulate ideas and make talk about the way."

13. Ott, *Unterwegs*, 52-54. Gröber's role in Heidegger's life was significant. Gröber was a native of Meßkirch and, as Rector of the Gymnasium in Constance, he was in part responsible for Heidegger's attendance there. Gröber's influence continued after his appointment as Archbishop in Freiburg. Particularly in the fateful years following World War II, Archbishop Gröber wrote on March 8, 1946, to the political advisor for Germany to the Pope, Pius XII, and reported about a meeting with Heidegger over which Gröber says: "Ich habe ihm [Heidegger] die Wahrheit gesagt, und er hat es unter Tränen entgegengenommen. Ich breche die Beziehungen zu ihm nicht ab, denn ich hoffe auf einen geistigen Umschwung in ihm." From *ibid.*, 323.

14. See Brentano, *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, trans. by Rolf George (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 27.

15. See Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1979), 143-144: "Dasein ist nicht ein Vorhandenes, das als Zugabe noch besitzt, etwas so können, sondern es ist primär Möglichsein. Dasein ist je das, was es sein kann und wie es seine Möglichkeit ist ... Das Möglichsein, das je das Sasein existenzial ist, unterscheidet sich ebenso sehr von der leeren, logischen Möglichkeit wie von der Kontingenz eines Vorhandenen, sofern mit diesem das und jenes 'passieren' kann. Als modale Kategorie der Vorhandenheit bedeutet Möglichkeit das *noch nicht* Wirkliche und das *nicht jemals* Notwendige. Sie charakterisiert das *nur* Mögliche. Sie ist ontologisch niedriger als Wirklichkeit und Notwendigkeit. Möglichkeit als Existenzial dagegen ist die ursprünglichste und letzte positive ontologische Bestimmtheit des Daseins ..." See as well, 387: "Das Verstehen bedeutet das Sichentwerfen auf die jeweilige Möglichkeit des In-der-Welt-seins, das heißt, als diese Möglichkeit existieren." Finally, 284: "Das Sein des Daseins ist die Sorge. Sie befaßt in sich Faktizität (Geworfenheit), Existenz (Entwurf) und Verfallen. Seiend ist das Dasein geworfenes ... Die Geworfenheit ... liegt nicht hinter ihm als ein tatsächlich vorgefallenes und vom Dasein wieder losgefallenes Ereignis ..., sondern das *Dasein ist* ständig - solange es its - als Sorge sein 'Das'. *Als dieses Seiende ... ist es existierend* der Grund seines Seinkönnens ...

Und wie *ist* dieser geworfene Grund? Einzig so, daß es sich auf Möglichkeiten entwirft, in die es geworfen ist. Das Selbst, das als solches den Grund seiner selbst zu legen hat, kann dessen *nie* mächtig werden und hat doch existierend das Grundsein zu übernehmen ...

Grund-seiend ... bleibt das Dasein ständig hinter seinen Möglichkeiten zurück. Es ist nie existent vor seinem Grunde, sondern je nur *aus ihm* und *als dieser*. Grundsein besagt demnach, des eigensten Seins von Grund auf *nie* mächtig sein."

possibility and actuality in Aristotle can be seen as perhaps the stimulus for the direction of Heidegger's ontological reading of Aristotle.

My thesis here is that Heidegger made an ontological reading of Aristotle, and that is why Joseph Owens' theological reading of Aristotle can lead one down a false path as an attempt to determine the Aristotle who shaped Heidegger. This is because a reading of Joseph Owens' *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*¹⁶ in search of a possible connection between Heidegger and Aristotle would lead one to the conclusion that there is little in common between them. Whereas Owens correctly stresses that the "many meanings of Being" in Aristotle are united by a Pros-hen (πρὸς ἓν), "reference to one," structure,¹⁷ his limitation of the "proper" meaning of Being to "Entity"¹⁸ (= Form¹⁹ = actuality/ἐνέργεια) encourages the reader of Heidegger to discount Aristotle as a philosopher of the "ontic" and of mere "presence;" precisely to the exclusion of matter (= possibility/δύναμις). In a most basic sense, then, Owens encourages the reader to look in the wrong direction. Owens' emphasis on πρὸς ἓν draws attention to actuality and distracts from the role of possibility in the Aristotelian project. By his placing such emphasis on the Pros-hen structure for establishing the unity of first philosophy, Owens focuses on the Form-series (Form- or eidetic-Systoiche), the unity of Form/Entity (actuality), to the exclusion of the Material-series (Material-Systoiche), the multiplicity of ὕλη (possibility).²⁰

16. Joseph Owens *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics: A Study in the Greek Background of Mediaeval Thought*, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1963).

17. See for example, Owens, *The Doctrine of Being*, 121-122, 151-152, 265, and 319, n. 19.

18. See Owens, *The Doctrine of Being*, 268: "How can 'Being *qua* Being' be universal, if it is restricted to one type of Being? ... How can there be one science that treats of all Beings? If 'Being' were a genus, there would be no trouble. But the Stagirite has insisted that Being is not a genus. The answer is being sought in the πρὸς ἓν [reference-to-one] way in which Being extends to its various instances ...

In this way there is an order in Being. All things are Being in reference to Entity. But the reference need not be immediate. Mediate reference is fully compatible with this doctrine of Being.

Privations and negations of Entity, or of anything referred to Entity, are also called Being. This follows consistently from the πρὸς ἓν nature of Being. The only requirement for the denomination of Being is a reference, either immediate or mediate, to Entity."

19. See Owens, *The Doctrine of Being*, 347-365.

20. See Happ, *Hyle*, 649: "... die Metaphysik [hat] zu ihrem Gegenstand erstens das Sein als Sein im allgemeinen und zugleich das *ens realissimum*, den unbewegten Beweger; zweitens eine Reihe von einander gegensätzlich zugeordneten 'Transzendentalien' im weitesten Sinne, die in die Form-Systoichie der 'Einheit' und die Materie-Systoichie der 'Vielheit' zusammengefaßt sind; drittens die Grundaxiome jeglichen Denkens wie den Satz vom Widerspruch; viertens die Erörterung des τί ἔστιν, also des Wesens."

Heidegger's Ontological Difference and Aristotelian Form/Matter

In his "Afterword" to the 1989 publication of the long misplaced Heidegger manuscript of 1922 entitled "Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation)," Hans-Ulrich Lessing reports this text was submitted to Marburg and Göttingen as part of Heidegger's application for teaching positions at both universities.²¹ Theodore Kisiel says of this manuscript: "... we have before us the nuclear structure of the Book BT, or more precisely, of the *Daseinsanalytik* which is to serve as a fundamental ontology."²² Although key themes later found in *Being and Time* are found in this manuscript, such as Care (Sorge²³), inauthentic Being (uneigentlich Sein²⁴), the public "they" (das 'Man'²⁵), death (Tod²⁶), facticity (Faktizität²⁷), tendency toward fallenness (Verfallensgeneigtheit²⁸), hermeneutic of destruction (Hermeneutik der Destruktion²⁹), "not that, but how" (nicht daß, sondern Wie³⁰), fore-having (Vorhabe³¹), truth (ἀλήθεια³²) and more, Heidegger is concerned in this manuscript to describe his work as a project on Aristotle, and the key to this Aristotelian ontology is movement and possibility.

21. The manuscript sent to Paul Natrop, who eventually hired Heidegger in Marburg in the summer of 1923, has been lost. Thomas Sheehan and Theodore Kisiel are responsible for finding the manuscript ("Anzeige," 270) sent to Georg Misch in Göttingen among the papers of Misch's student, Josef König. Misch had given König the manuscript on König's 71st birthday and Lessing reports that König packed it away unread in 1964. See "Anzeige," 273.

22. Kisiel, *Genesis*, 257.

23. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 240.

24. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 242.

25. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 243.

26. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 243.

27. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 246.

28. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 248.

29. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 249.

30. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 249-250.

31. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 253.

32. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 257.

Heidegger is particularly aware that the common reading of Aristotle's notion of οὐσία as raw Substance is far from Aristotle's own understanding.³³ Heidegger observes that the "central phenomenon" explicated in Aristotle's Physics is "das Seiende im Wie seines Bewegtseins"³⁴ ([individual] being in the how of its movement). Neither Aristotle nor Heidegger is concerned with things as mere objects, but with the world as it is encountered. The most vivid paradigm employed by both to represent and to reflect upon this encounter is the experience of the production of an artifact.³⁵ Heidegger describes ποίησις (creating, production) in terms of a Fore-having of the world as a fundamental ontological structure. He then asks, "How does this ontological structure arise?"³⁶ and responds: "The investigations ... must impart a possible access to the actual origin of Aristotle's ontology."³⁷

In circumspection, life is "there" in the concrete "how" of a that of engagement. The Being of this "that" is ... characterized ... as that which can be other [than what it is in contrast to] that which is necessary and always what it is.³⁸ One arrives at this ontological characteristic through negation of an other, actual Being. This [other, actual Being] ... arises in its categorial structure out of a definitely executed, ontological radicalization of the idea of a moving being. Exemplary for this possible identification of its meaning structure is the movement of production ... The Being of life occurs as a transpiring movement ... This movement is ἐξίς [habit] as σοφία [wisdom]. In fact, the Being of life must be seen in the temporality of σοφία as such ...

Every movement is ... a being under way ..., a not having yet arrived at its goal ... The Being character of ἐξίς [habit] and thereby of ἀρετή [excellence, virtue], that is, the

33. See Heidegger, "Anzeige," 248-249: "Auch da, wo grundsätzlich die Gegenstände nicht mehr als 'Substanzen' im rohen Sinne angesprochen werden (*wovon übrigens Aristoteles weiter entfernt war, als gemeinhin gelehrt wird*) und wo die Gegenstände nicht nach ihren okkulten Qualitäten befragt werden, bewegt sich die Lebensauslegung doch in Grundbegriffen, Frageansätzen und Explikationstendenzen, die in Gegenstandserfahrungen entsprungen sind, über die wir heute längst nicht mehr verfügen.

Die Philosophie der heutigen Situation bewegt sich zum großen Teil uneigentlich in der griechischen Begrifflichkeit, und zwar in einer solchen, die durch eine Kette von verschiedenartigen Interpretationen hindurchgegangen ist. Die Grundbegriffe haben ihre ursprünglichen, auf bestimmt erfahrene Gegenstandsregionen bestimmt zugeschnittenen Ausdrucksfunktionen eingebüßt."

34. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 251.

35. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 253.

36. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 253.

37. Heidegger, "Anzeige," 253-254 (my translation).

38. Heidegger distinguishes here between Aristotle's notions of hypothetical necessity and absolute necessity. Hypothetical necessity is concerned with that which can be other than it the way it is. Absolute necessity involves all that which cannot be other than the way it is. Aristotle understands the Unmoved Mover and ὕλη (matter) as absolutely necessary. Everything between those two extremes is hypothetically necessary. See Happ, *Hyle*, 719, 723, 725, and 728.

ontological structure of humanity, is understood in terms of an ontology of beings as the “how” of a definite movement and in the ontological radicalization of the idea of this movement.³⁹ (emphasis added)

Heidegger later says that what is decisive is to demonstrate for Aristotle that the traditional ontology based on categories of Being and Non-Being, otherness, and difference is incapable of understanding the phenomenon of movement.⁴⁰

This phenomenon gives itself from out of its own original and final structures: δύναμις [possibility, ὕλη], that is always a definite having at one’s disposal, ἐνέργεια [actuality, εἶδος], that which is taken in application at one’s disposal, and ἐντελέχεια [goal], that is the applied in the custodial holding of what is at one’s disposal.⁴¹

The typically Aristotelian formulation of the ontological structure of human experience is clear in Heidegger’s vocabulary and description of the human activity of the production of an artifact, for Heidegger’s description is a classic example of the triadic structure of becoming in Aristotle: Metaphysics Γ6 and K6 both describe this structure as one of contraries related by privation to a “substrate.”⁴² According to Aristotle, however, this “substrate” is nothing tangible.⁴³ The production of an artifact is unequivocally and radically grounded in movement or possibility

39. Heidegger, “Anzeige,” 260-261 (my translation).

40. Heidegger, “Anzeige,” 267.

41. Heidegger, “Anzeige,” 267 (my translation).

42. Happ, *Hyle*, 451, 453. Privation (στέρησις) in Γ and K has two meanings: a) the “missing” or “failing” of something positive (i.e., the Form); b) the “substrate” from which the positive something is missing. See Happ, *Hyle*, 449. In Aristotle’s triadic structure of becoming, both notions of privation can be understood as ὕλη (matter). The connection is clear in Γ and K where privation (στέρησις) is equated with δύναμις = ὕλη. See Happ, *Hyle*, 468.

43. See Happ, *Hyle*, 804: “Diese aristotelische Hyle ist -- wie das akademische zweite Prinzip -- sowohl in den ‘abstraktesten’ wie in den ‘konkretesten’ Arten, im ganzen wie im einzelnen *ausnahmslos* nichts Stoffliches, sondern ein *geistiges* Prinzip, ein νοητόν.” See also, *ibid.*, 804, n. 626: “... auch die αἰσθητὴ ὕλη [heißt und ist] nicht ‘sinnlich wahrnehmbare Materie’ ..., sondern ὕλη τῶν αἰσθητῶν bedeutet ... -- wie alle anderen Hyle-Arten - - *als solche* nicht sinnlich wahrgenommen, sondern [kann] nur durch Abstraktion = Wesensschau (νόησις) erkannt werden ...” See, as well, *ibid.*, 808: “Die Interpretation der aristotelischen Hyle als eines einheitlichen Prinzips weitab von aller ‘Stofflichkeit’ ist durchaus nicht einseitig und extrem ‘idealistisch’, wie eine empiristische Kritik meinen könnte, sondern läßt die vielen im Konkreten aufgesuchten Besonderungen des ‘Materiellen’ als Erscheinungsweisen, Prinzipiate des gleichen Prinzips verstehen und so überhaupt erst philosophisch relevant werden.” Although the notion “abstraction” sounds like matter is being reduced to an empty idealist concept, the term “abstraction” must be understood in terms of the “subtraction-Method” (ἀφάρεσις) of Aristotle. One cannot experience matter directly (*ibid.*, 305). One can only approach it indirectly and only approximately (*ibid.*, 305). This is illuminating since *prima materia* (ὕλη in the realm of sense perception) is “nothing actual” (*ibid.*, 304) and is “indivisible possibility” (*ibid.*, 305). Possibilities are nothing tangible, and they are only indirectly experienced through actuality. They can only be approached by a “downward” “via negativa” (see *ibid.*, 639) by means of the negation of all categories “even οὐσία” (*ibid.*, 663-664)

inseparable from a concrete circumstance. Although in no way tangible, possibilities are never a “mere nothing” or “arbitrary.” Possibilities are the *conditio sine quo non* of any and all event, and they are inseparable from a given situation. This is precisely how Aristotle speaks of ὕλη (matter).⁴⁴

As the notion of a Material-series implies, Aristotle’s Hyle-Principle has many meanings stretching from the ὕλη of the world of sense perception⁴⁵ to ὕλη νοητή that is pure “abstract” δύναμις (possibility).⁴⁶ Although πρώτη ὕλη (prima materia of the sub-lunar world) may be called ὕλη μάλιστα κυρίως (matter in the most fitting sense), this does not mean that matter is something physical for Aristotle.⁴⁷

Happ points out that “Pros-hen and the identification of Being and Henos [the One] lead to the construction and development of the first series (Form-Systoiche). However, the perspective of the relationship of opposites leads further to [the construction and development] of the second series (Material-Systoiche).⁴⁸” The first or eidetic series (the Form-Systoiche) consists of one (έν), same (ταύτόν), equal (ἴσον), and similar ὅμοιον, and it is analogous to the second or material series (Material-Systoiche) that consists of many (πλήθος), other (έτερον), unequal (ἀνίσον), and unlike (ἀνόμοιον).⁴⁹ The Form-series leads, then, from Form (εἶδος) over the “middle region” to objects of sense perception.⁵⁰ The Material-series leads from the many in its highest form as located and thought (ὕλη τοπική and ὕλη νοητή) over the “middle region” to objects of sense perception (ὕλη αἰσθητή or ὕλη γεννητή).⁵¹ Both of these sequences are driven by a movement both downward of “addition” and upward as

44. See Happ, *Hyle*, on matter as not “mere nothing” 457-458; on possibility as not capricious 706-707, 721-722; and matter (possibility) as the *conditio sine quo non* of any and all events (552-553, 721, 722).

45. This ὕλη αἰσθητή consists of the ὕλη τοπική of the supra-lunar world and of the πρώτη ὕλη of the sub-lunar world. See Happ, *Hyle*, 692, 700-701, 705, n. 127.

46. See Happ, *Hyle*, 646-647.

47. Quite to the contrary, matter for Aristotle is “pure possibility” (Happ, *Hyle*, 692, 697-698, 710) and neither “physical” nor “metaphysical” in the sense of anything actual (Happ, *Hyle*, 698).

48. Happ, *Hyle*, 422: “Pros-hen und Ineinssetzung von ὄν und έν führen also zum Aufbau und zur Entfaltung der ersten Systoichie, die Anschauung vom Zusammenhang der Gegensätze dann weiter zur zweiten Systoichie.”

49. See Happ, *Hyle*, 686, n. 40

50. See Happ, *Hyle*, 445. This “middle region” consisted of mathematics for Plato, but Aristotle substitutes the supra-lunar world for Plato’s mathematics. See Happ, *Hyle*, 691, 794.

51. See Happ, *Hyle*, 445.

“abstraction.⁵²” In the case of the Form-series, the top of the series is εἶδος or “pure actuality” (ἐνέργεια).⁵³ In the case of the Material-series, the top of the series is the πλῆθος- or ὕλη- Principle (Material Principle) of “pure possibility” (δύναμις). This fundamental dualism⁵⁵ is “united” in the Unmoved Mover since the Unmoved Mover seen “in its entirety is generalization and undeveloped.⁵⁶” Hence, in the case of both series the “purest” instantiation is at the “top” although the “purest” is inseparable from the whole series.

Whereas our modern post-Lockean philosophical understanding is concerned with the contrast between “thing” and “mere abstraction,⁵⁷” what is radical about Heidegger is that he is not caught in this opposition between “thing” and “abstraction” because his focus is not on the ontic but on the event of the Being-of-beings. The Being-of-beings for Heidegger is an echo of the ontological moment in Aristotle that stresses matter (ὕλη) as possibility to be the necessary condition for any and all experience in the world. Heidegger’s shift of focus away from the subject-object split, away from consciousness “in” or “next to” a world, and away from inner spirit and external extension, is accomplished precisely by a turn to the concealed dynamic of possibility in every and all actual Being-in-the-world. The shift of focus to possibility in all actuality enables a retrieval of truth as ἀ-λήθεια (ἀ-λανθάνω) as un-covering. Furthermore, from the perspective of possibility, time or history for Heidegger is an ecstatic horizon of past, future, present. Hence, possibility, inseparable from the actual, is radically historical since we already are the possibilities that we are yet to become, and we cannot become without a world.

52. See Happ, *Hyle*, 349-350.

53. See Happ, *Hyle*, 26, 57-58, 197, 287, 294, 301, 306, 391-392, 431, 790.

54. See Happ, *Hyle*, 197, 287, 710, 639-640, 645-646, 687, 778, 790. See especially *ibid.*, 790: “Wir können (und müssen) ... diese Proportionen [Hyle] ist ‘der Möglichkeit nach’ (δυνάμει) das, was die Form ‘der Wirklichkeit nach’ ist (ἐνέργεια) sämtlich auf eine *Ur-Proportion* gründen: ‘... wie ὕλη αὐτὴ καθ’ αὐτήν (= reine Möglichkeit) : εἶδος αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτό (= reine Wirklichkeit).”

55. See Happ, *Hyle*, 625, n. 225; 721; 723, n. 213, 737, 761.

56. Happ, *Hyle*, 646: “Der Beweger ist als reine Aktualität vollbestimmt, zugleich als Prototyp von Substanz bzw. Sein überhaupt Allgemeinheit und Unentfaltenheit. Dieses Ineinander von Bestimmtheit und Unbestimmtheit finden wir beim platonischen ἐν wieder, danach z.B. noch deutlicher beim ἐν Plotins; es ist dies bezeichnend für jedes ideale Sein, für welches das καθόλου τῶ προτερον εἶναι [generalization is prior] gilt.”

57. See Happ, *Hyle*, 321. The notion of mere abstraction comes from Locke (See Happ, *Hyle*, 586, 588, 650-651) and is only concerned with “empty” concepts.

58. The etymological analysis of truth as “un-covering” is not by any means unique to Heidegger. See Otto Willmann, *Geschichte des Idealismus. Band 1. Vorgeschichte und Geschichte des antiken Idealismus* (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1973 <1894>), 188-189.

In this sense, we can only come to ourselves out of the future in light of the possibilities we've inherited from our actual situation out of the past and present. Heidegger expresses this thought with Pindar's aphorism: "Become what you are"⁵⁹ ("werde, wie du bist!"⁶⁰).

The connection between Heidegger and Aristotle is precisely at the point of the notion of possibility. Since for Aristotle ὕλη means possibility, Happ writes of Aristotelian matter as the very *condicio sine qua non* of history (time): "The bearer of this desire and thereby the actual driving force of this process is matter. Since one can call this cycle 'History', matter [possibility] is, therefore, the factor of the historical in Aristotle's understanding of Being."⁶¹ As such, ὕλη as δύναμις (possibility) opens a perspective onto Aristotle that can give more historical and philosophical if not theological depth to Heidegger's reflections.

Some Theological Implications

Heidegger remains a perplexing and disturbing enigma. This is not the place to review his horrifying relationship to Nazism. Nevertheless, one cannot speak of Heidegger without some comment on this aspect of his life and work. One frequently hears the critique that Heidegger's philosophy left him no alternative but to be at the least a Mitläufer with the Nazis because his notion that we must wait on the event of Being reflects a profound passivity. If we must wait on Being, then there appears to be no social or political alternative but apathy. Furthermore, from Levinás we encounter the claim that Heidegger tragically neglects the other to focus exclusively on the individual (Dasein). There are surely grounds for embracing and challenging both of these readings and other interpretations of Heidegger's motivations (e.g., Thomas Sheehan does not want us to neglect anti-communism as a motivation for many excesses by Heidegger and most others in the Capitalist world). Yet another path that could include all of the above is to view his reprehensible inability to assume any responsibility for the Nazi years as itself an attempt either to underscore our inescapability from the ubiquitous dimension of the concealed in any and all experience or to deter the deification of Heidegger by his blind followers (perhaps both).

59. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, Pubs., 1962).

60. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 145.

61. Happ, *Hyle*, 775: "Träger des 'Verlangens' und damit die eigentliche 'Triebfeder' dieses ... Prozesses ist die Hyle. Da man diesen Kreislauf 'Geschichte' nennen kann, ist also die Hyle der Faktor des Geschichtlichen im aristotelischen Sein."

Whereas Heidegger's reprehensible politics is troublesome, Heideggerians tend to be nervous when theologians try to appropriate his notion of Being for theology because they are concerned about any reading of his work that might ameliorate his radical departure from the metaphysical traditions of the West. For these philosophers, it is acceptable to see Aristotle as an intellectual starting point for Heidegger's reflections, but Heidegger is not an Aristotelian.

I am not about to propose that Heidegger is Aristotle redivivus. I do want to propose that the connection to Aristotle can serve as stimulation for theological reflection on the basis of Heidegger's work that takes one beyond Heidegger's own project. However, there is nothing in what I want to propose that will attempt to reintroduce metaphysics into the discussion.

There are some valuable theological consequences to be drawn were we to read Heidegger in light of the Aristotelian "ontological difference" between ἐνέργεια (actuality) and δύναμις (possibility), εἶδος (form) and ὕλη (matter). For some, the attractiveness of Heidegger's project is that it draws the human down into the lived concrete world of everydayness from out of the ethereal clouds of idealism. What was revolutionary in Heidegger's classroom and writing was his re-thinking of Being and time as possibility inseparable from the world of daily concerns. To be sure, he leaves unanswered the question of "whence" and "whither"⁶² and he leaves open whether the path of negative theology might be fruitful.⁶³ Nonetheless, his focus is on human existence in the world as a structure of Care.

It is precisely Heidegger's development of the structure of Care on the basis not of substance but of possibility that allows for a drawing out of theological implications from his work just as Aquinas sought a synthesis of Plato and Aristotle in his theological project. What I am proposing is that Heidegger is not so revolutionary after all, and that his re-thinking of Aristotle places him squarely in the trajectory of Western theological reflection despite his reticence with respect to, his deflections of, and his outright misleading challenges to Christian theology.⁶⁴

There are two implications for theological reflection that I want to draw out of Heidegger's Aristotelian connection. The first implication is that Heidegger's ontological difference between beings and Being in light of the Aristotelian ontological difference between actuality (ἐνέργεια) and possibility (ὕλη) may offer a way of thinking about God in a non-metaphysical sense. The second implication is that Heidegger's exclusive focus on Being in

62. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 173.

63. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 499, xiii (H 427).

64. See Martin Heidegger, "Phänomenologie und Theologie" in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), 45-77.

terms of possibility when situated in its Aristotelian framework allows one to see that Heidegger has entirely overlooked if not suppressed the Form-series and mind ($\nu\hat{o}\hat{u}\varsigma$) in Aristotle. The Aristotelian framework of the Material-series and Form-series may allow a retrieval of the spiritual dimension of the human entirely neglected by Heidegger yet nevertheless no longer to be retrieved in a metaphysical sense.

On the one hand, Heinz Happ proposes that Aristotle's Unmoved Mover involves both moments of form and matter, actuality and possibility ($\hat{\epsilon}\hat{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ and $\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\eta$).⁶⁵ On the other hand, our experience in the world, Heidegger proposes, is a temporal process of manifest actuality and concealed possibilities. What these ontological differences allow is the contemplation of God as the "other side" of all that is manifest that echoes "damma daqqa" in the Elijah theophany of I Kings 19. In short, God is the no-thing of possibilities that ever anew breaks open in unanticipated ways the intractable actualities of life.

Finally, Happ reminds us that, from the time of his earliest reflections, Aristotle understood spirit ($\nu\hat{o}\hat{u}\varsigma$, mind) in the sense of self-thinking to characterize the highest "level" of Being ($\omicron\hat{\upsilon}\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$).⁶⁶ Furthermore, Happ maintains that mind ($\nu\hat{o}\hat{u}\varsigma$) is an a priori for Aristotle no differently than for Plato.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, spirit or mind ($\nu\hat{o}\hat{u}\varsigma$) is not sovereign over all that happens. There always remains an "irrational" dimension beyond the limits of spirit.⁶⁸ If we think of this "irrational" dimension theologically as the no-thingness of possibilities or God, then we can use this notion of mind ($\nu\hat{o}\hat{u}\varsigma$) that is entirely neglected by Heidegger, to be sure, to retrieve the classical Christian notion of the individual as inseparable from Christ. In other words, the individual self as spirit is inseparable from mind ($\nu\hat{o}\hat{u}\varsigma$) at the highest "level" of Being. For the Christian this comprehensive and illimitable mind ($\nu\hat{o}\hat{u}\varsigma$) is the Christ. Borrowing from Paul's almost ubiquitous use of the phrase,⁶⁹ we can not only think of the individual as "in Christ" always and already, but we can speak of an experiential necessity of the inseparability of the self and Christ. Christians can say with Paul, we have the "mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:16), and the one "who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him" (I Cor. 6:17) and our "body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within" (I Cor. 6:19).

65. See Happ, *Hyle*, 676.

66. See Happ, *Hyle*, 415, 415n. 519, and Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072b 20-30; 1074b 33034; 1075a 4.

67. See Happ, *Hyle*, 806.

68. See Happ, *Hyle*, 526.

69. Bernard McGinn reminds us that Paul uses the phrase that the Christian is "in Christ" 164 times. See Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, vol. 1, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad Press, 1992), 73.

It is my thesis, however, that these theological implications that arise out of the Aristotelian ontological difference need to be read through the lenses of the post-metaphysical Heideggerian project. Otherwise, we are too easily tempted to hypostasize these Aristotelian notions into static actuality. Theology must learn that Being is not a thing, that possibility is higher than actuality, and that there is no experience that is not spirit. There is no other thinker than Heidegger who helps us more with the first two lessons. Furthermore, Heidegger's radical dependence upon Aristotle provides us with the nod toward the classical and classical Christian traditions' understanding of spirit not as the Force but as the intangible, illimitable, and immeasurable depths within the self of mind as rooted in a spirit far richer than the individual. With the 19th century Swiss theologian, Alois Emanuel Biedermann, we can affirm that the Christian life is a life in this world seeking elevation into the spirit. "Religion is not a fantasizing out of this world into the next world or out of this time into an after-life, but it is the actual spiritual interaction with the eternal divine heaven in every moment and at every location of our creaturely existence. If this is not its real kernel, then it is a dream without any kernel."⁷⁰ Furthermore, "[a]ll truly religious interest concentrates itself with respect to how humanity, during its temporal life, comes to an actual adoption of the eternal as its personal possession in life. What humanity thereby has for its temporal life ... is what we want to describe, and nothing else, as a process of the elevation of humanity out of its natural life of the flesh to its truly spiritual life ..."⁷¹

70. Alois Emanuel Biedermann, "Die Zeitstimmen vor dem Richterstuhl der Evangelischen Allianz" (*Der Richterstuhl*) in *Zeitstimmen aus der reformierten Kirche der Schweiz*, 4 (1862), 196.

71. Biedermann, *Der Richterstuhl*, 197.