

METONTOLOGY AND HEIDEGGER'S CONCERN FOR THE ONTIC AFTER *BEING AND TIME*: CHALLENGING THE *A PRIORI*

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Abstract: The *Kehre* (turn) in Heidegger's thought has been greatly discussed and debated. The introduction of the notion of metontology (*Metontologie*) in 1927 has fruitfully informed this debate since it entails a concern for the ontic domain on the part of Heidegger that is not present in earlier works. The fact that this notion disappears right after being introduced, however, challenges its contribution to this debate. In this paper, I show that the disappearance of metontology does not imply the disappearance of Heidegger's concern for the ontic, but the opposite. I will begin by presenting Freeman's view of a tension between the ontic and the ontological in Heidegger's thought in the mid-to-late 20s that results in the introduction of metontology in 1927. Later on, I will show that McNeill's explanation of the disappearance of metontology as a consequence of Heidegger's mid-30s view that the *a priori* projection of being is a withdrawal of being (*Entzug des Seins*), allows saying that this disappearance does not entail Heidegger's sudden lack of concern for the ontic. By considering Heidegger's analysis of 'the mathematical' in *Die Frage nach dem Ding*, I will finally argue that metontology disappears from Heidegger's thought because its dependency upon ontology prevents it to account for his increasing concern for the ontic properly.

Keywords: Heidegger. Metontology. Ontic concern. Ontology. Withdrawal of being.

INTRODUCTION

Martin Heidegger's 1930's *Kehre* has been the focus of attention for many scholars who, by way of different interpretations, have suggested an understanding of this turn in Heidegger's thought. There have also been interpretations that deny such turning. I agree with those who think that

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Heidegger's *Kehre* allows us to say that there is a later Heidegger² and, consequently, an early Heidegger, identifying the thinking of the latter with that expressed in his, arguably, *magnum opus Being and Time* (1927) (Hereafter *BT*). This interpretation, however, does not entail that there are two different thinkers under the same name, but that the *Kehre* meant for Heidegger a redirection of his gaze from the centrality of *Dasein* expressed in *BT* towards 'the history of being' expressed consistently throughout his later works; a redirection that he thought necessary in order to carry out his thinking on being prefigured in *BT*. As George Pattison (2000, p. 12) suggests: "In each case [*BT* and the later works] the aim is reawakening of the encounter with being, even if this is seen from the point of view of the human subject in the one case and from the point of view of the history of being in the other." As it has been widely recognised, one of the important implications of this redirection of Heidegger's gaze is his distancing from his project of fundamental ontology (Hereafter *FO*), at least in the way this project was presented in *BT*.

In an Appendix to paragraph 10 of *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* (1928), (Hereafter *MFL*). Heidegger introduces the notion of metontology (*Metontologie*) to denote the ontic domain to which, according to him, *FO* has to return as its point of origin in order to account for 'beings as a whole.' Laureen Freeman (2010) persuasively argues that, in *MFL*, the relevance of the ontic domain seems to come to the fore in a way not seen before in Heidegger's early works. Thus, she reads the appearance of the notion of metontology in Heidegger's work in terms of an ontic concern on his part. Based on this reading, she suggests that Heidegger's (increasing) concern for the ontic after *BT* is at the heart of his turning away from *FO*.

In light of this reading, the following question arises: in what way does the notion of metontology contribute to Heidegger's turn away from *BT*? Accordingly, this question entails a more specific one: in what way does the notion of metontology contribute to Heidegger's understanding of ontology and *FO* after *BT*? The fact that the notion of metontology disappears from Heidegger's thought, however, does call into question the conclusions at which the analyses that have this notion as their basis arrive, and so the validity of these questions. Yet, if this disappearance does not imply that Heidegger's concern for the ontic fades away, it seems that Freeman's analysis can be sustained and that these questions do have a *raison d'être* after all.

² See for example Pattison (2000, p. 6).

In this paper, I will show that the disappearance of the notion of metontology does not imply the disappearance of Heidegger's concern for the ontic. I will argue that the opposite is the case, showing that the reason metontology disappears is that its indebtedness to ontology impedes it to account properly for Heidegger's increasing concern for the ontic. This will shed new light on Heidegger's turn away from *BT* and his understanding of ontology and *FO* after *BT*, thus providing new elements for future research into Heidegger's *Kehre*.

I will begin by presenting Freeman's view of a tension between the ontic and the ontological in Heidegger's thought in the mid-to-late 20s that results in the introduction of metontology in 1927. Based on William McNeil's (1992) explanation of the disappearance of the notion of metontology as a consequence of Heidegger's mid-30s view that the *a priori* projection of being is a withdrawal of being, I will then suggest that this disappearance does not entail that Heidegger's concern for the ontic decreases, but quite the opposite. Finally, by approaching the notion of the withdrawal of being from Heidegger's analysis of 'the mathematical' in *What is a Thing?* (Hereafter *WT*)³ I will offer a reason why being can no longer be thought of as the *a priori* that will allow me to argue that metontology disappears from Heidegger's thought because of its dependency on ontology. I will conclude with a few remarks on how Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's thinking in *WT* can provide elements to develop Heidegger's concern for the ontic.

1 METONTOLOGY AND HEIDEGGER'S CONCERN FOR THE ONTIC

MFL is a lecture course given in 1928 the main topic of which is Leibniz's thought. Heidegger focuses on the metaphysical problems underlying Leibniz's theory of logical judgment, pointing to the existential analytic of *Dasein* as the way in which these problems should be addressed. Heidegger makes this move by showing that Leibniz's definition of truth as *identitas* rests – without Leibniz's noticing it – on intentionality and transcendence, which in turn entails that it is ultimately based on a preliminary understanding of the being of beings.

³ The original German title for *WT* is *Die Frage nach dem Ding. Zu Kants Lehre von den transzendentalen Grundsätzen*. There are two English translations of this work, the first one from 1967 and the second from 2018. In this paper I will use the former since sections quoted in this paper are very well translated in it.

In an Appendix to paragraph 10 of *MFL* entitled ‘Describing the idea and function of fundamental ontology,’ Heidegger (1992, p.156-157/199)⁴ says:

Since being is there only insofar as beings are already there [*im Da*], fundamental ontology has in it the latent tendency toward a primordial, metaphysical transformation which becomes possible only when being is understood in its whole problematic. The intrinsic necessity for ontology to turn back to its point of origin can be clarified by reference to the primal phenomenon of human existence: the being ‘man’ understands being; understanding-of-being effects a distinction between being and beings; being is there only when Dasein understands being. In other words, the possibility that being is there in the understanding presupposes the factual existence of Dasein, and this in turn presupposes the factual extantness of nature. Right within the horizon of the problem of being, when posed radically, it appears that all this is visible and can become understood as being, only if a possible totality of being is already there. As a result, we need a special problematic which has for its [...] theme beings as a whole. This new investigation resides in the essence of ontology itself and is the result of its overturning [*Umschlag*], its μεταβολή. I designate this set of questions *metontology*. And here also, in the domain of metontological existentiell questioning, is the domain of the metaphysics of existence (here the question of an ethics may [...] be raised for the first time).

The last few decades have seen a growth in scholarly attention to Heidegger’s notion of metontology, particularly for the possibility it raises for setting up a relation between Heidegger’s thought and issues of embodiment and incarnality,⁷ on the one hand, and between Heidegger’s thought and ethics,⁸ on the other. The basis for these analyses is the undeniable fact that by introducing the notion of metontology Heidegger brings the ontic sphere to

⁴ Heidegger’s texts will be quoted by the English page number followed by the German.

⁵ The translator of *MFL* inserts the word “proper”, which does not appear in the original German.

⁶ The translator of *MFL* also inserts the word “properly” here, though it does not appear in the German.

⁷ See, for example, Schalow (2006) who argues that the locus of ‘incarnality’ in Heidegger’s thought is “the transition to ‘metontology’ as the ‘overturning’ (*Umschlag*) of fundamental ontology” introduced by Heidegger in *MFL*, and not the fundamental ontological framework of *BT*; also, Aho (2006) suggests that Dasein’s bodily nature can be undertaken as ‘metontology’ or ‘metaphysical ontics’, arguing that this position grants the necessary dismantling of traditional assumptions concerning the being of beings required for a ‘return to’ an interpretation of our bodily nature.

⁸ See, for example, Ortega (2005) who argues that reading *BT* as a project of ‘metontology’ allows us to find ways to construct an account of a Heideggerean Existential Ethics; also, Bernasconi (1987) opens a path in which Levinas and Heidegger can be placed together – or at least closer than expected – in the task of thinking the ethics of ethics.

the fore in a way that he had not done in earlier works. This is clear from the fact that this notion is introduced in an elaborated way for the first time in *MFL*⁹, and that Heidegger refers to it as a 'new investigation.'

Nevertheless, by affirming that the ontic sphere comes to the fore in *MFL* I do not mean that the ontic domain is ignored in *BT*. Heidegger is well aware in *BT* that inquiring into *FO* is something that must be carried out as an existentiell task of some particular being whose being is *Dasein*, and so the ontic will always be at the basis of *FO*. The fact that Heidegger introduces the notion of metontology in *MFL* and not in *BT* does, however, call into question in what respects this 'new investigation' or 'new' way of turning ontology back to its point of origin differs from how the ontic domain comes to the fore in *BT*.

In light of this issue, the following question immediately arises: in what way does the notion of metontology – as a way of going beyond *BT*'s conception of *FO* in a manner that is nevertheless consonant with that original starting point – contribute to addressing the very general question of the nature of Heidegger's turn away from *BT*? Accordingly, this question entails a more specific question: in what way does the notion of metontology contribute to addressing the question regarding Heidegger's understanding of ontology and *FO* after *BT*?

⁹ As far as I have been able to discover, besides Heidegger's account of metontology in *MFL*, there are two works in which he mentions this notion without offering an explicit indication of what he means by it. In 1926, in the context of analyzing Plato's cave allegory, he uses the notion metontology to point out to what happens when we move from the interrogation of beings (what they consist of and how they originated), to the disclosedness of what being itself signifies; to the question of being: "The ontological problem turns around! Metontological; $\varrho\epsilon\omicron\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\kappa\eta$; beings as a whole. The $\dot{\iota}\delta\epsilon\alpha\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\acute{o}\upsilon$: that which is utterly preferable to everything, the *most preeminent*. Being in general and the preferable. Something still *beyond* beings, belonging to the *transcendence* of Being, essentially determining the Idea of Being! The *most original possibility!* Originally *making possible* everything?" (HEIDEGGER, 2008, p. 87/106). In 1928, in the context of commenting Aristotle's Physics and in a paragraph entitled 'Being and Truth', Heidegger uses the expression metontology to point to nature: "Because *Dasein* [is] dependent factually metontologically [*faktisch metontologisch*] on beings, 'nature' (see Goethe, nature). 'In' the midst of nature, we are *strangers!* to her. Come to meet [*Entgegen-kommen*], not first by apprehension, but *on the basis of thrownness* in... This is [the] precondition so that beings get access to the world [*damit Seiendes weltengang wird*], this means, world must be given. Only insofar as world is given, this means, only insofar as *Dasein* exist, can beings – by which *Dasein* is supported and what *Dasein* *itself is and creates* – manifest themselves in their being *as beings!*" (HEIDEGGER, 2012, p. 21-22, my translation). As it can be seen, both mentions are in line with what Heidegger says about metontology in his Appendix to *MFL*: the redirection of the investigation to 'beings as a whole' goes hand in hand with the recognition of the factual extantness of nature.

Based on Heidegger's statement that the question about ethics may be raised for the first time in the metontological existentiell domain, Freeman (2010) investigates the relation between Heidegger's thought and ethics based on metontology. As expected, her proposal involves a way of understanding this very notion. Though this relationship would be a fascinating issue for future research, I will only focus on Freeman's view of metontology, since it is beyond the scope of this paper to address the relation between Heidegger's thought and ethics.

The above-mentioned passage of *MFL* attests for Freeman (2010, p. 551) that "[...] metontology is comprised of a new kind of questioning which responds to what was lacking in the merely preparatory nature of fundamental ontology. This questioning will be a part of the metaphysics of existence, whose subject matter is beings as a whole." She thinks that in this passage "[w]e can already see Heidegger gesturing towards his turn (*Kehre*) of the 1930s, when the human being ceases to take center stage in his questioning and analysis of being." (FREEMAN, 2010, p. 551). Similarly, she says, metontology does not privilege only *Dasein* to the extent that *FO* did, and for this reason, she thinks it can be seen as Heidegger's first (or proto-) turn (FREEMAN, 2010, p. 551). Moreover, Freeman suggests understanding metontology as a *development* of Heidegger's position in *BT* in light of his own uncertain (even tentative) remarks that conclude the text regarding the possibility that ontology requires an ontical foundation. (FREEMAN, 2010, p. 550) As she points out, "[m]etontology is fundamental ontology's self-overturning that at the same time builds upon and develops itself in returning to the concrete, factual condition out of which it emerged." (FREEMAN, 2010, p. 550). She understands the nature of this development in terms of an increasing concern for the ontic domain on the part of Heidegger (FREEMAN, 2010, p. 549).

The expression 'ontic domain' in relation to metontology has been interpreted in various ways. For Freeman (2010, p. 549, footnote 20), "it does not refer to the 'mere ontic' of Division I of *BT*, but rather, to an ontologically informed ontic understanding which presupposes the point to which fundamental ontology has brought us in *BT*." Hence, she thinks metontology is a neologism referring to the ontic sphere of human experiences and to the regional ontologies that were excluded from *BT*. (2010, p. 545) Thus, the ontic domain in reference to metontology encompasses "[...] beings, individual human beings, and the relations between them." (FREEMAN, 2010, p. 549). Freeman (2010, p. 549, footnote 20) is explicit, however, in suggesting that

her interpretation stands in opposition to many other interpretations, such as that of Crowell (2000) who thinks that metontology is a reversion to a 'merely ontic' foundation that amounts to an abandonment of *FO*, or that of Krell (1986) who thinks that it is a return to a domain of pre-ontological significance or that it is something like philosophical anthropology.¹⁰ For Freeman (2010, p. 549-550, footnote 20),

[...] none of these positions get metontology exactly right, insofar as they all miss the point of Heidegger's more nuanced conception of the ontic after the ontological project developed in *BT*: a position that is markedly different from average everydayness, philosophical anthropology, the formation of world-views, existentialism, or politics.

I think Freeman is right in understanding the ontic domain in relation to metontology in terms of a more nuanced conception of the ontic. Though she tackles this issue through her analysis and proposal about Heidegger's thought and ethics, I think more can be said about it. I will refer to this in the concluding remarks of this paper.

Freeman (2010, p. 547) suggests that there is a tension between the ontic and the ontological in Heidegger's thought, which is already present in the mid-to-late 1920s. She argues that this tension might have been one of Heidegger's motivations for trying to rework (only later to abandon) his project of *FO*. As she points out, one of the premises of *FO* is that the meaning (*Sinn*) of being (*Sein*) can only be understood once the structures that constitute human existence have been examined through an existential analysis of *Dasein*. In this context, she says, Heidegger (2011, p. 359/311) writes that "[...] the laying bare of *Dasein*'s primordial being must rather be *wrested* from *Dasein* by following the *opposite course* from that taken by the falling ontico-ontological tendency of interpretation." Freeman (1982, p. 295/419) points out that the next year Heidegger writes that the ontological ground "[...] implies nothing about...the ontical relations between beings, between nature and *Dasein*." Nevertheless, she says, "[...] at the same time that Heidegger seems to maintain that the ontological domain is the most fundamental domain, and necessary to understand human beings and their relationship to

¹⁰ Other authors to which Freeman point out in this respect are Pöggeler (1994), who thinks that it is likened to the Schelerian domain of metanthropology; Greisch (1987), who thinks that metontology runs the risk of a totalizing ontic thinking, and Kiesel (2005), who thinks that it provides us with a stronger way to combat the public "battle of worldviews" that arose in Germany from party politics. See Freeman (2010, p. 549-550, footnote 20).

the question of the meaning of being, there are some important places where this priority is disrupted.” (FREEMAN, 2010, p. 547). As evidence she points to the following passage of *BT* (HEIDEGGER, 2011, p. 364/316):

If, however, ‘there is’ Being only in so far as truth ‘is,’ and if the understanding of Being varies according to the kind of truth, then truth which is primordial and authentic must guarantee the understanding of the Being of Dasein and of Being in general. The ontological ‘truth’ of the existential analysis is developed on the ground of the primordial existentiell truth. However, the latter does not necessarily need the former.

Freeman (2010, p. 548) thinks that “[...] the priority of the ontological seems to be put into question in this passage since one does not need the existential truth in order to come to existentiell truths.” For example, she says, “[...] one’s own being can be disclosed to one in one’s concrete existing, regardless of whether one becomes a philosopher and develops a conceptual analysis of Dasein’s being in general.” (FREEMAN, 2010, p. 548). Indeed, she adds, “[...] ontic facts are conditioned by ontological structures, but truth (the display of phenomena) is not primordially theoretical, nor must it become theoretical.” (FREEMAN, 2010, p. 548). She suggests that this passage insinuates the direction that Heidegger’s takes a year later, in which the ontic domain is highlighted to a greater extent than it seems to be in *BT*. (2010, p. 548) For Freeman, this reading serves as a proper context for achieving a clear understanding of the following passage from *MFL* (Heidegger, 1992, p. 157/200), where Heidegger reconsiders the scope and direction of *FO*:

Fundamental ontology... is not a fixed discipline, which, once the baby is named, should not for good occupy the previously empty place reserved for it in some putative system of philosophy – a discipline which is now to be developed and completed so as to bring philosophy to a happy ending in a few decades...In fact, that ‘place’ is, in every philosophy, an occupied place, and it is in each case transformed.

Freeman (2010, p. 548) takes this passage to be a direct continuation of the last few pages of *BT*, where Heidegger puts into question his project as a whole. She suggests reading it as a segue from *BT* to *MFL*, emphasizing the developmental aspect of Heidegger’s analysis in the mid-to-late 1920s, thus providing further justification for Heidegger’s reconsideration of *FO*.

As Freeman (2010, p. 548-549) explains, Heidegger (2011, p. 487/436) concludes *BT* by stating that the way in which he has examined *Dasein's* existence “[...] remains only *one way* which we may take” and that the thesis of this text “[...] still remains ‘veiled’.” He then asks whether “[...] one can provide *ontological* grounds for ontology, or [whether] it also require[s] an *ontical* foundation?” (2011, p. 487/436). In keeping with this priority of the ontic, says Freeman, one year after the publication of *BT* Heidegger (1982, p. 19-20/26-27) goes on to claim that

[o]ntology cannot be established in a purely ontological manner. Its possibility is referred back to a being, that is, to something ontical – the *Dasein*. Ontology has an ontical foundation... Hence the *first task* for a clarification of the scientific character of ontology is the *demonstration of its ontic fundament* and the characterization of this founding.

For Freeman (2010, p. 549), “[...] the Appendix to *MFL* provides an answer to the question raised at the end of *BT* and illuminates the path that Heidegger’s thinking begins to take with respect to the importance of the ontic domain.” As she points out, it does so by developing and expanding upon the position that *FO* has an intrinsic necessity “[...] to turn back [*Umschlag*] to its point of origin,” (Heidegger, 1992, p. 156/199) namely, to its ontic foundation. (FREEMAN, 2010, p. 549)

In light of Freeman’s analysis, the answer to the question regarding Heidegger’s understanding of *FO* after *BT* is that Heidegger’s increasing concern for the ontic (at least between the mid-to-late 20s) undermines his project of *FO* as envisioned in *BT*. This, in turn, implies understanding Heidegger’s increasing concern for the ontic as key to his turn away from *BT*.

There is an undeniable fact, however, that can invalidate interpretations that have the notion of metontology at their basis, which is the fact that this notion disappears from Heidegger’s thought after he introduces it in *MFL*. But, does the disappearance of metontology from Heidegger’s thought override the concern for the ontic that this notion entails? Or is it the case that Heidegger’s concern for the ontic continues but no longer under the name of metontology? Given that Freeman reads Heidegger’s introduction of the notion of metontology in terms of his concern for the ontic, at least in her case it seems that the disappearance of the former but not of the latter would keep the soundness of her analysis untouched. I suggest, on the contrary, that to understand fully what the introduction of the notion of metontology means

for the development of Heidegger's thought is indispensable to acknowledging and accounting for the fact that this notion disappeared right after being introduced.

2 WILLIAM MCNEILL'S INTERPRETATION OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF METONTOLOGY FROM HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT: THE WITHDRAWAL OF BEING

McNeill (1992, p. 63) argues that metontology is an "existentiell" questioning that has 'beings as a whole' (*das Seiende im Ganzen*) as its theme. Given that Heidegger introduced this notion in the context of showing that ontology has an intrinsic need to return to its origin, that is, the ontic domain, McNeill (1992, p. 63) understands the *Umschlag* or μεταβολή of ontology as a 'recoil' of ontology upon itself: "In 1928, characterizing the idea of a fundamental ontology, Heidegger indicated that the latter must necessarily recoil upon itself and in so doing become transformed into what he designated 'metontology'."

Since metontology is an existentiell questioning, McNeill (1992, p. 63) suggests that here too

[...] it would first be possible to deal with a series of other questions concerning human existence – questions which, together with that of ethics, are in *Being and Time* said to require grounding in a fundamental ontology of Dasein: philosophical psychology, anthropology, 'politics', poetry, biography and historiography.

He says, however, that it is not until *IM* –an important course in the unfolding of the question of being¹¹ – "[...] that Heidegger explicitly confronts at least three of these issues listed in *Being and Time* under the rubric of existentiell interpretation (namely ethics, politics and poetry, *Dichtung*)." (MCNEILL, 1992, p. 63). Yet oddly enough, he adds, in *IM* there is no mention of the metontological questioning and, at the same time, *FO* (that would found the possibility of such regional disciplines as political science), is not clearly present in this work.

In light of this absence, McNeill (1992, p. 63) asks the following questions: (1) Is the fact that the possibility of such regional disciplines as

¹¹ As McNeill points out, in the preface to the seventh edition of *BT*, written in 1953 – the same year *IM* was first published – Heidegger directs the reader to *IM* "[...] for a clarification of this question." See McNeill (1992, p. 63, footnote 4).

ethics and politics in *BT* is said to require grounding in the *FO* of *Dasein* an indication of a change or revision of Heidegger's project between 1927 and 1928, the latter being the year when the possibility of the ethical and other such existentiell issues is directed not toward *FO* but to metontology? (2) Does the non-appearance of metontology, if not indeed *FO* in *IM* imply the abandonment of the unfolding of the question of being in terms of *FO* and metontology by 1935?

McNeill (1992, p. 64) advocates for the continuity of Heidegger's thought; therefore, he thinks that neither is the case, at least not in any straightforward sense. In the case of question (1), it is not difficult to answer it negatively, given that Heidegger (1992, p. 157/200) explicitly refers to the continuity between *FO* and metontology in *MFL*:

Metontology is possible only on the basis and in the perspective of the radical ontological problematic and conjointly with the latter. Precisely the radicalization of fundamental ontology brings about the above-mentioned turnaround [*Umschlag*] of ontology out of the latter itself. What we seemingly separate here, by means of "disciplines," and provide with titles is actually one – just as the ontological difference is one, or *the* primordial phenomenon of human existence!¹²

McNeill (1992, p. 64) focuses on the nature of this *Umschlag* or turnaround by examining question (2). In doing so, he concentrates on three different issues, the third of which dealing specifically with the disappearance of metontology. In what follows, I will concentrate on this third issue, which can be articulated thus: the experience of the recoil inherent in the unity of *FO* and the question of beings as a whole, as the need of radical metontology.

McNeill (1992, p. 74) begins his analysis summarizing Heidegger's description of metontology in *MFL* in the following points:

- i. Metontology constitutes a new kind of questioning that has beings as a whole as its theme.
- ii. Metontology should arise 'on the basis and in the perspective of' ontology.
- iii. The emergence of metontology should occur as the 'radicalization' of *FO*, its μεταβολή or *Umschlag*.

¹² McNeill does not follow the standard English translation of *MFL* but his own. I will indicate, however, the reference of the standard English translation that I use in this paper.

- iv. Metontology should constitute ‘the domain of the metaphysics of existence,’ a ‘metontological-existenciell’ questioning where (*inter alia*) ‘the question of ethics can first be raised.’

Beginning by addressing (iv), McNeill (1992, p. 74-75) points out that:

Existence [*Existenz*], according to *Being and Time*, means the *being* of Dasein; the preparatory fundamental-ontological analytic of Dasein is an *existential* one: it analyses Dasein with respect to its *being*. A metontological-existenciell questioning on the other hand would, as the realm of the metaphysics of existence, and in its unity with fundamental ontology, have to thematize Dasein as a being, and do so in the perspective of its being.

McNeill (1992, p. 75) suggests that, to some extent, *Dasein* is introduced in *BT* as a being, but *only* insofar as it is phenomenologically necessary to satisfy the preparatory status of the analytic. This is why, he says, Heidegger (1992, p. 136/171), when considering the existential analytic, affirms that “[...] the metaphysics of Dasein itself does not yet stand at the centre.” Yet, metontology as a metontological-existenciell inquiry is not to thematize *Dasein* as a being, but to have beings as a whole as its theme.

For McNeill (1992, p. 75), that “[...] this thematization of beings as a whole remains existenciell indicates that beings as a whole are unveiled, opened up as such *in and through* the existence of Dasein, *i.e.*, its disclosive openness towards being.” He suggests that this is why the fundamental-ontological analytic of *Dasein* in *BT* can assume its preparatory role with respect to the guiding question of the meaning of being in general, *i.e.*, of the being of beings as a whole and as such, which explains why metontology can arise out of, and in unity with, *FO*.

McNeill (1992, p. 75) highlights the notion of ‘thematization’ by suggesting that:

Thematization’ means ‘objectification’ (*Vergegenständlichung*).¹³ The thematization of beings that occurs both in the human sciences and in the natural sciences requires that not only the object – the being to be thematized as such – be uncovered and determined in advance, but equally

¹³ McNeill is here thinking on paragraph 69 of *BT*, specifically on letter (b) of this paragraph.

the place or *region* of that object with respect to beings *as a whole*. Now in the positive sciences this understanding of the thematic being as such with respect to their possible wholeness ensues, according to Heidegger, from a preontological, prescientific projection of the being of such objects, and not from a thematic, transparent understanding of being itself. An understanding of being is nonetheless latent and presupposed in all positing of beings.

In light of this analysis, McNeill (1992, p. 75) suggests that a *radicalized* thematization of beings as a whole on the basis and in the perspective of ontology requires a projective understanding of beings in the light of the being in general of beings as a whole and as such, in short, in the light of the meaning of being in general. With this in view, he focuses on the transition (or μεταβολή) of the analysis of the temporality of being (where the meaning of being, in general, is first given) into metontology. As McNeill (1992, p. 76) affirms:

This transition is not only characterized as the recoil or *Rückschlag* latent in fundamental ontology, as in *Being and Time, Introduction to Metaphysics*, and indeed in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. It is also, particularly in regard, it seems, to the temporality of being, described as an *Umschlag*: a turnaround or flip over, one could perhaps say.

McNeill (1992, p. 76) highlights the fact that in *BT*, the term *Umschlag* is used in paragraph 69 to denote the shift that happens when we move from circumspective concern to the theoretical comportment involved in thematization. At the same time, he suggests that Heidegger once again addresses the modification of the understanding of being that this shift entails in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1928), this time under the rubric of a temporal analysis of being. Then, he suggests that this *Umschlag* is thought, though in a different way, in Heidegger's *Antigone* interpretation in *IM*, which Heidegger (2000, p. 186/183) thinks is decisive (*entscheidend*) for a renewed meditation of the essence of human beings.

Heidegger's *Antigone* interpretation in *IM* confronts the reader with issues that go beyond the aim of this paper. Thus, I will refer to it only as the context in which the notion of the 'withdrawal of being' – crucial for McNeill's explanation of the disappearance of metontology – is presented.

In the *Antigone* interpretation, says McNeill (1992, p. 76):

[...] the human being as παντοπόρος, as experiencing the possible openness of beings as a whole and as such comes to encounter the ultimate ἄπορος of the nothing, of death. In this mutual counter-turning of παντοπόρος ἄπορος he is dis-placed, thrust into the “there,” the DA, the πόλις as the site [*Stätte*] or place of history. Yet in such radical dis-placement into his Da-sein, in his becoming ὑπίπολις, he first experiences the withdrawal or ἀπολις of his being. Exposed to the mutual counter-turning of ὑπίπολις ἀπολις, the essence of such openness or πόρος as transition, *Übergang* – another word earlier used to translate μεταβολή – shows itself as the happening [*Geschehen*] of history, the happening of the *Da* itself.¹⁴

In this perspective, McNeill suggests that the decisive insight of 1935 is Heidegger’s (2000, p. 174/171-172) view that it is from the perspective of this need – the need impelled by being itself – that the essence of human being opens itself to us for the first time. According to McNeill (1992, p. 77):

Thus impelled [*ernötigt*] by being itself, the necessity [*Notwendigkeit*] of man’s turning towards this need [*Not*] is therefore not simply initiated by man, but arises as a claim of being itself. The ‘movement’ or happening [*Geschehen*] of withdrawal now manifests itself as the history [*Geschichte*] of being itself, a “movement” that essentially exceeds human existence and from which the latter first receives its determination. Yet such excess does not imply absolute difference. Because this need or withdrawal of being itself prevails *as* being’s happening or appearing in beings, the encountering of such withdrawal in the disclosedness of Da-sein would then be nothing other than a *turning around* towards the openness of the happening of *beings* in their possible wholeness.

Having suggested that this turning in the twofold counter-turning of παντοπόρος ἄπορος and ὑπίπολις ἀπολις corresponds to that associated with metontology in 1928, McNeill goes on to show that the reason metontology is not realized as such in *IM* can be found precisely in Heidegger’s *Antigone* interpretation. In McNeill’s (1992, p. 77) words, this reason

¹⁴ Apart from μεταβολή the meaning of which is given in this quote, the two Greek words at play are πόρος and πόλις. Heidegger defines the former as ‘a going through..., a going over to..., a route.’ With respect to the latter, he points out that the usual translations as ‘state (*Staat*) and city-state (*Stadtstaat*)’ does not capture the entire sense of this word. Rather, it is ‘the name for the site (*Stätte*), the Here, within which and as which Being-here is historically. The πόλις is the site of history, the Here, *in* which, *out* if which and *for* which history happens.’ (2000, p. 162).

[...] lies in the problem of the sought-after thematization. For the modification or *Umschlag* of *Seinsverständnis*, the withdrawal in the meaning or *Temporalität* of being itself as presence proves so radical, so abyssal, that the horizon of the possible thematizing projection of beings as a whole as such is far from assured.

For McNeill (1992, p. 78), this withdrawal entails a double displacement: on the one hand, insofar as this withdrawal is an event of being itself, the essence of human beings is the displaced place where being itself appears. On the other, insofar as this withdrawal occurs precisely as the appearing of being in beings, being can no longer be thought of as the 'earlier', the *a priori* ground of beings. With respect to the former, McNeill explicitly states that it does not mean that the human being could be excluded from this rethinking of withdrawal as an event of being itself. In the case of the latter, he points out that it involves "[...] a displacement of the ontological difference: being can no longer be conceived in its difference from beings. Not that being itself would thereby be reducible to beings, or that the ontic would become dissolved in the ontological. This second displacement goes hand in hand with the first." (MCNEILL, 1992, p. 78).

Although McNeill explicitly affirms at the outset of his analysis that he advocates for the continuity of Heidegger's thought, he concludes that the basic notion of a prior understanding of being is not continuous between *BT* and *IM*. This conclusion necessarily raises the question of how this affects Heidegger's view of ontology and *FO* as conceived in *BT*.

McNeill suggests that metontology disappears from Heidegger's thought because in *IM* Heidegger realizes that in the appearing of being in beings, being withdraws. This means, for McNeill, that being can no longer be thought of as the earlier, the *a priori* ground of beings, and that, therefore, the thematization that metontology entails lacks the projective understanding of being that is necessary for it. It is not difficult to see that this reason for the disappearance of metontology from Heidegger's thought also explains (since it implies) the disappearance of the notion of *FO*. Put in reverse: if ontology entails the thematization of being, the destabilization of thematization undermines ontology itself (and with it, *FO* and metontology). This would explain why Heidegger does not mention *FO* in *IM* and, in general, abandons the notion of *FO* in his later works. I think that McNeill's explanation of the disappearance of metontology in the terms just explained imply that

Heidegger's introduction of the notion of metontology is a failed attempt to break clear of the *FO* model.

Although one would expect that the disappearance of *FO* in Heidegger's thought would entail the disappearance of the centrality of *Dasein*, McNeill's analysis shows that this is not the case. *Dasein* continues to be the 'place' of being. What changes is the way in which *Dasein* is understood: as the 'displaced place' *Dasein* is *the* place and in this way the centrality that *Dasein* had in *FO* is untouched, but insofar as it is a *displaced* place, this centrality changes its character: it carries a non-centrality. Certainly, Heidegger's understanding of *Dasein* in and after *BT* is an interesting topic within Heidegger's thought, but it is beyond the scope of the analysis intended in this paper. What is central in my analysis is what happens in the case of Heidegger's concern for the ontic: does the disappearance of metontology from Heidegger's thought entail the disappearance of Heidegger's concern for the ontic? In other words, does the withdrawal of being entail the disappearance of Heidegger's concern for the ontic?

There is much evidence to offer to support a negative answer to this question. Besides the fact that Heidegger's *Antigone* interpretation shows that the notion of 'beings as a whole' is fundamental for the 'new' way of thinking the human being in *IM* and that in this work Heidegger explicitly confronts three 'existentiell' issues, the question with which *IM* begins, *i.e.*, why are there beings at all rather than nothing?, has 'beings as a whole' as its theme, which is also attributed to metontology in the year 1928 and that enables reading metontology in terms of a concern for the ontic.

Hence, the disappearance of the notion of metontology from Heidegger's thought does not imply the disappearance of Heidegger's concern for the ontic domain; at least not until the year *IM* was written. This conclusion allows me to suggest that Freeman's view that Heidegger's (increasing) concern for the ontic is at the heart of his turn away from *BT* is not invalidated by the disappearance of the notion of metontology. In fact, I think the opposite is the case.

If the reason for the disappearance of the notion of metontology from Heidegger's thought is that thematization is no longer possible, this argues in favour of understanding this disappearance as due to the impossibility of metontology to account, in a proper way, for Heidegger's increasing concern for the ontic. Therefore, the withdrawal of being not only does not make the

concern for the ontic to disappear but rather suggests its increase. This means that, on the one hand, there is an essential relation between these two notions and, on the other, Freeman's view should find further support in the notion of a withdrawal of being. I will return to this point in the next section.

Insofar as the notion of the withdrawal of being is what enables understanding metontology as a failed attempt to break with the *FO* model, it is necessary to delve into it to disclose Heidegger's understanding of ontology and *FO* after *BT*. Specifically, it seems crucial to get a clearer idea of the reason why the withdrawal of being precludes its apriority.

3 THE WITHDRAWAL OF BEING AND THE PROBLEMATIC CHARACTER OF THE *A PRIORI*

There is a general agreement that the notion of a withdrawal of being (*Entzug des Seins*) first appears explicitly in the *Beiträge* (1936-1938).¹⁵ This notion has been widely associated with the later Heidegger and it is usually understood as an equivalent to the abandonment of being (*Seinsverlassenheit*), which is commonly considered to be the reason for the oblivion of being (*Seinsvergessenheit*) (Inwood, 1999, p. 72).¹⁶ The 'withdrawal of being' is one of the most difficult notions to grasp within Heidegger's thought. Its most enigmatic feature being that Heidegger describes it as a 'need' of being. (Vallega-Neu, 2003, p. 39)

As Daniela Vallega-Neu (2003, p. 57) explains, in *B*, the abandonment of being (withdrawal of being) carries a double sense:

[...] in a narrow sense, it indicates a clearly privative mode in which beings are abandoned by being; beings are deprived of their very essence (being) in what Heidegger conceives as the present era of machination. In a wider sense, the abandonment of being also indicates positively being's occurrence; being is experienced to sway essentially as withdrawal, yet a withdrawal through which beings may become manifest as such...The withdrawal of being¹⁷ allows the appearing of things.

¹⁵ Hereafter *B*. McNeill was certainly aware that the withdrawal of being is a notion in Heidegger's later thought. It is also highly possible that he was aware that this notion first appeared explicitly in *B*, right after *IM* was written, and that he was acquainted with this account.

¹⁶ In line with the difference between the early and later Heidegger mentioned in the Introduction to this paper, Inwood (1999, p. 71-72) suggests that in *BT* the 'oblivion of Being' is something that depends on the human being, whereas in the later Heidegger, it is engendered by being itself.

¹⁷ As Vallega-Neu (2003, p. 7, footnote 1) explains, Heidegger uses in *B* the word 'Seyn' (be-ing) instead of *Sein* (being) since he thinks that, in this way, being is thought as an 'occurrence' rather than as a highest being (metaphysically). I will follow McNeill in using the expression 'withdrawal of being

Though McNeill does not make any explicit reference to these two senses, his analysis shows that he has the wider sense in mind. In the case of the narrow sense, Heidegger's use of the expression 'the era of machination' shows that it points to an event that takes place in modernity, its crucial point consisting in the fact that 'beings are deprived of their very essence.' As Vallega-Neu (2003, p. 38) suggests, machination denotes a mode of being in which being (things) are reduced to mere exchangeable products of a way of thought based on calculation. Thus, she adds, the dominance of representation over the being of beings becomes decisive (VALLEGA-NEU, 2003, p. 60).

Trish Glazebrook (2000) has argued that McNeill's account of the withdrawal of being explains why Heidegger refers in *WT* to the metaphysical grounding of sciences in terms of 'the mathematical.' When the *a priori* projection of being becomes problematic for Heidegger because it is a withdrawal of being, Glazebrook (2000, p. 17) thinks that

[t]he projection of being at work in the regional ontology of science becomes likewise awkward. If phenomenological inquiry [the method of scientific philosophy] with being as its object is no longer possible since the *a priori* nature of such an understanding of being has been undermined, then the question of what metaphysical assumptions underwrite science becomes not only sensible but also demanded: if being's withdrawal precludes its apriority, then on what basis can the sciences be taken to have a metaphysical grounding? It is precisely this question that Heidegger asks in *Die Frage nach dem Ding*, and which he answers with the notion of the mathematical.

Glazebrook is suggesting an essential relation between the mathematical and the withdrawal of being. Thus, it seems reasonable to delve deeper into the former to shed some new light on the latter.

As I have suggested elsewhere (CRICHTON, 2019), based on his interpretation of the Greek expression τὰ μαθηματά, Heidegger distinguishes between three senses of the mathematical in *WT*: (a) that 'about' things that we already know and that, therefore, we do not first get it out of things, but, in a certain way, we bring it already with us; (b) the process of learning what a thing is, and (c) our fundamental way of relating to things. As I have pointed out, there is a general agreement to think of (a) as the basic sense of the mathematical. In Theodore Kisiel's words, (a) corresponds to 'any *a priori*

(Sein)' since it goes beyond the scope of this paper to account for Heidegger's view of the difference between Seyn and Sein.

knowledge whatsoever' (1973, p. 109). As I have argued, (a) refers to our pre understanding of being (the *a priori*). This being so, (a) is the condition of possibility of (b) and (c), and, thus, (a) and the corresponding occurrence of (b), places us in the realm of the concepts or representations of things.

I have also argued (Crichton, 2019) that Heidegger's analysis of the mathematical in *WT* allows him to draw up a distinction between intuitive representations and representations against the evidence of ordinary experience, associating the former to Aristotle's representations of things and the latter to the way in which modern science represents things and so to modern representations. In *WT*, for Heidegger, modern representations are the result of the will (*Wille*) of the mathematical to a self-grounding of knowledge that involves the rejection of the pre-given (*vorgegebene*).¹⁸ In this context, the expression 'pre-given' refers to that which is given in 'ordinary experience' (not to a pre-given, *a priori*, understanding of being), which in *WT* is also referred to as 'immediate actuality' or 'the natural context.'¹⁹

Though the idea that the mathematical has a will looks extremely odd at first, it does not if we think of the mathematical in terms of (c): the fundamental position *we* take towards things. As I have argued (CRICHTON, 2019), since the mathematical, by its original Greek –ontological – definition in terms of (a), involves a knowledge that is not taken out of things (ordinary experience/immediate actuality/the natural context), and that it has a will to a self-grounding of knowledge that involves the rejection of that which is given in ordinary experience, any *a priori* understanding of being (ontological knowledge) can and should turn into a determination of a thing by pure reason alone, determination that goes against the evidence of ordinary experience (modern representations). This understanding of Heidegger's conception of the mathematical has allowed me to suggest that modern representations can be understood as a fulfilment of the mathematical.

Heidegger's view toward modern representations is not sympathetic. As I have already suggested (CRICHTON, 2019), this approach can be

¹⁸ Heidegger's treatment of the will of the mathematical is carried out in sections 4.f.1 and 4.f.2 of *WT* p. 96-106.

¹⁹ As I have suggested elsewhere (CRICHTON, 2020), these expressions are connected to the expressions 'the usual everyday given', or 'that sphere in which we know ourselves immediately at home', with which Heidegger refers in *WT* to the realm of things that Kant neglects. As I have argued, even though Heidegger is clear in saying that Kant does not attend to that which encounters us prior to an objectification into an object of scientific experience, his focus on intuition betrays the possibility of doing it. I will come back to this in the concluding remarks of this paper.

read in *WT* as a result of the fact that the projection of the relevant domain that modern representations involve is a projection that in some way is not in accordance with that same domain. Or, in other words, because this type of representations breaks the relation with that which is given in ordinary experience. This view is in line with what Heidegger presents in other works, such as *The Age of the World Picture* (1938). The novelty of the analysis of modern representations in *WT* is, thus, the fact that the critical feature of this type of representations is a necessary consequence of thinking being as the *a priori*.

Based on this idea, I have argued (CRICHTON, 2019) that Heidegger's analysis of the mathematical in *WT* shows that in the mid 30's he had realized that thinking being as the *a priori* carries a danger, which consists in the fact that being can break its relationship with that which is given in ordinary experience and become determined by pure reason alone. This danger, thus, becomes the reason Heidegger uses the implicitly derogatory expression 'the mathematical' to refer to ontological issues in *WT*. This preliminary conclusion shows that the basic notion of a prior understanding of entities not derived from our encounter with them is not continuous between the late 20s and the mid-30s, which is, ultimately, the same conclusion at which McNeill's reading of the withdrawal of being arrive.

I want to suggest, then, that the change in terminology from the ontological to the mathematical in relation to Heidegger's view of representations against experience (modern representations), can shed new light upon the reason why the withdrawal of being precludes its apriority.

Given that in the appearing of being in beings, being withdraws (in the wider sense of the withdrawal of being), when being is thought as the *a priori* it *may* turn into (and according to the notion of the will of the mathematical it *should* turn into) a determination of being out of pure reason alone and, thereby, into an imposition upon the meaning of being that bears no relation with that which is given in ordinary experience (beings), *i.e.*, as representations against experience. I suggest that insofar as this type of representations corresponds to modern representations and that Heidegger has a critical stance towards this notion, the determination of being out of pure reason alone explains the narrow sense of the withdrawal of being. What I mean is that in modernity, by imposing a meaning on being that bears no relation to that which is given in ordinary experience (beings), representations against experience deprive

beings of their very essence (being), which, as Vallega-Neu has explained, is the crucial feature of modernity for Heidegger.

By the end of the previous section of this paper I suggested that the notion of a withdrawal of being and Heidegger's concern for the ontic are two essentially related notions, from which it seems plausible to expect that expanding on the understanding of one should result on expanding on the understanding of the other. How does my understanding of the withdrawal of being shed light upon the notion of Heidegger's concern for the ontic?

As I stated earlier, the expression 'ontic domain' in relation to metontology has been interpreted in various ways. Further, I have also suggested that the disappearance of metontology is due to the fact that it cannot properly account for Heidegger's increasing concern for the ontic. This situation releases the understanding of the ontic domain involved in Heidegger's concern for the ontic from its bond with the notion of metontology, leaving it free to be interpreted in a new way.

In *WT*, Heidegger is concerned with the fact that, insofar as it has become a universal way of thinking, the way modern science deals with 'reality' is what most holds us captive (*gefangen*) and makes us unfree (*unfrei*) in the experience and determination of things (HEIDEGGER, 1967, p. 51/49). He is thus interested in showing that our everyday experience of things contains truth, and an even superior truth than the one involved in the scientific way of disclosing reality, calling us to do the required philosophical work to lay the foundations of this truth (HEIDEGGER, 1967, p. 12/12).

In the Introduction to *WT* (1967, p. 6/6) Heidegger defines three different meanings of the word 'thing' delimiting his question to 'the narrower one', *i.e.*, present-at-hand beings (*Vorhandenes*). This includes all inanimate and all animate things, such as a rock, a clock, a rose, or a lizard. He has two reasons for this stipulation (1967, p. 5-7/5-7): the narrower sense is closer to our current linguistic usage, and the question concerning the thing, even where it is understood in its 'wider' (plans, decisions, historical things, etc.) and 'widest' (God, numbers, etc.) meanings, aims mostly at this narrower field and begins from it. This means for Heidegger that any ontic understanding arises from the narrower sense, which becomes a significant statement for my purposes since it gives us a clear indication about the ontic domain in which we have to look for his ontic concern. Heidegger deepens on his description of this narrow meaning by referring to it as "[...] the things around us... what

is most immediate, most capable of being grasped by the hand” (1967, p. 7/6), “...the realm of the things immediately around us.” (1967, p. 20/19). Furthermore, he suggests that the way modern science deals with things leaves behind the things that are immediately around us (1967, p. 20/19). Therefore, the ontic domain with which Heidegger is concerned in *WT* is the given in ordinary experience.²⁰

How does, then, my suggested way of understanding the withdrawal of being shed new light upon the disappearance of metontology from Heidegger’s thought? One needs to recall that the notion of metontology disappears from Heidegger’s thought because the thematization of being is no longer assured. Hence, the notion of metontology disappears precisely because it cannot properly account for Heidegger’s ontic concern since it implies thematization, and thematization implies thinking being as the *a priori* ground of beings. This is a way of thinking being that does not *necessarily* go together with Heidegger’s ontic concern, since it carries with it the possibility of breaking with ordinary experience (immediate actuality / the natural context) and become determined by pure reason alone (modern representations). In other words, metontology is a notion that entails an ontic concern on the part of Heidegger, as Freeman holds. Insofar as it is a notion indebted to ontology, however, it cannot properly account for that same concern that is at the basis of its origination and, therefore, in light of the persistence of this concern in

²⁰ As I have explained elsewhere (CRICHTON, 2019, p. 25-26), Glazebrook (2000; 2001) has interpreted Heidegger’s appreciation for ‘the given in ordinary experience’ as a tendency towards realism. Nevertheless, she thinks that Heidegger was always a realist, but that his realism developed from a naïve realism to a robust realism, a development for which his insight into the problematic character of the *a priori* is crucial. As Glazebrook (2000, p. 45-46) affirms, “[...] as long as Heidegger raises the question of being as a question of human understanding – specifically, as the *a priori* projected in scientific understanding – he cannot extricate the question of being from the history of idealism, from Kant’s *a priori*. If being is taken as a concept, metaphysics remains embroiled in the web of transcendental subjectivity in which concepts are to be found. That *Being and Time* and *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* were never completed is not symptomatic of Heidegger’s failure, but of his eventual insight that being is not prior *in* human understanding, but rather prior *to* human understanding.” The idea that being is prior *to* human understanding is one that Glazebrook relates to different issues such as Heidegger’s later understanding of being as φύσις, issues that in her interpretation demonstrate Heidegger’s commitment to realism (GLAZEBROOK, 2001, p. 369-376). Glazebrook’s understanding of Heidegger’s realism, however, is not conventional. She (2001, p. 362) suggests that Heidegger is a realist who nonetheless holds antirealist assumptions: “His realist commitment to the transcendent actuality of nature goes hand in hand with the thesis that human understanding is projective, and its corollary that the idea of a reality independent of understanding is unintelligible.” In this way, Glazebrook (2001, p. 362) thinks that Heidegger’s realism exchanges the either/or of realism/antirealism for a both/and.

Heidegger's thought, this notion has to disappear. Therefore, metontology is in fact a failed attempt to break clear of the *FO* model.

So, my final question is thus: how does this conclusion about the disappearance of metontology from Heidegger's thought can help us determine Heidegger's understanding of ontology and *FO* after *BT*? The determining factor for Heidegger's abandonment of *FO* is the danger of the *a priori*, which also determines his less clear commitment to ontology as the 'science of being' in his later works. Still, this fact cannot mean that being ceases to be Heidegger's main concern in his works after *BT*; it does entail, however, that the means for thinking being have to be readdressed in ways that do not carry the danger of thinking being as the *a priori*, *i.e.*, in ways that move away from ontology.

Freeman's view that there is an increasing concern for the ontic in Heidegger's thought finds further support in the notion of a withdrawal of being, as I have suggested so far. Thus, her proposal of a relation between Heidegger's thought and ethics does not lose its ground by the fact that the notion of metontology disappears. Indeed, I think the opposite is the case. This being so, Freeman should turn to Heidegger's later texts (at least to those from the mid-30s) to look for elements that can help her to work out the relation between Heidegger's thought and ethics, and not exclusively to his early texts.

I would like to conclude this paper with a few remarks about the way in which Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's thought in *WT* can provide elements to develop Heidegger's concern for the ontic. I have suggested elsewhere (CRICHTON, 2020) that Heidegger's appropriation of Kant's synthetic *a priori* in *WT* is in line with Heidegger's search for a way of thinking the *a priori* so that it cannot detach itself from ordinary experience. I have argued that Heidegger's interpretation of the role that Kant gives to sensible intuition in the determination of a thing is crucial. In fact, Heidegger thinks in *WT* that Kant's focus on intuition betrays the possibility of accounting for that which is given in ordinary experience of things (and not only for the object of scientific experience). Hence, bearing in mind the analysis above, Heidegger's thought-provoking interpretation of Kant's 'System of All Principles of Pure Understanding' in *WT*, which Heidegger (1967, p. 121-124/124-126) thinks are the ground-providing center of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and understands as the "[...] principles of pure reason upon whose ground something like a thing in its thingness is determined"

(HEIDEGGER, 1967, p. 122/124), can be read as an elaboration of a more nuanced conception of the ontic, which is involved in Heidegger's ontic concern. Therefore, one possible way to develop the ontic concern entailed by the notion of metontology – but for which it cannot account –, is to delve deeper into Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's thought in *WT*. This implies a new perspective for approaching the relation between Heidegger's and Kant's thought, which despite being the focus of various Heidegger scholars, needs more attention (CROWELL; MALPAS, 2007, p. 1). At the same time, this conclusion provides further support to my suggestion that Heidegger's later texts are an indispensable resource to work out the relation between his thought and ethics.²¹

CRICHTON, C. Metontologia e a preocupação de Heidegger pelo ôntico depois de ser e tempo: o desafio do *a priori*. *Transformação*, Marília, v. 45, n. 3, p. 33-58, Jul./Set., 2022.

Resumo: A *Kehre* (viragem) no pensamento de Heidegger foi amplamente discutida e debatida. A introdução da noção de metontologia (*Metontologie*), em 1927, informou proveitosamente esse debate, uma vez que implica uma preocupação com o domínio ôntico, por parte de Heidegger, que não está presente em trabalhos anteriores. O fato de essa noção desaparecer logo após ser introduzida, porém, desafia sua contribuição para esse debate. Neste artigo, mostra-se que o desaparecimento da metontologia não significa o desaparecimento da preocupação de Heidegger com o ôntico, mas o contrário. Começa-se apresentando a visão de Freeman de uma tensão entre o ôntico e o ontológico, no pensamento de Heidegger, em meados da década de 1920, que resulta na introdução da metontologia, em 1927. Mais tarde, evidencia-se que a explicação de McNeill para o desaparecimento da metontologia, como consequência da visão de Heidegger, de meados dos anos 30, de que a projeção *a priori* do ser é uma retirada do ser (*Entzug des Seins*), permite dizer que esse desaparecimento não acarreta uma repentina falta de preocupação de Heidegger com o ôntico. Ao considerar a análise de Heidegger de “o matemático”, em *Die Frage nach dem Ding*, finalmente, argumenta-se que a metontologia desaparece do pensamento de Heidegger, porque sua dependência da ontologia a impede de explicar sua crescente preocupação com o ôntico, de maneira adequada.

Palavras-chave: Heidegger. Metontologia. Preocupação ôntica. Ontologia. Retirada do ser.

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²¹ I am grateful to the anonymous referees of this journal for their helpful comments and suggestions.

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