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Bursting the Bounds of Reason? Models of Immanence and Transcendence

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Abstract

This paper examines Kant's metaphor of reason as an island in the *Critique of Pure Reason* in order to suggest an unresolved tension at the heart of his critical project, which is addressed in a different way in his *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason.* That tension is between the transcendental circumscription of pure reason and reason's on persistent pretensions to transcendence. Kant's model of transcendence is contrasted with two phenomenological models that attempt to articulate the desiderative nature of reason. Yet, precisely on this question of motivation differences between Husserl and Heidegger become clear and instructive. The paper concludes, in view of these differences, with a proposal for conceiving of transcendence in non-topological categories, but instead as the activity of questioning.

Keywords: Transcendence, Heidegger, Husserl, Kant, Phenomenology

I. The Island of Truth

If, as Ricoeur advises us, *the symbol gives rise to thought*[1], then perhaps the symbol of the island of truth from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* can orient us here. The metaphor opens Kant's famous section distinguishing *phenomena* and *noumena*. He writes:

> This domain [of pure understanding] is an island, enclosed by nature itself within unalterable limits. It is the land of truth – enchanting name! – surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the native home of illusion, where many a fog bank and many a swiftly melting iceberg give the deceptive appearances of farther shores, deluding the adventurous sea-

[1] The phrase first appears in an article of the same title, "Le symbole donne penser", *Esprit* 27/7-8 (1959). It appears again in his *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan (New York: Harper and Row, 1967 (Original French ed., 1960)): 247-57.

> farer ever a new with empty hopes, and engaging him in enterprises which he can never abandon and yet is unable to carry to completion.[2]

Here Kant presents to us an image of reason within "unalterable limits." These limits are ones with which we are "under compulsion to be satisfied." It is an image of a reason *bounded*, of reason de-limited and de-fined. It is an image of reason con-fined, at least in its "successful" employment. Kant, we might say, performs an *Akedah*.[3] He *binds* the understanding as Abraham did Isaac, that it might serve a single, salvific purpose and lead us from the slavery of metaphysical illusion to freedom. And yet, at the same time, Kant is too astute an observer to be satisfied with the image as such. It must be set within a broader landscape. The image of reason as an island, as bound on all sides, contains in its very conceptualization that in virtue of which the island is an island, *viz*., the ocean that surrounds it. This ocean, always tempestuous on Kant's telling, is a metaphor for, well, what, exactly? Illusion and deception, according to Kant. But Kant of course, stands on the island. Those who take to the stormy seas court freedom of thought, but also possible death. Melville tells us that Ishmael takes to sea as "a substitute for pistol and ball,"[4] and that to set forth on the sea is to court suicide; it is to be surrounded on all sides – again, bound – by death.

What is it that holds out at once death and freedom to reason? Kant does not specify the metaphor further, but only suggests it is that which entices reason; that which is desirable to it. Yet, with this suggestion, the symbol of the island reveals itself to be only a partial metaphor, or rather, an act of circumscription that seeks to identify all of reason with one aspect of reason. This is inadequate, even on Kant's telling, because it is reason itself that is not content with the island, not content to be bound to the safe, measured, and measurable *terra firma*, but instead *desires* – and it *always* desires on Kant's telling – to set forth in search of the "farther shores" of a *terra incognita*. But why should reason be desirous of such things? Moreover, and more importantly for the phenomenologist, if it is the case that reason always steps over (*tran-scendere*) its bounds, what are we to make of this essential feature? What is it that entices it beyond the bounds of its quantitative and conceptual confinement? How does it stand in relation to this desirous intending: is reason in some sense desire?

In order to curb its inordinate desire, reason is neutered by Kant by distinction and transformation.

> We shall entitle the principles whose application is confined entirely within the limits of possible experience, *immanent*; and those, on the other

[2] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Norman Kemp Smith. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). *Ibid*., A235-36/B294-95.

[3] See Genesis 22: 1-19. The term occurs in v. 10.

[4] Hermann Melville, *Moby-Dick,* eds. Hershel Parker and Harrison Hayford (W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 18.

> hand, which profess to pass beyond these limits, *transcendent*. [These latter are] actual principles which incite us to tear down all those boundary-fences and to seize possession of an entirely new domain which recognizes no limits of demarcation. Thus, *transcendental* and *transcendent* are not interchangeable terms.[5]

Thus, we first distinguish between immanent and transcendent employments of reason, and then, second, transform the historical (and ontological) understanding of the *transcendent* into the epistemological understanding of *transcendental*, i.e., the conditions of possibility. In this bit of alchemy, the transcendent has evolved from referring to "that which surpasses" (*transcendens*) all kinds of being while including them, to that which surpasses any particular form of immanence as its prior and necessary condition of possibility. The transcendent(al) is no longer that which "goes beyond," but rather that which "underlies."

Yet, while such distinctions may help isolate a pure (*reinen*) or bare (*bloßen*) employment of reason, they do not account for its desirous intending. And while Kant's "phenomenology" of reason begins from the observation that it is unable to avoid desiring more than it can have, he does not return to the relationship between reason and desire. *What* reason desires is clear enough: truth about the last things and the highest things – God, Immortality, and Freedom. These are of course also religious things.

The insufficiency of the Kantian account (not to say its inaccuracy) is further demonstrated when we consider how he argues for his position. Having shown the restriction of reason is a possibility, when Kant argues for its necessity he can only advance an historical argument: the scandal of philosophical difference (the dogmatists, sceptics, Hume, Locke) has led to "indifferentism" (Ax) and metaphysics, once queen of the sciences now mourns like Hecuba. Thus, it is the history of philosophical disagreement that justifies the legislation of reason by Kant's "tribunal." Yet, here we might press the philosopher from Knigsberg: Why is it that reason, of its very nature, desires to climb over (*tran – scendere*) the limits of its safe employment?[6] And is there a properly *philosophical* warrant for restricting or re-defining reason according to a more limited set of its possibilities?[7]

[5] Kant, *op. cit.*, A296/B352.

[6] We need not press him to concede the point. He opens the "Preface to the First Edition" with the claim that: "Human reason has this peculiar fate that in one species of its knowledge it is burdened by questions which, *as prescribed by the very nature of reason itself,* it is not able to ignore, but which, as transcending all tis powers, it is also not able to answer" (Avii).

[7] Gadamer, summarizing Hegel's critique of Kant puts this point well: In distinguishing between phenomena and noumena, "reason was proving this distinction to be its own. In doing so it by no means comes up against its own limits, rather reason has itself set this limit and that means it has already gone beyond that limit. What makes a limit a limit always includes knowledge of what is on both sides of it. It is the dialectic o the limit to exist only by being superceded." The passage occurs in *Truth and Method,* trans. Weinsheimer and Marshall (New York: Continuum, 2006), 338.

Kant claims, famously, to have found it necessary "to deny *knowledge*, in order to make room for *faith*" (Bxxx), but we might ask if he has not rather de-fined reason so as to preclude from its phenomenality precisely that which since Plato and Aristotle has been the source of its dignity: to strive for and comport in accord with what is most divine in us.[8] By binding reason, Kant enables reason to bind that after which it seeks. Or rather, it may only seek that which is able to be bound ("We can know *a priori* of things only what we ourselves put into them" (Bxviii)). In this sense, to bind is at once to bring into view, but also to hide from view. In order to see clearly, for Kant, we must see less. And is it not the God of Israel who proves too concrete and too particular for the universal legislation of reason? Who, having brought the wood for the sacrifice, is then bound and placed upon it? Such is the argument of Kant's final "critique," *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, or, more to our point here, religion *bound* by bare reason. Yet, it is precisely here that cords begin to fray: both those that bind reason and those by which reason binds. The shift from pure to bare reason in *Die Religion* shows that the attempted circumscription of pure reason in the first *Critique* (and, in a different way, that of practical reason in the second *Critique*) was insufficient. Reason, of itself, requires other and legitimate forms of inquiry.

In *Die Religion* Kant again seeks to draw a boundary between reason and unreason. Yet, it requires him to engage in a hermeneutic detour that, even while it colonizes theology with philosophy, nonetheless "comes to suggest that autonomy is in some measure a result that involves at least preliminary concessions to another discourse [i.e., theology] as having alethic properties that philosophy [pure and practical] does not have."[9] Reason can only redraw the boundary by reading and interpreting the text of scripture and so moves from a critical employment to a hermeneutical one. This is paradoxical insofar as it requires reason to acknowledge the good of the other discourse even while it takes the very concession as a license to ignore and discard much of it.[10] Here, reason "endures the *pathos* of its own limitations; reason 'suffers' the other discourse in its openness and hospitality for it; and reason enacts an interpretation of religious discourse in which it not only performs a humane service, *but makes itself more than it would have been had it remained within its own borders*."[11] Thus, the bounds of

[8] "But such a [rational and contemplative] life would be too high for man; for it is not in so far as he is man that he will live so, but in so far as something divine is present in him; and by so much as this is superior to our composite nature is its activity superior to that which is the exercise of the other kind of virtue. If reason is divine, then, in comparison with man, the life according to it is divine in comparison with human life" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross, Book X, §7.

[9] Cyril O'Regan, "Boundaries, Blind Spots, and Supplements", in *Christianity and Secular Reason*, ed. J. Bloechl (Notre Dame: UND Press, 2012), 89.

[10] Ibid., 97

[11] Ibid., 97-98 – emphasis mine. Concretely, O'Regan suggests it corrects the deficits of (1) the inadequate account of the freedom and responsibility of a self enacting a life in

reason are moved – but did not their explanatory power come from their "unalterable" status?

Kant shifts our discussion from the transcendent to the transcendental. We are told to desire not that which excels and exceeds us, but that which we already possess: the conditions of possibility already operative in our knowing performance. No doubt, this is a salutary exercise, and it is Kant's particular genius to have seen the necessity of it. But might we be permitted to descend, now, from Mount Moriah? To return to life itself, in the tent with Sarah and Eleazar? If we desire more, Kant concedes, reason can accommodate religion provided it submits to its immanent domain, itself an exercise of eminent domain.[12] But in this, philosophy is "counted twice": it is the adjacent discourse to religion vying for authority; yet, it is also the standard by which each is to be judged. Despite this perhaps unwarranted advancement of the shoreline, the stormy seas have not abated. Even here, Kant must supplement his supplement with a further critique of the *parerga* of religion – the experience of grace, miracles, mystery, and acts of charity – which are precisely those aspects that claim some sort of contact with transcendence. We have yet to escape the tidal pull and so are left with the question stated earlier, what is it that characterizes reason in its un-limited performance? Not confined to a terrestrial isle but asail amidst the dynamic multiplicity of life?

Considering both the *Critique* and *Religion*, we arrive at a model of immanence that has been expanded beyond the Cartesian *ego cogito* to include all possible experience that can give itself according to the categories of the understanding. In this model, the transcendent (not to be confused with the transcendental) is what lies beyond cognition and conceptualization, and therefore beyond our possible experience of it. It is not that it *cannot be* – Kant acknowledges the possibility of an intellectual intuition – but that it cannot be *for us*. Such the Kantian verdict; though, as we have seen, the borderlands have already begun to tremble.

II. Two Phenomenological Models

The Kantian opposition of immanent and transcendent has a long legacy, especially for those who seek to surpass it. Husserl and Heidegger both, while challenging Kant's solution on phenomenological grounds,

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a material and temporal world; (2) the continuity and particular character of such a self; (3) how such a self would undergo a "radical change" not determined by material and historical environment; (4) the inability to address the concept of moral exemplarity; and (5) thinking more substantially about the individual and the community and their mutual and interrelated improvement.

[12] Eminent domain is the right of public authority to take private property for public use.

accept the terms of the debate (with essential modifications). Just as Kant modified intuition to circumvent the Cartesian problem, Husserl modified it to circumvent Kant. Husserl's account of immanence[13] is famously articulated in his "principle of all principles."[14] The sphere of such originary affording intuition is consciousness: "Hence, we will keep our sights focused firmly on the sphere of consciousness and study what we find immanently in *it*."[15] Yet, for Husserl, unlike Kant, immanence and transcendence while in one sense *opposite* are not *opposed.* In Husserl, the primary sense of transcendence is "that which surpasses" in the sense of continually moving beyond. Perception is his signal and privileged example. This is key, because unlike Kant, for Husserl much of our experience is of transcendence, the perpetual transcendence the world before the limited engagement of our perceptual consciousness. In this sense, reason (consciousness) is *especially concerned with* transcendence. Phenomenology is, "step[ping] back to watch the forms of transcendence fly up like sparks from a fire." [16]

Yet for Husserl, even with an expanded notion of intuition and a model in which immanence and transcendence partially overlap, there is still a distinction between different forms of transcendence. In particular, to be distinguished from the transcendence of the world, is its "polar opposite," the transcendence of God. Such absolute transcendence is distinguished from both the absoluteness of consciousness and the transcendence of the world: "it would thus be 'absolute' in a sense totally different…"[17] Thus, while immanence has been expanded to accommodate certain forms of transcendence, there remains a transcendence that de-limits even this expanded immanence.

Additionally, in *Ideas* still we lack, as we did in Kant, any full account of why we do not by nature restrict ourselves to immanence, but desire beyond it in our knowing. This lack is less obvious and less problematic in Husserl, because while Kant starts with reason's *desire for (knowledge of) God*, Husserl stays closer to the Cartesian problematic and begins from *doubt of the world*. Yet, set against Husserl's rich account of our basic believing in the world (*Urdoxa*), it is not clear what should motivate us to doubt it in the first place.

[13] Husserl begins his "Introduction" to *Ideas I* by rejecting false accounts of immanence as "inner experience" in the Cartesian or Kantian sense. (Dahlstrom, 2014, p.3)

[14] Husserl, *Ideas I,* trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Hackett, 2014), §24, "That each intuition affording [something] in an originary way is a legitimate source of knowledge, that whatever presents itself to us in "Intuition" in an originary way (so to speak, in its actuality in person) is to be taken simply as what it affords itself as, but only within the limitations in which it affords itself there."

[15] Husserl, *Ideas I, §33*.

[16] Maurice Merleau-Ponty. "Preface" in *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 2002), xiii.

[17] *Ideas*, §58.

In Heidegger, Husserl's *overlapping* spheres of immanence and transcendence become *coincident* on account of a shared temporal foundation[18]: At the heart of immanence we find the world in its transcendence. In this, Heidegger, the historian of philosophy and medieval scholar, unites the *nova et vetera*. Being is both *transcendent – transgeneric* and *transcategorical* – and *transcendental* – the condition of possibility. What he adds to these accounts is an analysis of its temporal horizon as the ground – and here he differs from his *Vaterfreund* – of all being. Both Dasein and world[19] are equiprimordial in their transcendence.[20] Dasein's transcendence is *towards* and *within* the world and the world's transcendence allows Dasein to be itself, a being-in-the-world. Considered from the perspective of Heidegger's fundamental ontology reason is not that which *binds*, but rather that which *lets something be seen*:

> The function of the *logos* lies in merely letting something be seen, in letting entities be perceived [*im Vernehmenlassen*], *logos* can signify the reason. […] As something to which one addresses oneself, becomes visible in its relation to something in its 'relatedness', *logos* acquires the signification of relation and relationship.[21]

The root (*vernehmen*) of the compound verb Heidegger uses here carries the broad sense of "being examined," but also that of *being-heard* and *being-questioned*. This opens up an alternative model for thinking about how we might conceive of *trasncedens* because it returns the priority from that which can be *known* to that which can *appear*. The direct consequence of this is to reconceive immanence[22] as *ek-stasis*. We need not, indeed *cannot*, be content with the confines of our island because we always already stand outside it.

[18] "And if Dasein's Being is completely grounded in temporality, then temporality must make possible Being-in-the-world and therewith Dasein's transcendence" (H364). "The transcendence of the world has a temporal foundation" (H389). This is, at the risk of simplifying, the phenomenological conclusion of "Division Two" which concludes with the rhetorical question: "Does time manifest itself as the horizon of Being?" (H437).

[19] Being, as the basic theme of philosophy, is no class or genus of entities yet it pertains to every entity. Its 'universality' is to be sought higher up. Being and the structure of Being lie beyond every entity and every possible character which an entity may possess. Being is the *transcendens* pure and simple. And the transcendence of Dasein's Being is distinctive in that it implies the possibility and the necessity of the most radical individuation. Every disclosure of Being as the *transcendens* is transcendental knowledge. Phenomenological truth (the disclosedness of Being) is *veritas transcendentalis*" (BT, H38).

[20] This is not at odds with what Heidegger refers to as the "Christian" notion of transcendence, but it does show that it is in need of a deep ground of explanation: "But the [Christian] idea of 'transcendence' that man is something that reaches beyond himself-is rooted in Christian dogmatics, which can hardly be said to have made an ontological problem of man's Being. The idea of transcendence, according to which man is more than a mere something endowed with intelligence, has worked itself out with different variations" (BT, H49).

[21] Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 34.

[22] The term only appears once in *Being and Time* at H61.

III. The Question

All three figures we've considered frame transcendence and immanence in terms of a *topology*. Kant, most obviously, provides us with the landscape of an island surrounded by stormy seas and later, in search of a supplement to pure and practical reason, still conceives of it in terms of boundary-drawing in which reason gradually colonizes theology by expanding its territory from pure to practical to hermeneutical, redrawing its boundaries to mark off the reasonable from the unreasonable. For Husserl, the borderlands are shared, there is a transcendence appropriate to immanence, one that is grasped in immanence. And yet here too there remains a demarcation between perceptual and absolute transcendence. Finally, for Heidegger in whom the distinction is least rigid, there persists the language and conceptualization of founding and founded. Within a topological frame, the realms of immanence and transcendence may expand or contract; they may overlap, and even become coincident, but the language itself is not neutral. Following Heidegger, we might acknowledge that *logos* (reason) is *Rede* (discourse),[23] and so the manner in which we "speak" conditions that which we allow to appear. Topological language preserves – whatever the relation it proposes – the signification of two distinct spaces moving closer together or father apart and these boundaries are perhaps also bindings.

What might we see in addition or otherwise if we substitute an *interrogative* model for a *topological* one? Let us return to the implied but unspecified dynamism of Kant's original image. What if one were to consider transcendence not as a property of perceptual objects, nor as the possibility of something that exceeds human intuition, nor as a descriptive category of Dasein's concourse with the world, but rather simply as asking questions: as the interrogative posture in which we find ourselves always already in the natural attitude and its average everydayness?

Is it not our questions that lead us beyond the confines of our small island? Questions that lead us to desire to account for our experience beyond the basic and unquestioned presumption of its givenness? Questions that lead us into the world, but also that presuppose it in the ways that they press upon us? It is questions that burst the bounds of reason because their horizon of possibility is not bound by what can be known, but only by what might be asked about.[24]

It is suggestive that Husserl provides a "phenomenology of the question" in his final and posthumous work, *Experience and Judgment* where he is

[23] Heidegger, *op. cit*., 32ff.

[24] Kant himself recognizes a certain a priority to the question and that it is the source of our discontent with the island of truth: "We are not satisfied with the exposition merely of that which is true, but likewise demand that account be taken of that which we desire to know" (A237/B296).

attempting a *genetic* account of consciousness that can articulate not only its various moments and modes, but the sweep and direction of its movement from prepredicative passivity to reasoned, judicative judgment.[25] According to that analysis, questioning is "a peculiar active mode of behavior of the ego" that is "originally motivated by events in the passive sphere."[26] Despite the modest treatment it receives, questioning is the phenomenon by which Husserl can provide an account of the "striving" and "will to decision" of the ego with which the text is primarily concerned. Questions are the levers of transformation that propels consciousness, now understood as inquiring consciousness, from its passive *Urdoxa* to various forms of higher and founded activity. It is a "striving for decision."[27] Questioning further reveals the practical, we might even say ethical, dimension of conscious intentionality, insofar as it reveals "the essential striving of the ego for the unanimity of its acts of position-taking" and so results in "an original impulse to get out of this condition and into the normal condition of unity." This suggests a double transcendence to the question: that of consciousness towards truth, but also the movement from knowing to doing: "All reason is at the same time practical reason… [and] is always at the point of passing over to corresponding volitions, endeavors, activities, to testing the method of solution, etc."[28]

While Husserl's account points to a persistent question in phenomenology – that of motivation – and while it begins to answer this in a fruitful way, its analysis is hampered by an unwarranted assumption and an unwarranted bracketing. In the first place, Husserl assumes that all questioning is a modification of doubt (which is itself a modalizaiton of our unreflective certainty in the existence of the world). In the midst of our uncritical believing-in we are suddenly presented with "a unified field of problematic possibilities." Questioning responds to the tension produced by such an

[25] Anthony Steinbock in his preface to his own translation of two of Husserl's essays on this matter, suggests that *static* phenomenology is characterized by (1) a constitutive approach concerned with *how* something is given, i.e., with modes of givenness and (2) a concern for essential structures. *Genetic* phenomenology carries both the sense of genealogy and development. It is thus concerned with (1) "primordial constitution" (passive genesis), (2) the genesis between (or from) passive and active spheres of experiences and genesis within the purely active sphere of experience (i.e., rational acts). Such an account of the genesis of consciousness must also account for its development and therefore inquire as to a certain teleology in view of which certain motivations produce the transformation of an *Uroosa* into, ultimately, the judicative assertions that constitute natural science. It is ultimately questions that play a key role in the "striving" of consciousness towards such an end. See Steinbock, "Husserl's Static and Genetic Phenomenology: Introduction to Two Essays", *Continental Philosophy Review* 31: 127-134, 1998 (Netherlands: Kluwer, 1998), 129.

[26] Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 307.

[27] According to that analysis, this desire for decision drives us from "simple questions" to "questions involving justification" that demand "additional assurance, of justifying and corroborating the judgment of perception" (311).

[28] Ibid., 308, 309

event by an "active doubting."[29] Here it seems relevant to press Husserl on the assumption that all questioning is a form of doubt. Doubting seems to presuppose a set of contrary possibilities (even if one remains unthematic) and therefore to occur within a closed horizon. This certainly *can* be the case, but is it *always* so? Is there not also a questioning that is a mode of wonder? And if so, is not the horizon of such wonder not bound by a defined set of competing possibilities, but rather by (infinite) possibility as such?

Secondly, Husserl brackets the essential and three-way relatedness of questioning.[30] Yet, the dialogical structure of a question is essential to its phenomenological description. The relatedness of questioning is the very heart of the *Wunder* of rationality Husserl described in this *Grenzeproblem* (*Grenze* = boundary). It is in a sense miraculous (*wunderbar*) that our questioning is not in vain with respect to either that which occasioned it nor that towards which it tends, that "rational-teleological" way in which the world is present to us and we to ourselves. "Here we clearly have a sense in which the mind is a 'grace'. That is, the responsible use of the mind itself is dependent on an *a priori* of genesis, which rides on a fact for which we are not responsible. … It is wonderful but true that consciousness is not a capricious flow of facts that could indifferently be something else."[31] Questions in their possibility as well as their reasonable expectation of fulfillment are the original witnesses to this. It would seem a betrayal of phenomenological method to begin from possible answers and work backwards to permissible questions. In its original manifestation, questioning is given and characterized by a fundamental *unrestrictedness*, which is hidden from our seeing when reason is prematurely bound and unable to ask what it will.

Heidegger does not bracket the complex phenomenality of the question, but renders it in terms of its *Gefragtes*, *Befragtes*, and *Erfragtes* – that which is asked about, that which is interrogated, that which is discovered in the questioning. Nor is interrogation divorced from the interrogator: *to question*, *to be in question*, and *to be the being that questions* is the nature of Dasein.[32] *Inquirer* is the first name for Dasein: "The very asking of this question is an entity's mode of Being."[33] The great premise of *Being and Time* is that to be able to question presupposes a relation however unthematic and imprecise between the questioner and its intended term.

May we not then think of our questioning as a primary mode of transcendence? Is not to question – if we are to make an adequate response

[29] Ibid. 308.

[30] "Questioning is normally that which is addressed to another or oneself as if another [about something]." "We can leave that out of account." Ibid., 308-309.

[31] Jim Hart, "Husserlian Philosophical Theology", in *Essays in Phenomenological Theology*, 127.

[32] "Inquiry itself is the behavior of a questioner." (Heidegger, op. cit., 5).

[33] Ibid., 7.

to young Meno – always already to be in partial relation to an answer? When we question we are already in search of a "known unknown." Such intending is heuristic, anticipatory, prone to error, but never radically separated. The completely ignorant man asks no questions. To question, then, or perhaps more accurately, to be gripped by a question is adopt the posture of openness that allows for the manifestation of being. If this is true, we might suggest in merely heuristic fashion that being is that which is brought to manifestation and known through all correct answers to every possible question.

Lastly, to bring us back to Ricoeur and the essay with which we began, the right kinds of questions are crucial for the appropriation of reality because they put us at stake. For Ricoeur a properly philosophical hermeneutics does not ask merely exegetical questions. That is, what he calls "truth without belief, truth at a distance."[34] True questions and their answers require that we believe in them. Truth without belief asks nothing of us. In this sense – this ethical sense – questions not only hold open the possibility of transcending any given horizon, but more radically, invite us in the search for their answers and, in the appropriation of those answers, to surpass ourselves.

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[34] Ricoeur, *op. cit.*, 354

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