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1-бөлім
ФИЛОСОФИЯ

Раздел 1
ФИЛОСОФИЯ

Section 1
PHILOSOPHY

**THE CONCEPT OF ON-
TOTHEOLOGY IN KANT
AND HEIDEGGER AND
THE POSSIBILITY OF
RELIGION: CONTEM-
PORARY PROTESTANT
INTERPRETATION**

Kant and the origin of the notion of ontotheology

The expression “ontotheology” appears in twentieth century literature through the texts of Martin Heidegger, for whom the entire history of Western metaphysics, from Plato to Nietzsche, can be determined as metaphysical, which means ontotheological¹. However, it was Kant who first used the term “onto-theology” as a designation for the ontological proof of the existence of God based on mere concepts (a priori). Kant coined this term in *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781, 1787), his momentous analysis of the capacity and limits of reason and the implications of each for the claims of traditional metaphysics, which he defines as a “system of pure reason (science), the whole (true as well as apparent) philosophical cognition from pure reason in systematic interconnection [1, p.696]”. Kant considers metaphysics as the systematization of knowledge based on reason alone.

In the third division of the transcendental dialectic Kant divides theology in general, as “cognition of the original being,” or God, into theology based on pure reason (*theologia rationalis*) and theology based on revelation (*theologia revelata*) [Ibid., p. 583]. Revealed theology is the only possible empirical theology oriented towards revelatory appearance of God in the world. Rational theology divides itself into *transcendental theology* that attempts to conceive the being of God “merely through pure reason, by means of sheer transcendental concepts,” which clarify the condition of the possibility of knowledge in general; and *natural theology*, which “asserts that reason is in a position to determine the object more closely by analogy with nature” [Ibid., p. 584]. All forms of rational theology share a common characteristic – endeavors to gain the knowledge of God, not as a possible object of empirical experience as revealed theology does, but through the correctness of thinking as the condition of the possibility of experience itself.

Within the further subdivisions of transcendental theology, Kant identifies “cosmotheology,” which thinks that “the existence of an original being is to be derived from an experience in general (without more closely determining anything about the world to which this

¹ In *Identity and Difference* Heidegger claims that Western metaphysics since its beginning has remarkably been both ontology and theology.

experience belongs)”, and “ontotheology”, which attempts “to recognize that existence through mere concepts, without the aid of even the least experience” [Ibid. p. 584]. Therefore, ontotheology could be regarded as the purest form of the speculative-theological extension of reason. It aims to prove the existence of God as cause of the world through mere concepts of reason alone (as in the various ontological proofs in Anselm or Descartes), without referring to experience (scriptural or natural revelation). In his analysis of such “proofs” founded on traditional ontological argument for the existence of God Kant employs the concept of the *ens realissimum* or the *ens originarium*: “...the concept of an individual being, because of all possible opposed predicates, one, namely that which belongs absolutely to being, is encountered in its determination. Thus it is a transcendental ideal which is the ground of the thoroughgoing determination that is necessarily encountered in everything existing, and which constitutes the supreme and complete material condition of its possibility, to which all thinking of objects in general must, as regards the content of that thinking, be traced back” [Ibid. p. 556].

For Kant, such a most real and primordial being is the necessary condition for the possibility of all other beings. As he points out, every being must be determinable by the understanding through the totality of predicates. The understanding grasps the reality bringing those predicates together. In that way, the idea of a perfect reality, which is free from all limitations, as one to which all possible determinations may be attributed, serves as the key reference point of the understanding of all other beings, which are nothing further than limitations of the highest reality. The idea of God consequently provides us with a conception of “the material of all possibility,” of a source from which all the properties of any particular thing could hypothetically be derived. As Kant explains, “all manifoldness of things is only so many different ways of limiting the concept of the highest reality” [Ibid., p. 557]. Consequently, Kant argues, “...we are justified in assuming and presupposing an *ens originarium* which is at the same time an *ens realissimum* as a necessary transcendental hypothesis. For to cancel a being which contains the data for everything possible is to cancel all possibility. And therefore a most real original being is a necessary presupposition, on account of its relationship to the possibility of all things” [2, p. 68].

In *Lectures on Philosophical Theology* Kant refines metaphysical concepts of God, which are the foundation of everything else, and assigns them to

the respective rational theological disciplines. Thus, the concept of *ens originarium* represents God as “the only original being which is not derivative” and “contains all realities in itself” provides the basis for cosmotheology. It also necessitates the highest perfection of God as “*completely* isolated from everything, as existing for himself and from himself and as standing in community with no other being” [Ibid., p. 43]. The concept of God as “the being of all beings (*ens entium*)” belongs within the teleological scheme of physicotheological (or teleological) “design argument”. In this concept, Kant thinks of an all-sufficient God as the highest ground of all reality. The basis of ontotheology is formed by the concept of God as the highest being (*ens summum*) and a “being having every reality”. Therefore, ontotheology could be defined as the thought of “a being which excludes every deficiency,” and cosmotheology as thought of “being which contains all realities in itself” and physicotheology as thought of *summum bonum*, “the highest good, to which wisdom and morality belong” [Ibid., p. 23].

From the metaphysical concept of an *ens realissimum* and its attributes Kant derives originality and unconditional necessity of God’s being. The purpose of this argument is to demonstrate that there must exist some necessary highest reality whose non-existence is impossible. The urgency of this requirement arises from “our rational need to account for the world of appearances, understood as a series of alterations, or contingent beings” [3, p. 272]. In Kantian critical religion this aspect of God’s nature, according to Stephen Palmquist, fulfills an otherwise unsatisfiable need of reason [4, p. 105]. Human reason seeks “somewhere for a resting place in the regress from the conditioned, which is given, to the unconditioned” [1, p. 558]. The idea of God, as the most real being, provides this place of rest.

As Paul Guyer clarifies, the necessary being of the highest sufficiency as the cause of all possible effects, is an idea that enjoys an ambiguous position in Kant’s philosophy. It is simultaneously crucially necessary as a final ground of all things and the “insoluble problem for human reason” [2, p. 65]. Despite Kant’s efforts to prove the subjective necessity of the idea of the supremely real being, he acknowledges that such an idea lacks objective reality and stays as a mere thought entity. He admits that we are not entitled to “presuppose the existence of a being conforming to the ideal, but only the idea of such a being, in order to derive from an unconditioned totality of thoroughgoing determination the conditioned totality, i.e., that

of the limited” [1, p. 557]. This means that this philosophical idea of a supremely real being that possesses all realities without exception is not sufficient to postulate God’s existence outside of thought. Reason notices, “...the ideal and merely fictive character of such a presupposition much too easily to allow itself to be persuaded by this alone straightway to assume a mere creature of its own thinking to be an actual being were it not urged from another source to seek somewhere for a resting place in the regress from the conditioned, which is given, to the unconditioned, which in itself and as regards its mere concept is not indeed actually given, but which alone can complete series of conditions carried out to their grounds” [Ibid., p. 558].

According to Kant, proponents of the ontological argument confuse the ideal or logical existence with real existence. They begin their thinking from the concept of an *ens realissimum*, a supremely perfect being, which by definition contains all reality. For this reason, they conclude that *ens realissimum* must necessarily exist. However, Kant insists that we can claim *ens realissimum* (rational construct) as having only ideal, not real existence².

Therefore ontotheology only proves the existence of an idea of metaphysical concepts of God, “and as to the existence of a being of such preeminent excellence it leaves us in complete ignorance” [Ibid., p. 557]. Ontotheological thinking represents the paradigmatic instance of the theological illusion of theoretical knowledge and ultimately is a failure: we can have no theoretical knowledge of God, supremely real being containing all perfections, that exists necessarily. Ontological proof of God’s existence fails because we cannot reason from a pure concept of “God” to an actual object. In “objective reality,” the question of the existence of

the *ens realissimum* (the all-reality and being of all beings) remains open and insoluble merely on the basis of pure reason. Kant states: “...for objects of pure thinking there is no means whatever for cognizing their existence, because it would have to be cognized entirely a priori, but our consciousness of all existence ... belongs entirely and without exception to the unity of experience, and though an existence outside this field cannot be declared absolutely impossible, it is a presupposition that we cannot justify through anything” [Ibid., p. 568].

Because of such limitation of the scope of the knowledge of reality, ontotheology loses its basis in pure reason and in addition forfeits its claim to theoretical knowledge of the being of God. Since ontotheological thinking cannot extend itself beyond the field of experience, theoretical knowledge can neither prove nor refute the existence of God. Kant admits that if he thinks “of a being as the highest reality, the question still remains whether it exists or not” [Ibid., p. 568]. In his analysis of ontotheology in *Lectures on Philosophical Theology* Kant takes note that in his pre-critical metaphysical argumentation of the existence of God “of all possible proofs, the one which affords us the most satisfaction is the argument that if we cancel an original being, we cancel at the same time the substratum of the possibility of all things” nevertheless “even this proof is not apodictically certain. For it is unable to establish the objective necessity of an original being.” Consequently, because our speculative reason wants to have insight into why something is possible “this proof only establishes the subjective necessity of such a being... But the objective necessity of such a thing can by no means be demonstrated in this manner.” Kant concludes that even while this argument can be regarded as form of theological illusion of pure reason it cannot be refuted, “because it has its ground in the nature of human reason” [2, p. 66].

As Stephen Palmquist explains, Kant demonstratively shows that not just ontotheological but all “theoretical” attempts to achieve certain knowledge of God’s existence inevitably fail, because their aim transcends the capabilities of human reason. “Viewed from the theoretical standpoint, god is not an object of possible human knowledge, but an idea that inevitably arises as a by-product of the totalizing tendencies of human reason” [5, p. 3]. In other words, the concept of God is an indirect result of the process of obtaining empirical knowledge. We do not have “intuition” of God and there is no hope that we will obtain some theoretical knowledge of God’s existence.

² According to Kant, our tendency to form the idea of the unconditioned is natural and unavoidable. However, problem arise when reason is compelled to postulate the unconditioned object of such an idea. Such a move to a metaphysical unconditioned is beyond the capacities of human cognition. Leading commentators of Kant (H. E. Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, New Haven 2004); M. Grier, *Kant’s Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion*, Cambridge 2001)) prove that the initial source of those fallacious inferences is “transcendental illusion” and commitment to the doctrine of transcendental realism. As Sami Pihlström explains this doctrine fails to draw “the crucial transcendental distinction between things as they are in themselves (that is, things as they would be when abstracted, per impossibile, from the conditions required for representing them) and appearances, the form of which is constituted by the human cognitive faculty (Sami Pihlström, *Pragmatic Pluralism and the Problem of God*, New York 2013, p. 24).

However, alongside with critique of traditional theistic arguments Kant claims that there are various reasons that make the postulation of God as necessary being urgent. Perhaps the foremost interest in this respect is not speculative but practical: in Kant's judgment the idea of a necessary being, from which we might derive and account for the unity and purposive connectedness in the world of appearances, provides important "cornerstones of morality and religion" [2, p. 498]. This grounding of philosophical theology in practical reason provides a foundation for rehabilitation of the ontotheological concept of God. Kant concludes that from a moral and religious standpoint the "concept of a highest being is a very useful idea" [Ibid., p. 568]; it prevents us from adopting an "anthropomorphic" view of God, one drawn from empirical principles. Therefore, in the framework of Kant's rational theology God is posited as the *ens realissimum* who administers the "moral law" to all persons. Though we can have some knowledge of this necessarily being only as a hypothetical concept that cannot be absolutely proved to exist, it is essential to postulate the existence of such being in order to assure meaning to our moral commitment. Rational beings cannot seek the highest good if its possibility is not presupposed. Therefore, in *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant maintains, "[we have] not only the authority, but also the necessity linked as a need with duty, to presuppose the possibility of this highest good, which, since it has [its] place only under the condition of the existence of God, links the presupposition of God inseparably with duty; i.e., it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God" [6, p. 159].

As a postulate of practical reason, Kant's concept of God is supposed to provide an effective justification for our commitment to morality. However, Kant admits that this moral argument cannot stand as an objectively valid proof of the existence of God. As rational moral agents, we do not consider the possibility of God's existence as one metaphysical option among others, rather we discover "through an examination of practical reason itself that the existence of God is presupposed in the very activity of moral agency" [7, p. 36]. At the same time, as Sami Pihlström reminds us, we have to take into account that in his critique of traditional arguments of God's existence Kant remains a theistic metaphysician. He claims that the possibility of morality, "really presupposes a metaphysical commitment to the existence of God, even though this commitment can rationally and legitimately only be made from the perspective

or standpoint of practical (instead of theoretical) reason. It is important to notice that metaphysics and ethics are deeply entangled here" [8, p. 30]. Many contemporary interpreters of Kant's theological views agree that Kant intended his well-known criticism of the traditional theistic proves not as an assault on the justifiability of theology, but as a preparation for a more authentic and humble way of affirming God's existence on the basis of practical cognition. The traditional theoretical arguments could not provide an appropriate theological basis for religion. In his *Lectures on Ethics* Kant posits: "In religion, the knowledge of God may be founded only on faith... ratiocination in religious matters is dangerous. Were our religion to rest on speculative grounds, it would be but weakly assured if one wanted to demand proof of everything, for reason can go astray. So in order for religion to stand firm, all ratiocination must be done away with... Religion is based solely on faith, which needs no logical proofs, but already suffices to presuppose itself as a necessary hypothesis" [9, p. 100-101].

Oriented toward scientific knowledge of God's existence, traditional theistic arguments are dangerous because of their potential to encourage human beings to believe that they are capable to manipulate God in the same vein they manipulate objects in the natural world. In place of those traditional theoretical proves, Kant presented a new approach to arguing for God's existence, that is, his "moral" argument as postulate of practical reason.

This grounding of philosophical theology in practical implications allows Kant to make assertions about the being of God focusing rather on subjective convictions of moral agents rather than on scientific and objective cognition. In such a way, Kant's critique of theoretical reason in conjunction with a transition to the moral philosophy definitively undermines traditional metaphysical thinking. With regard to ontotheological thinking this means that despite the legitimacy and usefulness of postulating the existence of God for morality the metaphysical conception of God as supremely perfect being doesn't provide any knowledge about the reality of God with objective certainty. At large, the Modern ontotheological conception to divine reality, criticized by Kant, was an expected outcome of the rationalist spirit of the Enlightenment, which reduced the mystery of God to the level of a rational explanation intended to underpin the intelligibility of the world. The reality of God was conceived now as being alongside other beings. The God of biblical revelation has given way to the God of philosophers, to the eternal, immutable and impassable being.

Heidegger's post-ontotheological thinking and the possibility of religion

As was mentioned above for Kant God, when defined as *ens realissimum*, is the essential condition for the possibility of any knowledge of all reality. Heidegger imparts to the term "ontotheology" the fundamentally different sense.³ According to Heidegger, the capital error of all Western metaphysics lies in identification of Being with God as the highest being and as *causa prima* (first cause, which is also cause of itself). Therefore onto-theology is at work in any metaphysics where "the deity can come into philosophy only insofar as philosophy, of its own accord and by its own nature, requires and determines that and how the deity enters into it" [10, p. 56]. "As John Caputo explains onto-theologic is a "circulatory system" in which Being serves as the ground of entities and entities serve in turn as the ground of Being. In this respect the target of Heideggerian usage of the notion of ontotheology is much broader in scope than Kantian. Heidegger uses the word to refer to the entire Western metaphysical tradition from Plato to Nietzsche for which the question of Being is bound up with the question of the highest being which the West has traditionally designated as "God" (*theos*).

Heidegger sees coordination of the question of being and the question of God as the key characteristic of Western metaphysics. He strongly criticizes this connection of philosophy and theology. In his opinion, such metaphysical conception of the being and God is both ontologically and theologically inadequate, for it obscures the timeliness of being and the eternity of God and serves to obscure the most fundamental meaning of being. Heidegger establishes a goal to break the link between philosophy and theology in order to create a possibility for each pursuit to probe its subject free from the constraints of the other. In lectures given in 1993–94 John Macquarrie, one of the original translators of *Being and Time*, claimed that "despite his equivocal remarks about Christian theology and the belief of some critics that he was an atheist, it may be affirmed that no philosopher

had more influence than Heidegger on the theology of the twentieth century" [11, p. 6].

The central aspect of Heidegger's critique of ontotheology is Western metaphysics' exclusive concern with entities (*onta*), which entails the introduction of greatest of all entities (*theos*) and leads to the constant neglect of Being (*Sein*). In *Nietzsche*, which provides the general framework for this analysis, Heidegger explains that Western metaphysics constantly asks the "guiding question of metaphysics; What are beings?" (*Seiende*) whereas "the grounding question of philosophy: What is Being?" (*Sein*) is traditionally neglected [12, p. 138]. In consequence of this exclusive focus on beings (or entities), Western metaphysics developed as onto-theology.

The question could be posed as to what is Heidegger's critique of ontotheology aimed at. The difficulty in deciding the question is that, as S.J. Mcgrath explains, Heidegger's onto-theology critique has a thick and a thin version, and Heidegger is not always clear on the distinction between the two [13, p. 217]. The "thick version" of critique is focused on any ontological conception that employs the notion of God as an instrument of explanation of the beings. According to Mcgrath, its origins can be found in the "Luther-inspired theological silence" of early Heidegger. In the 1928 lecture course *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* he insists that philosophy has no resources for articulating a notion of God [14, p. 165]. This version of onto-theology critique is closely connected to Heidegger's appropriation of Lutheran *theologia crucis*. Philosophy in its God-forsakenness is not able to speak about God because its notions of transcendence, infinity and eternity are just projections of Dasein's experience of freedom and temporality.

In addition, Heidegger explains that traditional metaphysics does injustice toward philosophy closing off the question of Being prematurely. By positing some highest being as the answer to the problem of Being before any inquiry has taken place, metaphysics forgets the question of Being, and conceals it in the question of the highest being. Accordingly, Heidegger contends, For example, anyone for whom the Bible is divine revelation and truth already has the answer to the question "Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?" before it is even asked.... One who holds on to such faith as a basis can, perhaps, emulate and participate in the asking of our question in a certain way, but he cannot authentically question without giving himself up as a believer, with all the consequence of this step. He can act only "as if" [15, p. 7].

³ It's interesting that Heidegger seems never to have acknowledged Kantian origin of the term "ontotheology", probably because of new connotation this term received in his philosophy of being. As John Caputo points out, Heidegger settled on Kant's word because he thought the etymology of the word brought out a problem that stretched from Aristotle to Hegel and Nietzsche" (debate in Greek and medieval philosophy about an ambiguity in Aristotle's usage of first philosophy as referring to the science of the First and Highest Being and to the science of Being as such).

Given the fact that Christian metaphysics tends to occlude the openness of the question of Being, Heidegger makes his provocative claims that “Philosophy, in its radical, self-posing questionability, must be *a-theistic* as a matter of principle” [16, p.148]. It is important to take note that Heidegger’s goal is not to suggest some form of *metaphysical atheism* (in fact substantive atheism would be regarded by Heidegger as onto-theological from perspective). Rather his intention is to offer *methodological atheism* that helps philosophy to keep the question of Being open, to live in the openness of the question without pretending to have final answers to it.

Founded upon Marion’s postmodern reading of *via negativa* Laurence Hemming argues that Heidegger’s refusal of a theological voice and his reluctance to give more precise contours to the divine should not be regarded as the atheism that rejects the possibility of responsible, considered faith. Heidegger’s early theological silence is a way to avoid an objectifying and thus ontological notion of God and consequently clear the ground for genuinely thinking of God. According to Hemming, Heidegger’s refusal to come to the problem of God is “a way of bringing his interlocutor, me, to the problem of God. Heidegger’s atheism is a vibrant pedagogy, indicating the extent to which so much which claims to speak of God does not do so, and which forces me to confront the question of who the God is who might lie silent behind all that has been said” [See. 17, p. 45].

The thin onto-theology critique belongs to the later period of Heidegger’s philosophy. It’s key characteristic – a critique of the God of metaphysics, the *causa sui* regarded as foundational for resolving epistemological problems. Based on this concept human beings arrogate to itself a view from a divine standpoint. Though this principle is at work in all metaphysics, it fulfills itself in modern rationalism and German idealism. As McGrath claims, those modern philosophical systems elevated the role of human understanding “by inscribing within it an a priori grasp of the ground from which everything causally emerges” [13, p. 218]. The critique of this version of onto-theology comes to the fore in Heidegger’s *Contributions to Philosophy* (1936), *Letter on Humanism* (1946) and the 1957 lecture “The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics.” In these writings, Heidegger breaks his earlier theological silence and explains how God might enter into philosophy without philosophy lapsing into ontotheology. For instance, in *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger claims that philosophy does

not need God to explain beings, however it turns its attention to the divine in order to understand divine in its own terms. Considered according to metaphysics, god must be represented as the most-being, as the first ground and cause of beings, as the un-conditioned, in-finite, absolute. None of these determinations arises from the divine-character of god but rather from what is own most to a being as such, insofar as this is thought as what is constantly present, as what is objective and simply in itself and is thus, in re-presenting explaining, attributed as what is most clear to god as object [18, p. 258].

In his later texts, Heidegger considers the task of philosophy in clearing a space for the thinking of the divine. In the *Letter on Humanism* he makes a famous remark that human being is “the shepherd of being... called by being itself into the preservation of beings truth” [19, p. 260]. There could be no doubts that for Heidegger this being is not some divine reality of ground for other beings, however that does not mean that it holds an atheistic stance. It rather means that Heidegger sees the task of philosophy in illuminating being in itself and in experiencing it in its truth [13, p. 219]. At this point, it is necessary to pose the question if this ontological thinking has any religious import? The contention of this article is that thinking of being articulates temporality and finitude of the human situation and consequently creates preconditions for the appearance of the divine.

Heidegger’s critique of onto-theology is often taken to be a critique of theistic discourse as such, a critique that seeks to provide a philosophical case against belief in a personal Creator. But, according to American philosopher of religion Merold Westphal, Heidegger’s critique of onto-theology is not directed toward the God of the Bible, before whom people fall on their knees in awe, pray and sacrifice. It is not an abandonment of theistic discourse, but a critique of a metaphysical tradition that reduces God to a First Explainer fully intelligible to human understanding. This critique is not focused on theistic discourses as such, “but of those that have sold their soul to philosophy’s project of rendering the whole of reality intelligible to human understanding” [20, p. 4]. As Westphal insists, “their fault does not consist in affirming that there is a Highest Being who is the clue to the meaning of the whole of being. It consists in the chutzpa of permitting this God to enter the scene only in the service of their project, human mastery of the real” [Ibid., p. 4]. The critique of onto-theology is directed not at what is said about God but at how it is said, to what purpose. Its goal is to keep open the space for “religiously meaningful

God-talk by resisting the “metaphysical” tendency to imprison theological discourse within a primacy of theoretical reason [Ibid., p. 22-23]. Thus, the overcoming of onto-theology helps to avoid the temptation to have God conceptually at our disposal.

Westphal notes that, in a postmodern context, onto-theology is one of the seven deadly sins [Ibid., p. 13] since it treats God mostly as an explanatory postulate and involves theorizing about God in a way that assumes that reason is a reliable tool for attaining such perfect knowledge of God that can eventually remove divine mystery. From the onto-theologian point of view we can believe the truths about God, undistorted by our human settings. Therefore the “sin” of onto-theology is that it refuses to accept the limits of human knowledge and leads to the loss of mystery. Onto-theology is not merely the ontological assertion about a Highest Being who gives unity to the whole creation; “it is above all the epistemological claim that with reference to this Highest Being we can render the whole of being fully intelligible to human understanding” [21, p.103].

Westphal comes to the conclusion that Heidegger’s critique of onto-theology is not the objection to the idea of “the omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent God” but an invitation to theology to become itself by contrasting the God of the philosophers with the God of living faith. It reminds theologians that there is an infinite difference between God and humankind. God remains a mystery to human understanding and human cognitive control of God and of the world is not possible. “Too easily our God-talk can become the attempt to capture God in our conceptual nets rather than a way of offering ourselves to God in

adoration, in gratitude, and in obedient service” [22, p. 492]. Westphal also supports Heidegger’s idea, that the goal of theology “is never a valid system of theological propositions” but rather “concrete Christian existence itself.” Because the goal of theological statements is the praxis of the believer as a distinctive mode of existence, “theology in its essence is a practical science”, it is “innately homiletical” [20, p. 16]. Therefore the critique of onto-theology is not intended to abolish theology. It is to see that the task of theology is “to serve this life of faith, not the ideals of knowledge as defined by philosophical traditions” [Ibid., p. 27].

Westphal is sympathetic with Heidegger’s stress on the need for a “horizon of understanding” that acknowledges mystery and denies humans cognitive control of God and of the world. It should be noted that according to Westphal, Heidegger’s analysis is incomplete. He does not communicate that theology and the life of faith are metaphysical in their own non onto-theological way. They affirm a “world behind the scenes” and consequently a “God who remains hidden in the midst of self-revelation to whom in awe and wonder one might well pray or sacrifice or sing or even dance” [23, p. 264]. As Westphal argues, thinkers that take biblical faith seriously need to consider “how to be metaphysical without being metaphysical”. This metaphysics needs to be “a humble metaphysics, acknowledging that it rests on faith and not pretending to be the Voice of Pure Reason” [Ibid., p. 272]. Heidegger’s critique of onto-theology is helpful in understanding why we should move away from onto-theological metaphysics directing our thought to the “world behind the scenes”.

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