ABSTRACT

REASON IN THEOLOGY: A COMPARISON OF FERNANDO

CANALE AND WOLFHART PANNENBERG

by

Sven Fockner

Adviser: Denis Fortin

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Thesis

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: REASON IN THEOLOGY: A COMPARISON OF FERNANDO CANALE AND
WOLFHART PANNENBERG

Name of researcher: Sven Fockner

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Denis Fortin, Ph.D.

Date completed: October 2008

In this thesis the role of reason in theology is examined through the analysis of
two theologians. Both Fernando Canale and Wolfhart Pannenberg put forth new answers
to this age-old question. The issue is how independent of preconceived philosophical
ideas their theological construction really is.

In order to determine this, the study first analyzes Canale's major work on this
question. In a phenomenological examination of the structure of reason, Canale comes to
the conclusion that reason is dependent on what he calls a primordial presupposition. In a
survey of the history of philosophy he shows that so far only two interpretation of this
presupposition have been found: timelessness and temporality. In order to arrive at a

theological reason, he tries to draw an interpretation from Scripture. His result is that in the biblical writings, reason is built on a temporal interpretation of the primordial presupposition.

The thesis then focuses on Pannenberg's approach. In an attempt to make theology reasonable again, Pannenberg constructs a systematic theology that is coherent within itself and in harmony with the truth discovered in the other sciences. In the course of doing so, he also critically examines reason, though not as fundamentally as Canale. What he comes up with is a new conception of reason that seems to harmonize theology and philosophy, but when scrutinized reveals itself as merely a new wording for the traditional Platonic understanding of reason.

Once this basis of understanding is reached, this study compares the two theologians and their respective models of reason, pointing out similarities and differences. In the conclusion the results of the thesis are summarized. In terms of independence Canale clearly is more radical than Pannenberg. Both however have contributed to the task of establishing theology as an endeavor independent of philosophy. Still there remains a lot of work to be done in this area.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

REASON IN THEOLOGY: A COMPARISON OF FERNANDO

CANALE AND WOLFHART PANNENBERG

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Sven Fockner

2008

REASON IN THEOLOGY: A COMPARISON OF FERNANDO

CANALE AND WOLFHART PANNENBERG

A thesis
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts

by

Sven Fockner

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

_____
Denis Fortin, Ph.D., Adviser

_____
John T. Baldwin, Ph.D.

_____   _____
Miroslav M. Kiš, Ph.D.   Date approved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PROBLEM, METHODOLOGY, AND GOALS

Contrary to atheist propaganda it is impossible to do theology without the use of

reason. Even a theological construction that appears to be unreasonable was not

constructed without it. Because theology is more than a mere repetition of Bible verses, it

cannot avoid thinking and as soon as it starts to use forms of thought it has entered into

the realm of philosophy. Even the exegetes, as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel stressed

in the first half of the nineteenth century, reflect during the process of interpretation,

though most are unaware of it.[1] Nevertheless through reflection they involve categories

of thought in their exegesis that were formed by philosophy. Hegel also stated that for

this reason theology has always been dependent on philosophy.[2] A look into history

confirms that from the earliest beginnings of Christian thinking to this day, theologians

have taken the foundational basis of their work from philosophical systems, mostly

without any critical reflection.[3] Since the method always influences the result of one's

---

[1] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Werke in 20 Bänden Mit Registerband*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 14: 25.

[2] Ibid., 12: 45.

[3] One of Pannenberg's views that often appears in his writings is his understanding of the acceptance of Platonic categories as a conscious decision motivated by the desire to reach the non-Jewish world. Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Die Aufnahme Des Philosophischen Gottesbegriffes Als Dogmatisches Problem Der Frühchristlichen Theologie," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 70, no. 1 (1959): 12-14, and idem, *Systematische Theologie*, 3 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988-1993), 82, 90. See also Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Christentum Und Platonismus: Die Kritische Platonrezeption Augustins in Ihrer Bedeutung Für Das Gegenwärtige Christliche Denken," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 96, no. 2 (1985): 147-161. But whether this was an intentional move or not does not change the result. Canale points to

work,[4] one could say that Christian theology is what it is today because of Greek philosophy.[5] The problem connected with that fact is that the Greek concept of reality from which their theory of cognition was derived is different from the concept of the Jewish Bible and the apostolic writings, which were supposed to be the main authority for Christian theology, especially in its early stages.[6] The biblical statement "God created the earth" means something totally different if God is defined as the Platonic One or Good and the earth is seen as a mere material appearance of eternal ideas, which are taken to be the true realities behind the appearances. But not only the objects of theological thought (God and the universe) but also the basic tool, namely thinking itself is shaped in a very specific way.[7] Consequently, if the biblical writings are being thought about with Greek reason and taken to refer to a Greek reality, the true meaning of

Thomas Aquinas and Rudolf Bultmann as examples of theologians who deliberately chose a philosophical system to express their theology, but adds that they failed to critically examine the presuppositions involved. See Fernando L. Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 10 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1987), 6.

[4] On the importance of method and presuppositions see Fernando L. Canale, "Evolution, Theology, and Method Part 1: Outline and Limits of Scientific Methodology," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 41, no. 1 (2003): 65-110. See also parts 2 and 3 of this series of articles.

[5] Especially at the beginning of the 19th century, this philosophic influence was harshly criticized. Both Ritschl and Harnack held that through the intrusion of metaphysics into the revealed religion Christianity was distorted. See Albrecht Ritschl, *Theologie Und Metaphysik: Zur Verständigung Und Abwehr* (Bonn: Marcus, 1881), 20, 42, and Adolf Harnack, *Lehrbuch Der Dogmengeschichte*, 3rd ed., 3 vols. (Freiburg i.B.: J.C.B. Mohr, 1894), 1:596-601.

[6] Gerhard von Rad, Oscar Cullman, and Karl Löwith all emphasized that, as one example, the biblical conception of history as a linear movement towards an *eschaton* is markedly different from the Greek cyclical conception of history in which everything returns to its origin and starts anew. Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology I+II* (Peabody, Mass.: Prince Press, 2005), 2:106-119, Oscar Cullmann, *Christus Und Die Zeit: Die Urchristliche Zeit- Und Geschichtsauffassung* (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1948), 43-52, and Karl Löwith, *Weltgeschichte Und Heilsgeschehen: Die Theologischen Voraussetzungen Der Geschichtsphilosophie* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2004), 14-16.

[7] If the true reality is found behind the material world, reason, in order to have any knowledge at all, needs to be able to lay hold of that hidden reality. Therefore, reality, whether present or past (history), which only deals with the appearances, is totally devalued as a source of knowledge. Truth can be found only in the ideas. See Julián Marías, *History of Philosophy* (New York, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1967), 47-48.

Scripture might be lost. For Protestant Christians who hold a high view of the Bible, the necessity of finding a biblical way of thinking is obvious. If reason plays a major role in theology, the question of the nature, structure, and functioning of reason needs to be addressed in order to enable theology to use reason without importing an alien body of thought.

Unfortunately, such essential preparatory work for Christian theology is taken up only by a few theologians or philosophers. This study will examine the role of reason in theology by comparing two recent contributors to the discussion. Fernando Canale was chosen because his work represents the most radical position on the role of reason in theology, subjecting it completely to the *sola scriptura* principle. The implications of such an approach are not to be underestimated. It necessitates a complete reconstruction of Christian theology, which Canale has only started to undertake.[8] Wolfhart Pannenberg stands on the other end of the spectrum concerning the role of reason in theology. His theology first of all needs to be reasonable, that is, coherent in itself and with the rest of scientific truth. For him "Scripture does not carry divine authority" and "the experiences recorded [in it] need to be tested and evaluated for their truth claims with rational and scientific methods."[9] In his case reason is the judge over scripture—quite the opposite of

---

[8] Not everything would need to be developed from scratch. There are, according to Canale, trends within philosophy (and theology) that move into the right direction and that could be used in the formulation of such a theology. He names Michalson, Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty in connection with epistemology. As far as ontology is concerned, things will be more difficult since the result of Canale's investigation suggests a theo-onto-logical structure of reason, which has so far not been dealt with. See Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions*, 386, n. 1; 406. The promise of such a system is enormous. It could possibly revolutionize Protestant theology and solve many of the doctrinal conflicts that have plagued Christianity for decades. On the other hand, the amount of work involved is just as gigantic.

[9] Frank Hasel, *Scripture in the Theologies of W. Pannenberg and D.G. Bloesch: An Investigation and Assessment of Its Origin, Nature, and Use* (New York: P. Lang, 1996), 157. Hasel goes on to explain that "Scripture is assigned [by Pannenberg] a normative function by being a sign of the identity of the Christian faith through the centuries." For the contrasting views on revelation and inspiration of Canale and

Canale's position. The question with Pannenberg then is where his concept of reason comes from. This is where the study becomes interesting since Pannenberg, according to his own words, does not uncritically subscribe to any existing theory of reality or knowledge. Pannenberg as well as Canale scrutinizes the status of classical Western reason in the theological enterprise, and a comparison of their differing results will prove to be enlightening for future study on the role of reason in theology since new attempts are always developed from and in opposition to pre-existing theological or philosophical construction. What makes such a comparison promising is that these two theologians not only represent different poles of theological thought, but they both are trained as philosophers and hence are able to critically deal with the underlying philosophical questions.

Fernando Canale in his work *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions* confirms that since theology is an intellectual enterprise, reason, or *logia*, has in the past subtly but surely functioned "as the cognitive absolute that conditions and determines the meaning of both theological understanding and discourse. Theological truth, then, can only be perceived, recognized, and accepted within the categories and limits allowed by *logia*."[10] He then challenges the necessity of this dependence of theology on philosophy in general and specifically on Greek thinking. Despite the fact that theology has, for almost 2,000 years, used the classical Platonic-Aristotelian theory of knowledge, with the exception of modern liberal

---

Pannenberg compare Hasel, 104-158, with Fernando L. Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology: A Hermeneutical Study of the Revelation and Inspiration of the Bible* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Canale, 2005), 225-449.

[10] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 2.

Protestantism which followed Kant,[11] Canale claims "that theology is able to develop a criticism of its use of reason by itself outside the traditional philosophical realm."[12] He holds that the recent development of a criticism of philosophical reason shows that other conceptions of reason are possible,[13] which leads him to conclude that theology could develop its own understanding of theological reason. His dissertation, on which the present study will focus, constitutes the establishment of the possibility of such a criticism.[14] While he has not yet constructed a complete metaphysical system, his work clearly outlines the form it needs to take. His first chapter on the phenomenological analysis of reason shows the three "poles" of reason (*ontos*, *logos*, *theos*) that need to be considered when speaking about reason and theology, no matter what position one takes. These poles can also be distinguished in Pannenberg's construction.

Wolfhart Pannenberg has not dealt with the structure of reason as detailed as Canale, but has invested his life in the construction of a metaphysical system. As was pointed out above, this system is not based on a *sola scriptura* principle as in Canale. Pannenberg's approach however is not less radical. He takes up the task of reestablishing theology as a science in a way that was unheard of since the beginning of the

---

[11] Ibid., 7.

[12] Ibid., 8.

[13] Ibid., 5.

[14] Ibid., 12. After his dissertation Canale has continued working on the actual construction of an alternative approach addressing the question of the origin of theological reason, that is, of inspiration and revelation of the Bible in two volumes. See Fernando L. Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration: Searching for the Cognitive Foundation of Christian Theology in a Postmodern World* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2001), and idem, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology: A Hermeneutical Study of the Revelation and Inspiration of the Bible*. Then, he addressed the issue of methodology in idem, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology: The Role of Method in Theological Accommodation* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Canale, 2005). Finally, he dealt with basic complementary guidelines for such a theology in idem, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology: Scripture Replacing Tradition* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Canale, 2005). On the role of reason in theology, however, his dissertation remains the fundamental work on which all subsequent volumes build.

enlightenment. Pannenberg is one of the greatest living systematic theologians whose breadth of knowledge and writing is enormous.[15] Pannenberg studied philosophy under Nicolai Hartmann, Karl Jaspers, and Karl Löwith and regularly lectured on philosophy at the University of Munich.[16] In his 1996 book *Theology and Philosophy* he writes: "Without a thorough knowledge of philosophy one cannot understand the Christian teaching, as it has formed historically, nor come to a founded judgment on the truth claims of the Christian teaching in the present…. In the history of Christianity, systematic theology has, since the church fathers, always been formulated in discussion with philosophy."[17] However Pannenberg is well aware that this should not happen in the form of an uncritical acceptance of philosophical speculation. "It is not about affiliation with one philosophy or another, but about a participation in the awareness of the problems." "[The Christian teaching] will also refer to the limits of the respective form of

---

[15] Pannenberg's work is immensely large, his list of publications between 1953 and 2000 contains 645 items, according to his website at the University of Munich: http://www.st-foe.evtheol.uni-muenchen.de/personen/pannenberg/publikationen/index.html, accessed July 2, 2007. Already in 1980 David McKenzie stated that "during the past two decades, few theologians have written on such a large number of issues with such intellectual rigor as Wolfhart Pannenberg. David McKenzie, *Wolfhart Pannenberg & Religious Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: University of America Press, 1980), 1. In 1988 Braaten and Clayton attested that Pannenberg is "without doubt the most comprehensive theologian at work today." Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton, *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988), 9.

[16] Cobb states that Pannenberg, in contrast to process theologians who have relied on process philosophers, "is his own philosopher." John B. Cobb Jr., "Pannenberg and Process Theology," in *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988), 55.

[17] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theologie Und Philosophie: Ihr Verhältnis Im Lichte Ihrer Gemeinsamen Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandehoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 11. All English translations of German works are my own. Maybe the most famous representative of theologians wrestling with the role of philosophy is Augustine. He compared philosophy to the treasures that the Israelites took with them from Egypt: Something that can be used for the service of Christ even though it comes from a bad source. See Saint Augustine, *The City of God and on Christian Doctrine,* trans. Marcus Dods and J.F. Shaw, vol. 2, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988), De doct. chr. 2.40.60.

philosophical thought."[18] Though his theology is scientific, Pannenberg does not accept reason uncritically into theology but argues that it should be used in a way that is in harmony with the Christian tradition as it is conserved in the Bible and the writings of the ancient church.

This thesis will compare Canale's and Pannenberg's approaches to reason in theology from the viewpoint of their independence from classical philosophy. The question to consider is: How far have Canale and Pannenberg come in their quest for autonomous theological thinking? From what has been said above it is clear that the scope of this thesis cannot be to build its own criticism of theological reason. This is not possible within the limits of this thesis. It is already foreseeable that the main task of this paper will be an exegetical, not a critical one. This paper is not concerned with possible strengths or weaknesses in Canale's analysis[19] or in Pannenberg's position. The objective is first of all to correctly understand their positions. Only after their respective positions are well understood can it be determined where the two present similarities in their dealing with the role of reason in theology, where they oppose each other, and how free they really are from classical philosophical presuppositions. As was already pointed out above, such a comparison is not totally homogeneous, since Canale has not yet finished his biblical system.

To accomplish its goal this study will in the first chapter provide a sketch of Canale's thought in *A Criticism of Theological Reason*. Most important will be the first section of Canale's book which discusses the onto-theo-logical structure of reason. It is

---

[18] Pannenberg, *Theologie Und Philosophie*, 11.

[19] For an analysis and critique of Canale's work see Oliver Glanz, "Time, Reason and Religious Belief: A Limited Comparison between Herman Dooyeweerd's Structural Analysis of Theoretical Thought

this analysis which enables "thinking about thinking," that is, an objective way to distinguish different interpretations of reason. The three poles of reason identified by Canale will also structure the subsequent analysis of Pannenberg's system. The third and last part of Canale's work establishes the biblical view of a theo-onto-logical structure of reason. It is here that Canale argues for his understanding of a biblical version of reason. The second part of *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, which examines two examples of theological reason, will not be discussed in the present paper.

The second chapter of this study will then examine the ontological and epistemological frameworks of Pannenberg's thought as well as his understanding of the concept of the *theos*. Because of the abundance of literature produced by Pannenberg the examination will focus mainly on the first volume of the collected essays *Grundfragen systematischer Theologie*, which deal with preparatory questions of method, theology and philosophy, the three volumes of his systematic theology, which represent the "mature Pannenberg," [20] and the little volume *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, which appeared simultaneously with the first volume of his systematic theology and lays out the philosophical basis for his system.[21] Other works will be brought in where relevant. Another result of the enormity of the body of thought that Pannenberg has produced in his life is the need to arrange it in some way in order to make it more ascertainable. For reasons of comparability, the threefold structure of reason pointed out by Canale was chosen as a organizing principle in the examination of Pannenberg. Again the intention is

---

and Fernando Canale's Phenomenological Analysis of the Structure of Reason and Its Biblical Interpretation" (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2006).

[20] Hasel, 95.

[21] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, vol. 1+2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967+1980); idem, *Systematische Theologie*, vol. I-III (Göttingen:

not to lay out, let alone discuss, the complete theological system of Pannenberg,[22] but to

get to the most foundational presuppositions of his thinking in order to find out whether

his system is built on the Greek conception of reality that has dominated theology for so

long or if he has independently constructed his own philosophical groundwork. Therefore

only a very brief and general outline of his theological system will be given, to provide a

context for the following specialized study of Pannenberg's use of reason in theology.

    In the third chapter, this study will compare the respective approaches and point

out similarities and differences in terms of presuppositions, method, and results.

    The fourth and last chapter will provide a summary and conclusion which takes

up the concerns and questions of this introduction to see in what way the present study

has provided answers or insights to them.

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988-1933); idem, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988).

[22] For an overview of his system see Stanley J. Grenz, *Reason for Hope: The Systematic Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.Co., 2005). A critical discussion can be found in the collection of essays edited by Braaten and Clayton. Both volumes were published before the publication of the systematic theology was completed, but Grenz has the explicit approval of Pannenberg for the summary of his thought.

CHAPTER II

CANALE'S ANALYSIS OF REASON

Introduction

Is reason absolute? Is it neutral? Or are there different kinds of reason, different

interpretations of it? Because reason is foundational for theology, these questions demand

an answer. Fernando Canale holds that reason is dependent on other variables and

therefore theologians need to ensure that their interpretation of reason is in harmony with

Scripture. This chapter will delineate the main argument of his work *A Criticism of*

Theological Reason. First the structure of reason as seen by Canale will be outlined. Then

this study will follow his application of his analysis of reason to the history of

philosophy. After that this study will briefly sum up his exegesis of Exod 3 and 6, and

finally his suggestions for a theological reason based on the Bible will be outlined. As

explained in the introduction, a critical discussion of Canale is not intended.

Because reason is a necessary ingredient of theology and because theology has in

its history never been a unified whole, Canale is led to ask if reason itself could be at the

root of the problem.[1] In order for this to be possible he would have to show that reason as

such is not absolute but rather contingent on some other presupposition. If reason needs

to be interpreted, then a wrong interpretation or differing interpretations could be the

cause of theological disagreement. This question lies at the heart of the discussion about

---

[1] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 2-3.

the role of reason in theology. Canale sets out to demonstrate the relativity of reason through a "phenomenological analysis of the act of knowing."[2] In developing his critical analysis of the formal structure of reason, Canale is aware that what he is describing is not concrete but abstract. He explains: "In other words, the structure of reason is never given by itself alone—as if one could find reason's systematic 'functioning' detached from all systematic 'content'—but it is only co-given in any actual system of meaning."[3] Reason is never empty, it always does something, always constitutes meaning. Nevertheless one can phenomenologically abstract its structure.

The Constitution of Meaning

The *logos* which is a constituent of theo-logy is defined by Canale as "the realm of meaning, which includes everything that is connected with the constitution of meaning in general."[4] The most basic condition for any meaning is the existence of two

---

[2] Ibid., 25. The word "phenomenology" derives from the Greek φαινομενον which means "to place in the light." Marías, 429. As a concept of method it "does not describe the 'what' of the object of philosophical investigation, but the 'how' of this inquiry." Martin Heidegger, *Sein Und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), 27. This means that as a method of inquiry phenomenology limits itself to the phenomena, to that which shows itself. The idea, which goes back to Husserl, is to go to the things themselves and describe them as they present themselves, without any speculation about what they truly are or what might constitute them. Hartmann explains that phenomenology sticks to the facts. What these facts mean, whether they are metaphysical or not, does not concern phenomenology. Nicolai Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 5th ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965), 38. According to Hartmann, the analysis of the phenomenon is indifferent to the problems it raises. The next step would then be the analysis of the problems irrespective of their possible solvability, which he calls aporetics. Phenomenology and aporetics together make up the preparatory work for problem solving.

[3] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 46. He continues: "The phenomenological analysis leads behind the actual content of meaning to the cognitive dynamics which is responsible for the constitution of meaning as meaning." Ibid. This "behind" should not be understood however as an abstraction. Rather the distinction between structure and actual content is like the distinction between a function and its result.

[4] Ibid., 20. In nn. 1 and 2 on this page he makes a significant comment for the theological reader, namely that *logos* is basically used as synonymous with reason in this context and needs to be freed from all Christological connotations.

independent sides, a subject and an object.[5] In other words, meaning always needs to be

the meaning of something and meaningful for someone. This cognitive relationship is

knowledge, the constitution of an image of the object in the subject.[6] Concerning the

structure of this relationship, classical thought assumed that the subject is merely

receptive,[7] which means that knowledge is determined wholly by the object which is

known.[8] However in his phenomenological analysis, Canale, following Nicolai

---

[5] Ibid., 28.

[6] According to Hartmann, the image is a third part in the act of knowing. It is neither identical with the object, nor with the subject. Usually, the subject is not aware that it is forming an image of the object. In the naïve sphere it thinks it is grasping the object. Only if an error occurs, that is, if a second grasping of the same object contradicts the first, then the subject realizes that what it had grasped was not the object, but an image of it. Since all knowledge could possibly include a fallacy, the image is discovered by phenomenology to be an inherent part of the act of knowing. Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 45-47.

[7] Receptive does not necessarily mean passive, since, depending on the type of ontology, the subject might have to extract the eternal truths from the sense impressions in order to gain knowledge. "According to the opinion of Plato, there is no need for an active intellect in order to make things actually intelligible; . . . But since Aristotle did not allow that forms of natural things exist apart from matter, and as forms existing in matter are not actually intelligible; it follows that the natures of forms of the sensible things which we understand are not actually intelligible. . . . We must therefore assign on the part of the intellect some power to make things actually intelligible, by abstraction of the species from material conditions. And such is the necessity for an active intellect." Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province and Daniel J. Sullivan, 2 vols. (Chicago, Ill.: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955), Ia, 79.3.

[8] Independent of the question how the object determines the subject, the resulting knowledge is objective or absolute. Aquinas put it this way: "But the human intellect, which is the lowest in the order of intelligence and most remote from the perfection of the Divine intellect, is in potentiality with regard to things intelligible, and is at first "like a clean tablet on which nothing is written," as the Philosopher says (De Anima III, 4)." Ibid., Ia, 79.2. This Aristotelian notion of the human mind as *tabula rasa* (see Marías, 79) existed up to the time of John Locke as a counter-understanding to the innate ideas of the platonic tradition which were used by Descartes. See Pannenberg, *Theologie Und Philosophie*, 158. Kant changed all this with his claim that the object (Ding an sich) is not available to the subject. The only things available are sense impressions (phenomena). The innate ideas became categories of human understanding— predetermined by the subject—into which the phenomena are pressed in order to be intelligible. See Michael J. Young, "Functions of Thought and the Synthesis of Intuitions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, ed. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 101-105. Thus Kant established the subject as creatively contributing to the act of knowing.

Hartmann, argues for the creative participation of the subject in the formation of *logos*.[9]

The image would then be an interpretation of the object by the subject.

If both the object and the subject contribute to the constitution of meaning, the question about the nature of their contribution arises. The object needs to communicate its properties to the subject.[10] The basic input of the object therefore is its existence. There must be an object, otherwise no knowledge is possible. So the object contributes itself, its essence.[11] "Knowledge is a grasping of Being."[12] Of course, as was pointed out

---

[9] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 30-32. According to Hartmann, only purely logical philosophy can construct meaning without considering the subject. Such an ideal concept, however, has little to do with reality. In contrast to the logical procedure, Hartmann adheres to the gnosiological approach, which reestablishes the knowing subject. Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 36-37.

[10] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 30.

[11] Because of the metaphysical nature of this study, a word of explanation and definition concerning the concept of Being seems necessary at this point. Both authors deal with this concept and the transition of Heidegger's (whom Canale treats) and Pannenberg's thoughts into English makes things even more complex. The question of Being is the most foundational in philosophy and from the time of the pre-socratics it has puzzled the greatest thinkers of history. It is the concept which can be predicated of everything: of that which *is* and even of that which *is* not. Everything that can be imagined or named "has" Being. As a consequence, the most basic statement about Being is the principle of noncontradiction: Being is that which excludes nothing. If something is, then it is not not. This implies that apart from nothing, everything "has" Being, which is the principle of the excluded middle. Another thing that follows is that Being and existence have to be distinguished. There are "things" to which Being can be accorded that do not actually exist. A Unicorn *is* imagination – it is. Things that exist will be called entities or beings (with lower case b) in this study. Entities need to be distinguished from Being. Being, since there is nothing outside of it, needs to be one, unchangeable and infinite. If it was not infinite there would be something outside of Being, which by definition is not possible. If there were many "Beings" that could be differentiated, they would exclude each other and consequently not be Being, which excludes only nothingness. The same is true if Being would change. Then the older Being would be distinguished from the newer Being and they would mutually exclude each other. Since entities are many, finite, and subject to change, they cannot be identical to Being. The nature of the difference between Being and beings cannot be discussed here. It will be assumed that entities participate in Being through analogy. One could say that they "have" finite Being but that would be a paradox. Nevertheless in English works one sometimes reads about the Being of entities – an imprecise wording that usually refers to the essence of entities. Since the fact that something exists says nothing about what it is, traditionally an essence is ascribed to entities. This essence answers the question what they are. The possible answers (e.g., red, heavy, cold, etc.) are modes of Being. Something *is* red. Something has "coldbeing" (German: *Kaltsein*). So in a way the essence could be called the (way of) Being of a thing. The relation of existence and essence has also been a subject of much debate. For the present study it will be sufficient to say that, since Being is immutable and change or motion was traditionally taken to be the measure of time, Being was interpreted as timeless. In such an understanding the essence was equally unchangeable or timeless (though it was individuated by matter) and therefore preceded existence. Only lately has philosophy considered that essences might be subject to change and therefore in time. This of course implies another definition of Being. This overview is based on

above, the subject also has to exist if there is to be a relationship. For both sides of the

structure of reason, a theory of Being is necessary to understand how meaning is

established.[13] Reason therefore presupposes ontology or exists within an ontological

framework.[14] On the subject's side, however, more than mere existence is required. It

needs a certain ability or potentiality to receive the essence of the object.[15] Without the

subject's cognitive capabilities the mere existence of the two poles of meaning would be

useless. But this is not enough. If the subject would merely receive the properties of the

object, this would result in "a perception of an existing other" "as a content of

consciousness." In order for meaning to be constituted, this perception needs to be

"rendered meaningful by categories or concepts."[16] This is what Canale calls the

epistemological framework of reason which exists in the knower and is prior to any

---

Albert Keller, "Sein," in *Handbuch Philosophischer Grundbegriffe*, ed. Herman Krings, Hans Michael Baumgartner, and Christoph Wild, vol. 3 (Munich: Kösel, 1974), 1288-1304.

[12] R. Vancourt in his foreword to Nicolai Hartmann, *Les principes d'une métaphysique de la connaissance* (Paris: Aubier, 1945), 20. One can understand this by considering the fact that something needs to exist in order to be known. It is the final horizon of knowledge. Only against this horizon is knowledge possible and if one abstracts all the modes of Being and also the existence of a thing, then the ultimate thing that is to know is Being. In this way, the object determines the subject in the act of knowing. However, this does not result in realism, since what is really determined is not the subject itself, but the image of the object in the subject. See Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 48.

[13] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 37.

[14] Canale's analysis rejects the Kantian understanding according to which reason functions completely independent of ontology as a closed epistemological system. Ibid., 37, n. 2. The question remains however how ideal objects fit in the ontological framework. Hartmann sees cognition dependent upon the ontological and the logical precisely because real and ideal objects (like mathematical sentences) can be known. Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 50, 54. For the purpose of the present study, however, this aspect can be bracketed, since Hartmann himself states that the prevalence is in the ontological realm. Ibid., 74.

[15] This is all that phenomenology can say about the relationship. Aporetics would have to point to the mystery how the subject, the consciousness, can grasp something outside of itself and how the object can determine something outside of itself. See ibid., 62-63.

[16] Gustave Weigel and Arthur G. Madden, *Knowledge, Its Values and Limits* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973), 17.

subject-object relationship.[17] These categories constitute the potentiality to know.

Through its categories the subject contributes actively to the act of knowledge. However,

the spontaneity of the subject does not affect the object, but only the image of the object

in the subject.[18] This is why the creativity of the knowing subject does not diminish the

primacy of the object, of the ontological framework in the act of knowing.

Since Canale sees the categories not in a transcendental manner as Kant did, but

rather, parallel to Aristotle, as categories of Being,[19] the epistemological framework

appears as grounded in and requiring the ontological framework. The ontological

framework on the other hand, as can be seen by the word *logos* in its name, includes an

epistemology.[20] To have ontology, one needs to interpret it through the spontaneity of the

subject.[21] This reveals the interdependence of the frameworks of reason. Since both

epistemology and ontology are vital for an understanding of the constitution of meaning

---

[17] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 39. In n. 1 of that page he stresses that this *a priori* framework is not to be understood in a Kantian way as independent from sensual input. Without the object the framework is without content, unintelligible. But nevertheless, "some aspects of the cognitive object-to-be-known are already present in the subject."

[18] The subject's relation to the object therefore remains purely receptive. Only in the constitution of the image does the subject act spontaneously and creatively. This, however, as Hartmann points out, is something that goes beyond phenomenology into aporetics. Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 48. The fact that the image is never identical to the object is the impetus for the progressive improvement or enlargement of knowledge. One could say that advancement in any area of knowledge is based on the creative spontaneity of the subject in the formation of a new, more adequate image of the object. Ibid., 55. Note that an incomplete image is not necessarily a wrong image, while even a complete image can be a wrong one. A progression in knowledge is not necessarily a progression in truth and vice versa. Ibid., 57.

[19] Marías, 67-68.

[20] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 35.

[21] Ibid., 40-41.

and each of them includes the other, neither of them can be seen as "an absolute tribunal"[22] about the functioning of reason.

It is this interdependence which makes a system of meanings necessary. If every part of the structure of reason is dependent on each other, isolated meanings are impossible. Canale states that "there are only interrelated meanings; for meaning is constituted and exists in a system."[23] Outside the relationship of the ontological and epistemological framework, no coherent or unified knowledge is achievable. Within this relationship, meaning flows from the whole to the parts. This means that even though the part is determinate and emits an individual flow of meaning, this meaning is given only against the background of the whole. "The understanding or interpretation of reality as a whole provides reason with the context or background needed for the constitution of meaning."[24] This whole, which was traditionally studied by metaphysics, is what Canale calls the system. At the center of the system is the concept of *theos*. Only through some notion of "divinity" can the whole, the totality of reality be thought as unity. The *theos* is the one, which is opposed to the many; the one, which unifies the many. Through much of history the concept of *theos* was identical to the idea of God or something supernatural in the broadest sense, but even atheistic worldviews need some concept that will structure and unite the world for them—otherwise no meaning and knowledge would be possible.[25]

---

[22] Ibid., 37, n. 1.

[23] Ibid., 44.

[24] Ibid., 47. In n. 1 Canale refers to Lee who explains the flow of meaning through contexts. If two people have no common context at all, they cannot communicate successfully. This shows that meaning comes from the context, which is what Canale calls the whole.

[25] See Roy A. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 2005), 9-128.

For Canale—in contrast to pantheism or panentheism—the *theos* articulates the system but is distinct from it. This concept is the end of the phenomenological analysis of reason. The structure of reason appears as onto-theo-logical, with the *theos* providing the ultimate ground through the system which facilitates the coherent interrelation of the *logos* (i.e., the epistemological framework) and the *ontos* (i.e., the ontological framework).[26]

Before Kant, the *theos*, which makes the unity of meaning possible, was with Aristotle seen in God as Being. For Kant, this most basic concept, from which the nature of the whole, that is, the system is being determined, was the "idea of pure reason."[27] Canale agrees with the traditional Aristotelian notion that the *theos* is the ultimate expression of the *ontos*, that is, Being.[28] This means that even the concept of *theos* is not independent or absolute. Though the analysis of reason's structure is complete, "the *theos* cannot constitute the final state in a search for the ultimate ground of meaning, because *theos* . . . conceals a theo-logia, namely an understanding or interpretation of the *theos*."[29] Since *theos* is the ultimate *ontos* and both are "logies," the solution has to be found in the *logos* itself, which, as Canale remarks without any irony, is the subject matter of the

---

26 Ibid., 49. Henrich ascribes the first usage of the term ontotheological to Kant. But since it was not included in the *Critique of Pure Reason* it was not adopted by others. Heidegger was the next to speak about the ontotheological nature of metaphysics. See Dieter Henrich, *Der Ontologische Gottesbeweis: Sein Problem Und Seine Geschichte in Der Neuzeit* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1960), 1. For a discussion of Kant's critique of ontotheology see Henrich, 137-178. For an overview of Heidegger's critique see Anthony J. Godzieba, "Ontotheology to Excess: Imagining God without Being," *Theological Studies* 56, no. 1 (1995): 3-20.

27 Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 48, n. 3. Consequently, for Kant, God was not necessary for reason to function. In his *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant tried to reestablish the necessity for God which he had abolished in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

28 Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 51.

29 Ibid., 50-51. However, Canale points out, despite the fact that the *theos* is relative, Heidegger in his task to overcome metaphysics was the first to dare to interpret the *theos* in a way that diverged from Greek tradition.

whole investigation.[30] At this point, his quest for the definitive ground of meaning has to leave the phenomenological analysis to take a step beyond *ontos*, *theos*, and *logos* into the realm of foundational ontology where all three originated.

The Primordial Presupposition

Phenomenologically the *logos* is reliant on the *ontos* which in turn needs the *theos* for the constitution of meaning. The *theos*, which shapes the system, again is dependent on the *logos* (as is the *ontos*) and so the analysis comes full circle to where it began. The structure of reason therefore cannot give a cognitive ground for meaning. All of its levels are a theoretical abstraction and rely on *a priori* presuppositions for their interpretation.[31] Canale distinguishes between relative and absolute *a priori*. Relative presuppositions are grounded in absolute presuppositions. The absolute premises "are the 'ground floor' or 'source' of meaning for the whole rational system, and as such they stand beyond doubt, criticism, verification, and in this sense are neither 'true' nor 'false'."[32] Accordingly they have to be decided for on the basis of faith.[33] Nevertheless these *a priori* also belong to

---

[30] Ibid., 51.

[31] Ibid., 66.

[32] Ibid., 61. They cannot be rationally questioned since a rational questioning would employ reason which is based on the presupposition it is trying to question. Of course they also cannot be rationally proven. Collingwood emphasizes that a verification of them is not even applicable, since it doesn't matter if they are true or not, all that matters is if they are supposed or not. R. G. Collingwood, *An Essay on Metaphysics*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 32. The certainty that is usually ascribed to them despite their unintelligible character (i.e., that one is held to be the only right presupposition) is criticized by Canale as negligence of the hypothetical character of reason. See Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 61, n. 1.

[33] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 56, 65, n. 4. Kant denied that they are knowledge (see ibid., 55, n. 2) and so did Wittgenstein. Aristotle and Plato on the other hand considered them as knowledge. The difference lies in the definition of knowledge. For Kant and Wittgenstein, knowledge must be provable. Aristotle agreed that this was not possible for the first principles, but nevertheless held that they are known since they have a meaning of their own which can be expressed in propositions (Ibid., 61, n. 3). Canale holds that they are not knowledge in the usual sense but insofar as they always co-appear with a subject-object relationship. See ibid., 71.

18

the realm of epistemology since they have to be intelligible. The fact that the cognitive

subject is often unaware of their presence and operation does not remove the necessity of

intelligibility. Canale holds that in the ultimate realm beyond the *theos* there can be only

one absolute presupposition.[34] Because the ultimate presupposition shapes the system by

defining the *theos*, it determines both the ontological and the epistemological framework.

Consequently there cannot be different presuppositions for the *ontos* and the *logos*. This

could only be the case if the concept of *theos* was replaced by two differing concepts.

However, since the *theos* provides the ground of unity for the whole, such a split would

eliminate a unified system of meaning. If ontology and epistemology were worked out on

differing ultimate premises, coherence, system, and truth would be impossible.[35] This

primordial presupposition, that necessarily needs to be unique, is what Canale calls the

dimensionality of reason.[36] It is here, at the "minimum meaning that the structure of

reason requires," that the actual criticism of reason would have to start.[37] A

representation of Canale's analysis could look something like shown in fig. 1.

---

[34] Ibid, 59, n. 1. Here it is again important to distinguish between presuppositions as functioning in the structure of the system of reason and the actual presuppositions that are used in the spelling out of the system of reason. It is with regard to the first, structural understanding that Canale argues for a single presupposition. Concerning the actual meaning of this single presupposition he insists on multiple interpretations. See ibid, 61, n. 2. Ironically in the history of philosophy things were exactly the other way around.

[35] Ibid., 74, n. 2.
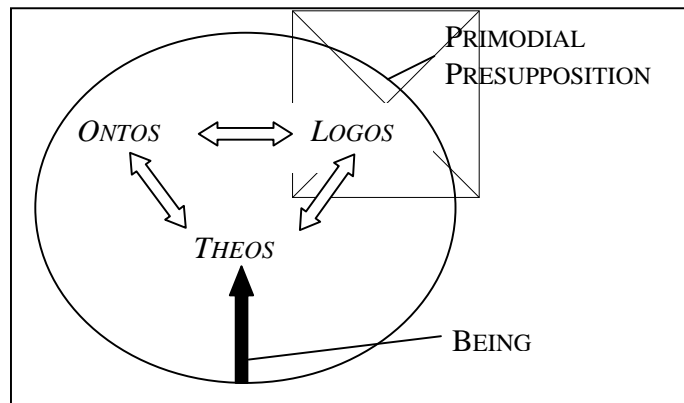
[36] Ibid., 67.

[37] Ibid., 66.

Figure 1. The onto-theo-logical structure of reason.

The two directional arrows symbolize the interdependence of the *ontos*, *logos*, and *theos*. The primordial presupposition is encompassing all three elements as determining ground (ellipse). The black arrow representing its influence could be also directed towards the *ontos* or the *logos* since the primordial presupposition pertains to all beings and is found in the epistemological realm. It is pointed at the *theos* because on the one hand meaning flows from the whole to the part and on the other the *theos* is understood by Canale as the ultimate expression of the *ontos*, which means that the *theos* is the only "being" which *is* truly and completely. Being therefore is "materialized" in the *theos*. This is also the way it has been interpreted in history. Why is the label "Being" ascribed to the black arrow, the influence of the primordial presupposition on the system? Being is not an entity or thing; it always "co-appears" with entities. If there *is* something, Being also exists. Through the concept of Being the basic minimal understanding of reality, including the *theos*, becomes interpreted. According to Canale the only known possibilities are to interpret it either as timeless/spaceless or temporal/spatial. The notion of Being characterizes all realities including God or some other concept of the *theos*. Through the *theos*, which is the center of the system, that is, the determining factor of the

whole, Being shapes the two frameworks of reason. One can see how Being is the way

through which the primordial presupposition exerts its influence on the structure of

reason. Therefore, the primordial presupposition is the interpretation of Being. With this

basic knowledge (i.e., what Being is) reason first develops an ontological framework and

on the basis of this the epistemological framework. However the "procedures, functions

and categories" of epistemology were already born and used in the formation of the

ontology.[38] Again one sees the mutual conditionality and the necessity for a presupposed

starting point. As has been mentioned above, the interpretation of this starting point

cannot be justified by reason.[39] Even though this is commonly agreed on, the majority of

the philosophers insist that the interpretation of the primordial presupposition is not

hypothetical (i.e., not affected by the spontaneity of the subject). Here Canale breaks new

ground. Notwithstanding the fact that in the history of philosophy there have been two

interpretations of the dimensionality of reason, which will be discussed briefly below,

representatives of both views hold that theirs is the only possible understanding of it.[40]

Canale however has shown that, due to the hypothetical nature of all aspects of the

structure of reasons, not only two but theoretically infinitely many interpretations are

possible and equally valid.[41]

 This decisive insight opens the way for a criticism of reason. It is possible for

another way of thinking, besides the Greek concept, to exist. Canale now turns to the

---

[38] Ibid., 73.

[39] The existence of this starting point is testified by reason in the existence of the broadest most inclusive notion, the notion of Being (not of entities).

[40] Ibid., 72, n. 1.

[41] Ibid., 74, n. 1.

history of philosophy to examine the classical dimensionality of reason and the criticism of philosophical reason initiated by Heidegger.

Dimensionalities of Reason

The phenomenological analysis of the structure of reason revealed the need for a primordial presupposition to determine the *theos* as ground of meaning for the epistemological and ontological framework. This presupposition cannot be rationally justified, which makes room for more than one possible "correct" interpretation. The nature of reason appears as hypothetical, yet, as we will see, this was forgotten or denied through most of the history of Western thought. Nonetheless the structure of reason laid out by Canale remains untouched by the varying views of this primordial presupposition.[42]

In the history of philosophy two versions of the dimensionality of reason can be detected, namely timelessness and temporality. The classical Greek notion of timelessness was for most of the past the only existing concept, until another view arose in the second half of the nineteenth century. Canale examines the meaning and consequences of these options through two philosophers, who are generally recognized as pioneers of either timelessness or temporality, followed by an abridged overview of the development of the epistemological and ontological framework that emanated from their thinking.[43] This study will follow his outline of the different interpretations of reason's dimensionality to enhance the understanding of Canale's proposition of a biblical reason

---

[42] Ibid., 74, n. 2.

[43] Ibid., 75.

22

and to identify the existing concepts against which Pannenberg's originality can be tested.

<div align="center">Timelessness</div>

Parmenides

Canale traces the timeless understanding of reason's dimensionality back to Parmenides (~ 550 B.C.). In contrast to other thinkers of his time such as Thales of Miletus, Anaximenes, Xenophanes of Colophon, or Heraclitus, Parmenides did not seek the *arche* in nature but in the realm of thought.[44] He no longer discussed things; he discussed what things are, he discussed Being,[45] which he saw grounded in timelessness. Parmenides argues for timelessness through a *via negativa* (i.e., by stating what Being is not). He begins with uncreatedness (the absence of becoming), which is similar to indestructibility and endlessness (the absence of perishing), and complements this notion with the thoughts of completeness (the absence of parts) and motionlessness (the absence of change).[46] Timelessness is already included in the notion of changelessness or

---

[44] In order for all things to be, there must be Being, which cannot be a thing since it is the condition for the existence of all things. Being had to be a No-thing, not an object of sensory perception, but an object of thought. Marías puts it like this: "being and the *noeîn* or *noûs* are the same" (23).

[45] See ibid., 20, 23, and Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 77, n. 2. Being was understood as an transcendent thought. Jaspers writes that "one was seen in the other, the logical in Being and Being in the logical." According to him, such an empty or objectless thinking, in the naivety of the creative beginning, cannot be repeated today in the same form. See Karl Jaspers, *Die Grossen Philosophen*, vol. 2 (Erfstadt: Hohe, 1957), 260.

[46] For a discussion of Parmenides criteria see Marías, 22, and Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 80-81. Jaspers also mentions being one (*on* in contrast to *onta*) as a semata of Being. Jaspers, 259. Helferich explains that all these criteria go back to the notion that nothing comes out of nothing (*ex nihilo nihil*). Therefore Being had to be eternal and uncreated. It also had to be one and whole, since otherwise the parts had to be added to it out of a vacuum. Finally, since nothingness itself is unthinkable, Being exists necessarily. See Christoph Helferich, *Geschichte Der Philosophie: Von D. Anfängen Bis Zur Gegenwart U. Östl. Denken* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1985), 7

immutability, since in the Greek view time is the measure of motion.[47] The clearest

negation of time however is his statement that Being "never was nor will be because it is

now." In order to understand this statement and other issues in the rest of this paper

correctly it is necessary to grasp the two basic ways of understanding time.

Excursus on the nature of time

Canale notes that the last statement of Parmenides is ambiguous.[48] It could be

interpreted as timelessness but also as eternal duration in time, since Parmenides stresses

its existence in the now, not merely its existence, as a proper timeless wording would

require. Canale correctly analyzes the sentence and, without explicitly mentioning

McTaggart, interprets Parmenides as a B-theorist.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Cambridge philosopher J.M.E.

McTaggart systematically distinguished and analyzed the two ways in which time had

always been understood.[49] On the one hand, events are ordered in terms of past, present,

and future. Some of them are happening now, some have already happened, and some

will happen later. This view is called the A-theory, or, to use a more informative label

than McTaggart, the tense theory or dynamic-time theory. Alternatively, in the B-theory,

"pairs of events are ordered in terms of either member of the pairs preceding the other or

---

[47] Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Tredennick and G. Cyril Armstrong (London: W. Heinemann, 1933), 12.1.5.

[48] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 81, n. 2.

[49] John M. E. McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 2:9-10. While this distinction and the naming of it has become the standard expression among scholars, the real point of McTaggart's discussion of time, namely that time is an illusion and that nothing that exists "can possess the characteristic of being in time," has not won many followers.

being simultaneous with it."[50] This is also called the tenseless theory or the static-time

theory. According to this B-theory, it would be impossible to say "It is raining now," yet

B-theorists hold that this tensed sentence can be expressed through a tenseless sentence

like "It is raining on August 2nd 2008," which relates the event of raining to the birth of

Jesus of Nazareth (or the assumed date of his birth) as happening 2007 years and some

days after it.

According to Ganssle, the decisive distinction between the theories is their answer

to the question "whether 'The now' exists independently of our experience."[51] Do events

have a special ontological status when they happen in the now, when they are occurring,

or does occurring or not-occurring make no difference at all? This question asks if the A-

theory describes an objective feature of time. Clearly events are situated before and after

other events (B-series), but is there also some reality to the *nowness* or presence of events

or is this just a subjective criterion?[52]

If somebody was removed to a different point in time than the present and would

not know at which exact point in time she was, then the sentence "The Berlin Wall falls

in 1989" would not tell her if this was happening right now or whether it was past or

future. For B-theorists this is not a problem, since for them the attributes past, present,

and future do not make a difference, are purely subjective, and say nothing about the

---

[50] Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Unqualified Divine Temporality," in *God & Time: Four Views*, ed. Gregory E. Ganssle (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 194.

[51] Gregory E. Ganssle, ed., *God & Time: Four Views* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 14.

[52] Wolterstorff, "Unqualified Divine Temporality," 195, illustrates the situation without an A-theory time by comparing time to space. In space things are next to each other (B-series). The spatial concepts of here and there would represent the concepts of now and earlier/later. Obviously *hereness* and *thereness* are no objective features of spatial objects; they merely are here for us because we have a body that is located in space. Similarly past, present, and future would only be the result of the location of the subject in time.

ontological status of the event. The now does not exist objectively. In the tenseless

understanding, the issue of whether the fall of the Berlin Wall has happened, is

happening, or will happen is merely a matter of perspective; it depends on who you ask,

Stalin, Gorbatchev, or Putin. The consequence of such a view is that all events exist in

time all the time (like objects in space), they are simply not occurring at all times. The

fall of the Berlin Wall exists in the same way at the time of Stalin, Gorbatchev, and Putin.

The fact that it occurred during the reign of Gorbatchev makes no difference

ontologically. As a consequence the building and the falling of the Wall both co-exist

"eternally," but the first occurred twenty-eight years before the second.[53]

Tense-theorists on the other hand would argue that the now exists independently

of any subject who experiences it.[54] Temporal presence is interpreted from the side of the

event, not the subject. In order for any event to exist in relation to other events (B-series)

it has to occur and it cannot do that without occurring at some time. Similarly, in most

cases, it also ceases to occur, making the "later" relationship of other events possible.

This cessation also occurs at a point in time. The span between occurrence and cessation

is the necessary condition for any event to be part of the B-series. This span is the now,

not of any subject, but of the object.[55] A-theorists hold that the existence of an event is

limited to the time of its occurring, its now or presence, and that the difference between

past, present, and future expresses a change in the ontological status of an event.

---

[53] Ganssle, 15.

[54] They would hold that the comparison to space, while sounding impressive, is basically flawed, since it determines *hereness* through the subject which is not necessarily the case with presence in time.

[55] Wolterstorff, "Unqualified Divine Temporality," 197.

This relates to the primordial presupposition in the following way: if the A-theory is correct, Being, which for Canale is realized in God as the *theos*, must be temporal because in an A-theory setting Being cannot be immutable and change implies temporality. The reason is that if there is a past, present, and future, God as creator stands in relation to that changing reality and therefore also changes.[56] At the time of Adam he was not yet the God of Abraham and he was the God of Isaac before he was the God of Jacob. He maintained Hosea before he kept John the Baptist alive. "God is doing different things at different times. He is changing."[57] If the A-theory is wrong and the present is purely subjective, then God can be timeless or atemporal. This is the question, which to this day separates those who believe in a timeless God from those who see him as temporal. Paul Helm, a proponent of timelessness, believes in the B-theory.[58] Nicholas Wolterstorff who sees God as temporal believes in the A-theory.[59] That this is a question of faith is hinted at by Padgett who denies the B-theory "on grounds outside of theology and the philosophy of religion."[60] This affirms Canale's identification of temporality and atemporality as primordial presupposition.

---

[56] Ganssle, 15.

[57] Ibid. Another example, that is however disputed, is the issue of omniscience (which is basically a variation of immutability, since the increasing of knowledge would count as change). If the now is something objective there is an irreducible fact about it, that cannot be expressed in relationships to other events. If God is omniscient he would have to know the now, every now and therefore he would have to be temporal. Otherwise it would be impossible for him to know if the sentence: "It is raining now" is true or not. For a counter-argument see Paul Helm, "Divine Timeless Eternity," in *God & Time: Four Views*, ed. Gregory E. Ganssle (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 59.

[58] Helm, "Divine Timeless Eternity," 58. See also idem, *Eternal God: A Study of God without Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[59] Wolterstorff, "Unqualified Divine Temporality," 195. See also idem, "God Everlasting," in *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Steven M. Cahn and David Shatz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[60] Alan G. Padgett, "Response to Paul Helm," in *God & Time: Four Views*, ed. Gregory E. Ganssle (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 62.

Now if Parmenides really promoted the timelessness of Being, then one would expect him to consciously or unconsciously adhere to the B-theory. The denial of past and future in his statement seems to confirm this expectation. The fact that he speaks about Being existing now however would fit better to the A-theory. But this would conflict with the immutability of Being. Canale notices the problem in the statement of Parmenides and solves the tension by interpreting the now not as pointing to the present, but rather as suggesting that for Being everything is equally present. This again fits the timelessness of the B-theory which, as Canale notes, is the only possible understanding of Parmenides given that the now is only accessible through appearances and sensory perception, both of which are denied that ability to reach Being.[61]

Parmenides concluded

So Parmenides affirmed the atemporality of Being. Instead of examining things through sensory perception he examined Being through thinking, through the *noûs*. While things can be red at one point in time and green at another, they always are. By negating all the *semata* (representations) of sensory perception he constructed the idea of Being as the ground for everything there is (*via negativa*). If Being really is to be Being, it has to be immutable and atemporal (since time is the measure of motion/change).[62] Thus timelessness became the first technical interpretation of the primordial presupposition of reason. As the dimensionality of reason, or the first basic understanding of Being as *theos*, it shaped ontology and epistemology of the next two and a half millennia.[63]

---

[61] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 81, n. 2.

[62] Of course if Being is timeless and the things are in time, then the things cannot be. This was the problem that Parmenides left for the philosophers after him. See Marías, 24.

[63] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 84.

Plato

Parmenidian timeless ontology was further developed by Plato and Aristotle. For

Plato, the timeless realm was no longer separated from reality as conceived by

Parmenides. For Plato the timeless realm is the realm of timeless beings or ideas. The

world as temporal is not opposed to timelessness, but is instead imitating it.[64] Through

this imitation the temporal things participate in the ideas. Thus timelessness orders and

conditions the temporal world. As epistemology is based on ontology and Platonic

ontology focuses on the timeless realm, knowledge also has to be timeless in order to be

true knowledge.[65] Truth (as correspondence to reality) can only be found in timeless

ideas. The question is, How can temporal humanity know these ideas? To answer this

question, Plato had to make man partially timeless. The eternal human soul, which before

the incarnation existed in the timeless realm and knew the ideas but forgot them due to its

fall, is reminded of them by the things of this world.[66] This system was so influential that

Whitehead, in an attempt to illustrate its significance, remarked that "the safest general

characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of

---

[64] Ibid., 86. Things do not truly and fully exist, but they imitate their timeless idea. Since Being has to be one, a horse that truly is can only be one. This one truly existing immaterial timeless "horse" Plato calls the idea of a horse. Therefore the many horses in this world cannot truly exist, but they share the existence of the idea of a horse. Their defective existence is grounded in the existence of the idea. Thus Plato solved the problem inherited from Parmenides. See Marías, 44-47.

[65] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 87.

[66] In the famous example of Plato in *Meno* (81d-84), Plato lets Socrates question a little boy until he himself discovers the laws of geometry. This is proof that his soul already knew the concepts but had merely forgotten them. Through *anamnesis* it was reminded of them. Augustine effectively challenged this example by asking why this remembrance only extends to intelligible things and why no one, who has never seen a cow, can be questioned in such a way that he remembers the idea of a cow. See Augustine, *The Trinity* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 12.15.24. Augustine here argues against the reincarnation of the soul, a view that developed in Plato's thought out of the teaching about the preexistent soul. See Colin Brown, *Christianity & Western Thought: A History of Philosophers, Ideas & Movements*, vol. 1 (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 32-33.

footnotes to Plato."[67] Canale ascribes this influence to the fact that Plato was the first to fully develop an ontological and epistemological framework, thus providing the basis for reason to function. Since Plato's conception of the *theos* was timeless as a result of his interpretation of Being, reason "was born at the same time that it became timeless."[68] Through Plato's influence, the timeless interpretation of the dimensionality of reason became so unconditionally accepted, that for most of the history of Western thought, it was identified with reason itself. People overlooked, forgot, or denied the hypothetical nature of reason.

Aristotle

That timelessness dominated the history of philosophy in the way it did is due to the fact that Plato mediated the Parmenidian gap between the temporal and the atemporal.[69] This bridge was elaborated and improved by Aristotle. He changed the timeless ideas into timeless forms, which are now part of things. Form and matter make up all the substances that exist, yet they are not parts but "ontological moments" that can be distinguished solely by the intellect.[70] The relationship between time and timelessness

---

[67] Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York, N.Y.: Free Press, 1978), 39.

[68] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 88.

[69] Of course the fact that the Platonic system had striking parallels to Christianity is another factor that contributed to its propagation. Augustine praised the Platonists for their insight and their proximity to Christian doctrine. Augustine, *The City of God and on Christian Doctrine*, De civ. Dei 8.5, 9-11. He even claimed that, had they been alive, they would have become Christians. Augustine, *Of True Religion*, trans. J.H.S. Burleigh (Chicago, Ill.: Regnery, 1959), 4.7. Pannenberg points to three aspects that made Platonism especially appealing to early Christians: the doctrine of one God, the ideal of a life in alignment with God, the connection between epistemology and grace. See Pannenberg, *Theologie Und Philosophie: Ihr Verhältnis Im Lichte Ihrer Gemeinsamen Geschichte*, 40.

[70] See Marías, 70. Neither form nor matter can exist without the other. Formless matter does not exist and neither does immaterial form. See Anthony John Patrick Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (London: Routledge, 1993), 25-27. God is of course exempted from this rule.

thus became closer, but is still extrinsic.[71] God, or Being, is still interpreted as timeless,

the unmoved mover. Thus knowledge also has to come from that realm. However, since

the Platonic idea is now present as form in the things, there was no longer any need for a

preexisting soul in order to grasp them—the soul is merely the form of a human being.

All one needs is the ability to abstract the form from the substances. To do this, Aristotle

postulated the active intellect, which filters the timeless form out of the phantasms of

sense perception.[72] The concept of knowledge through abstraction proved decisive for the

development of classical reason.

Kant

The next major turn in the history of philosophy that Canale discusses is the

thought of Kant, who rejected Platonic-Aristotelian metaphysics. In Kant's system,

knowledge is not grounded in timeless reality. Does this mean that he also changed the

dimensionality of reason from timelessness to temporality?[73]

In a very simplified way one could say that Kant rejected the Aristotelian notion

of the active intellect. For him, there was no way to get from the sensible intuition to

Being itself. Canale says that "Kant put asunder what since Parmenides was considered

as belonging together, namely thinking and being."[74] Epistemology is no longer grounded

---

[71] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 92.

[72] Marías, 79.

[73] According to Kant, the primordial presupposition or, in his words, the "formal condition *a priori* all appearances" is time. In contrast to space, time is not only a condition of external intuition, but also of internal intuition, meaning the intuition of ourselves. See Immanuel Kant, *Kritik Der Reinen Vernunft*, Philosophische Bibliothek, vol. 505 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1998), 109 (B50). For an outline of Kant's demonstration of this fact see Jaspers, 37-38. Canale, however, stresses that in speaking about this most basic *a priori* Kant "did not deal with time in the realm of reason's dimensionality." Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 100. The accuracy of his evaluation will become obvious below.

[74] Ibid., 97, n. 2.

in ontology, but is transcendentally grounded in itself. The *thing-in-itself* (*noumen*) is not

knowable, only the phenomena are. Since there is not active intellect to abstract the form

from the phantasms, the form had to come from somewhere else. Kant's breakthrough

was his insight that the form of things is actually a condition of cognition in the subject.

As Aristotle moved Plato's forms from the heavens into the things, so Kant moved

Aristotle's forms from the things into the subject.[75] Knowledge then comes from

sensation shaped by the *a priori* forms, categories, and transcendental ideas of the mind.

By making the *logos* independent from the *ontos*, Kant accomplished the turn to the

subject that was traditionally ascribed to Descartes.[76]

The step from a timeless to a temporal dimensionality of reason was nevertheless

not taken by Kant. Timeless ontology is not denied by him; there still is a *thing-in-itself*.

He merely holds that it is incognizable. But that unknown reality, which also includes

God, remains untouched. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant defends his understanding

of the notion of time against those who claim an absolute reality of time: For Kant, time

is in the subject before all sensation and in this sense it is real, the "real form of internal

intuition." But it has only subjective reality. If it is in the subject, time basically is

---

[75] Ibid., 99, n.1. The subjective productivity was a part of human knowledge since in the Middle Ages Aristotle's active intellect became a faculty of the human soul. This raised the question whether knowledge was marred by the human participation. "Since Nicholas of Cusa the answer to that question was that the productivity in the thinking of man is an image of the creative productivity of God in the generation of his creatures." Pannenberg, *Theologie Und Philosophie: Ihr Verhältnis Im Lichte Ihrer Gemeinsamen Geschichte*, 191.

[76] Even though the Cartesian *cogito* was the first and most certain knowledge, this does not mean that it is also the basis of all knowledge. In fact, Descartes could only start with the *cogito* (or end his methodical doubt there) because God guaranteed that the fact that what he was thinking was not an illusion caused by a demon of some sort. So Descartes is falsely credited with making thought subjective. Pannenberg traces this misinterpretation of Descartes from Hegel to Heidegger. See Pannenberg, *Theologie Und Philosophie: Ihr Verhältnis Im Lichte Ihrer Gemeinsamen Geschichte*, 143-144, 202. Canale however shows by quoting from *Being and Time* that Heidegger obviously shared our assessment of the Cartesian discovery. Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 96, n.2. Pannenberg sees the Cartesian tension between thinking and the infinite as the ground of thinking in Kant's philosophy. In the transcendental

nothing, since it is not in the *things-in-themselves*.[77] The *thing-in-itself* is outside of time

for Kant, just as it is for Plato. It is clear that Being, even though it is no longer the object

of knowledge, is understood as timeless.[78]

In addition to the timeless ontological framework, Canale also shows that the now

independent epistemological framework is still in the timeless realm. For Kant the

sensible world is not the realm of *doxa* or opinion, but the realm of knowledge. Yet, true

knowledge is still regarded as universal, exact, and necessary which is clearly a feature of

timelessness.[79] This can also be seen in the fact that Kant kept the classical ideal of

objectivity and therefore was even forced to claim that there is an actual relation between

the categories of thought and the *things-in-themselves* through the intuitions.[80] In

addition, knowledge according to Kant has its ground not in the sensory experience

---

aesthetics Kant puts the infinite before the finite. In the transcendental analysis the infinite is abstracted from the finite. See Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 25-27.

[77] Kant, 111-113 (B52-55). See Jaspers, 38. Also, when speaking about time in the corresponding section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant always seems to imply that time consists of before, simultaneous, and after. He says that "Time is 1) not an empirical term which was abstracted from any experience. The being coeval or consecutive would not even come into perception, if the conception of time would not underlie *a priori*." Kant, 106 (B46). This sounds like the tenseless or B-theory of time which traditionally has been the understanding of those who see ultimate reality as timeless. For a final verdict on Kant's view concerning McTaggart's two theories, further study would be necessary which would go beyond the scope of this work.

[78] Kant also interprets God as timeless. See Immanuel Kant, *Kritik Der Praktischen Vernunft Und Andere Kritische Schriften*, 6 vols., Werke, (Köln: Könemann, 1995), 3:431 (123) or idem, *Kritik Der Urteilskraft* (Berlin: 1790), 343-345. See also Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 101, n. 2. Neither God's existence or nonexistence can be known or demonstrated rationally. Nevertheless God as highest being remains a necessary ideal for thinking. It is the concept that closes and crowns all of human cognition. Its value in separating the intuition from the real God will be demonstrated if the existence of God is claimed by practical reason. Kant, *Kritik Der Reinen Vernunft*, 706-707 (B668-669). Concerning the reality of God, the mentioned postulate of practical reason was all that remained. Yet this argument very quickly lost its appeal. See Pannenberg, *Theologie Und Philosophie: Ihr Verhältnis Im Lichte Ihrer Gemeinsamen Geschichte*, 201.

[79] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 99, n. 1. A temporal understanding of knowledge would be subject to change over time and therefore could not claim universal validity or necessity.

[80] Kant, *Kritik Der Reinen Vernunft*, 246 (B185). It is hard to see how this could be possible in his system. Pannenberg laconically states that "the objective validity of our subjective acts of cognition can hardly be demonstrated that way." Pannenberg, *Theologie Und Philosophie: Ihr Verhältnis Im Lichte Ihrer Gemeinsamen Geschichte*, 192. See also Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 103.

(matter), but in the *a priori* forms in the subject. This understanding is similar to that of classical philosophy, for example, in the statement by Aquinas: "Now a thing is known in as far as its form is in the knower."[81]

Notwithstanding the fact that Kant operated with timelessness as primordial presupposition, Canale holds that he still paved the way for the introduction of temporality.[82] For Kant both the epistemological and the ontological frameworks operate with an atemporal *theos*. Yet since Kant, ontology is no longer the object of epistemology. This basis-function for epistemology is taken over by the phenomena. The phenomena are not abstract forms or generalizations of objects but individual, concrete representations through the senses. Knowledge of the individual, even though it is just the individual appearance, was not possible in the Parmenidian-Platonic-Aristotelian conception where the individual realm is the realm of opinion. Thus Canale says that "the origin of sensible knowledge, in its particularity, seems to point to the possibility of a temporal primordial presupposition." [83]

For reasons of brevity this study will skip Canale's discussion of Jaspers as the last representative of the timeless dimensionality of reason. His point that this primordial presupposition dominated Western thought from its beginnings to modernity is clear enough from what was outlined above. Also, the Greek thinkers and Kant together

---

[81] Aquinas, Ia, 75.5.

[82] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 100, n. 3.

[83] Ibid., 101, n.3. He immediately adds, of course, that such pointing can at best be called "dim," since the phenomena are disconnected from Being.

provide the philosophical basis for almost all of theology.[84] To further follow Canale's

thought one now needs to turn to the temporal dimensionality of reason.

Time

As outlined above, the phenomenological analysis of the structure of reason

revealed the need for a primordial presupposition to determine the *theos* as ground of

meaning for the epistemological and ontological framework. This presupposition cannot

be rationally justified and makes room for more than one possible "correct"

interpretation. In the history of philosophy two versions of the dimensionality of reason

can be detected, namely timelessness and temporality. Timelessness, as has become

obvious, was the only existing concept until the second half of the nineteenth century

when another view arose. Temporality is a rather late development.[85]

Heidegger: Temporal Ontology

The philosopher whom Canale chooses as a representative of a temporal system is

Martin Heidegger. Canale first mentions Heidegger's teacher Edmund Husserl, who

denied the existence of the *thing-in-itself* and thus set reason into a temporal ontological

framework.[86] But since Husserl was more interested in the epistemological realm, this

insight was not fully developed and it remained up to Heidegger to bring the implicit into

---

[84] Ibid., 7.

[85] Ibid., 115.

[86] Ibid., 116-118. Canale does not mention however the earlier denial of the *thing-in-itself* in German idealism. Schulze and Fichte criticized this Kantian concept. See Pannenberg, *Theologie Und Philosophie: Ihr Verhältnis Im Lichte Ihrer Gemeinsamen Geschichte*, 217. For Fichte there is nothing beyond the subject. The non-ego exists only through the self-positing of the ego. Marías says that in Fichte "reality loses its character as a substance and becomes pure dynamism" (311). In a similar manner, Schelling and Hegel also rejected the *thing-in-itself*, and thus the timeless realm of Kant's ontology. While this is not decisive in the light of the obvious temporality of Heidegger's system, it is important to keep in mind this older move towards temporality, since Pannenberg is influenced by Hegel.

sharp focus. Heidegger was the first after Parmenides to consciously address the issue of

the primordial presupposition of reason. Neither Plato, nor Aristotle, nor Kant had dealt

with this question, but simply assumed the Parmenidian interpretation of the

dimensionality of reason.[87] Consequently, Heidegger saw himself as the first true

philosopher and defined as his task the destruction of the history of philosophy.[88]

Obviously he had realized that for the achievement of his goal in *Being and Time*, namely

the interpretation of time as the possible horizon of any understanding of Being, he could

not rely on any of his earlier colleagues.

Canale states that it is impossible within the scope of his work to give even an

introduction to the thought of Heidegger.[89] The implications for the present paper are

obvious. Nevertheless it is necessary to mention a few simplified features of Heidegger's

philosophy so as to see an example of a temporal dimensionality of reason, which will

help one to better evaluate Pannenberg's understanding.

Heidegger is concerned mostly with ontology. He deserves credit for developing

the ontological framework of reason from a temporal concept of Being.[90] This is done

through Husserl's method of phenomenology. Such a choice already implies a temporal

primordial presupposition, since it negates or ignores the existence of the *thing-in-itself*

---

[87] For Plato and Aristotle see Canale, *A Criticism of Theological*, 89. For Kant see ibid., 102. Aristotle dealt briefly with it when he discussed the most general notion of Being in his Metaphysics, yet not as detailed as Heidegger did.

[88] Heidegger, *Sein Und Zeit*, 19-25. See Dorothea Frede, "The Question of Being: Heidegger's Project," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 60.

[89] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 122, n. 2.

[90] Since epistemology is based on ontology, the resulting theory of knowledge also has to be temporal if it is to be coherent. In this way, Heidegger's system, even if it does not deal with the epistemological framework, has a foundational bearing on this part of the structure of reason as well. See ibid., 120, n. 2.

or the timeless realm behind the appearances. While Kant limits the reach of knowledge

to the appearances, Heidegger declares the appearances to be reality. Consequently, if

Heidegger speaks about Being he speaks about the concrete existence of humans, their

Dasein (being there). Canale summarizes the meaning of *Dasein* as "the concrete, factual,

individual reality of man as existent."[91] The existence of human beings then is the basis

for the existence of the study of Being.[92] In *Dasein* as the basis of any consideration of

Being, Being is not something behind the appearances. Being appears to us in its

everydayness not as abstract entity, but as beings which we encounter primarily as we put

them to use.[93] Contrary to all the thinkers of the past, Heidegger does not start with

neutral, present things that exist independently of humanity, he starts with human beings

and to them things are always in some relation, of some use.[94]

---

[91] Ibid., 122, n. 1.

[92] Heidegger states that fundamental ontology must begin by "clarifying the possibility of having any understanding of being at all—an understanding which itself belongs to the constitution of the entity called *Dasein*." Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York, NY: Harper, 1962), 274. There would be no question of Being, no Seinsfrage, if it wasn't for some human being asking it. And every answer to it will be given through and in a human being. If we want to understand Being, we have to start with ourselves. We are the starting point, our own existence as the prerequisite for any ontology. Heidegger calls this our *Dasein* (being-there).

[93] Harrison Hall, "Intentionality and World: Division I of Being and Time," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 125. Heidegger applies Husserl's method not merely to the modes of Being, but to Being itself. The category which corresponds to Being like the seeing of colors corresponds to red would be usage. Through usage in our everyday business we perceive the "Being" of things.

[94] To put it in the famous example of Heidegger's workshop and the hammer: a hammer has its perceivable properties, but for the most part, when we use it we do not perceive them. Our focus is not on the hammer, but on its use. And this is true for the doorknob and most other things. It is this invisible functioning of equipmental things that is definitive of their being-in-the-world. This means that we encounter the being of things through our usage. So the hammer to us is not in the first sense brown or heavy or made of wood and metal, but it is that with which we drive nails into wood. We do not perceive it as a hammer that exists independently or without any relation to us. Heidegger puts it this way: "The peculiarity of what is proximally ready-to-hand (zuhanden) is that, in its readiness-to-hand, it must as it were, withdraw in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically. That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves. On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work." Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 99.

It is clear that this opens up the possibility for Being to change over time, as usage

changes. Existence now comes before essence. The temporal understanding also has

consequences for knowledge, since a hammer would be something totally different for

somebody who uses it as a chair. But not only the essence and knowledge of objects

becomes relative, even our own existence, our *Dasein*, is thoroughly temporal. Canale

states that "Dasein is in a structure from which meaning flows to him [*sic*]. This structure

springs from temporality and stands on it."[95] Marías puts it this way: "It is from the

standpoint of time that Dasein comprehends and interprets being."[96] This means that

Dasein as being-in-the-world is on the one hand conditioned by our past existence.

Heidegger calls this *Dasein*'s *thrownness*.[97] In our everydayness we are in a certain

context and this context shapes what we are and thereby what things are for us. On the

other hand *Dasein* is open towards the future; it is to be determined by the future. This

takes the form of a choice of possibilities of meaningfulness on the basis of our life

situations (past).[98] With every possibility ignored or realized *Dasein* is shaped anew. This

relative element is only extinguished at death. In dying the ultimate and total

understanding of *Dasein* becomes possible.[99] "The way we project ourselves into the

---

[95] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 122, n. 3.

[96] Marías, 428. According to the spelling rules of this paper, being should be capitalized in this quotation. Julian Marías is also among the philosophers who thought in the direction of a temporal dimensionality. Besides him Canale lists Ortega y Gasset, Jean-Paul Sartre, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Ernst Bloch. Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 127-129.

[97] See Marías, 434.

[98] Charles B. Guignon, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 8.

[99] Heidegger replaces Descartes' "cogito ergo sum" with a "moribundus ergo sum": I die, therefore I am. The reasoning behind this paradoxical view is that death is the only instance where I cannot be replaced. Someone else could marry the woman I would have married and somebody could fill my place in society. Other appointments where I cannot be replaced, like a surgery, I can avoid if I want to. The only

future (ahead of ourselves) while taking with us our past (being already in) in our immersion into the present (being at home with) is what Heidegger designates as the 'ecstases' of temporality."[100] This means not ecstatic but extended in contrast to punctual. "Ecstases" are *Dasein*'s ways of reaching out to its death, its roots, and its surroundings. Thus meaning flows to *Dasein* from its temporality. Time itself is a result of *Dasein*'s ecstases. This is why Heidegger could say that "Being is not something other than time."[101]

Two caveats are added by Canale to the view that Heidegger operates on a temporal primordial presupposition. One is the fact that Heidegger sees the forgetfulness of Being in classical metaphysics and the late progress towards temporality as a necessary development. Here Heidegger slips into a timeless epistemology in his interpretation of the historical process. On a truly temporal ground of Being, no historical

---

thing where I cannot be replaced and that I cannot avoid is death. Hoffmann puts it this way: "Death totalizes me, for due to death my identity will become complete. Death individualizes me, for it imposes upon me the one and only experience that is inescapably mine." Piotr Hoffman, "Death, Time, History: Division II of Being and Time," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 199.

[100] Frede, 64.

[101] Martin Heidegger, "The Way Back into the Ground of Metaphysics," in *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: An Anthology*, ed. William Barrett and Henry David Aiken (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 1962), 214. It might be added that from Heidegger's language about the past, the present, and the future it can be inferred that he tends towards an A-theory understanding of time, which has traditionally been the condition for a temporal dimensionality of reason. It seems that the A-theory is a necessary conclusion for those who take the *Lebenswelt* seriously. Wolterstorff argues that, since tenseless sentences cannot express all that tensed sentences do, humans cannot function without the indexical system of temporal reference (e.g., 70 years ago) which presupposes the A-theory. In everyday life, therefore, one simply needs the A-theory. To go back to the example from the person who is without a point of reference in time, without a now, and then is told about the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989: if she wanted to watch the news about the events in Berlin, how should she determine when to turn on the television? Obviously she would need to know when the fall is now—but there is no now according to the B-theory. Tenseless theorists would answer, that the turning on of the television needs to be simultaneous with the fall of the Wall. But what if in the course of her life she turns on the television more than once? How would she know which of the existing events of turning on the television she has to make simultaneous with the fall? This example is an adaptation of Mellor's example of the turning on of the radio and Wolterstorff's critique of it. See D. H. Mellor, *Real Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), and Wolterstorff, "Unqualified Divine Temporality," 198-201.

necessity is possible.[102] Second, Heidegger does not recognize the spontaneity of the subject in the structure of reason. For him, there is only one possible dimensionality, namely time. This leads him to conclude that Parmenides and philosophers after him built a groundless metaphysics. Of course Canale rejects this view on the basis of the result of his preceding study which has shown the relativity of the primordial presupposition.[103]

Temporal Epistemology

Some implications of a temporal ontology have already been mentioned above. Since Heidegger is focused on Being and no other philosopher had developed a theory of knowledge within a temporal epistemological framework,[104] Canale outlines some of the characteristics that such a construction would need to have.

A first characteristic has to do with objectivity. As mentioned above, Kant failed to renew his concept of objectivity together with his reconceptualization of epistemology. He maintained that certainty in the cognitive subject depended on universality and necessity of the knowledge which are guaranteed through the timeless interpretation of Being.[105] Within a temporal epistemological framework, however, Being is historical, or one could say it is found in the Parmenidian *doxa*. Being therefore changes and this has implications for knowledge. Just like Heidegger's *Dasein* is stretched out over time,

---

[102] See Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 123, n. 3.

[103] Ibid., 125, n. 5.

[104] This is also due to the newness of the problem. Teilhard de Chardin and Karl Marx have provided coherent interpretations of temporal reality in its changing flux. However neither the evolution of de Chardin nor the class struggle of Marx is developed from a temporal epistemological framework, even though ontology is understood in that way. Again the one who understood the greatness of the task best is Heidegger. His solution is the way of poetic expression but it seems that reason would lose its coherence and stop functioning if Heidegger's route were to be followed. See ibid., 143-153.

[105] See Kant, *Kritik Der Reinen Vernunft*, 169 (B122), 306 (B256), and Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 133, n. 1.

every being is temporal and therefore both subject and object are infinitely complex. Instead of freezing the poles of meaning in a static relationship as in classical timelessness, temporal epistemology has to grasp them through and in the flux of time.[106] To know a thing is to interpret it from its past into the future. Clearly this entails a continuous incompleteness of knowledge. Husserl speaks about indeterminacies caused by unlimited possibilities of the future. In the temporal flux, these "indeterminacies define themselves more clearly to turn at length into clear data themselves; contrariwise, what is clear passes back into the unclear."[107] Objectivity thus would need to be redefined in order to do justice to the change in the character of knowledge.

A second characteristic has to do with abstraction. Since Aristotle abstraction has been the central tool of cognition, but in a temporal epistemological framework it would have to take on a whole new form. In classical epistemology it was achieved by the *via negativa*, the negation of the *Lebenswelt* (temporal reality) and considered superior to it, since it had left the world of appearances behind. In a temporal understanding, however, the *Lebenswelt* is affirmed and abstraction functions as a simplification of the infinitely large and complex net of lines of intelligibility flowing from the past, present, and future. Abstraction therefore results in something that is less than the *Lebenswelt*.[108] Similarly,

---

[106] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 136, n. 1. In contrast to classical epistemology, a temporal understanding does not have to deal with the difficulty of a *chorismos*, a gap between subject and object. Ibid., 139.

[107] Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1967), 137. He continues: "To remain for ever incomplete after this fashion is an ineradicable essential of the correlation Thing and Thing-perception. If the meaning of Thing gets determined through what is given in Thing-perception (and what else could determine the meaning?), it must require such incompleteness." Ibid.

[108] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 135.

the *a priori* categories of thought are reinterpreted as stemming not from timelessness, but from the past experiences and acts of knowledge.[109]

The third aspect is the greatest problem in connection with a temporal epistemology. It is the fact that coherence of meaning cannot be achieved from a human standpoint. Yet a *theos* as ground of unity has to be left out of the picture since it would entail a (theo-)logia which is the goal yet to be achieved.[110] Canale suggests a way out through the reshaping of the idea of transcendence. If it was freed from the *via negativa* of timelessness that started with Parmenides and prevails to this day, the *theos* would be freed from the timeless primordial presupposition and could function in a temporal setting. It could be integrated, however, only after the philosopher has developed at least a basic onto-logical structure of reason which enables him to "hear God's voice."[111]

With these thoughts Canale ends his discussion of the onto-theo-logical structure of reason. From the insight into the hypothetical nature of reason he concludes that in order to make a decision for one of the two interpretations of the primordial presupposition one needs "to meet ultimate truth at least in a partial and germinal way."[112] This could be attempted in philosophy or theology. Canale of course opts for theology and goes on to survey how the dimensionality of reason has shaped the doctrines and meaning of Christianity. This insightful exposition will not be treated

---

[109] Ibid., 138.

[110] Ibid., 152, nn. 1, 2.

[111] Ibid., 151, n. 3.

[112] Ibid., 158.

here.[113] Rather this paper will now focus on the last part of Canale's work with the intention of understanding his claim for a temporal interpretation of theological reason.

Theological Reason

Since Christian theology so far has not addressed the dimensionality of reason but rather uncritically accepted the classical interpretation of it, the need for a criticism of theological reason is obvious. The possibility, however, is not. How should it be done? Merely constructing an alternative theological reason would not be scientifically valid. Following Kant, Canale holds that the alternative should not be an imagination of our mind but should be grounded in reality through a phenomenological analysis.[114] In order to be able to gain a viewpoint from which to decide how theological reason should be constructed, in timelessness or in temporality, one has to find what Canale calls a "fact of theological reason"[115] which is not the product of any philosophical interpretation of the primordial presupposition.[116] This fact could then be analyzed phenomenologically in order to decide for the dimensionality of theological reason. Such a viewpoint can only be found prior to the incorporation of Greek thinking into Christianity which limits the

---

[113] One result that should be mentioned is that both the system of Thomas Aquinas and the one of the Heideggerian Rudolf Bultmann operate with timelessness as primordial presupposition. See ibid., 283.

[114] Kant was in a similar situation when he wrote his critique of pure reason. Reason produced contradictory results and consequently something had to be wrong with reason. See ibid., 285, n. 1. So, when inquiring into the possibility of synthetical *a priori* sentences, he turned to the fact of synthetical *a priori* sentences in pure mathematics as providing the proof for the possibility. This fact of reason, according to Kant, would have saved Hume from the erroneous conclusion that all our knowledge comes from experience. See Kant, *Kritik Der Reinen Vernunft*, 71-79 (B19-B23).

[115] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 284.

[116] In philosophical thinking the presupposition would be consciously chosen and therefore could not provide the original theological reflection which is needed.

search to the NT church or earlier.[117] In following Heidegger, who in his search for the

true meaning of Being went back to the origins of Western thinking, namely pre-Socratic

philosophy, Canale chooses to go back as far as possible into the history of Christianity.

This leads him to Exod 3:14-15, the only text that reveals something about the biblical

view of Being and therefore "provides the background of intelligibility for the Biblical

constitution of meaning as a whole."[118] The perspective chosen for the examination of the

text is therefore that of the dimensionality of reason.

Since the focus of this paper is to compare Canale's work to Pannenberg in terms

of independence from Greek philosophy, a detailed discussion of the history of the

interpretation of Exod 3 is not necessary. Also it is not intended to critique Canale's own

exegesis of the pericope. What is important is his method of examination and the results

and implications for the dimensionality of theological reason.

Canale's approach could be described as contextual phenomenological exegesis—

contextual, because he does not attempt to interpret the name of God in Exod 3:14

independently of the surrounding verses and sees the entire answer given by God as a

coherent whole which constitutes the meaning of the אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה . His approach is

---

[117] Cullmann affirms that the NT had a temporal understanding of time (53).

[118] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 289, n. 2. In 2001 Wolterstorff chose the same text as the basis for his argument for a temporal God. See Wolterstorff, "Unqualified Divine Temporality," 187-188, 203-208. Traditionally, however, the passage was used to identify the biblical God with a preconceived, Greek notion of Being. See for example Augustine, *The Confessions and Letters*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. J.G. Pilkington and J.G. Cunningham, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988), Conf. 7.10.16, 7.11.17, and the discussion in Eckard König, *Augustinus Philosophus: Christlicher Glaube Und Philosophisches Denken in Den Frühschriften Augustins*, ed. Vinzenz Buchheit, Studia Et Testimonia Antiqua, vol. 11 (Munich: Wilhem Fink, 1970), 39.

phenomenological because he applies an *epoché* and suspends his presuppositions to be able to describe, not construct or prove, the meaning that shows itself in the text.[119]

One first result of this exegesis is the affirmation of the ontological character of the passage. Canale stresses, however, that while the text gives "an explicit biblical basis for interpreting God ontologically," "the meaning of Being expressed in the text is not revealed by it."[120] The point is that the philosophy that fills this void must not be extra-biblical. Rather one should continue to question the text for further ontological clues as to the form of such a philosophy. One strong clue is the open ontological structure of the text discovered by Canale. He interprets the sound-name of God in the present tense, as an affirmation of God's presence. God is the one who exists. Such a statement however would be just an empty concept if it were not for the identification with the God of the fathers. Furthermore the meaning of the name is also opened up for further development in the future through the declaration that the name will remain for all generations.[121] Thus the meaning of the name of God "is placed in temporal historical extension which embraces the three temporal *ecstasies*, namely past, present, and future."[122] Consequently, if one asks for guidelines or clues in the philosophical interpretation of

---

[119] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 296-297. *Epoché* means suspension of judgment.

[120] Ibid., 338. See also n. 2 on that page.

[121] Ibid., 344, n. 2.

[122] Ibid., 344. Canale does not mention the parallels to Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* at this point, maybe to avoid the impression that Heidegger's was a biblical philosophy. Nevertheless the similarities are obvious. Later when discussing his examination of the text in regard to the dimensionality of reason, he refers to Heidegger's method of starting with *Dasein's* appearance. See ibid., 352, n. 2. Within this context, then, the statement that humans can never fully grasp God could get a new dimension through the fact that God is never finalized by death.

both God and Being,[123] the lines of intelligibility of God's ontic presence, which flow

from these *ecstasies*, must be the ground for a biblical view. This leads Canale to the

conclusion that in biblical thinking the study of ontology must be preceded by the study

of God. This necessitates a reversal of reason's classical onto-theo-logical structure

towards a theo-onto-logical one.[124]

This rearrangement of the structure however does not yet answer the question

about the primordial presupposition of the text.[125] To discover it, Canale examines the

ontological and epistemological framework of the fact of theological reason in Exod 3 in

regard to the dimensionality in which they function. God's ontic presence is taken as the

basis of the ontological understanding of his Being.[126]

Concerning the ontological viewpoint, Canale notes that the text identifies Being

and appearance. God reveals himself (Exod 3:2) and what he reveals is he himself. The

subject and the object are identical.[127] Accordingly the platonic *chorismos* (division,

---

[123] Canale emphasizes that the two are closely connected in their meaning, yet they are not identified as one. The meaning flows from God to Being. See ibid., 350, n. 3; 352.

[124] Ibid., 347.

[125] Here Canale is more careful or thorough in his investigation than Wolterstorff, to whom the fact that something has a history, as in this instance God obviously does, is enough ground for the establishing of the A-theory. One needs to mention that Wolterstorff's investigation is not about the structure of reason, but about the question whether God is in time or not: of course a temporal God, as *theos* of the biblical structure of reason would be equivalent to a temporal dimensionality of reason. See Wolterstorff, "Unqualified Divine Temporality," 203.

[126] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 354. Traditionally the ontic presence was devalued as appearance with the connotation of inauthenticity over against the real, authentic Being in the timeless realm. Such an understanding however results from a specific interpretation of the ontological framework, which is to be the result of the investigation itself. Therefore Canale puts any preconceived notions about the ontic presence under his methodological *epoché*.

[127] According to Canale "current theology" holds that God appears not as himself but rather as he appears. Even though he does not give any references for this claim it seems reasonable given the fact that his would be the consistent view in a timeless framework. See ibid., 358, n.2. Those who do speak about self-revelation, like the trend in German theology that originated from Hegel, often did this as a reaction to the enlightenment, which had destroyed the Bible as revelation. The consequence for many was to dismiss the historical parts of Scripture and limit God's revelation to that which he reveals about himself. Thus

separation) between God or Being and this world is rejected by the text, as is the resulting notion of the *analogia entis*.[128] If God as himself is in the same "level" of Being as Moses and Moses is temporal, God and Being, which co-appear, are also understood as temporal in Exod 3. Canale therefore concludes that the fact of theological reason operates within a temporal ontological framework.[129]

In regard to the epistemological viewpoint one now could simply infer that because epistemology is based on ontology the biblical epistemological framework also has to be a temporal one. Canale however demonstrates this common primordial presupposition through a biblical example in which the temporality of knowledge is revealed. He chooses Exod 6:2-7 as a parallel passage to Exod 3, which addresses "Being (YHWH) from the perspective of the epistemological framework, that is, of the categories and cognitive processes that the subject is supposed to have and follow in order to grasp and constitute meanings."[130] The goal, then, is not to discover the primordial presupposition, but to see if the cognitive procedure in the text corresponds to

reason or science could no longer criticize revelation. See Wolfhart Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), 8-10. Revelation as self-revelation has become the dominant understanding through *Dei Verbum*, the consensus of the Second Vatican Council on the topic of revelation. Already the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) defined the content of revelation as God himself and his will. But the rest of its formulations discuss revelation as the transmission of information so that as a consequence the notion of a self-revelation was pushed into the background. The Second Vatican Council then defined revelation not as an instruction about salvation but as a real self-communication of God. The human being is not the recipient of divine information, but in his whole existence drawn into a life-partnership with God. This self-revelation happens through word and act in the medium of history. See Josef Schmitz, "Das Christentum Als Offenbarungsreligion Im Kirchlichen Bekenntnis," in *Handbuch Der Fundamentaltheologie: Traktat Offenbarung*, ed. Walter Kern, Hermann J. Pottmeyer, and Max Seckler (Freiburg: Herder, 2000), 5-6, 10.

[128] The *analogia entis* (analogy of Being) holds that beings exist through analogy to Being. For Plato this analogy consists in some form of participation. Beings exist because they participate in Being.

[129] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 359. He immediately points out that this must entail a redefinition of temporality. By no means should this conclusion lead anyone to think that God is pulled down into the imperfect temporal realm. Rather the temporal realm needs to be freed from any derogatory connotations.

[130] Ibid., 365.

the temporal interpretation of Being.[131] Before this can be answered it is important to note that in Exod 6 the object of knowledge is YHWH himself, just as the appearance in Exod 3 was Being. The *logos* knows Being in the appearances. One first observation of Canale is therefore that epistemology follows ontology in the rejection of the *chorismos*.[132] A second point that Canale notes is that the knowledge of YHWH as expressed in VV. 3-7 consists of the *ecstasies* past (God of the fathers, covenant), present (God is with Israel in its bondage), and future (promise of delivery). This series will lead the people to know God as YHWH their God.[133] The parallelism to temporal ontology is obvious. Canale therefore concludes that the epistemological framework is grounded on the same temporal primordial presupposition as the ontological framework. The biblical theory of knowledge consists of a gathering of lines of intelligibility from the ontological extension of God. "Knowledge about God in himself and knowledge about His acts coincide."[134] In these two passages from the roots of Christian thinking, Canale has found his fact of theological reason that demonstrates that it is possible to use a temporal primordial presupposition.

With the insight into the temporality of the dimensionality of reason in Scripture Canale ends his book. Through a phenomenological study the relativity of the primordial presupposition was revealed and the exegesis of a fact of theological reason established

---

[131] Ibid., 366.

[132] Ibid., 372.

[133] Ibid., 376-377.

[134] Ibid., 378. This statement sounds very much like Pannenberg's first thesis in his programmatic work *Revelation as History*: "According to the Bible, the self-revelation of God did not happen directly, as for example through a theophany, but indirectly through his actions in history." Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*, 91. This is not to be understood as a negation of propositional revelation. Theophanies are not denied per se, but only as having God as content. This already points to a tension between Canale and Pannenberg in regard to Exod 3.

the possibility of a criticism of theological reason. In terms of the search for an independent, scriptural approach to reason, Canale's work constitutes a major step. His analysis of the structure of reason is the condition for any discussion of an autonomous biblical reason. In addition he has applied this analysis to the history of Western thought and exposed the two existing options for the interpretation of reason. Finally Canale identified temporality as the presupposition that seems to reign in Scripture. The way is open for the study and construction of theology's own ontology and epistemology on the basis of Scripture and in independence from philosophical traditions.

CHAPTER III

PANNENBERG'S SYSTEM

Introduction

Motivated by the fact that theology as an activity of human thought inescapably

makes use of reason and by the insight that through the predefinition of what reason is

philosophy has a huge influence on theology, this thesis examines two Protestant thinkers

concerning the independence of their views of reason. The previous chapter outlined the

study done by Fernando Canale in his book *A Criticism of Theological Reason*. It was

shown how Canale establishes the possibility of an alternative conception of theological

reason based on a temporal primordial presupposition.

This chapter will turn to another Protestant theologian who also wrestled with the

role of reason in theology and like Canale chose not to simply take over the concepts

formed by philosophy. The objective is once again to first understand the philosophical

system and second to probe its independence from preconceived philosophical notions.

Wolfhart Pannenberg, professor emeritus of systematic theology at the University of

Munich, has devoted his life and work to the task of demonstrating the truthfulness of

Christianity in the present world. He is a major contributor to the discussion about

science and religion[1] and his life work, the three-volume systematic theology, has as its

---

[1] One can see his involvement in the science-religion debate in every one of his books. The second volume of his systematic theology basically consists of a harmonization of biblical concepts with the current trends in science. For other examples see Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of*

theme "the truth of the Christian dogma and the Christian kerygma per se."[2] Before the

Enlightenment, the authority of Scripture and of the church was accepted without

challenge and thus the concept of objective truth was guaranteed. But the Enlightenment

and higher criticism destroyed these authorities. As a reaction only internal faith was

supposed to guarantee truth (Schleiermacher) yet this also failed because it was

subjective. Despite this fact, according to Pannenberg, much of systematic theology still

acts as if it could presuppose (in the prolegomena) the truth of Christianity. Instead of

such futile pretense, one needs to make the truth question the object of systematic

theology. The fact that truthfulness is not presupposed does not mean that it needs to be

created by or in the theologian. It already exists but it can only be known through

exposition. This is what Pannenberg ventures to do: arguing for truthfulness by

expositing a theological system. The systematic character of the presentation is itself an

argument for its truthfulness since it shows internal and external coherence.[3] One early

aspect of this elaborate, systematic attempt to make Christianity intelligible to a

---

Science (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976); idem, "Theological Questions to Scientists," *Communio* 15, no. 3 (1988): 319-333; idem, "Theological Appropriation of Scientific Understandings: Response to Hefner, Wicken, Eaves, and Tipler," *Zygon* 24, no. 2 (1989): 255; idem, "The Emergence of Creatures and Their Succession in a Developing Universe," *Asbury Theological Journal* 50, no. 1 (1995): 17-25; idem, "The Theology of Creation and Natural Science," *Asbury Theological Journal* 50, no. 1 (1995): 5-15; idem, "Faith in God the Creator and Scientific Cosmology," *Communio* 28, no. 3 (2001): 450-463; idem, "God as Spirit and Natural Science," *Zygon* 36, no. 4 (2001): 783-794; idem, "Notes on the Alleged Conflict between Religion and Science," *Zygon* 40, no. 3 (2005): 585-588; idem., "Problems between Science and Theology in the Course of Their Modern History," *Zygon* 41, no. 1 (2006): 105-112; Wolfhart Pannenberg and Niels Henrik Gregersen, *The Historicity of Nature: Essays on Science and Theology* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2007), Wolfhart Pannenberg and Ted Peters, *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith*, 1st ed. (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/J. Knox Press, 1993).

[2] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:10. Pannenberg is aware, of course, that the truth claims of Christianity will remain claims until the *eschaton*, the final revelation of God. His goal nevertheless remains the same with the intention of demonstrating that religious statements cannot be dismissed categorically as untrue. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:26, 2:10.

[3] See Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:28-36.

secularized audience that has received a lot of attention from theologians all over the world stems from his first book *Revelation as History*.[4]

A complete account of Pannenberg's theology is neither intended nor possible within the limits of this thesis.[5] The following pages will provide a brief sketch of some of his lines of thought. The goal is to make the eschatological emphasis of his system intelligible to the reader. After that, the three poles of reason's structure in Pannenberg's thinking, the *ontos*, the *logos*, and the *theos*, will be treated successively.[6]

Revelation as History

The situation of German theology that Pannenberg experienced as a young scholar at the University of Basel, where he studied under Karl Barth in 1950, and at the University of Heidelberg, in the following year, consisted of a "gulf between the historical-exegetical and the dogmatic-systematic studies."[7] Pannenberg and a group of

---

[4] Quotations from this work in this paper will be taken from the German original. The English translation was published seven years later: Wolfhart Pannenberg and others, *Revelation as History* (New York: Macmillan, 1968). Together with his "Heidelberg circle" of colleagues Pannenberg in this book claims that, according to the biblical witness, the self-revelation of God happens through his actions in history. This theme has accompanied him for the rest of his life and is an important part of his mature system. For biographical data on Pannenberg see Hasel, 96-101, and Wolfhart Pannenberg, "An Autobiographical Sketch," in *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988).

[5] It is widely acknowledged that Pannenberg is one of the most comprehensive thinkers of our time. His spectrum of knowledge and writing reminds one of Aquinas. Yet even though his thought "has expanded almost encyclopedically into many of the major disciplines studied in a modern university" he has "retained remarkable continuity with the core of his early writings." Braaten and Clayton, 9. This refers to "the radical historical character of his work" and the importance of revelation and resurrection. It is therefore legitimate to focus the introduction to his thought on the aspect of revelation as history which started off Pannenberg's theological career.

[6] For an introduction to Pannenberg see the chapter "Pannenberg's Approach to the Dogmatic Enterprise" in Grenz, *Reason for Hope*, 11-43.

[7] Carl E. Braaten, "The Current Controversy on Revelation: Pannenberg and His Critics," *The Journal of Religion* 45, no. 3 (1965): 225. In Heidelberg Gerhard von Rad was complemented by the form critic Günther Bornkamm. Their interpretation of the Bible was not easily harmonized with the dogmatics of the Heidelberg systematic theologians Peter Brunner and Edmund Schlick.

young theologians of all specializations frequently discussed the relation of the Bible understood as revelation, as used by systematic theology, and the Bible understood as a historical document, as used by historical-critical exegesis. Their solution took on the form of the book *Revelation as History* in which they dealt with the relationship of revelation and history, from the viewpoint of OT and NT scholarship, as well as of systematic theology and church history. Pannenberg wrote the introduction and the systematic chapter in which he set forth the new program. The other three chapters provided the supporting groundwork for his theses.

Pannenberg's view of revelation is based on the concept of revelation as self-revelation. The notion that the highest or noblest content of revelation is God himself was accepted from the earliest times of Christian history. However, the exclusivity of self-revelation (i.e., the notion that all revelation needs to be a self-revelation of God in order to be truly a revelation) is the legacy of German idealism which reacted against the destruction of propositional revelation during the Enlightenment.[8] It was Hegel who first explicated the concept of self-revelation in its strict sense.[9] Karl Barth was another famous proponent of this view of revelation. Pannenberg accepts the priority of self-revelation without denying that there are other forms.[10] However he and his Heidelberg

---

[8] See Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Die Krise Des Schriftprinzips," in *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 13-15; Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*, 8; and Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:35-36.

[9] According to him self-revelation in order to be a true revelation of the self can only be one. If there would be more than one then each of them would be not a revelation of the self but of parts of the self, which says nothing about the subject to be revealed. The concept of the oneness of revelation has become an important by-product of revelation as self-revelation. Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*, 8.

[10] He treats them extensively in Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:217-233. However, as Löser points out, Pannenberg in contrast to Barth wanted to create a theology that was not "a theology from above," a label he attached to Barth's system. Consequently, his "theology from below" could not integrate revelation in the traditional understanding in which it broke into this world from above. Therefore he is

circle pointed out in *Revelation as History* that the Bible recounts no instances which speak about God directly revealing himself.[11] Rather God is to be known indirectly[12] through his actions in history.[13] The Bible mentions the self-revelation of God through his actions in its earliest parts, mostly in connection with the events of the Exodus.[14] This view was modified through the prophets of the exile. According to Pannenberg Deutero-Isaiah saw the captivity of Israel as an annulment of the covenant between Israel and God. The victory of the Babylonians was interpreted by the on-looking world as defeat of YHWH. Deutero-Isaiah proclaimed the reestablishment of Israel and thereby also the vindication of YHWH which would lead to the conversion of all peoples. YHWH would

---

almost exclusively concerned with the self-revelation in history. Werner Löser, "'Universale Concretum' Als Grundgesetz Der Oeconimia Revelationis," in *Handbuch Der Fundamentaltheologie: Traktat Offenbarung*, ed. Walter Kern, Hermann J. Pottmeyer, and Max Seckler (Freiburg: Herder, 2000), 92.

[11] Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*, 11-16. He denies that the revelation of the name, the concept of the word of God or even the law constitutes such a form of self-revelation. See Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:220-226 or, for a summary, Braaten, "The Current Controversy on Revelation: Pannenberg and His Critics," 227. This denial is based on certain presuppositions. Pannenberg says that the giving of the law would be a self-revelation if the law was identical to the will of God which was identical to the essence of God. The same is true if the name would reveal the essence of God or if the Word of God that was given to the prophets had God himself as content. Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*, 17.

[12] Indirect revelation means that the information is not the content of the revelation, that which is revealed directly, but is revealed through something else. Content and intended communication are not identical. The transmission is broken. The meaning will only be accessible if the revelation is viewed from a different angle. History does not reveal God directly, but only indirectly, if seen from the right angle. Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*, 16-17.

[13] Barr has criticized the notion of revelation through history in several of his writings, challenging among other things the biblical basis for the claim that history is "the absolutely supreme milieu of God's revelation." James Barr, "Revelation through History in the Old Testament and Modern Theology," *Interpretation* 17, no. 2 (1963): 193. Barr emphasizes that there are other axes of revelation such as "direct verbal communication between God and particular men on particular occasions" (201). See also James Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation: A Study of the Two Testaments*, Currie Lectures, 1964 (London: S.C.M. Press, 1966), 65-102. Pannenberg has reacted to this criticism and the emphasis on "word revelation." Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:251-281.

[14] See, e.g., Deut 4:35, 39; 7:8-9; Exod 7:17; 8:6, 18; 9:14; 10:2; 14:31; 1 Kgs 18:37, 39; 20:13. Strangely enough Pannenberg in *Offenbarung als Geschichte* discusses these texts. Yet in his systematic theology, in what appears to be a confusing account, he interprets them as limited to requiring monolatry (God as the only God of Israel) whereas the exilic revelation proclaimed monotheism (other gods do not exist). See Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, I:214. This however does not work with all of the texts and so he resorts to postulating later vitiations of the text. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, I:225.

reveal his deity and himself through the repatriation of the Israelites.[15] The self-revelation

of God was no longer seen in God's actions of the past but was now expected of his

actions in the future. The repatriates saw that the conversion of the nations had not

happened, but that God had reestablished them and thereby himself as the God of Israel.

However, the question of the truthfulness of God's predictions and his reliability

depended on the conversion of all peoples. The apocalyptical writers of Judaism

projected this event into the eschatological future. "Under the experience of the shifting

forms of governance of the world powers, the eschatological expectation of a final

realization of the kingdom of God was developed. This was connected with the notion of

a realization of justice for the individual in the resurrection and judgment."[16] The end

(*eschaton*) would bring the recognition of YHWH by all of humanity and thereby the

final self-revelation of God.[17] This shift towards the end, even though it developed

historically, is a logical consequence of the notion of history as self-revelation and the

oneness of revelation. Only if history is complete can one speak of a true self-revelation

Originally the change brought about through the exile was that the self-revelation will be complete only at the end of history.

[15] Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*, 95-96.

[16] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:227. This apocalyptical expectation of the resurrection is so vital in Pannenberg's understanding that he states: "If the apocalyptic expectation should be entirely untenable to us, then the primitive Christian faith in Christ is also untenable to us; then the continuity of that which would remain of Christianity after discounting such features would be broken with Jesus and primitive Christian proclamation, including Paul. We must be clear of what is at stake when we discuss the truth of the apocalyptic expectation of a future judgment and the resurrection of the dead: we are dealing directly with the foundation of the Christian faith. Without the horizon of the apocalyptic expectation we could not grasp just why the man Jesus should be the finally valid revelation of God, why in him and only in him God himself should have appeared." Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Grundzüge Der Christologie* (Gütersloh: Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1964), 79. The question if this expectation is still intellectually feasible today is answered in the affirmative, because the hope that goes beyond death is seen by Pannenberg as being constitutive of human nature. Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Was Ist Wahrheit?," in *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 221, and idem, *Was ist der Mensch?: Die Anthropologie der Gegenwart im Lichte der Theologie*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 31-40.

[17] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:212.

of God.[18] This of course creates a tension with the idea that God can be known in the present. This tension is solved by Pannenberg through his interpretation of the Christ event.

Jesus' ministry stood in the Jewish tradition and proclaimed the apocalyptic consummation of the earth into the kingdom of God. [19] Yet at the same time he also taught that the kingdom of God was already present. The resurrection of Jesus was interpreted by the NT as prolepsis of the *eschaton* when all the dead will rise. This, as Pannenberg sees it, led to a new understanding of Jesus' earthly life and his claim of the presence of the kingdom. It was now seen as the proleptic presence of the *eschaton*. For those who believe in Christ, the old prophecies are *already* present even though the end is *not yet* here.[20]

Thus the revelation of God in Jesus solves the great tension that is characteristic of all indirect revelation. Since God's actions in history are an indirect revelation, one can never know for sure if a complete revelation of God is reached through one specific event or even a series of events. Each of them could and probably does reveal only one aspect of God. Only the totality of all actions could give a full picture. In God's case, the totality of actions is the totality of reality. "Everything there is" as the full self-revelation of God can be understood in two ways. If it is taken as the fixed cosmos, one follows the track of

---

[18] Braaten, "The Current Controversy on Revelation: Pannenberg and His Critics," 227.

[19] Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*, 92.

[20] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:230-233. The earliest explicit statement, that Jesus not only revealed the plan of salvation (which was a secret from before the earth was made and which the prophets who spoke about it did not understand) but also God himself, is found in Ignatius. However, without the word revelation, Pannenberg sees the same meaning already in John 1:14 and Heb 1:1-2. The deity of Christ makes this a logical conclusion.

Greek natural theology. If on the other hand it is understood as the whole of reality in its change over time, that is, as history, one follows German idealism.[21]

Two major obstacles occurred on this second track. The first was the question of how one isolated event like the life and death of Jesus can be the absolute revelation, if history is revelation only in its entirety. The second question concerned the history after Jesus Christ. Was there a progress in revelation in the last 2,000 years? Since one is getting closer to the totality, there should be some advance, but then the revelation in Christ would not be absolute.[22] Both of these questions were solved through the proleptic understanding of Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection.[23] If Jesus anticipated the end, then his life as an isolated event can be the absolute revelation and after him no progression is possible since the end was already anticipated in Christ. At the same time God becomes fully knowable in the present since Jesus provides a possibility from which one can meaningfully speak about the totality of history.[24] Furthermore the Christ event now also meets the criteria of the singularity of self-revelation.[25]

---

[21] See Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*, 17-18. After Schleiermacher and Schelling who set forth the thought of history as revelation, it was again Hegel who systematically completed the concept and united it with the idea of self-revelation.

[22] For Hegel this progress was limited to an improvement in the understanding of the revelation in Christ. However there are no reasons why there should be no progress in revelation itself. Ibid., 18-19. Kierkegaard's reaction to the notion of a progressive revelation after Christ was negation of the universal-historical approach to Christianity.

[23] Braaten holds that this is the point where Pannenberg departs from Hegel and brings in something new into the idealist view of history. Hegel's conception had "suffered during its transmission through the nineteenth century because of the inability of its exponents in showing how history in its totality can be the self-revelation of God without relativizing the Christ event." Braaten, "The Current Controversy on Revelation: Pannenberg and His Critics," 227.

[24] Without such a supernatural event, it would be impossible to grasp the meaning of history, since it is always changing in the development of itself. This is why philosophers like Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer, and Löwith "had no confidence in the possibility of universal history." Carl E. Braaten, "Toward a Theology of Hope," *Theology Today* 24, no. 2 (1967): 220. After Hegel and his self-unfolding of the absolute spirit nobody had the hubris to believe that he or she held the key for a philosophy of universal history. Löwith says that "the final reason, why the future remains dark 'for us,' is not the myopia of our

The centrality of the life of Christ, especially of the resurrection, which results from this conception, is obvious. Pannenberg insists that the resurrection can be demonstrated by means of historical research, yet his interpretation of historical knowledge is broader than its usual understanding of it among historians.[26] His whole theological construction will fall if the resurrection did not take place, since the future is anticipated in this event.[27] The concept of anticipation is essential to Pannenberg's thought. It figures prominently in his exposition of revelation as history, and it will also be of fundamental importance for his ontology and epistemology. According to Labute, it is "the foundation on which his system is built."[28]

With his conception of history as the locus of the divine self-revelation, Pannenberg had to face opposition from every side. The Barthians and the *Heilsgeschichte* theologians had discarded history in favor of a meta-history or pre-history. The Bultmannians, on the other hand, had disbanded history in favor of a

---

knowledge, but the lack of those religious premises that made the future transparent to the ancients." Löwith, 20. Pannenberg however does not intend to structure and predict history from the viewpoint of the resurrection. He emphasizes that "this does not make possible, however, an oversight over the drama of world history as from a stage box. . . . Jesus Christ, the end of history, is not available to us as the principle of a 'Christologically' grounded total view of world history. . . . No one can make the *eschaton* into a key to calculate the course of history, because it is present to us in such a mysterious, overpowering, incomprehensible way." Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Redemptive Event and History," in *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. Claus Westermann (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1963), 334.

[25] Löser, 92. For an overview of Pannenberg's understanding of historical science see Charles Villa-Vicencio, "The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg," *Journal of Theology for South Africa* 16, no. 1 (1976): 30-34, and Fred H. Klooster, "Historical Method and the Resurrection in Pannenberg's Theology," *Calvin Theological Journal* 11, no. 1 (1976):5-33. Braaten mentions the insistence on historicity resurrection as a point which is seen by Pannenberg's critics as "theologically fatal and historically fanatic." Braaten, "The Current Controversy on Revelation: Pannenberg and His Critics," 233. For a summary of the criticism of Pannenberg's Christology see Stanley J. Grenz, "The Appraisal of Pannenberg: A Survey of the Literature," in *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988), 36-46.

[26] Löser, 92.

[27] See Pannenberg, "Was Ist Wahrheit?" 221.

subjective, existential history. Braaten comments that Pannenberg through his work has revealed the underlying unity of these camps, which lies in their rejection of history and their emphasis on revelation in the word.[29] This means that the events alone cannot communicate, or at least not enough or clearly enough. Therefore one needs a form of interpretation through the word.[30] Here Pannenberg differs. To him revelation does not require some special insight in order to be discovered. Thesis three of his seven theses in *Revelation as History* states that "In contrast to the different appearances of God, the revelation in history is open to everybody who has eyes to see."[31] One can see how this

---

[28] Todd S. Labute, "The Ontological Motif of Anticipation in the Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37, no. 2 (1994): 275.

[29] Braaten, "The Current Controversy on Revelation: Pannenberg and His Critics," 226.

[30] If not all of history is revelation, but only a special thread called salvation history, then one can never know which event is a revelation and which isn't. Consequently, theologians, in following James Barr, have used the spoken word as a tool for determining which parts of history are revelations. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:256-257.

[31] Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*, 98. According to Pannenberg what YHWH does in history is often described as being a revelation for all people. It is not some pious hallucination. The truth about the revelation in Christ, according to Paul (2 Cor 4:2-4), is so obvious that its perception should be the natural, only possible result of the encounter with the event. There is no need for an elevation of the natural human cognitive powers. If people are blinded to these truths it is not because they need an elevation of reason but because the need to become reasonable and truly look at them. One does not need faith to see it. On the contrary, who looks at it impartially will start believing. When Pannenberg emphasizes history as revelation this is not in opposition to the history of Israel as revelation. It does not mean all of history, including the bike in China that has a flat tire as well as Mohammed Atta flying into the WTC tower, is a revelation of God. Rather it means history that is truly history and not just the imagination of a pious scribe. In *Revelation as History* Pannenberg states that "the history of Israel up to the resurrection of Jesus Christ is indeed a succession of very special events. Therefore they also have something special to say, which could not be heard from other events." Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*, 100. So the history of Israel still has a special place, yet it is history "as it presents itself to today's historical judgment and as it is reconstructed on the basis of historical-critical examination." Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:254. The difference to salvation history is that the biblical text is not authoritative anymore. The difference to kerygma theology is that there is a core of history supposed to exist behind the text. The second position has lately been challenged in OT scholarship by the Kopenhagen school (Lempke, Thompson, etc.), which sees this historical-critical assumption as fundamentalist imagination. See Ingo Baldermann, ed., *Religionsgeschichte Israels Oder Theologie Des Alten Testaments?* Jahrbuch Für Biblische Theologie, vol. 10 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner Verlag, 1995), and Schaper Joachim, "Auf der Suche nach dem Alten Israel? Text, Artefakt und »Geschichte Israels« in der Alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft vor dem Hintergrund der Methodendiskussion in den Historischen Kulturwissenschaften - Teil I+II," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 118, no. 1+2 (2006): 1-21+181-196.

conception resonates with Pannenberg's anti-supernaturalism, which is the result of his overall aim to make Christianity intelligible to a more or less naturalistic audience.

In contrast to Canale, Pannenberg does not take the Bible as revelation.[32] Since revelation happens in history, a written work cannot be revelation. It can only be a testimony to the fact that revelation happened in Jesus Christ. Without that anticipatory event all one could report would be partial glimpses of the yet to come complete revelation at the end of history. In a similar manner, Pannenberg's conception of revelation as history automatically negates the revelatory character of nature.[33]

This brief outline of the beginning and basis of Pannenberg's thought will be sufficient to understand how the concept of anticipation came into his theology and why it is so important for him. Such an understanding is necessary in order to facilitate the study of the role of reason in his system. In order to answer the question about the philosophical independence of Pannenberg's theology in comparison to Canale's approach, this study will now look at Pannenberg's understanding of reality, knowledge, and God—the three pillars of reason discovered by Canale. Since, as the study of Canale has shown, almost all of history was dominated by a timeless interpretation of reason, divergence from timelessness will function as a working definition of philosophical independence in the examination of Pannenberg. Consequently the underlying question in the following pages will be whether one can trace temporality or some other non-timeless presupposition in Pannenberg's system.

---

[32] Canale holds that "all Scripture is revealed." See Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 382.

[33] On the one hand, nature could be seen as an act of God and thus be revelation. However, as pointed out above, Pannenberg accepts Hegel's notion of the oneness of revelation as self-revelation. It is here that nature is disqualified as is history without the proleptic Christ event. Partial revelations are no revelations at all.

The Ontological Framework

The first of the poles of the structure of reason to be examined is the object, that which is known. Which primordial presupposition lies at the root of Pannenberg's understanding of ontology? For the discussion of his ontology this study will examine two aspects pointed out by Pannenberg himself in regard to pre-Aristotelian ontology. One aspect is that which exists, that is, all things or beings. The other is the abstract concept of Being in contrast to what *is* not.[34]

Beings or Entities

Concerning the beings, one sees that, as mentioned above, Pannenberg's theology relies heavily on the current scientific consensus in its truth claims as well as in its methodology.[35] Schmitz summarizes his approach by stating that "Pannenberg declares himself to be the advocate of mature reason, in the meaning given to it by the Enlightenment, to which a mere positivistic authority is intolerable."[36] The attempt to make philosophy intelligible to one's contemporary scholarly world necessitates the agreement on basic presuppositions.[37] In the case of ontology this means that one is not to

---

[34] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 52. This distinction between beings and Being was denied by Heidegger who consequently proclaimed the end of metaphysics and banned God from philosophy. Ibid., 11-12.

[35] His position on the scientific character of theology is put forth in Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977). The English title is *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*.

[36] Josef Schmitz, "Die Fundamentaltheologie Im 20. Jahrhundert," in *Bilanz Der Theologie Im 20. Jahrhundert: Perspektiven, Strömungen, Motive in Der Christlichen Und Nichtchristlichen Welt*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimmler and Rovert Vander Gucht (Freiburg: Herder, 1969), 242. Pannenberg continuously criticizes Schleiermacher for his flight into subjetivity. See, e.g., Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:51.

[37] Grenz says that Pannenberg explicates Christianity "always in terms of *contemporary* human knowledge." Grenz, *Reason for Hope: The Systematic Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 80 (emphasis mine). The problem involved in such an approach is that human knowledge always changes over time. In

expect Pannenberg to follow a traditional supernatural account.[38] It would be hard to make Christianity intelligible today if it was grounded on Augustine's hierarchical ontology between *nihil* and *esse*. This is also true of the classical understanding of creation.[39] Nonetheless, Pannenberg adheres to both a hierarchy of beings and a creation. Creation in his understanding refers less to the cause as to the purpose of beings.[40] Similarly, the hierarchy is not a hierarchy of more or better participation in Being.

---

addition, no science is without tensions in its explanations of reality. Since reality is a unity, these tensions are generally taken to result from mistakes or gaps in the theories. If Pannenberg strives to achieve external coherence of theology with all other sciences, he is modeling his system after theories that are themselves internally inconsistent. To put it more radically, Pannenberg is integrating mistakes into his theology, dooming it to be outdated with any discovery or turn of consensus in the sciences which he tries not to contradict. For the influence of science on Pannenberg see Philip Hefner, "The Role of Science in Pannenberg's Theological Thinking," in *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988). For the inconsistencies in physics, one of the sciences Pannenberg is in dialog with, see Lee Smolin, *The Trouble with Physics: The Rise of String Theory, the Fall of a Science, and What Comes Next* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 3-17.

[38] That is true despite the fact that in his systematic theology Pannenberg begins with God and establishes him as creator before dealing with the beings, the creatures. This approach is different from his previous writings on anthropology in which he began with humanity as beings and from there established God as creator. See Grenz, *Reason for Hope: The Systematic Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 80. The earler writings referred to are Pannenberg, *Was ist der Mensch?: Die Anthropologie der Gegenwart im Lichte der Theologie*, and idem, *Anthropologie in Theologischer Perspektive* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983). One reason for this change of method might be the insight that metaphysics cannot demonstrate God but only the infinite. This can only be equated with God if the idea of God is already presupposed. Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 18. In any case it is unlikely that Pannenberg would contradict a scientific consensus.

[39] Pannenberg from his scientific standpoint interprets the separation of the waters (Gen 1:6) as meaning the construction of a dome. What appears to the present author as a projection of medieval cosmology (which falsely claimed to be biblically grounded) into the text on Pannenberg's part, leads him to the conclusion that the creation account "is an impressive testimony of archaic natural sciences, which rationally explained the order of the universe by analogy to human knowledge of engineering." Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:140. This is taken as a model for a "biblical" approach to the creation issue. Theology should describe creation "with the means of the current state of perception of the world respectively." Then, of course, each description as outlined above will become wrong as the consensus of science or society changes over time. While this may sound like a temporal understanding of epistemology it raises the question of what the creation actually is. Is there really something that deserves the name creation? If so, what is it? What is the common denominator between for example Pannenberg's and the medieval approach, since they both describe creation. Can creation change totally without becoming something else? For Pannenberg the doctrine of creation is a necessary consequence of his doctrine of God. See Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:106, 2:77. If the empty or abstract doctrine itself as grounded in God is immune to change, is there not some timeless realm behind history? A timeless God perhaps?

Nevertheless it follows the classical outline rather closely. At the lowest level are inanimate beings, the expanding and cooling universe after the Big Bang. The next level is reached in animate beings,[41] among which the plants are limited in their mobility and consequently the lowest group. Animals are already acting in relation to their environment yet only humanity is able to fathom the divine reality as distinguished from everything finite.[42] This does not mean that humanity were more divine or more spiritual beings than stones. The usage of the term "animate" is not to suggest that living beings have an *anima*. Pannenberg denies the existence of a soul of any kind.[43] Humanity's top position also does not mean that, from a biological perspective, evolution could not proceed to even higher creatures. Such a statement can only be made if one knew the source or origin of the universe and humanity's relation to it. Since the source of the universe is a matter of faith, such a statement is only possible theologically.[44]

---

[40] Creation is not merely another, more spiritual, label for the results of the natural sciences. Rather it points to the structural links between created beings and the totality of creation. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:149. The goal is the generation of independent creatures. Ibid., 2:160-161.

[41] Ibid., 2:152.

[42] Ibid., 2:159. The ability of humanity to grasp the divine, according to Pannenberg, could be caused by the fact that, in contrast to animals, humanity can distinguish between past, present, and future.

[43] Pannenberg, *Was ist der Mensch?: Die Anthropologie der Gegenwart im Lichte der Theologie*, 31-37.

[44] As the meaning of history is determined only by its totality, its end, the coming into existence of life as part of history can also only be interpreted from the end of history. This end is proleptically present in Jesus Christ. See Grenz, *Reason for Hope: The Systematic Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 84, n.13. Therefore the meaning of the *genesis* of life as creation can at this point in time only come from the incarnation. Consequently Pannenberg describes the "striving" of evolution towards independent beings as leading up to and making possible "the self-differentiation of the eternal son and the father in the relationship of the creature to the creator." Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:161. Only if God is the creator „can the story of Jesus Christ be interpreted as reconciliation of the world through the one true God." Ibid., 2:77. Christology and soteriology are beyond the focus of this study but one can already see that such an understanding will result in a view of redemption as a consequence or continuation of creation. God sets up his kingdom in Christ "to redeem and complete his creation." Ibid., 2:75. Similarly Pannenberg states that "the incarnation belongs to the original design of God's creation of humanity without regard to Adam's fall." Idem, "Eternity, Time and the Trinitarian God," *dialog: A Journal of Theology* 39, no. 1 (2000): 13, n. 9.

On the level of beings Pannenberg's ontology appears in a materialistic form even though its interpretation, or an understanding of it, is not possible without God.[45] In the same line of thinking, Pannenberg also argues against the scientific concept of a closed universe even though his description so far accepted its conclusions. He takes the naturalistic description of reality and inserts God into it without contradicting any of its claims. For instance, he argues that since God as creator (the exact nature of creation will be discussed below) is free, the creation and the preservation of it are necessarily contingent. God did not have to create and does not have to sustain. It would also be possible that nothing exists. Accordingly everything that exists and happens is a miracle: It has God as its cause.[46] This concept is his answer to the Cartesian and Newtonian theory of inertia which viewed God as a watchmaker and gave rise to a mechanical worldview.[47] Such a supernatural aftertaste does not interfere with the explanation of beings and their origin given by the natural sciences.[48] Rather it attaches God as a supplement. Thus Pannenberg's understanding of beings is thoroughly temporal, but that does not make his ontological framework temporal. The question is whether the true

---

[45] This is in keeping with Pannenberg's claim that the truthfulness of Christianity will be measured by its success in making sense of reality. As he stated in 1988: "If the God of the Bible is the creator of the universe, then it is not possible to understand fully or even appropriately the processes of nature without any reference to that God. If, on the contrary, nature can be appropriately understood without reference to the God of the Bible, then that God cannot be the creator of the universe, and consequently he cannot be truly God and be trusted as a source of moral teaching either." Pannenberg, "Theological Questions to Scientists," 320. See also idem, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:10. Again the necessary connection between the idea of God and creator can be seen in the above quote.

[46] Ibid., 2:60-62. Humans are not aware of the miraculous nature of reality because they got used to it. Events that are commonly identified as miracles differ from other events only insofar as they exceed our limited knowledge of the laws of nature. Pannenberg agrees with Augustine and Clarke on this definition of traditional miracles. God does not break scientific laws, but scientific laws are imperfect approximations of the true laws that govern reality—the laws with which God operates.

[47] Ibid., 2:65-67. This development was against the explicit understanding of Newton himself.

[48] This does not mean that Pannenberg was not aware of the tentativeness of those results. He explicitly mentions the theoretical character of evolutionism. See ibid., 2:143, n. 310.

nature of the beings is timeless or not. A step towards finding that out is the examination of Being in the next section. The final decision however will have to be suspended until Pannenberg's understanding of the *theos* is examined.

Being as Ultimate Ground of Reality

The most basic concept of philosophy is the concept of Being. Being is the basis of all that *is*, in contrast to what is not, and traditionally also in contrast to beings. The reason for this traditional contrast is that beings are transient, while Being seems to be non-transient since there always *is* something. In addition, beings usually consist of parts that continue to be when they are taken apart. The existence of beings is hence traditionally understood as being caused by the existence of its parts. The Parmenidian concept of Being discussed above reflects these criteria in its *semata* timelessness and oneness. Another way of interpreting Being, one less mysterious, is the theory of Democritus, which says that everything is made up of various imperishable, indivisible elements which he called *atoma*.[49] Even though the linkage from Democritus to modern science is neither direct nor simple, the second approach has come to dominate contemporary thinking.

Philosophical Background

In his discussion of Being, Pannenberg unites the views of Parmenides and Democritus. The natural sciences have traced the parts down to the level of atoms and even subatomic particles (e.g., quarks). Of the theories that discuss what lies beyond, string theory is the most popular, but none of these models fulfills the criteria of the

Democritian *atomon*.[50] The uncertainty of physics concerning Being opens the door for

Pannenberg to bring God into the picture. He does this through the merging of Dilthey's

hermeneutic, Heidegger's *Dasein*, and a modification of process philosophy based on the

platonic critique of atomism in general. This critique argued that atomism cannot explain

the unity of the many, in the totality of the world as well as in the beings, without

reference to additional principles. These principles would then have to be equal if not

superior in their subsistence to the atoms.[51] Without the One, the many can neither be one

nor many, there would be nothing. The idea of unity, of a One, needs to exist for the

atoms to be able to form a unity. In other words, the whole is more than the sum of its

parts. "In regards to this circumstance one can speak theologically about the origination

of creaturely forms through God's creative activity, without getting into competition with

the scientific enlightenment of the conditions of their emergence."[52] This thought and its

consequences need to be explained in detail, for they constitute the ground on which the

judgment concerning the dimensionality of the ontological framework is to be made.

Since the natural sciences in their search for Being have reached a level of

speculation that is closer to philosophy than to physics,[53] Pannenberg asks if matter in the

---

[49] Helferich, 8-9. For Democritus this theory was not a denial of the gods. He explicitly states that one who understands that a proper relation of the parts, a right middle also relates to a human being, is wise and has nothing to fear from gods or demons.

[50] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:148. The point is that according to Democritus the *atomon* has to be one. The diverse beings are created through different arrangements of this one particle. The quark theory however assumes several distinguished types of quarks.

[51] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 54, 82.

[52] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:149.

[53] At the moment, the string theory is the most common answer to the question regarding what matter is made up of. Yet this theory is impossible to verify empirically. For a basic introduction to the problem see Smolin, xiii-xiv. String theory also involves a high level of imagination or abstract thinking since the natural laws, space, and even time are not working as usual on this micro-level.

end might not be grounded in something immaterial.[54] In following quantum physics he

suggests a field of force from which instant events originate.[55] The philosophical

interpretation of this theory was done by Alfred North Whitehead. According to

Whitehead the final ground of reality is instances which he called actual occasions or

entities. These momentary and ephemeral events, or rather chains of events, make up

reality.[56] However their orientation towards each other is not merely external as in

Democritus's theory. There are no (divine or natural) laws that posit them in a certain

way in time and space. Rather the relationships are an internal part of the event in the

sense that each event is made up of the incorporation of the multiple relations to other

events.[57] This, on the other hand, also means that each event makes up the totality in its

---

[54] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:148.

[55] Pannenberg puts a lot of emphasis on the field theory. He interprets the trinity and especially the Holy Spirit as a field of force. Ibid., 1:414-415, 2:99-104. This aspect will not be discussed extensively in the present paper for lack of space and knowledge in physics on the part of the author. Yet Pannenberg's field theory is not without critics, among others John Polkinghorne who insists on the physical, material nature of fields, which was elaborated by quantum theory. Pannenberg, according to Polkinghorne, interprets the field as immaterial or spiritual and is thus in opposition to the scientific consensus. See John Polkinghorne, "Fields and Theology: A Response to Wolfhart Pannenberg," *Zygon* 36, no. 4 (2001): 795-797. See also idem, *Belief in God in an Age of Science*, Terry Lectures (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), John Polkinghorne, "Wolfhart Pannenberg's Engagement with the Natural Sciences," *Zygon* 34, no. 1 (1999): 151-158, idem, *Faith, Science and Understanding* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Universtiy Press, 2000), and Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Response to John Polkinghorne," *Zygon* 36, no. 4 (2001): 799-800.

[56] Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 27. Consequently, there would be no hierarchy of beings as Pannenberg held because everything that exists would be distinguished only through the structure of the relationships between the actual entities. Here Whitehead collides with Pannenberg's ontology. Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 88.

[57] Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1925), 115. In this way Whitehead sees the relationships as an action of the occasion itself and calls them prehensions. "Each actual entity includes the universe, by reason of its determinate attitude towards every element in the universe." Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 71f. This led Whitehead to the conclusion that the actual entities create themselves and are self-sufficient. Consequently God, even though he does guarantee the unity of the universe for Whitehead, only functions as the locus of the possibilities of individual events, but not as origin of those events. Whitehead says: "It is as true to say that God creates the World, as that the World creates God." Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 528. See Pannenberg, *Theologie Und Philosophie: Ihr Verhältnis Im Lichte Ihrer Gemeinsamen Geschichte*, 354-355. This constitutes a contradiction to Pannenberg's understanding of God as creator. Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 89.

occurrence through the integration of the relations into which it enters. Time and space are also included in the "creation" of each instant occasion. This then leads to as many perspectives of the universe as there are events.[58] Here Pannenberg notes an inherent contradiction. If the actual entity is indivisible, then the distinctions of the relationships which constitute its identity are only abstract and notional. If this is the case, then the actual entity cannot be described as being constituted through the integration of these relations, which are only a theoretical construction. This conclusion also follows from the fact that the relations are created through the occurrence of the actual entity.[59]

It becomes obvious that Pannenberg's critique of Whiteheadian atomism is justified: The parts cannot themselves constitute the whole (if circular reasoning is to be avoided) but need to involve another principle. If every instant event makes up its time and space and itself, there is no real connection between the events. One could not say that Being is temporal or changes over time, because it creates itself anew in every instant. Every being above the level of the actual entities would be an illusion. This is why Pannenberg concludes that the actual entities cannot be the totality of all that truly is,

---

[58] "Every actual entity springs from that universe which there is for it." Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 124. See Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 84. Ford puts it in the following words when he discusses Pannenbergs eschatology: "Thus each occasion has its own world, and there is no single privileged event which could be described as the end of the world or the end of history. Each occasion is the end of its world as the final summation and appropriation of all its conditions." Lewis S. Ford, "The Nature of the Power of the Future," in *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988), 86.

[59] Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Atom, Duration, Form: Difficulties with Process Philosophy," *Process Studies* 14, no. 1 (1984): 25. See also Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 85-86. Cobb agrees that this is "the heart of the problem for Whiteheadians." Yet, he argues, it is more the interpretation of Whitehead that is vulnerable to this critique than Whitehead himself. When his writings might sometime sound like the prehensions were only abstractions, this is the result of the development of his thinking which sometimes leaves inconsistencies. According to Cobb a correct interpretation of Whitehead could solve this problem. Cobb, 62-63. In any case, classical process thought is correctly critiqued by Pannenberg.

cannot be the final real thing. One needs to unite process thinking with the concept of substance to explain the existence of entities.[60]

Whitehead's metaphysical devaluation of non-transient entities over against the temporal events is rejected by Pannenberg as providing the ground of Being, as is the Platonic devaluation of the transient over against the timeless idea. The transient as well as the non-transient is an aspect of Being. Fortunately for Pannenberg, process philosophy, with its connection of Being and time, is not dependent on atomism.[61] What is agreed on in most of process philosophy is the determination of every being through the totality of connections in which it exists. Pannenberg sees process philosophy's critique of the classical timeless notion of substance as the result of a historical development and therefore independent from its particular exposition through Whitehead.[62]

The development consisted in an approximation of nature to geometry.[63] It started with the autonomization of the concept of relation. Aristotle saw relations as accidents of substances. Consequently, for a relationship between two substances, there had to be two accidents, two relationships. Geometry however revealed that these two are identical—there is only one line as a relationship between two points. Therefore the systems of

---

[60] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 91.

[61] Alexander, for example, saw infinite time and space preceding any notion of a limited space or time. Samuel Alexander, *Space, Time, and Deity* (London: Macmillan, 1920), 38-40.

[62] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 54. This independence from Whitehead can also be seen in the fact that Dilthey, in his discussion of the problem of substance, came to a similar solution from an entirely different angle. Dilthey's hermeneutic of historical experience and self-experience said that the totality of life, which is never reached by any human during his or her lifetime, grounds the meaning of the individual experiences. Consequently the meaning changes over time. Heidegger explicitly referred to Dilthey. Heidegger, *Sein Und Zeit*, 397-399.

[63] The following outline of the development is taken from Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 54-55.

relation (space and time) were taken to be something which exists independently from the substances. Kant then defined substance as a subcategory of relationships. According to him it only makes sense to speak about substances in relationship to accidents. Without accidents the substance would be empty, unintelligible. Consequently, the relation is prior to the substance. From the notion that relations are constitutive of substances and the notion that time and space as the systems of relation exist independently, it is only a small step to process philosophy. While process philosophy denies the substance, the line of thought outlined above also resulted in the notion that substances are constituted through the sum of their relations. A substance would then no longer be the timeless basis of things, nor would it be an illusion, rather it would exist or *be* only in relation to the concrete temporal world and change as this world changes. The question is, How could this be imagined? How could a substance be dependent on time? Pannenberg answers this question through another historical sketch.

In contrast to Heidegger's claim that the history of philosophy was dominated by the Aristotelian notion of time,[64] Pannenberg shows that the connection of Being and time is not as new as Heidegger thought. Plotinus, who is of primary importance for Pannenberg's thinking, distinguished time and motion.[65] One of his arguments was the fact that what does not move is nevertheless in time. A second argument was the thought that measuring or counting already presupposes time, which is why time and movement cannot be mutually determined. In his quest to redefine time, Plotinus followed Plato in

---

[64] Heidegger, *Sein Und Zeit*, 17-18.

[65] "Movement cannot be time." Plotinus, *Über Zeit und Ewigkeit: Enneade III,7*, trans. Werner Beierwaltes (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995), 113 (III,7,8). According to Pannenberg this thought is already implicitly present in Aristotle, who, in contrast to Plato and his connection between time and the movement of the stars, brought in the soul as the locus of the counting of these units of time. Pannenberg,

his view that time imitates eternity. Plotinus understood eternity as the totality of life, as the life that always has its entirety present within itself. This totality of life is also Being.[66] Because of the fall of the soul, life on earth is partial and this causes time. [67] Time is the blurred image of eternity in the fragmented reality. It is what keeps it together despite the fall. The totality is only present as ideal future, which resonates with every moment of time. Eternity becomes the goal of finiteness and time is the way to get there. So as in Heidegger, Plotinus gives primacy to the future because the totality of *Dasein* becomes possible only in the future. In contrast to Heidegger, however, Plotinus, when speaking about the soul, meant the "world-soul," that is, a collective soul of the whole of reality, not the individual. [68]

The next step in the development towards a philosophical understanding of temporal substances, according to Pannenberg, came about in Augustine. Augustine rejected the notion of the "world-soul" and limited his thinking about time on the individual soul since for him finite beings were not the result of a fall of the world-soul from its unity with the *logos*, but of God's creative activity. The soul's participation in eternity was made possible for Augustine not through its future totality but through the present as duration.[69] This duration is an image of eternity, an intuition and participation in timelessness. Augustine's conception enabled a more positive understanding of time

Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke, 56. Heidegger either missed this detail or considered it negligible. Heidegger, *Sein Und Zeit*, 421-422.

[66] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 57.

[67] As was pointed out above, Pannenberg does not share Plotinus's belief in the soul. He only endorses his conception of eternity.

[68] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 58.

[69] The soul extends the present moment through *memoria* and *expectation* in both directions. Augustine calls this the distension of the soul. Augustine, *The Confessions and Letters*, Conf. XI, 26, 28,

than Plotinus's fall-theory. On the other hand it represented a step back from his insights, since past and future, *memoria* and *expectation*, are on equal footing, whereas Pannenberg holds that the future should have primacy because of the appearing of the essence in the length of time.[70]

In Kant, then, eternity as the horizon of time was replaced through the subjectivity of the ego. As pointed out above, time for Kant was an *a priori* condition within the subject.[71] In a similar way Heidegger replaced eternity through *Dasein*. Despite the fact that Plotinus's eternity does not figure in Heidegger, the primacy of the future returns in his interpretation of death. The totality of existence (its essence) is only possible in the future.[72] It is at this point that the development unites with Dilthey's insight that the totality of life, which is never reached by any human during his or her lifetime, grounds the meaning of the individual experiences.[73] Thus process philosophy's thesis that everything is constituted through its relationships is reached without a denial of the

---

38. His examples include speech and music. In both cases the soul extends itself to include the past and anticipate the future in order to understand a sentence or enjoy a piece of music.

[70] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 60.

[71] Kant, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, 109 (B50). Pannenberg rejects this notion since the ego is not infinite and therefore the time-consciousness (time as infinite totality) cannot be grounded in the subject. Rather Descartes was correct in holding that the ego can only be thought as a limitation of the infinite. The eternal needs to be prior to the subject. Therefore Plotinus's affiliation of time to eternity remains vaild. See Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 60-61.

[72] Heidegger states that "Wenn zum Sein des *Dasein*s das eigentliche bzw. uneigentliche *Sein zum Tode* gehört, dann ist dieses nur möglich als *zukünftiges*." Heidegger, *Sein Und Zeit*, 325-326.

[73] According to Dilthey "one would have to await the end of life and could, only in the hour of death, overlook the entirety from which the relation of its parts would be determinable." In contrast to Heidegger, however, Dilthey saw that "one would have to await the end of history to have the complete material for the identification of its meaning." Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 26 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), 7:233, 237. The limitation of Heidegger to the individual life is one of the points of critique of Pannenberg.

substance and time and space.[74] Concerning Heidegger, Pannenberg raises the question

whether death truly brings about the totality of life. On the basis of the hope for a future

beyond death—something that can be found among all peoples—he answers in the

negative.[75]

What remains is the incorporation of the future as the sum of all relationships and

possible unification of existence and essence.[76] Since the autonomization of finiteness in

Heidegger and Kant was rejected on the basis of the hope for an afterlife, the future needs

to be interpreted with Plotinus as eternity.[77] This also explains how substances can be

temporal. The totality of life, of *Dasein*, which was discussed above is nothing but the

essence or Being (as the sum of its modes of Being) of an entity. If the essence of a being

can be determined only in the future, then it is not yet decided in the present what the

being *is*. Its nature can only be anticipated in a way similar to Heidegger's concept of

authentic living in the presence of death[78] and Whitehead's notion of the subjective aim.[79]

---

[74] It is in regard to substances which change over time (like living beings) that Pannenberg sees the value of Whitehead's analysis. See Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 88-89.

[75] Ibid., 62. Concerning the hope for an afterlife see Pannenberg, *Was ist der Mensch?: Die Anthropologie der Gegenwart im Lichte der Theologie*, 33.

[76] It is here that this strand of thinking differs fundamentally from Whitehead's thought, for whom the future was infinite and open-ended. This results from his view that every moment is its own reality, complete and finished within itself. God is not the future who makes up the probability of events, but the "everlasting companion through whom relevant aspects of eternal possibilities become effective in each moment." Cobb, 60.

[77] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:115-116. This interpretation does not change the temporal nature of the substances, yet it leaves the door open for a Christian interpretation of ontology. Pannenberg unites this concept with the Jewish hope for the *eschaton* at the end of time. See Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 79.

[78] Heidegger, *Sein Und Zeit*, 262-263. See Anton Hügli and Byung Chul Han, "Heideggers Todesanalyse," in *Martin Heidegger: Sein Und Zeit*, ed. Thomas Rentsch, Klassiker Auslegen (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 140-141.

[79] Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 327, 425, and idem, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1933), 194-195. While he uses the term anticipation, Whitehead does not see anticipation as constitutive for the formation of the subject in a formation of its subjectivity out of

In other words the essence of events and entities changes over the course of time because of their development (events and living beings) or the developments of the contexts in which they stand (inanimate beings). Consequently what they are (*ti en enai*) also changes. Their peculiarity and essence will be determined only at the end of their course in time.[80] This decision about the essence at the end is retroactive. Pannenberg mentions a flower which is already a flower when it starts to grow, even though it does not have a blossom yet. Since the entity was on the way to becoming just that, it is already anticipated and thus present in its unfinished existence.[81]

Eschatological Ontology

Pannenberg starts with the atomistic concept of Being as developed in the natural sciences and its philosophical exposition in process philosophy. He criticizes the inability of this system to explain the existence of entities or unity in general. Into this void he posits his redefinition of the concept of substance. Substances are the principle that Whiteheadian atomism lacks. As outlined above, this principle has the same ontological

its future. In Pannenberg's view Whitehead lags behind Aristotle, who in his analysis of motion already saw the role of the future goal for the process of becoming. For Whitehead this is impossible since he understands becoming as constituting itself in each instant. See Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 89.

[80] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 76. Pannenberg is speaking about the essence of things in themselves—the meaning they have for themselves, not for others. Otherwise, if the meaning something has for others was to be included in its essence, only the end of time would bring about a final verdict, since the changing contexts also change the evaluation of things or events in the past.

[81] Again Pannenberg points to Aristotle's analysis of movement. *Energeia* as movement aims for its *telos*, the completion or *entelecheia*. Then Aristotle says that the motion is the incomplete completion of the thing that moves. So the *energeia* can already be called *entelecheia*. Because the *telos* is at the same time final reality of the *eidos* or content of the *energeia*, Pannenberg states that the *entelecheia* which is already present in the becoming is a form of the anticipation of the essence of the thing that moves. Of course, since this was a general statement and not about the motion of an individual entity, there is always already a completed movement in existence while the other is becoming. This was necessary because of his view of the timeless unchangeable forms of things. Ibid., 77.

status as the *atoma*. Therefore, substances also truly exist; they are.[82] The question is,

however, where do the substances come from if they are more than the sum of the parts?

Are events and substances truly the bottom level? Where does the doctrine of God as

creator and sustainer of creation enter the picture? Pannenberg sees the field from which

the events spring as the Trinity.[83] This field is Being and it is the source of everything

that exists through the intentional occurrence of events which make up the substances.

Space and time also originate from this field simultaneously with creation.[84] The fact that

substances originate in God as the field force does not mean, however, that they are

unchangeable over time. Quite the opposite is true. Through the course of evolution all

living substances changed from very simple organisms to more complex; species

developed and differentiated.[85] This change is enabled through the primacy of the future,

which Pannenberg sees as analogous to the indefiniteness of the Quantum-field. Because

at that level everything is possible and the rules we commonly call the laws of nature do

not apply, the future is not determined by the present but rather, according to physicist

Hans-Peter Dürr, the future becomes a field of possibilities which determines the

---

[82] This does not deny that substances consist of elementary events which themselves are manifestations of field powers. The fact that they are made up of smaller units, however, does not mean that their existence was only secondary. See Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:148, and idem, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 78, 88.

[83] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:99-103. Pannenberg is aware that physical and theological viewpoints are different in principle. Therefore physical theories cannot be directly imported into theology. They are only approximations of the true reality which is also the object of theology. One example is that the field force of the Spirit is different from the physical field theories in that it is not constituted through the occurrence of the events but rather actively or intentionally generates them. Ibid., 2:123.

[84] Ibid., 2:107-109. Of course the notion of an origin of time is paradox since it already presupposes a time for the beginning of time. Plotinus saw this emanation of time from eternity as a crack, which he interpreted as fall. Augustine saw it more positive as willed by the creator. Ibid., 2:116. Neither one of them nor Pannenberg came to a solution.

[85] Ibid., 2:139. The struggle for improvement in the form of conflict and assimilation, which results in a hierarchy of species, is reminiscent of Hegel's idealism.

probability density for the occurrence of each particle in space.[86] The actual occurrence of an event (or chain of events which constitutes a particle in its duration) can then be interpreted as a manifestation of the future. In this sense, the Spirit, equated to the force field of future possibilities, the field from which entities originate, is the origin of everything:[87] the events and also their integration into substances.[88] The future is not just the source or beginning of the entities, it is also the completion of their temporal, tentative existence. "Every new event emanates from God's future, in which all creaturely forms have their origin as well as their completion."[89] This then is Pannenberg's eschatological ontology. A complete existence is possible only in the future, which is eternity as the simultaneous presence of all events. Everything that is not eternal, that is in time, does not yet exist fully. It only is insofar as it anticipates the future (which determinates its sum or essence) or manifests it for one fleeting moment after the other.

The important question is whether Pannenberg's ontological framework is based on timelessness or temporality as primordial presupposition. Since for Pannenberg God is ultimate Being, the *theos*, the final verdict will depend on the discussion of this concept.

---

[86] Hans-Peter Dürr, "Über die Notwendigkeit in Offenen Systemen zu Denken—Der Teil und das Ganze," in *Die Welt als Offenes System: Eine Kontroverse um das Werk von Ilya Prigogine*, ed. Günter Altner (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1986), 17.

[87] Spirit in this context refers not to the Holy Spirit, but the God who is spirit in contrast to material beings. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:463.

[88] Ibid., 122-124. This integration happens through the Augustinian duration of the subject by means of *memoria* and *expectation*. See Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 58. This duration is an appearance of eternity within time. The entering of eternity into time however (or the other way around) will happen only in the future. Then the succession of changing durations will be complete in the sense that they will all be present. This is why the completion or totality of beings is in the future and why their present existence is an anticipation of that future.

[89] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:132. Of course, Pannenberg does not hold that God has a future. What he wants to express through the German genitival construction is that the future belongs to God, that it is the future which is eternity, not the personal future.

Nevertheless one can already detect a trend in his thinking. While Pannenberg would like to combine the thought of a constant essence in becoming with process thinking, it is doubtful whether this is accomplished. [90] If eternity is the totality of life for the individual, or the essence of beings in general, this means that one's essence is not within human reach. It is God who truly determines the future, the eternity, the *eschaton* and thereby also the essence.[91] Pannenberg explicitly states that the essence is not in the hands of human decision, but it can be either achieved or missed in every decision.[92] Anticipation, in referring to eternity instead of death, has not simply changed the focus. While in Heidegger and Dilthey death is the end of the process of freedom through which I determine what I make of myself, in Pannenberg what I make of myself determines not what I am in eternity but only whether I will be or not. My essence is complete in the

---

[90] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 91.

[91] Grenz sees the concept of God as the power that determines everything as one of the major features of Pannenberg's theology. Grenz, *Reason for Hope: The Systematic Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 7. After the exposition of the field theory one can understand how everything that happens or exists derives from the events that spring from the field. The questions of human freedom and predestination that result from this view cannot be treated within the limits of this paper. Cobb, 68-70, criticizes Pannenberg's determination of the present through the future in relation to human freedom. It is somewhat ironic that Pannenberg's reformulation of the doctrine of God was originally designed to meet the atheist criticism that God as an existing being (in contrast to a force field) would limit human freedom. Yet if this study has understood Pannenberg correctly, the power of the future does just the same in an indirect way. See Cornelis P. Venema, "History, Human Freedom and the Idea of God in the Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg," *Calvin Theological Journal* 17, no. 1 (1982): 67, and also Anne Carr, "The God Who Is Involved," *Theology Today* 38, no. 3 (1981): 317. It was already mentioned above how this determination could change the understanding of salvation from an instauration to a completion. Another aspect will be the question of theodicy. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Über Historische und Theologische Hermeneutik," in *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 138.

[92] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 70, 90. This is a very telling detail of the eschatological ontology. Walsh discusses Pannenberg's understanding in contrast to the Greek concept. He falsely calls Pannenberg's approach a geneticist ontology and the Greek's a structuralist ontology. In describing the latter he states: "Indeed, structuralism understands change and development simply in terms of living up to or failing to live up to a predetermined structure of reality." Brian J. Walsh, "Pannenberg's Eschatological Ontology," *Christian Scholar's Review* 11, no. 3 (1982): 235-236. So what Pannenberg finds "so objectionable in Greek thought" turns out to be true of his system as well.

future, which is God. Therefore I have to achieve this future through my actions.[93] If I don't do that, I will not exist in eternity. The consequence is that existence and essence are determined by God from eternity. Substances may change over time; their essence could change only if God would change. If Being is temporal depends on whether or not God changes. Even with a temporal primordial presupposition it seems unlikely that God, though he might act between time as Canale says, is himself subject to change.[94] From that perspective the trend in Pannenberg's eschatological ontology seems to go towards an immutable understanding of Being in the classical sense and a mere imitation of Being through the beings in time.[95]

The Epistemological Framework

As Canale's analysis has shown, the ontological and the epistemological frameworks are interdependent. Ontology includes a *logos* and epistemology knows the *ontos*. Therefore Pannenberg's view of knowledge can be expected to show strong similarities to his interpretation of Being. Pannenberg acknowledges the existence of several approaches to reason and discusses them, yet he does not see that the spontaneity of the subject reaches the level of reason's structure. In his view his interpretation of biblical epistemology supersedes the Greek concept. The fact that the difference might lie

---

[93] Here the Protestant Pannenberg comes rather close to a concept that could be called salvation by works.

[94] The Bible which testifies to God's actions in history at the same time affirms that God does not change. See Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Rom 11:29; Jas 1:17. One needs to distinguish between ontic or ontological change in God and changes in the divine life. According to Canale, God does not change ontologically, there is no ontic/ontological becoming of God like in panthesim, panentheism, and theistic evolultion. Yet Canale sees that in the Bible there is a becoming in divine life because this life is temporal.

[95] Another indicator that points in that direction is the fact that the sum is more than the parts, which was Pannenberg's original point of departure from process philosophy. The essence of a human, for example, therefore must be more than life, more than the sum of its moments or decisions. This "more" is eternally grounded in God.

in the realm of presuppositions is not considered. The focus of the following examination

will again be the question whether Pannenberg has constructed a theological

epistemology independently of the predominant philosophical current. Before outlining

his discussion of the three interpretations of reason, this section will summarize

Pannenberg's view of the biblical concept of truth as an important criterion of meaning.[96]

What Is Truth?

In his 1962 essay *What is truth?* Pannenberg discusses the Israelite concept of

truth in contrast to the Greek model. Since this section is focused on Pannenberg's

approach and because the Greek view was already touched upon earlier, only the

Israelite/biblical model which Pannenberg adopts will be treated here.[97]

Pannenberg starts with the Hebrew word for truth אֱמֶת which is based on the root

אמן. אמן means to confirm, support, uphold in the Qal, to be established, be faithful in the

Niphal, and to be certain (i.e., to believe in the Hiphil). Cognates include אֹמֶן-

faithfulness, אֱמוּנָה-firmness, fidelity, steadiness, and אֵמֻן-faithful, trusting.[98] Things or

words are אֱמֶת, according to Pannenberg, when they are reliable, steadfast, or

---

[96] Despite the fact that this study chose truth as a starting point, it does not adhere to Pasquariello's thesis that Pannenberg made his epistemology and his ontology fit his conception of truth. His reason is that the essay about truth was written before the other metaphysical articles. Ronald D. Pasquariello, "Pannenberg's Philosophical Foundations," *The Journal of Religion* 56, no. 4 (1976): 339. However the chronological order of thought is not necessarily parallel to that of publication. The earliest work, *Revelation as History*, already implies certain features of ontology in its discussion of the resurrection.

[97] One insight of Pannenberg concerning the Greek view should be mentioned: his interpretation of Heidegger's translation of ἀληθεύειν. The act showing itself as it is, the not concealing itself, implies an event-character of ἀλήθεια that shows traces of a history. According to Pannenberg this aspect was consciously ignored by the Greek thinkers in order to maintain their distinction between changeless truth and varying appearance. The appearing of truth nevertheless includes a historical understanding of truth that runs contrary to the Greek intention. This is the hidden aporia of the Greek concept of truth. Pannenberg, "Was Ist Wahrheit?," 205, 216-217.

unswervingly stable. Truth in the OT then is not a timeless, "once-and-for-all"

characteristic, but something which needs to prove its worth, to be reliable, even more

than once.[99] In following von Soden, Pannenberg defines truth not as something which is

behind reality, but as reality seen as history. Truth does not exist, it happens. And since,

in history, everything is in flux, "truth is that which will emerge in the future."[100]

Consequently, only things or persons that remain as they are, that do not change, can be

the object or subject of truthful propositions. As long as things change, one cannot name

their essence truthfully. As long as one changes, one's utterances cannot be taken as

truth, since trust on the basis of one's truthfulness or faithfulness in the past cannot

guarantee that one does not change to unfaithfulness. Absolute truth is therefore

impossible. All one can get are degrees of probability.[101]

Two aspects of this view need to be mentioned in connection with this notion.

One is the obvious difference to the Greek conception where experience or sensation

reaches only the *doxa* and therefore has no bearing on truth whatsoever. In Pannenberg's

conception, experience reaches true reality as it is. The second aspect is the role that faith

plays in this conception of truth. God alone is truly אֱמֶת, since he is the only being that

[98] See R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, אָמַן, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1980).

[99] Pannenberg, "Was Ist Wahrheit?," 203.

[100] Hans von Soden, *Was Ist Wahrheit? Vom Geschichtlichen Begriff Der Wahrheit* (Marburg: Elwert, 1927), 15.

[101] Pannenberg, "Was Ist Wahrheit?," 206. Pannenberg's account seems to work a lot with rhetoric here. It is not as clear and structured as usual. He does not cite many biblical references (Ps 91:7 and Isa 7:9) and it seems that the importance of the future and the resulting view is already presupposed for him and should also be presupposed for the reader. One gets the impression that his purpose is to establish the similarities between the Greek and the Hebrew concept so that he can make the argument that the Israelite view encompasses and supersedes the Greek, since it includes everything that the Greek requires but also aspects that cannot be integrated into the Greek view. The last sentences therefore represent the present

claims to be immutable and therefore in a position to know and be known.[102] Absolute

truth is therefore only available through faith, especially because even God cannot

validate his truth-claims beyond doubt in the present.[103] For his character as for

everything else, humans have to rely on past faithfulness and believe that he remains true

to himself and that this truthfulness will be revealed in the future.[104]

This understanding of truth seems to be based on the correspondence theory in

which truth is measured by the identity of statement and reality. God's promise is true if

it happens. A report is true if it is identical with the actual event. The description needs to

correspond to the object. Pannenberg points out elsewhere, however, that correspondence

is just a secondary or deduced criterion which relates to human judgment, the human

knowledge of truth.[105] Truth itself however is determined through coherence.[106] It is

---

author's interpretation of Pannenberg on the basis of his other writings. Pannenberg regains his normal clarity once he turns to the historical development of the concept of truth.

[102] His reliability also spills over to the order of his creation (those areas which are still based on his authority). Ibid., 208, cites Pss 100:5; 111:7; 117:2; 119:90; 146:6.

[103] This does not mean, however, that the truth-claims of faith may or should not be examined and tested as far as their logic, basis, and probability are concerned. See Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 60-62. On the contrary, Pannenberg insists that faith that is not based on understanding would have only the subjective decision as a basis. Thus it would amount to self-salvation and making oneself into a god. In order to trust in something or somebody, it or he or she has to be experienced as real. Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Einsicht Und Glaube," in *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 230.

[104] Another consequence of this understanding of truth, in which knowledge as an anticipation of the future is based on the knowledge of past experiences, is that God has to act in order to be known as true or trustworthy. He cannot simply appear and be identified by the *nous* or active intellect thus establishing a doubtless knowledge. Rather he must be tangible in experience in order to establish himself as true God. The concept of revelation as history is closely connected to Pannenberg's epistemology.

[105] Coherence was used by Nicholas Rescher as a clarification of the correspondence criterion. If the human assessment is coherent with all other assessments then it truly corresponds to the object. Rescher soon gave in to the criticism that insisted that the coherence of the things themselves, not of human judgment, is the criterion for truth. See Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:63. An additional problem with the correspondence theory is the fact that the object with which the thought of it needs to correspond can only be grasped through thought. Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*, 205.

[106] Grenz confirms that coherence is Pannenberg's most important truth criterion. Grenz, *Reason for Hope: The Systematic Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 14. This is why Pannenberg sees the coherent

independent of whether or not anybody reaches it. Correspondence is only a special kind of coherence, namely the coherence of a denotation and its object. Consensus is seen in a similar manner as the coherence of the judgments of a group.[107]

The history of Western thought is viewed by Pannenberg as a transfer from the Greek conception of truth towards the Israelite understanding. The major turn in this development was the subjectivization of truth through the insight into the spontaneity of the subject. Contrary to the Greek view in which the acquisition of knowledge is a passive process, Nicholas of Cusa understood human thinking as creativity based on sensation. From the spontaneous construction he saw in mathematics he concluded that knowledge is generally created that way.[108] The justification for such a human participation in the constitution of truth is found, as said by Pannenberg, in the biblical view of creation and humanity as *imago dei*. Nicholas of Cusa sees the image of God in humanity realized through the limitless creativity in the mental cosmos. For him the image of God also guarantees that the spontaneous construction corresponds to reality. The same is true for Descartes who based the truthfulness of human thought on the *veracitas* of the Almighty. Kant's error, in the estimation of Pannenberg, of attempting to

---

exposition of theology in a systematic way as an argument for the truthfulness of Christianity. If the Christian dogma is coherent within itself and with all of reality, the probability of it being true is very high. See Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:31-34.

[107] Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*, 219. Pannenberg believes that the correspondence criterion cannot be used without the consensus criterion. Objectivity requires more than one opinion. The consensus should, however, rely only on experts in the respective field. A pure consensus theory as it is defended by Habermas is rejected since it could not distinguish between truth and convention. Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*, 24, n. 62, see idem, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:22-23. Pannenberg notes that Habermas himself cannot always stick to mere consensus truth but needs to include presuppositions that imply the correspondence criterion. Idem, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*, 204, n. 402.

[108] Pannenberg, "Was Ist Wahrheit?," 210-213. While Pannenberg affirms the subjective, hermeneutical part in truth, he holds that a totally subjective truth *à la* Nietzsche or Sartre is impossible. "My truth cannot be only mine. If it cannot be claimed, at least in principle, to be true for all—even though hardly anybody else may be able to see it—then it inevitably ceases to be true for me as well." Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:60.

ground pure reason without recourse to an extra-human reality, was reversed through German idealism which again saw truth dependent on God. If this connection between truth and God is kept in mind, the subjectivization of truth is a legitimate result of the biblical view of reality.[109]

As was pointed out above, if truth is relative, the unity or oneness of truth can only be perceived as a history of truth in which the essence of truth is the process of this history. Absolute truth then is only possible at the end of history. As von Soden put it in the quote cited at the beginning of this section: "Truth is that which will emerge in the future." If the history of Western thought is a turn from Greek to Israelite truth, then the historical aspect of the biblical notion of truth should also be found in the history of philosophy. Pannenberg mentions Hegel's as the most significant attempt at the unity of historical truth. For Hegel, truth is not something that is already present but rather history itself.[110] Truth is therefore neither timeless nor immutable and it will only be visible at the end of history.[111] Naturally the question arises, how was it possible for Hegel to construct a true system of history and philosophy, if the end of history is not yet available? This is precisely the point of criticism which Pannenberg raises against Hegel. In order to be able to grasp the unity of history, he had to understand his own position

---

[109] Pannenberg, "Was Ist Wahrheit?," 214-215.

[110] Beiser puts it this way: "One of the most striking and characteristic features of Hegel's thought is that it *historicizes* philosophy. . . . Rather than seeing philosophy as a timeless *a priori* reflection upon eternal forms, Hegel regards it as the self-consciousness of a specific culture." This, according to Beiser, "amounted to nothing less than a revolution in the history of philosophy." Frederick C. Beiser, "Hegel's Historicism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, ed. Frederick C. Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 270.

[111] Pannenberg, "Was Ist Wahrheit?," 218.

83

and point of view as the end of history. Thereby Hegel's thinking loses the openness towards the future.[112]

It is precisely here that, according to Pannenberg, the biblical understanding of truth is still superior to any of its modern approximations. In the NT the end is the locus of truth as in Hegel. Yet despite the fact that God as absolute truth is already revealed in Jesus, the openness for the future still persists. This paradox is possible because of the proleptic character of the Christ event. Christ's resurrection is a forestalling of the *eschaton* and thus provides the unity of history and truth and the revelation of God. However the future is still open, since for the rest of humanity the resurrection has not yet occurred and, says Pannenberg, it is not yet clear what the resurrection will be. The word resurrection is a metaphor taken from the awakening and rising after sleep. It is the figurative expression of a hope beyond death. The reality that will correspond to this metaphor however is not known. All one knows is that one will finally have reached one's essence and *be* and know completely—whatever that may look like. Therefore the future remains open even though it is already present in Jesus.[113] The *eschaton* will bring nothing substantially new that was not present in Christ's resurrection.[114]

---

[112] Here Hegel is inconsistent with his own approach to truth and therefore proves his system false or untruthful. If future truth is excluded, this means that not all truth is incorporated in his dialectical steps. Partial truth can never be absolute, which is why the concept of God is not grasped in truth. Ibid., 219.

[113] If it was not like this, if the future was completely fixed and revealed, then the Christ event could not be the true revelation of the true God, because the openness towards the future is constitutive for truth and God in the biblical understanding. God is the future. If the future was already completely present in Christ it would cease to be the future and therefore could not reveal God. Ibid., 221.

[114] Pannenberg, "Einsicht und Glaube," 235.

Three Forms of Reason

Since coherence is Pannenberg's primary truth criterion and he wants to

demonstrate the veracity of Christianity through showing its internal coherence as well as

its external coherence with all other truths, it should be clear that despite the fact that

truth always involves an element of faith and anticipation, the use of reason is essential

for Pannenberg. He discards the direction of Kant and Schleiermacher, which limits

language about God and faith to the realm of the irrational or feeling,[115] but he also

rejects the restriction of reason to a mere illumination of truths already presupposed from

revelation.[116] Theology for him needs to be reasonable.

Yet, Pannenberg is aware that reason is not a unified whole, which is important

for the study of his epistemology. In words that sound like Canale he calls for a criticism

of theological reason. "It could be the task of theology to take a close look at those claims

that arise in the name of reason per se! This is the only way that will make it possible to

gain a critical idea of reason and cognition in general, which will facilitate a reasonable

account of the truth of the Christian message."[117] Pannenberg distinguishes three forms of

reason, *a priori*, hearing, and historical reason.

The first interpretation of reason is the classical one, the Aristotelian-Thomistic

understanding in which the *a priori* principles of the *intellectus* are applied to experience.

---

[115] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:51, and idem, "Glaube Und Vernunft," in *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 242.

[116] Pannenberg does not deny that the truth exists before and independent of all theology, but this truth can only be found in the process of cognition. It is impossible to identify the truth without rationally knowing or understanding it. "Such a move, he maintains, leads to the division of truth into autonomous spheres and to the attempt to shield the truth content of the Christian tradition from rational inquiry. Nothing could be more abhorrent to Pannenberg." Grenz, *Reason for Hope: The Systematic Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 15. See also Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:32-34.

[117] Pannenberg, "Glaube Und Vernunft," 243.

Like Canale, Pannenberg allocates Kant to this classical notion, albeit his *a priori* is interpreted slightly differently. This kind of reason was opposed and defamed by Luther since it leaves no room for anything that does not comply with its principles.[118] Contrary to Luther's intention Pannenberg holds that this form of reason cannot simply be changed through the instillation of supernatural principles, since those will always be seen by *a priori* reason as a yoke that needs to be cast of.[119] Faith and reason will remain antagonistic in this system.

The second conception of reason is the hearing reason. In contrast to the *a priori* notion, hearing reason is not an inborn machine. Rather it points to something that is heard. A model of this idea is found in Plato, in the sudden enlightening that grasps the ideas of Being which are given to it. It seems that such a hearing would also accept supernatural revelation, but Pannenberg cautions that this kind of reason is directed towards something entirely different from the Christian faith. While faith looks towards the future, hearing reason receives the timeless Being, that which always is.[120]

The only concept of reason left is the historical, the equivalent to Pannenberg's ontology and the biblical notion of truth. However, historical reason is not a postulate of

---

[118] Ibid., 244-245. Two months before he nailed the 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg he wrote the following theses: "43. It is an error to say that no man can become a theologian without Aristotle. This in opposition to common opinion. 44. Indeed, no one can become a theologian unless he becomes one without Aristotle. 45. To state that a theologian who is not a logician is a monstrous heretic—this is a monstrous and heretical statement. This in oppositions to common opinion." Martin Luther, "Disputation against Scholastic Theology (1517)," in *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy F. Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 16. However, as Pannenberg points out, Luther praised reason if it was renewed through theology, guided by faith. He adhered to the unity of truth and the validity of logical conclusions. See Bernhard Lohse, *Ratio und Fides: Eine Untersuchung Über die Ratio in der Theologie Luthers* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), 104-116.

[119] Pannenberg, "Glaube und Vernunft," 246.

[120] Ibid. At this point in the study it is hard to tell what the difference between the two is, because it depends on the *theos*. If for Pannenberg God is timeless, then hearing reason would be identical to faith as far as content is concerned. In the present this view of hearing reason was renewed in Wilhelm Kamlah's writings as a counter-approach to the self-sufficient reason of modernity.

theology but rather the main trend in the philosophical development after Kant.[121] Again

Hegel plays an important role with his insight into the creativity involved in the reflective

structure of thinking. Every piece of knowledge is only a step on the way to further

knowledge.[122] As in Kant, the synthesis, which unites the thesis and the antithesis, is the

creative part.[123] Since such human syntheses cannot be absolute but are subject to change

and improvement, the dialectical structure of reason is necessarily historical. Truth is

relative to its position in the historical process and absolute truth is only available at the

end. Reason does not passively receive knowledge in an instant, but rather works toward

it in the course of history. The problem with Hegel was that he saw this process of

reflection as a necessary development. He missed the contingency of history, or better, of

his own interpretation of history. Hegel did not see how the syntheses that were found

during the course of history were actually his own creative syntheses.[124] Consequently his

---

[121] The basis for this trend in Kant is identified by Pannenberg in Kant's incorporation of the productive imagination. In contrast to general logic, which is abstract, transcendental logic deals with the manifold that is given to it by transcendental aesthetics through the senses. The spontaneity of our thinking, says Kant, requires that this manifold is sifted through, received, and connected in order to arrive at knowledge. This action Kant calls synthesis. Synthesis is "the mere effect of imagination, a blind yet indispensable capacity of the soul, without which we would have no knowledge, but the existence of which we are rarely even aware." Kant, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, B102-103. However in Kant this creative fantasy was used only for the derivation of the forms of *a priori* reason.

[122] Pannenberg, "Glaube Und Vernunft," 248. Of course Hegel was not alone in the discovery or development of speculative reason. Fichte and Schelling had worked before him and continued to work parallel to him. Yet in contrast to Hegel they saw truth, the absolute (ego), as a given and prior to the process of reflection. Hegel's response was truth as the result, the whole. Helferich, 210.

[123] Pannenberg explains this dialectic in Pannenberg, *Theologie und Philosophie*, 260. The consciousness experiences a discrepancy between its actual content and the object it tries to grasp. In order to be consistent in its truth claims it needs to unite the actual content with the contradiction seen in the object. This is done by creative reflection. But as soon as the synthesis is reached, a new inconsistency is discovered and so the process continues.

[124] This has been the reason for criticism of his system. It was even at his time not validated by historical research and supressed important parts of world history and the history of religions. Even a follower of Hegel like Schmidt has to admit that the systematization of Hegel is not totally correct, but this is seen by him as a marginal question given the magnitude of his insight into the nature of the historical process. Erik Schmidt, *Hegels System der Theologie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974), 42.

claim to be or live in the time of the final stage of reason has to be rejected. What remains is creative, historical reason on its dialectical way into the future.

Wilhelm Dilthey examined this developmental process. While he rightly stressed the historical character of reason, his disregard of the dialectical nature of reflection made his analyses somewhat shallower than Hegel's. It is with Dilthey and his emphasis of the end of life or history, which was laid out above, that reason reaches the level where it corresponds to Pannenberg's ontology. Heidegger developed Dilthey's system further through the idea of anticipation. The impossibility of knowing the whole, the end of life or history, does not entail the inability to be able to be whole (*Ganzseinkönnen*).[125] Dilthey resigned and accepted the relativity of all assertions since no one has access to the end. Pannenberg however turns this conclusion around and, following Heidegger, affirms that all assertions are grounded in an anticipation of this end.[126]

Eschatological Epistemology

In the history of philosophy the insight into the spontaneous contribution of the subject to knowledge led to a historicizing of the conception of reason, which Pannenberg interprets as the move from Greek to Hebrew epistemology.[127] Knowledge can be gained only through anticipation of the future, which will bring the completion of all things.

---

[125] Pannenberg, "Über Historische und Theologische Hermeneutik," 142-146. This improvement of Heidegger remains untouched by the two criticisms that Pannenberg brings forth against Heidegger in general, namely that, first, the end cannot simply be anticipated by knowing that it will come because of the random course of history, and that, second, death is not the ultimate end of *Dasein*.

[126] Pannenberg, "Glaube und Vernunft," 249-250. While both faith and reason anticipate the future, there still remains a difference between the two. Whereas faith is explicitly directed at the *eschaton*, reason is first of all concerned with the present things, with the definition and nomination of them. For reason, says Pannenberg, the *eschaton*, the totality of reality is only anticipated in the background as the basis and condition of its certainty.

After a study of Pannenberg's ontology, it does not come as a surprise that his epistemology, the *logos* which knows the *ontos*, also has an eschatological character. According to Pannenberg, thinking (especially metaphysical thinking) which is to be taken seriously can no longer construct Being and knowledge out of abstract concepts.[128] Rather, the relation of reason to its object will take the form of a conjectural reconstruction that is distinguished from the intended truth. "Its characteristic form of thought will be more anticipation rather than the concept (*Begriff*) of classical metaphysics. To be precise: the philosophical concept (*Begriff*) itself will show itself as anticipation."[129]

Such an approach is not revolutionary. The anticipatory use of reason is the reigning paradigm in scientific thought today. Natural sciences function by creating hypotheses which anticipate reality. This anticipation will be proved right or wrong through future experience.[130] Again the similarity of faith and knowledge is obvious. The same is true of the science of history. No longer do historians merely paste together their

---

[127] At one point, Pannenberg states that the Christian should not need the modern reflections on the historicity and limitation of our knowledge. He could get those insights directly from the Bible. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:65.

[128] What he has in mind is the Hegelian *Begriff* which according to Dilthey and Heidegger represents a way of doing philosophy that began with Plato and Aristotle. The big metaphysical questions were answered through abstract concepts and logical reasoning. Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 66. Pasquariello notes the word-play between the *Begriff* and *Vorgriff* which means anticipation, but would literally be translated as prefetch. According to Pasquariello, Hegel "could not deal adequately with contingence, the appearance of new things and events in history, so he excluded it in favour of the *Begriff* (as dialectically present result). The concept of *Vorgriff*, anticipation, enables Pannenberg to preserve the openness of history." Pasquariello, 341.

[129] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 68.

[130] Pannenberg, "Was ist Wahrheit?," 213. While the testing of hypotheses is something new in modern thought, the anticipatory construction is traced back by Pannenberg to the thinking of Nicholas of Cusa with its emphasis on spontaneous creativity. It needs to be distinguished, however, from the anticipation of Kant who also said that "All knowledge . . . can be called an anticipation and without doubt this is the meaning in which Epicurus used his expression πρόληψις." Kant, *Kritik Der Reinen Vernunft*,

sources. Rather, they create a representation of a time-period, an event or a person, which

is tested against and hopefully corroborated by the critically evaluated sources.[131]

Spontaneous creative reason has also been at work in systematic theology, even though

theologians still deny what they are doing on a day-to-day basis. Even if they limit

themselves to citing Bible verses, the selection and ordering would bring in their

creativity.[132] This means that theological statements also have to be open to verification.

Theology therefore is a science like any other.[133]

Pannenberg emphasizes that anticipation is used even in everyday life. Without

anticipating the homogenous movement of the stars and planets, there would be no use in

speaking about days or years. Without anticipation it would be impossible to assign any

meaning to the events of our personal or collective history.[134] In fact, every assertion is

by virtue of its logical structure a hypothesis. Whether one says "It is going to rain

B208. Yet knowledge does not reach the thing-in-itself which is why Kant's anticipation does not anticipate reality but only, as Kant goes on to explain, the categories of time and space.

[131] This is the achievement of post-Enlightenment historiography especially in Germany. Historicism challenged the old conception of history which was a chronicling of births, battles, and deaths of rulers and searched for the reasons for historical change, for the *Geist*, in the terms of Ranke, which moved history. Friedrich Jaeger and Jörn Rüsen, *Geschichte des Historismus* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1992), 1. This led to totally new areas of investigation like the history of economics, society and culture. Jaeger and Rüsen point out that "science increasingly evolved into a dynamically and discursively structured process of the accumulation of knowledge. Each scientist could contribute his piece to the process but was also exposed to the criticism of the community of scholars and had to reckon with the possibility of his insights becoming outdated. . . . Whereas pre-Enlightenment historiography saw its ability to provide orientation and truth through its stories grounded on the fact that its authors applied absolute impartiality (i.e., consciously abstained from all subjective ingredients), Enlightenment historiography recognized the indubitable fact that the structure of a story is inevitable shaped through the construction of its author." Jaeger and Rüsen, 15, 17-18.

[132] The proleptic character of dogmatics is also based on this fact. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Was ist eine dogmatische Aussage?," in *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 176, 180.

[133] Pannenberg, "Was Ist Wahrheit?," 214, n. 26. Dogmatic statements are therefore to be treated as hypotheses that will be true if their conditions are met. As long as this is doubtful, their truth is hypothetical. The recognition of this does not diminish the assertive character of those statements, says Pannenberg, but takes it seriously. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:67-68.

[134] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:64-65.

tonight" or "I was in Mexico last week," every statement that refers to facts or data that are not included in the statement is open to verification.[135] Even in simply calling things by their name and saying "This is a house," one implies a getting ahead of oneself to the future where it will be finally determined what a house is, because every entity gets its meaning only in the totality of reality.[136] Yet while in practice eschatological reason is widespread, the awareness of this is not. The reason lies in the fact that for most purposes the determination on the basis of repetition of typical forms is a sufficient approximation.[137] In philosophy, however, the provisional nature of knowledge needs to be considered as a matter of principle.

How then does eschatological epistemology work? Since meaning is constituted through an anticipation of the future, the truth of every assertion is tentative, dependent on the actual fulfillment in the *eschaton*. Therefore every statement is a participation in the future which is interpreted by Pannenberg as the eternity of God.[138] This is based on the anticipatory character of reality itself. As was pointed out in the first chapter, Canale's analysis of the structure of reason has shown that the contribution of the object is its ontic properties. Therefore its crudity is also communicated and received by the

---

[135] For the possibility of verifying theological hypotheses see Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*, 334-346. The only way to make an assertion that is not hypothetical would be a tautology (e.g., "It is raining or it is not raining" "A cat is a cat") the average information content of which is relatively low. A way to secure hypotheses is to speak about things that cannot be tested, e.g., "God exists." This is why Popper introduced falsification as a truth criterion in order to separate scientific from metaphysical hypotheses (since both are equal as far as their claim to truth and testability are concerned). If something cannot be proved wrong, it cannot be true. See Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*, 40-41.

[136] Pannenberg, "Glaube Und Vernunft," 250.

[137] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 78.

[138] Rahner describes this as an intuitive outlook or range of feeling. He takes it from Aquinas's statement "God, as Dionysius says (Div. Nom. I), we know as cause, by way of excess and by way of remotion." Aquinas, Ia 84.7 ad3. The Latin word *excessus* means to go out, to go beyond, to pass. See Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 74-75.

logos, which consequently becomes anticipatory.[139] Anticipating reason has similarities

to the concept (*Begriff*) of classical philosophy. The concept also claims identity with the

object of knowledge, the thing whose concept was under discussion. On the other hand a

concept is always merely a concept of a thing, not the thing itself—which *is* not yet fully.

Anticipation unites the identity and difference and defines the relationship as temporal.

Anticipation is not yet identical with the thing itself, it is still open to verification or

falsification. But under the precondition of the future eschatological appearance of the

totality of the object, the object is already present in anticipation.[140]

Even though the object is already present, it is only present as anticipation, not as

itself. Eschatological reason is aware of this fact, in contrast to Heidegger's *Vorlauf* to

death.[141] This awareness constitutes its dialectical nature through which Pannenberg's

conception gains a striking similarity to Hegel's system. Pannenberg describes the

concrete functioning of anticipation this way: "Since every such understanding of the

whole rests on an anticipation, it bears an internal contradiction which will drive it

beyond itself again, insofar as it reaches out to the whole and yet presents itself as a mere

anticipation, thus showing that it is not the whole."[142] Thus every anticipation, through

---

[139] In connection with this fact Pannenberg renews the old distinction between essence and appearance. The object in its present appearance is to be distinguished from what will be its essence in the *eschaton*. This also influences the character of any knowledge of temporal objects. The implications of this for the character of his system should not be underestimated. See Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*, 44.

[140] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 75.

[141] Pannenberg, "Über Historische Und Theologische Hermeneutik," 149-150.

[142] Ibid., 139. This wording closely resembles Pannenberg's own description of Hegel's method in *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*: "This experience [the experience of the consciousness with itself] is that the actual content of the consciousness is again and again not identical with that which it believes to grasp as the true. . . . [The consciousness] therefore has to try, in the reflection upon itself, to grasp the unity of the intended truth and its actual content. Thereby it reaches a new level of self-conception." Pannenberg, *Theologie Und Philosophie: Ihr Verhältnis Im Lichte Ihrer Gemeinsamen Geschichte*, 260.

the consciousness of its imperfection, calls for a new anticipation, which is based upon reflection on the previous anticipation. Therefore the series of anticipation is not an endless row of equally valid concepts that displace each other. They rather form a chain of increasing approximation to actual, eschatological existence.[143] The fact that the totality of life, the essence or Being in which the entity participates, is the motor of this process constitutes the difference to Hegel's understanding, in which the contradiction within the natural consciousness drives thought to the next level. It is not the internal contradiction, but the absolute essence that creates the tension which necessitates a new anticipation.[144] Pannenberg adds that such a process is only possible if the known "being itself is not yet what it is, that is, that it has not yet come into its own essence."[145] Thus the dependence of epistemology on ontology is confirmed in his eschatological conception.

This examination of Pannenberg's eschatological framework shows that he is consistently constructing his system within the structure of reason. The interdependence of *ontos* and *logos* requires an eschatological epistemology which is just what Pannenberg develops. What about the dimensionality of his epistemological framework? At first sight it seems to be a temporal construction since Pannenberg stresses the

---

[143] Only in the *eschaton* will the plurality of beings truly be, that is, they will achieve their essence. Therefore knowledge as anticipation anticipates not the present state of things—which is subject to change—but their true reality, which will be found at the end of time when they reach true existence, when they reach "Being."

[144] Pasquariello calls this "negative mediation whereby the ultimate mediates itself negatively to the anticipation, thereby bringing about its collapse." Pasquariello, 342. Pasquariello adds however that the ultimate is also responsible for the positive creation of a new anticipation (346).

[145] Pannenberg, "Über Historische und Theologische Hermeneutik," 150. The fact that even the understanding of understanding is a tentative anticipation could lead one into the aporia of relativism, as in the case of Dilthey. However, as Pannenberg points out, even this relativism is relative and cannot be taken as absolute truth. Nevertheless anticipation needs at least one anticipation that has not been outdated so far

93

relativity and incompleteness of historical knowledge. However, as in the ontological

framework, the difference between anticipation and the anticipated is reminiscent of the

classical distinction between appearance and essence. The final verdict on the primordial

presupposition of Pannenberg's epistemological framework depends on the essence, or

that which is anticipated (i.e., his conception of the *theos*). It could well be that temporal

knowledge is constructed in a system based on timelessness as dimensionality of reason.

Since anticipation aims at a knowledge of Being, it aims at God. If God is timeless, then

the totality of reality would be predetermined and the knowledge of it would also be fixed

even though human beings would not know it yet. What Pannenberg would have

achieved in this case is a mere declaration of the incognizability of the classical timeless

ideas before the *eschaton*. This would then be a Greek system stripped of *anamnesis* or

the active intellect, which is therefore doomed to ignorance until the *eschaton*.

Pannenberg's *Theos*

The study so far has shown that in Pannenberg's system the question of his

philosophical independence is decided by the interpretation of God, which functions as

theos. His epistemological framework consists of a temporal interpretation of knowledge.

But since the *logos* knows the *ontos* and Pannenberg's ontological framework is not as

clearly temporal as his epistemology, his epistemology does not guarantee a non-timeless

presupposition. Being, for Pannenberg, is found in God and God also constitutes the

future, the completion of the totality of reality. If God would turn out to be timeless,

absolute reality and consequently the ontological framework would be so, also. The

examination of Pannenberg's understanding of God is therefore of elementary importance

---

and that will not outdate itself. Such an anticipation "guarantees" the existence of the anticipated.
According to Pannenberg it is given in the resurrection of Christ. Ibid., 151, 155.

for the understanding of the primordial presupposition on which his system is grounded. This however will prove to be everything but easy. On the one hand, Pannenberg claims to reject the classical timeless understanding of God,[146] on the other hand, as was pointed out above, it is clear in his writings that space and time are created and therefore God cannot be "in time."[147] In addition Pannenberg in his explanation of eternity does not deal simply with God but includes the Trinity in his argument. This complicates his account so that, even on a second and third reading, one cannot totally shake off the impression of some inconsistencies.[148] Because of space limitations the present study will have to confine the depth of the Trinitarian discussion to a required minimum.

The best entry point for Pannenberg's interpretation of *theos* is God's eternity. It is clear that God is eternal and even if this eternity will have to be interpreted, there is one thing that necessarily follows from this fact that will put the following discussion and some of Pannenberg's other statements into perspective: God is not becoming.[149] To the historical experience of humanity it might look as if God would reach his reality, fully come into being, only at the *eschaton*, but this has nothing to do with God's eternal essence. Pannenberg repeats his position when commenting on Augustine's interpretation of Ps 102:24. "So God is indeed unchanging in his identity, God 'from everlasting to

---

[146] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:437.

[147] Ibid., 1:391, 414.

[148] Venema discussed these inconsistencies or ambiguities, as he puts it, without arriving at any solution in 1982. Venema, 75-77. See also Ford, 85-86. The publication of the systematic theology and the volume *Metaphysics and the Idea of God* enables a deeper understanding and point towards a Trinitarian explanation.

[149] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:359. In the preceding pages, Pannenberg sounds like he would, with Jüngel and Moltmann, adhere to a coming into existence of God in connection with the establishment of his reign on this earth. This tension will be the object of the following discussion.

everlasting' (Ps. 90:2)."[150] These assertions stand in contrast to others where he states

that "in a restricted but important sense, God does not yet exist."[151] Elsewhere he asks,

"Does this not mean: God is not yet, but will be?"[152] The basis for this statement is

Pannenberg's conviction that the being of God and the existence of his kingdom are

identical. "The being of God is his reign. He is only God in its execution, and this

execution is determined as future."[153] He here conveys the impression that God would

come into being in history. This contradicts the negation of any becoming on God's part

in his systematic theology mentioned above.[154] One could speak of a development of his

thought if he had not affirmed the contradictory statements twenty-two years after the

publication of the first volume of his *magnum opus*. Pannenberg explicitly denies that the

future establishment of God's kingdom is due to human perspective. He says: "Can God

be king without such recognition? This hardly seems possible. . . . God's kingship over

his creation is not something accidental with regard to his own identity as being God. It is

inseparable from his divine nature."[155] Obviously, in Pannenberg's thought, these

concepts are united in some deeper way which removes the discord.

---

[150] Pannenberg, "Eternity, Time and the Trinitarian God," 10. He adds that this does not necessarily mean that God is timeless.

[151] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Westminster Press, 1969), 9-29. Villa-Vicencio, who cites this phrase, builds his interpretation on such an understanding of God. At the time of his writing the statement from the systematic theology was not yet in print and so he is totally justified in doing so. See Villa-Vicencio, 36.

[152] Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Der Gott Der Hoffnung," in *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 393.

[153] Ibid., 391.

[154] See also the following statement: "We cannot agree when Whitehead suggests that the futurity of God's kingdom implies a development in God." Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, 62.

[155] Pannenberg, "Eternity, Time and the Trinitarian God," 11.

A Trinitarian *Theos*

A first step towards this resolution is to understand the theological reasoning

behind those statements that declare God's existence dependent on human history. It is

based on Karl Rahner's famous thesis "The 'economic' Trinity is the 'immanent' Trinity

and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic' Trinity."[156] This means that there is a

structural similarity between the three persons of the Trinity and their appearances or

actions in the history of salvation. The economic Trinity refers to the creation through the

Father, the salvation through the Son, and the consummation through the Spirit. This

sequence of historical revelation cannot be merely external to God. Rahner came to this

conclusion through the insight that incarnation is not something accidental to the Son. On

the contrary, the Son is the "son" eternally and the incarnation was from eternity part of

his essence. The man Jesus Christ is the expression of the nature of the divine *logos*.[157]

Consequently the economic Trinity represents something real in the immanent Trinity.[158]

From the economic Trinity one can see how the immanent Trinity is structured. God the

---

[156] Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York, N.Y.: Herder and Herder, 1970), 22. Rahner thereby reverses the emphasis that had prevailed after the Council of Nicaea 325 and the Council of Constantinople 381. Theology, beginning with Athanasius of Alexandria, had emphasized the immutability of God, of the (immanent) Trinity in order to combat Arianism and other heresies. Change within God, as suggested in the successive steps of historical self-revelation or the temporal creation of the Son, had to be denied. Consequently "the immanent Trinity became independent of the economic and more and more without function in the economy of salvation." Walter Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1982), 318.

[157] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:356.

[158] Pannenberg criticizes Kasper for denying that the immanent Trinity is extrapolated from the economic. Whether or not extrapolation is the appropriate term, there is some causal connection between the two and theology should stress this fact, since it is the only possible justification for the dogma of the Trinity. Ibid., 1:359, n. 216.

Father reigns in the kingdom that is established through the Son and consummated by the Spirit.[159]

Rahner maintained the ontic independence of the immanent from the economic Trinity even while emphasizing their structural interdependence. Much of theology after him however virtually identified the two aspects of the Trinity, which led to the dissolution of the immanent into the economic Trinity.[160] The classical notion of the immanent Trinity ceased to play any role in much of theology.[161] The result is a definite temporal conception of God, who changes according to the proceedings of salvation history.[162] As cited above, Pannenberg does not agree with such a view. In his system he

---

[159] Moltmann has pointed out that the Spirit's glorification has to be seen as an intertrinitarian doxological action, since it is directed at the Father and the Son and not at something outside the Trinity. What the Spirit does on earth is what he is doing eternally within the Trinity. Jürgen Moltmann, *Der Gekreuzigte Gott* (Munich: Kaiser, 1972), 141, 143.

[160] Kasper, 335. If this happens, Kasper points out, the economic Trinity loses any meaning. If there is no God, he cannot reveal himself in the history of salvation. Therefore the immanent Trinity has to be the ontological ground of the economic. Rahner had already stated the same thought, namely that the self-communication (economic) presupposes the self that is to be communicated (immanent). See Rahner, 382f.

[161] Joseph A. Bracken, "Trinity: Economic *and* Immanent," *Horizons* 25, no. 1 (1998): 7.

[162] In the present author's estimation this trend goes back to the "anthropologization" of theology brought about by Fichte and Feuerbach. Both criticized the anthropomorphisms of classical theological language about God or the Trinity as person/s. Feuerbach saw God as a projection of the traits of the human race into the supernatural realm. After Hegel, anthropology became the basis for theology. See Pannenberg, *Theologie Und Philosophie: Ihr Verhältnis Im Lichte Ihrer Gemeinsamen Geschichte*, 295-358. The consequence was a shift of the focus on the economic Trinity without presupposing an immanent one. Since humanity is the criterion for theology, God is God only as he is God for us. See the book by Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco, Calif.: Harper, 1991). Thus only the economic Trinity is God since it relates to the history of religion. As Bracken states it, "only the economic Trinity in their [those like LaCugna] judgment is the proper object of Christian belief and worship. For, as they see it, the notion of the immanent Trinity has unconsciously been an intellectual trap to ensnare the imagination of some of the best-known theologians of the last two thousand years. The actual results of these highly abstract speculations have contributed little or nothing to the faith-life of the Christian community." Bracken, 7. Carr mentions Rahner and Pannenberg as two representatives who deal with the doctrine of God on the basis of anthropology, but as will be shown, their result is different from the current trend mentioned above (315-317).

wants to truly unite immanent and economic Trinity.[163] This requires a conception of God which can encompass "not only the transcendence of God and his immanence in the world, but also the eternal self-identity of God and the contestability of his truth in the process of history as well as the final judgment about his truth through the completion of history."[164]

God as Power of the Future

How does he manage to harmonize this tension? The solution lies in the conception of God as the power of the future.[165] Like all things, God has his full existence only in the future, in the *eschaton*. This is the historic, mutable part. Only when the economic Trinity will be merged into the immanent Trinity will the Trinitarian God

---

[163] The question of whether such a unification amounts to an identification is as difficult to answer as the question whether the economic Trinity is identical to the world. If both questions could be affirmed, Pannenberg would propose some kind of trinitarian panentheism. This issue leads beyond the scope of the present study. On the one hand Pannenberg holds that God determines everything, that everything emanates from him and that in him—as the future—all essences are determined. So all of history would be a self-revelation of God (See Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*, 17) which would suggest an identification of the economic trinity with reality. But on the other hand Pannenberg states that the history of Israel and especially the Christ event have a special revelatory character which other events don't have (ibid., 100). In addition it seems that the economic trinity is merely a projection of the immanent into the temporal sphere, so the panentheism verdict cannot be easily answered and has to be relegated to a separate study.

[164] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:361. The eternal identity is the point of distinction between him and Bracken, who also rejects an abrogation of the immanent Trinity. The latter argues for an ontology of becoming which has strong similarities to Pannenberg's ontology. Bracken modifies Whitehead's philosophy so as to give existence to the composite entities (social groups of relations between actual entities). These beings, made up of relations, resemble the Trinity which is also made up of relations among themselves. "This panentheistic understanding of the God-world relationship does not end up making the three divine persons part of a cosmic process for the evolution of the world (as can happen in theologies focusing exclusively on the economic Trinity) but, rather, includes the process proper to creation within the antecedent process of divine communitarian life." Bracken, 15.

[165] The notion of God as power of the future fits well with other aspects of Pannenberg's system too. On the one hand the term power corresponds to the physical notion of the field that Pannenberg uses as an explanation for the existence of God. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:414-415, 2:99-104. On the other hand it is an viable alternative to the classical idea of God as a substance, which, according to Pannenberg is untenable after the criticism of Fichte, Feuerbach, and especially Bloch. Pannenberg, "Der Gott Der Hoffnung," 392-393. While Pannenberg accepts this criticism, he does not adapt his identification of God and Being, which was criticized by Heidegger. Godzieba mentions Kasper and Marion as

fully be. God's essence, similar to all other beings' essence, develops through time. The eschatological completion will be the locus of decision about the deity of God.[166] Yet, as with all other beings, the decision will retroactively determine what they were all along.[167] Due to this determination, which Pasquariellio calls the principle of retroaction,[168] Pannenberg's ontology does not seem to be truly temporal. As was pointed out at the end of the discussion of Pannenberg's ontological framework, the result of the development does not lie in the hands of the beings themselves, but in the hands of God.[169] The same is true for God: the future which will determine the totality of one's essence is God himself. Therefore Pannenberg says that "God is his own future."[170] Here

representatives of a reaction to Heidegger's destruction of ontotheology who have come up with a conception of God without being, of God as love. See Godzieba, 5.

[166] Exod 3:14, the name of God, is interpreted in a similar manner. While Pannenberg admits that the intention of Moses in asking for the name of God probably included the ancient Near Eastern understanding that the name unlocks the essence of the thing named, he also emphasizes that it is not a self-revelation of God. Pannenberg and others, *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*, 12-13. This is the case because God rebuffs the question by giving as his name a reference to his future actions in history. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:224, 249. He obviously interprets the verb differently from Canale as future. Pannenberg's interpretation fits into the category that Canale calls the future theory of the historical interpretation of Exod 3:14. Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 313-315.

[167] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:359. In a similar way, the resurrection (as a prolepsis of the *eschaton*) not only clarifies that Jesus is God, not only adds a piece of knowledge, but ontologically decided that he has been God all along. In a sense, the resurrection made Jesus God. Statements like this from Pannenberg might sound to the reader unfamiliar with his thought as if he would deny the eternal preexistence and deity of the son, but this is not the case. See Pannenberg, "Eternity, Time and the Trinitarian God," 13, and idem, *Systematische Theologie*, I:336-341. Such formulations are the consequence of his eschatological ontology.

[168] Pasquariello, 345.

[169] Beings in their decisions can either meet or miss that goal. As a consequence they will in the *eschaton* either arrive at their essence or not, which means the end of their existence. See Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 70. It is exactly at this point in Pannenberg's thinking that process theologians see human freedom dissolved through the notion of God as the power of the future. Ford, for example, states that "when the end of history becomes realized. Or when the kingdom comes, the divine activity of the future becomes present, and overpowers our freedom." Ford, 87.

[170] Pannenberg, "Eternity, Time and the Trinitarian God," 13. He immediately adds that this does not mean that God's essence would be defined through the future, because if this were the case God would be dependent on something else and could not be God. Rather this dictum needs to be understood as saying that God does not have any future beyond himself. Within the Trinity, the futureness can be differentiated. The Son is the future of the Father since he establishes the kingdom. The Spirit is the future of the Son

one has the eternal, immutable part: God is determined by God. This also implies that the

final verdict about God's deity, about God being God, is not in the hands of humanity or

history.[171]

The last thought leads back to the Trinity. The study of Pannenberg's ontology

has shown that human beings in their historical decision making and changing can either

hit or miss their essence.[172] In God's case there are only hits, since he is the only one

whose essence is not determined by somebody else. Furthermore, since he is faithful to

himself he cannot possibly miss his essence.[173] The consequence is that all decisions God

makes in history, all "changes" or developments, hit some aspect of his essence. This is

the reason why the economic Trinity corresponds to the immanent Trinity. In other

words, the development that happens in history, in God's self-revelation, is determined

by God, which means that it must be reality within the eternal Trinity. The eternal

identity of God is differentiated through the three persons' involvement in history. The

---

because he resurrected him. The Father is the future of both Son and Spirit since they work to bring about his kingdom. So even within this internal distinction the "everybody" in the end is his own future.

[171] So despite the repeated affirmation that God's essence is his reign (which goes back to Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik* [Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1945-1970], I/1, 369) and that "the existence of a world is not compatible with God's deity without his sovereignty over it" (Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:341), the decision that God is the God of this world and the universe is eternally fixed in God as the power of the future. Pannenberg confirms this impression in the sentence following the one cited above. He states that sovereignty is part of God's deity and as such a reality within the Trinity. The free and voluntary submission of the Son under the reign of the Father and the conferment of the kingship of the Father to the Son show that the sovereignty of God is something that is eternally within God and not dependent on human recognition. So it is correct to say, that God's deity depends on the establishment of his reign through the Son, but this is true first of all in the immanent Trinity. In the same line Pannenberg affirms that God's essence is not unaffected by his relationships to other beings. But those relationships to his creatures are an expression of his freedom and therefore are grounded in his essence. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:106. So while interpersonal relations are part of what God is, he himself determines these relationships.

[172] Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 90.

[173] The notion of immutability is rejected by Pannenberg as an unbiblical import from Greek philosophy. The concept of God's faithfulness is the biblical alternative to it which has the advantage that it does not exclude God's involvement in history or his ability to act contingently. See Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:470-473.

economic Trinity is the expression of the immanent Trinity in human history, or to put things differently, in time.[174]

<h2 style="text-align:center">Eternity as Unified Life</h2>

God as the immanent Trinity is not in time. He is eternal. Thus the examination of Pannenberg's *theos* has come full circle to where it started: God's eternity. The interpretation of God as power of the future does not exclude God's eternity. God is not just the power of the future of the present, but was the power of the future at the time of Ananias, Abigail, Abraham, or Adam. In fact he also was the power of the future before there were any humans, before creation. He was the power of the future from eternity. The eternity that is implied by the futurity of God—about this Pannenberg is very clear—does not entail timelessness.[175]

According to Pannenberg, the biblical concept of God's eternity is not the classical Greek dualism of eternity and time. The OT had no other term for eternity but endless duration. Such duration does not mean endless time, since God in his eternal duration also remains the same—something that is not the case in normal temporal duration. Somehow time differences seem to be leveled for God.[176] One key text for Pannenberg is Ps 90:4, "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is

---

[174] Yet not all of history is the economic Trinity. The economic Trinity is limited to God's self-revelation in history.

[175] Pannenberg, "Eternity, Time and the Trinitarian God," 10. See also idem, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:440, and idem, "Der Gott Der Hoffnung," 393. On the following page he explains that it makes a difference whether eternity is thought of as timelessness, endless persistence of something which exists since primeval times (eternal time), or the power of the future over every present.

[176] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:434.

past, and as a watch in the night." This text is not a basis for the conversion of human into divine time. Rather it states that any length of time is present to God in its totality like yesterday is for humanity.[177] A later attempt to express what Ps 90 tries to convey was the apocalyptical notion of heaven as the place of decision-making or judgment. In heaven the future is already present in God's decision of it. Consequently, eternity has to be understood as all of time being present to God.[178] One can see that though God's eternal identity which encompasses all of time is in opposition to time, there is nevertheless a connection between time and eternity. As Pannenberg repeatedly emphasizes, God "is not a God to whom time doesn't matter."[179] This was not the case in platonic philosophy with its dichotomy between time and timelessness. "Plato was a far cry from thinking eternity as the embodiment (*Inbegriff*) of the succession of that which is separated in time."[180] Platonic thinking became very influential in Christian theology through Augustine, who also adhered to a timeless, immutable God.

There is however another strand of thinking about eternity that existed throughout the history of Christianity to which Pannenberg himself counts. It goes back to Plotinus and his alternative theory of time. While Plato saw time connected to motion,[181] Plotinus

---

[177] Here Augustine's distension of the soul through *memoria* and *expectation* is a helpful analogy to understand God's eternity. Just as a sentence or a piece of music (or yesterday, to use the biblical example) is present to us in its entirety despite the fact that some parts of it are past and some future, so to God the totality of time is present. Ibid., 1:442-443.

[178] Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Zeit und Ewigkeit in Israel und im Christentum," in *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie II* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 199-201.

[179] Pannenberg, "Eternity, Time and the Trinitarian God," 11.

[180] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:436.

[181] Aristotle interpreted time as the succession of numbers. The soul was the locus of the counting and consequently of the measuring of time. Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke*, 56. This alternative was dominant in Aristotelian scholastic thinking and ended in Kant's interpretation of time as the self-affection of the ego. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 440.

held that such a theory could not explain the unity of time and the possibility of relating one instant to another.[182] Time has to be understood in connection with eternity in order to understand transitions from one moment to the next. If our life is (in) time and eternity is the unity of time, then eternity has to be the totality of life present to the eternal.[183] This eternal presence, according to Plotinus, was the original, ideal state, out of which time fell and disintegrated into past, present, and future, a succession of isolated moments yet in their succession constituted through reference to the totality. This is life, which in its hustling ahead always consumes new time while the past life similarly takes up time.[184] Time appears as the fragmentation of eternity, or, the other way round, "eternity appears as depth-dimension of the temporal present."[185] In this view, then, eternity is not opposed to time, even though there is a contrast, but stands in a positive relation towards it by

---

[182] If time follows from motion, this following already implies time. Plotinus, III.7.10 (p. 125). Time can therefore not be caused by motion and, Plotinus ironically adds, "since we are not concerned with what time is not . . . it would now be time to say, what has to be understood as the essence of time." See Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:114.

[183] Plotinus, III.7.3 (p. 99). Kant saw the priority of the totality of time for the comprehension of any partial "times," however he did not see the implications for the thought of eternity. Kant, *Kritik Der Reinen Vernunft*, B48. Pannenberg speculated that Kant might have ignored it. In any case, the self as basis for the unlimited whole of time is not acceptable to Pannenberg, since the self is not unlimited. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:440, 2:115-116.

[184] Plotinus, III.7.11 (p. 129).

[185] Pannenberg, "Zeit und Ewigkeit in Israel und im Christentum," 202.

encompassing it in an eternal present.[186] This view was taken up by Boethius to whom Karl Barth later referred.[187]

Barth was also the one who supplied Plotinus's concept with a Trinitarian groundwork.[188] This was absolutely necessary, for "if we imagine the simultaneous possession of life as a whole in a solitary subject, all temporal distinction would evaporate and therefore the quality of life itself. Therefore it is only in the Trinitarian life of the one God that the Plotinian description of eternity in terms of wholeness of life is realized."[189] Rahner's rule of the identity of immanent and economic Trinity explains how God can have the whole of life, of reality, of time, present before him without being timeless.[190]

_____

[186] Pannenberg sees in this a parallel to God's infinity. According to Hegel, the truly infinite has to encompass the finite as well. Otherwise it would have the finite as something outside of himself and would not be infinite. In a similar way, true eternity needs not only be opposed to time but also to encompass time. A timeless eternity would be an example of the bad infinity since it was only opposed to time. True eternity will literally take up time in the future. Consequently, Pannenberg says, the future is the place where eternity is in time. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:441-442. The simultaneous presence also fits well with the notion of God as omnipresent. According to Einstein's theory of general relativity, time is relative to the location of the observer (and also the speed at which he is moving). A being that is at all places at the same time, that covers space therefore automatically, has the totality of time present before it. This resonates with the notion that God as field of force creates the space-time-continuum. Space and time are consequently both encompassed by him. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:108, 113.

[187] Barth, II/1, 688.

[188] He spoke of an order and succession within the Trinity and even of a before and after. Ibid., II/1, 693-694.

[189] Pannenberg, "Eternity, Time and the Trinitarian God," 14. Tillich also agrees that eternity does not entail timelessness or endless time. Paul Tillich, *Systematische Theologie* (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1955-1966), 322. However he does not ground this view in the Trinity and while he can avoid the undifferentiated self-identity of God, he cannot explain the relation of this God to his creatures. See Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:440.

[190] It also thereby makes possible God's contingent actions which would be excluded by a timeless eternity, as Pannenberg holds against Pike who had criticized eternity in general as condemning God to inactivity. See Nelson Pike, *God and Timelessness* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1970), 8-14, and Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 1:438. It should be added however that the question itself is a matter of debate. Paul Helm holds that God can act contingently (e.g., answer prayers) even if he is timeless. His conception gets somewhat complicated and artificial though. See Helm, "Divine Timeless Eternity," 52-55, and also the ensuing discussion with the other contributors.

The Primordial Presupposition

Is Pannenberg's *theos* temporal then? Clearly not in the usual sense of the word. It is striking that Pannenberg nowhere states that God is in time. The fact that he is not is a logical conclusion of the fact that time and space are products of the divine field of power.[191] God is not subject to change as human beings are. His essence is fixed in himself and eternally determined. All the change that can be seen in his self-revelation is just a translation or projection of his eternal differentiated Trinitarian essence into the temporal sphere of creation. If Pannenberg states that God is not yet, this does not express the facts of the Trinity, since for them there is no "not yet"; all is present. Rather this statement is a translation of the relational reality that God is not God without being sovereign over/with the Son and the Spirit into the human dimension. It expresses eternal truths in a temporal perspective, since the simultaneous presence of life is unimaginable in time. Similarly, the assertion that the execution of God's kingdom is future is a temporal projection of the eternal reality that God's kingdom is established through the Son.[192] The classical distinction between essence and appearance that Pannenberg admits in a modified form to apply to his system of anticipation[193] also suggests the view that the mutable part of God is an appearance (in order to reveal himself to humanity who cannot

---

[191] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:107-109. It was already mentioned above that it is somewhat a paradox to speak about a beginning of time. Nevertheless, Pannenberg affirms that time originated with creation. Nevertheless it is not a necessary part of finiteness, since in the *eschaton* finite creatures will live in the eternal present with God. Rather, time is the condition for independence and the possibility to choose and act for the creatures. Ibid., 2:116-117.

[192] In keeping with the description of the Trinity in the statement "The Son is the future of the Father." Pannenberg, "Eternity, Time and the Trinitarian God," 13. Which can only be an analogy from a human, temporal perspective since Pannenberg limits Barth's "before" and "after" to the economic Trinity. See Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:438-439.

[193] See Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*, 44.

understand but in the sequence of time), while the real thing, his true essence, stands behind or above that appearance. Pannenberg's *theos* therefore is not temporal.

So is Pannenberg's primordial presupposition as revealed in the *theos* timelessness? Not in the classical sense. To Robert Jenson, who criticizes Pannenberg's eternity as a falling back upon the old idea of eternity as timeless present,[194] Pannenberg merely answers that God's present is different, since it is the future and furthermore a characteristic of the Trinity, not of the three persons in their distinctiveness.[195] The answer is telling. God's present is different from the timeless present, not because the present was different (i.e., temporal), but rather because Pannenberg's God is different from classical timeless notions of God. So God might well be called timeless, if this did not include all those concepts that Pannenberg rejects. This was the point of his statement contra Pike that God is able to act contingently.[196] Pannenberg's God is not the monolithic unmoved mover of Scholasticism. Pannenberg's God is the distinguished Trinitarian God, whose nature is relational, who is not distant to his creatures, who became human, who acts in time.[197] In fact, God is continuously active in the sustainment of his creatures and through that in all of their activities.[198] But he is not confined to this kind of action, he can also do miracles, like the resurrection of Jesus. In the present author's opinion this is Pannenberg's concern: the alternative view of God. It can also be

---

[194] Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 218, n.61. Jenson criticizes the fact that God does have no future outside of himself. In effect, then, as Jenson correctly recognizes, he has no future at all. In Jenson's view, however, eternity itself contains a future. "God is not subject to the march of time, but this is not because eternity does not march."

[195] Pannenberg, "Eternity, Time and the Trinitarian God," 13.

[196] See n. 192.

[197] Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, 2:58-59.

[198] Ibid., 2:63-68.

seen in his reinterpretation of immutability into faithfulness.[199] When Pannenberg speaks

out against timelessness it is not because God was temporal, but because God is not

timeless in the classical understanding.

With this emphasis, Pannenberg certainly comes closer to the biblical God and

thereby takes a step towards the critical continuation of the reception of the philosophical

concept of God into theology.[200] For this he is certainly to be commended. However, for

the purpose of the present study, which asks for the nature of Pannenberg's primordial

presupposition concerning the dualism of time and timelessness as dimensionality of

reason in the history of philosophy and theology, Pannenberg's system in effect has to be

counted to the timeless side. His *theos*, even though it might appear to be changing in its

involvement in history, is in essence eternally the same. Its essence, even though it

includes the development of history which will be determined by the future, is

nevertheless eternally fixed by the fact that God is the future. The temporality is not real,

but merely a projection of God's essence into the temporal realm. Thus Pannenberg's

temporal ontology of God, his conception of the *theos*, is nothing more than a play with

words. The change is part of the eternal, relational Trinitarian nature of God but not a real

change in God's essence, which amounts to timelessness. Since God is also the

realization of Being, Being is understood as timeless as well. As far as the dimensionality

of reason is concerned, Pannenberg's system appears to be timeless.

---

[199] Ibid., 1:470-473.

[200] Pannenberg, "Die Aufnahme des philosophischen Gottesbegriffes als dogmatisches Problem der frühchristlichen Theologie," 45.

CHAPTER IV

COMPARISON

The objective of this study is to examine the role of reason in theology. Since the study of reason is the area of philosophy, two theologians were chosen who also are philosophers. What was described above has shown that both of them dig deep into the fundamental questions. The comparison of their approaches will serve to clarify the picture developed so far and show how what they are saying is related to each other. The criterion to be kept in mind is how independent from philosophical preconception reason functions in their respective systems.

The execution of the actual comparison is both difficult and in danger of becoming redundant. Difficult, because the work of Canale and Pannenberg is of such a different nature; possibly redundant because—due to the disparity in character—the description and analysis of the work of Pannenberg was arranged along the structure of reason as pointed out by Canale. Putting this corset on the investigation of Pannenberg's huge body of thought was necessary in order to arrive at a comparable result within the limits of this thesis. This necessity resulted in the fact that some comparison has already happened implicitly in the second chapter.

Similarities

The most striking similarity between the two conceptions of Canale and Pannenberg is their call for a criticism of reason. Pannenberg states: "It could be the task

of theology to take a close look at those claims that arise in the name of reason per se!

This is the only way that will make it possible to gain a critical idea of reason and

cognition in general, which will facilitate a reasonable account of the truth of the

Christian message."[1] Canale in a similar statement explains: "A criticism of theological

reason . . . means to claim that theology is able to develop a criticism of its use of reason

by itself outside the traditional philosophical realm."[2]

While we have already mentioned that the actual development of the criticism

goes in different directions, there are nevertheless some features in Pannenberg's system

that seem to be similar to Canale's conception—even though it is far from being finished.

One is the strong eschatological emphasis that could be called the *Leitmotif* of

Pannenberg's theology. Here Pannenberg conveys some deep insights into the biblical

understanding of truth and Being. In connection with the primacy of the future, the role

of biblical prophecy for epistemology should be considered. Another similarity is the

centrality of Jesus in his theology. Even if one does not agree with Pannenberg's notion

of self-revelation as happening exclusively in history, Christ remains the fullest and most

complete revelation of all and therefore a biblical theological reason should keep a

Christ-centered focus and always test its construction against the one who claimed to be

the truth.

Another similarity is the conception of ontology and epistemology on the natural

level. Both Pannenberg and Canale see the philosophical development of the last decades

as a turn to the biblical understanding of reality. Especially Canale praises postmodernity

---

[1] Pannenberg, "Glaube und Vernunft," 243.

[2] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 8.

as a "perfect opportunity"[3] to develop a new system of thought. The insights of Heidegger, Dilthey, and others have opened the way for alternative conceptions by pointing out the tentativeness of all knowledge. Historical existence and truth are affirmed by both thinkers in relation to the created order. The differences begin when it comes to God and ultimate reality, but even here, Pannenberg's conception denies some of the features of classical timelessness and thus represents a step in the same direction that Canale wants to go.

Another parallel that needs to be mentioned briefly is the agreement on the importance of history as *locus* of revelation. For Pannenberg, this was how it all started, the basis of his system. Canale does not agree with everything that Pannenberg says on the topic, especially his exclusion of other forms of revelation on the basis of the criteria of oneness and self-revelation. Nevertheless Pannenberg states: "Perhaps the criticism of theological reason should search for the understanding of the *theos* in the history of the *theos*' temporal manifestations?"[4]

The most important resemblance however comes to light in the question of the structure of reason. In classical thought the structure was onto-theo-logical. Canale challenges this conception and proposes that theology should come up with a theo-onto-logical system of reason. From what was said above it is clear that it is difficult to determine where a thinker actually starts. If Canale wants to criticize the *logos* with the *theos* (instead of the *theos* being criticized by the *logos* as it has been throughout history), how does he arrive at the concept of *theos*? He does so by referring to a fact of theological reason. But this fact also needs to be understood or interpreted which requires

---

[3] Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 237.

some form of *logos*. The same is true of Pannenberg. It is very hard to determine where timelessness as primordial presupposition comes from. Yet it seems that it comes from his understanding of the concept of *theos*. Of course one could argue that Pannenberg's *theos* is shaped by his timeless *ontos*, his conception of Being as timeless, just as it has been in classical philosophy. But from his writings the impression seems to be that the primordial presupposition comes from his concept of God. His ontology and epistemology are temporal. It is only when God enters the picture that their true underlying timelessness becomes visible. God as being determined by himself as his own future is basically timeless. And this timeless *theos* which grounds the unity of the system requires the timelessness of *ontos* and *logos*. So despite the fact that their primordial presuppositions are opposed to each other, both Pannenberg and Canale agree on the fact that theological reason needs to be theo-onto-logically structured.

Differences

Apart from the difference in the character of their work, the most obvious difference between Canale and Pannenberg is their understanding of the form that a theological conception of reason needs to take. Both agree on the necessity of an independent construction of theological reason. Pannenberg has completed his system and thus submitted a proposition about what it could look like. Yet, as this study has shown, it is not identical with Canale's vision of it. While Canale has not yet finished the actual critical system, he has invested a lot of work in the theoretical justification and preparation of it and is more than clear that, for him, timelessness is not an option, since he understands the Bible to present a temporal picture of God and reality.

---

[4] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 153, n. 3.

This leads to another difference between Canale and Pannenberg, one that was mentioned in the introduction: the role of the Bible in their thinking. Canale adheres to the *sola scriptura* principle which for him means that the whole Bible is revealed and inspired.[5] For Pannenberg "scripture does not carry divine authority" and "the experiences recorded [in it] need to be tested and evaluated for their truth claims with rational and scientific methods."[6] One could be tempted to call Canale naïve for committing himself to the Bible the way he does, but his study has shown that such a decision is neither better nor worse than any other *a priori* choice. But is he not in a hermeneutical circle since in finding the basis for epistemology in the Bible he is already employing some form of thought and reason? It is true that he makes his analysis a phenomenological one, but is phenomenology itself not based on philosophical presuppositions? And is a methodological *epoché* really possible? These are justified questions that cannot be easily answered within the limits of this paper.[7] What can be said however is that from the perspective of this study Canale's approach is to be commended. A biblical concept of reason must be developed from a perspective that needs to be as neutral (or biblical) as humanly possible. Even if total objectivity might in the end not be feasible, such a method at least allows for a hermeneutical spiral that leads into something new and truly independent. In addition, Pannenberg seems to be in a similar hermeneutical circle: First and foremost his theology has to be reasonable and in

---

[5] Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 382.

[6] Hasel, 157.

[7] Concerning phenomenology it has been mentioned above that such a choice already implies a temporal primordial presupposition, since phenomenology negates or ignores the existence of the *thing-in-itself* or the timeless realm behind the appearances. If one focusses only on "that which shows itself," it is unlikely or even impossible to grasp the supernatural or whatever is supposed to lie behind the visible

harmony with science. Reason is the judge over Scripture but then reason is also to be shaped by Scripture as the testimony to God's revelation in history, to Jesus, the ultimate revelation of truth and Being. It seems that none of their differing views on Scripture can claim logical superiority over the other.

The question is whether the difference in the estimation of the Bible affected the result of their respective concepts of theological reason. For Canale it is clear that, once he has established the dependence of reason on a primordial presupposition, this presupposition needs to come from the Bible. Pannenberg does not address the question of presuppositions directly but he argues for an understanding of reason that follows the biblical view. Does the fact that Pannenberg's goal is to bring Christianity into coherence with the insights of science force him to accept their presuppositions? This study has shown that this is not the case. His ontology which is based on quantum physics and process thought is temporal with the exception of the essence of each being which is predetermined by God as power of the future. Pannenberg's epistemology also builds on a "temporal" concept of truth and acknowledges the tentativeness of all knowledge. But again, since the *logos* knows the *ontos*, since true knowledge means grasping the essence of the object, God enters the picture and brings in the question whether ultimately this conception might not be timeless after all—which is what this study found to be the case. In both cases he includes the biblical testimony which defines God as acting and "changing" in history and truth as temporal (אֱמֶת). Consequently, on first sight, his ontology as well as his epistemology look thoroughly temporal, but in the final verdict one sees that this temporality is bracketed by God as the power of the future that

---

reality. Yet in an attempt to be as neutral as possible a method that excludes that which cannot be examined or measured can hardly be called a bias.

determines everything. So in the opinion of the present author the subordination of the Bible to the sciences is not the reason for Pannenberg's timeless primordial presupposition. Rather his theology, which in this respect seems to be based on tradition instead of the Bible, introduces this concept into his system. One could say that the role of the Bible is decisive for the two approaches, yet it is not the subordination to science that causes that difference but rather the subordination to tradition.

It was just mentioned that Pannenberg does not address the question of the presupposition. This could be taken as one hint that—unlike Canale—he did not consider the spontaneity of the subject. One example can be found in his treatment of epistemology. Pannenberg acknowledges the existence of several approaches to reason and discusses them, yet he does not see that the spontaneity of the subject reaches the level of reason's structure. In his view biblical epistemology supersedes the Greek concept. The temporal concept is better or truer than the Greek. He does not mention the fact that historical truth is not an improvement of the classical notion, but rather based on a temporal ontology, which is caused by a different assumption about ultimate reality. Canale in his overview of the history of philosophy distinguishes the different concepts of *ontos* and *logos* regarding the choice of a primordial presupposition. Pannenberg correctly criticizes Hegel for not seeing the randomness of history and attempting to press it into a neat linear development, yet he himself did not address the randomness of the choice of his concept of truth.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study started with the fact that theology is a reasonable enterprise, which is done with the use of reason. The study of reason has traditionally been the territory of philosophy. In a way that is mostly unrecognized but nevertheless important, theology is dependent on philosophy for its most basic ingredient: the forms of thought. Since the method always influences the result, one needs to ask how much theology is shaped by the philosophical decisions the theologian needs to make in order to do theology. Catholic theology has developed its own philosophical basis over the centuries. For Protestantism, fundamental theology is a field that only a few dare to venture into. But especially for Protestants, who build their theology on Scripture and not on tradition, the need for a philosophical basis that is in harmony with the worldview of the Bible is imperative. One step towards such a biblical reason consists in the examination of existing biblical philosophical constructions. Two of them were the focus of this study. The main body of this work has tried to outline and grasp the core concern of Canale's *Criticism of Theological Reason* and of Pannenberg's theological and philosophical system. This was done in order to evaluate their theological construction in search of a truly biblical concept of reason.

Canale started his writing in a time when ecumenical ambitions were high but the theological landscape did not stop its continued fragmentation into more and more

116

diverse positions. Theological disagreement is not only a problem for Christian unity, but also puts theology as an "intellectual enterprise"[8] into question. For Canale this challenge goes deeper than theology, it pertains to reason itself, which is the basis of the constitution of (theological) meaning. Using his philosophical background, Canale therefore scrutinized reason in order to see how it actually worked and if a certain understanding of reason could be at the root of theological disagreement. What he found was an onto-theo-logical structure of reason which is incorporated into a system of meaning. Canale's analysis of reason revealed the interdependence of ontology and epistemology. Since both are vital for an understanding of the constitution of meaning but each of them includes the other, neither of them can be seen as "an absolute tribunal"[9] about the functioning of reason. This is where the whole, the ultimate ground of reason, comes in. This whole, which was traditionally studied by metaphysics is what Canale calls the system. The determining factor in the system is the *theos*.[10] Thus, the structure of reason appears as onto-theo-logical, with the *theos* providing the ultimate ground through the coherent interrelation of the *logos* and the *ontos*. Despite the fact that *theos* is the ultimate expression of the *ontos*,[11] which means that even the concept of *theos* is not

---

[8] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 1.

[9] Ibid., 37, n. 1.

[10] As has been pointed out above, Canale in his phenomenological analysis of the structure of reason uses *theos* not as a synonym for God, but in a formal sense for the One (of the One and the many), the center of unity of all ideas. For Christians of course (and Pannenberg is one of them) this function is ascribed to God, but that is irrelevant as far as the structure of reason is concerned.

[11] Ibid., 51.

independent or absolute, *theos* is the part of the structure of reason from which the primordial presupposition flows to the other parts.[12]

Since all of the three poles are interrelated, none of them can be the start or beginning. One needs to begin with an assumption or *a priori* in order for reason to function. Traditionally this *a priori* was a notion of Being, which is why the *ontos* stands at the beginning. Because of the role of the *theos* in the system, Canale calls for a theo-onto-logical structure in which the initial assumption is about the *theos*, which for the Christian theologian is God. This assumption about God would have to come from the Bible (a statement on which all Christians should agree) and thus it could remove not only the influence of foreign philosophical concepts but also possibly remove the theological quarrels that result from different philosophies. However, independent of which structure one uses, it always depends on one most basic assumption.

Thus Canale's analysis of the structure of reason revealed the relativity of reason to a primordial presupposition. This presupposition cannot be justified rationally but has to be chosen by faith. In examining the primordial presupposition in the history of philosophy, Canale discovered two opposing interpretations of it, namely temporality and timelessness, with timelessness being the prevailing one of those two. Neither of these two (or any other theoretically possible versions) can be called right or wrong. Since they are chosen by an act of faith the only criteria that could argue for or against a presupposition are religious criteria. This opens the door for a biblical interpretation of reason, which is what Canale is trying to establish. The problem he faces is the possibility

---

[12] This is especially true in a theo-onto-logical system of reason. But even in a onto-theo-logical system, where the ground for the interpretation of *theos* and *logos* is the *ontos* and where the understanding of Being precedes and grounds the understanding of *theos*, the unification of the three poles into a system of meaning is enabled through the *theos*.

of analyzing the biblical primordial presupposition without tainting it with one's own presupposition, which has to exist in order for reason to function. Canale tries to solve this problem through the phenomenological method which puts all *a priori* under a methodological *epoché*. Then he analyzes a fact of theological reason, that is, a biblical statement that deals with Being and knowing. According to this analysis, the Bible portrays God in a way that suggests temporality as dimensionality of reason, which means that a biblical concept of reason would have to be built on this primordial presupposition. Temporality has been used in recent philosophy, but so far no theological system was established on its basis. The development of such a system is the task or vision, with which Canale ends his book and on which he has kept on working after its publication. The radical nature of Canale's work and vision can hardly be overestimated. He is calling for the construction of something unprecedented, for the rewriting of the history of philosophy. He surely is independent from preconceived philosophical notions.

The study then turned to examine Wolfhart Pannenberg, arguably the greatest living theologian. In contrast to Canale, Pannenberg has not analyzed reason and its structure in a basic phenomenological way, at least not in any of his publications, but he has constructed an entire theological system (something that remains to be completed for Canale), and in the course of doing that has written extensively on each of the three pillars of the structure of reason that Canale discovered. For reasons of comparability the investigation of Pannenberg was arranged along this threefold structure.

Pannenberg began his work in a time and setting that was thoroughly atheistic and anti-metaphysical. Theology in Germany, the stronghold of historical critical scholarship, had, as a reaction to this trend in textual research, limited faith to the private and irrational realm. Barth in his unique way had broadened the gulf that Schleiermacher had

established.[13] After the Second World War, in the middle of modernity, Pannenberg began his quest of renewing metaphysics and reestablishing the truth-claims of Christianity. His strategy was to demonstrate that the Christian faith provides the best explanation of reality as a whole including modern scientific and philosophical discoveries. Based on his interpretation of revelation as history and especially the proleptic full self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ, he developed the metaphysics of anticipation. This metaphysics of anticipation, or eschatological metaphysics, interprets Being and knowledge as prolepsis of the future or God's *eschaton*. Being and knowledge as anticipation of the totality of Being implement the current state of philosophical research and its move to a contextual or hermeneutical approach to the problems. Ontology is seen as the sum of life and relationships, whereas epistemology is limited to grasping this *ontos* in progress instead of some absolute truth behind it. One can see that such a conception is generally free from everything supernatural and totally different from the classical Greek view. By interpreting God as the future, the totality of life and reality, Pannenberg brings the deity back into this temporal system.

Pannenberg's conception of *theos* coherently integrates his ontological and epistemological framework of anticipation. God as the power of the future also fulfills Pannenberg's own criteria of being coherent with the rest of truth, philosophical and scientific, through the concept of the field of force. The importance of his system for theology on its way into the future is not yet adequately estimated. He created a new metaphysical system in the tradition of Aquinas or Hegel, which claims to make sense of all of reality. However it seems that by bringing God back into epistemology and

---

[13] Braaten, "The Current Controversy on Revelation: Pannenberg and His Critics," 225.

ontology he also brought back timeless Being, even though his interpretation of God is clearly different from the classical timeless understanding.

Since God, as the power of the future which determines everything, is eternally the same, the sum of reality is fixed from eternity to eternity. The anticipation of one's essence is therefore not a creative contribution to the sum, but merely a passive reception of a timeless absolute, similar to the classical notion of appearance and essence. Clearly in Pannenberg's system essence precedes existence. What everything will, or rather should be, is eternally determined by God. In this timeless conception of *theos* and *ontos*, Pannenberg's epistemology nevertheless remains temporal, at least for humanity before the *eschaton*, since they have no intellectual capacity to know the eternal realm. Knowledge, which in theory is anticipation, in practice probably is an abstraction in the way Canale describes it in thinkers such as Heidegger or Merleau-Ponty.[14] This does not change the primordial presupposition of the system; it merely declares timeless truths to be non-cognizable for humanity before the *eschaton*.

To come back to the question of the study: Did Pannenberg overcome the dependence of theology on philosophy? The answer has to be a qualified no. Pannenberg did create a new theological ontology, but he consciously and independently chose to do so on the traditional basis of timelessness as the nature of Being. Therefore Pannenberg's system, in this respect, is not as groundbreaking as Canale's approach. The "no" has to be qualified, because even though Pannenberg ended up with a classical timeless philosophical conception, he does not belong to the category of uncritical adoption, into which most other theologians fall. Pannenberg is not dependent on philosophy but uses it creatively. He is his own philosopher and has created his own metaphysical system as a

basis for his theology. The magnitude of this achievement is probably unparalleled in contemporary theology. Although Pannenberg shows similarities to both historicist and process thought, he clearly distinguishes himself from these schools and criticizes them in the areas where they diverge from what he understands to be the biblical picture. The same is true for Hegel and German Idealism as a whole. So in this sense Pannenberg has partially overcome the dependence of theology on philosophy. Of course his system stands in relation to the great theologians and philosophers of history, but it is a creative and critical relationship.[15] He has created something new that Walsh calls contradictory monism—the attempt to reject both dualism and the trap of a simplistic monism.[16] While nobody will dispute the fact that Pannenberg is a unique thinker, uniqueness in general was not the question of this thesis. Rather, the focus was on the primordial presupposition and in this area Pannenberg's system lacks uniqueness.

Both scholars have taken the necessary step of doing the philosophical groundwork for Protestant theology. In different ways, both attempted to develop an understanding of theological reason that does not blindly accept the philosophical consensus of the times. If in terms of independence from preconceived *a priori* Canale

---

[14] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 130-137.

[15] This is described well in the often quoted paragraph by Braaten in which he says: "What species of theology is this? Is it conservative or liberal? Is it neo-orthodox or paleo-orthodox? Is it Hegelian? Is it Lutheran? Pannenberg conceded that his American audiences seemed to have some difficulty in classifying his theology. The neo-fundamentalists would enjoy his position on the historical verifiability of the resurrection as a datable event of past history. The orthodox would like the sound of *notitia*, *assensus*, and *fiducia* but wouldn't know what to do about his antisupernaturalism. *Heilsgeschichte* theologians would indorse his stress on history but would generally not approve of eliminating the prophetic word from the definition of revelation. Historians would applaud his devotion to the facts, but few would succeed in reading revelation right off the facts of history. Those who see Pannenberg's theology as a revival of conservatism need only to meet his doctrine of scripture and the confessions to be disabused of any illusions. Pannenberg's theology obviously escapes ready-made labels." Braaten, "The Current Controversy on Revelation: Pannenberg and His Critics," 233-234.

[16] Walsh, 248.

seems superior to Pannenberg, one needs to keep in mind the differing goals of these two thinkers. While Canale's aim is to construct a system of theological reason from biblical revelation, Pannenberg wanted to construct a theological system that demonstrates Christianity's truthfulness through dialog and correspondence with the other sciences. In addition, one needs to consider that Canale's work (or the part considered in this study) is the first step on the way to a philosophically independent theology, the establishment of the possibility thereof. Pannenberg on the other hand has spelled out his system under the attentive eyes of the scientific world. Each of the two thinkers that this study has looked at has in his unique way done a marvelous work. And in a different manner they both convey the same message: There remains a lot of work to be done in the quest for a Christian philosophy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alexander, Samuel. *Space, Time, and Deity*. London: Macmillan, 1920.

Aquinas, Thomas. *The Summa Theologica*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province and Daniel J. Sullivan. 2 vols. Chicago, Ill.: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955.

Aristotle. *The Metaphysics*. Translated by Hugh Tredennick and G. Cyril Armstrong. London: W. Heinemann, 1933.

Augustine. *The City of God and on Christian Doctrine*. Translated by Marcus Dods and J.F. Shaw. Vol. 2 A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ed. Philip Schaff. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988.

_____. *The Confessions and Letters*. Translated by J.G. Pilkington and J.G. Cunningham. Vol. 1, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ed. Philip Schaff. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988.

_____. *Of True Religion*. Translated by J.H.S. Burleigh. Chicago, Ill.: Regnery, 1959.

_____. *The Trinity*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1963.

Baldermann, Ingo, ed. *Religionsgeschichte Israels Oder Theologie Des Alten Testaments?* Vol. 10, Jahrbuch Für Biblische Theologie. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner Verlag, 1995.

Barr, James. *Old and New in Interpretation: A Study of the Two Testaments*. Currie Lectures, 1964. London: S.C.M. Press, 1966.

_____. "Revelation through History in the Old Testament and Modern Theology." *Interpretation* 17, no. 2 (1963): 193-205.

Barth, Karl. *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1945-1970.

Beiser, Frederick C. "Hegel's Historicism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, ed. Frederick C. Beiser, 270-300. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Braaten, Carl E. "The Current Controversy on Revelation: Pannenberg and His Critics." *The Journal of Religion* 45, no. 3 (1965): 225-237.

_____. "Toward a Theology of Hope." *Theology Today* 24, no. 2 (1967): 208-226.

Braaten, Carl E., and Philip Clayton. *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988.

Bracken, Joseph A. "Trinity: Economic *and* Immanent." *Horzions* 25, no. 1 (1998): 7-22.

Brown, Colin. *Christianity & Western Thought : A History of Philosophers, Ideas & Movements*. Vol. 1. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990.

Canale, Fernando L. *Back to Revelation-Inspiration: Searching for the Cognitive Foundation of Christian Theology in a Postmodern World*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2001.

_____. *Basic Elements of Christian Theology: Scripture Replacing Tradition*. Berrien Springs, Mich.: Canale, 2005.

_____. *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology: A Hermeneutical Study of the Revelation and Inspiration of the Bible*. Berrien Springs, Mich.: Canale, 2005.

_____. *Creation, Evolution, and Theology: The Role of Method in Theological Accommodation*. Berrien Springs, Mich.: Canale, 2005.

_____. *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions*. Vol. 10 Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series. Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1987.

_____. "Evolution, Theology, and Method Part 1: Outline and Limits of Scientific Methodology." *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 41, no. 1 (2003): 65-100.

Carr, Anne. "The God Who Is Involved." *Theology Today* 38, no. 3 (1981): 314-328.

Clouser, Roy A. *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005.

Cobb, John B. Jr. "Pannenberg and Process Theology." In *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton, 54-74. Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988.

Collingwood, R. G. *An Essay on Metaphysics*. Rev. ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

Cullmann, Oscar. *Christus Und Die Zeit: Die Urchristliche Zeit- Und Geschichtsauffassung*. Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1948.

Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Gesammelte Schriften*. 26 vols. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Dürr, Hans-Peter. "Über Die Notwendigkeit in Offenen Systemen Zu Denken - Der Teil Und Das Ganze." In *Die Welt Als Offenes System: Eine Kontroverse Um Das Werk Von Ilya Prigogine*, ed. Günter Altner, 9-31. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1986.

Ford, Lewis S. "The Nature of the Power of the Future." In *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton, 54-74. Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988.

Frede, Dorothea. "The Question of Being: Heidegger's Project." In *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon, 42-69. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Ganssle, Gregory E., ed. *God & Time: Four Views*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

Glanz, Oliver. "Time, Reason and Religious Belief: A Limited Comparison between Herman Dooyeweerd's Structural Analysis of Theoretical Thought and Fernando Canale's Phenomenological Analysis of the Structure of Reason and Its Biblical Interpretation." M.A. thesis, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2006.

Godzieba, Anthony J. "Ontotheology to Excess: Imagining God without Being." *Theological Studies* 56, no. 1 (1995): 3-20.

Grenz, Stanley J. "The Appraisal of Pannenberg: A Survey of the Literature." In *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton, 19-53. Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988.

_____. *Reason for Hope: The Systematic Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.Co., 2005.

Guignon, Charles B., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Hall, Harrison. "Intentionality and World: Division I of Being and Time." In *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon, 122-140. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Harnack, Adolf. *Lehrbuch Der Dogmengeschichte*. 3 vols. 3rd ed. Freiburg i.B.: J.C.B. Mohr, 1894.

Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. 2 vols. Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1980.

Hartmann, Nicolai. *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*. 5th ed. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965.

_____. *Les Principes D'une Métaphysique De La Connaissance*. 2vols. Paris: Aubier, 1945.

Hasel, Frank. *Scripture in the Theologies of W. Pannenberg and D.G. Bloesch: An Investigation and Assessment of Its Origin, Nature, and Use*. New York: P. Lang, 1996.

Hefner, Philip. "The Role of Science in Pannenberg's Theological Thinking." In *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton, 266-286. Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Werke in 20 Bänden Mit Registerband*. Edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York, NY: Harper, 1962.

_____. *Sein Und Zeit*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006.

_____. "The Way Back into the Ground of Metaphysics." In *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: An Anthology*, ed. William Barrett and Henry David Aiken, 3, 207-218. New York, N.Y.: Random House, 1962.

Helferich, Christoph. *Geschichte Der Philosophie: Von D. Anfängen Bis Zur Gegenwart U. Östl. Denken*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1985.

Helm, Paul. "Divine Timeless Eternity." In *God & Time: Four Views*, ed. Gregory E. Ganssle, 28-60. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

_____. *Eternal God: A Study of God without Time*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Henrich, Dieter. *Der Ontologische Gottesbeweis: Sein Problem Und Seine Geschichte in Der Neuzeit*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1960.

Hoffman, Piotr. "Death, Time, History: Division Ii of Being and Time." In *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon, 195-214. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Hügli, Anton, and Byung Chul Han. "Heideggers Todesanalyse." In *Martin Heidegger: Sein Und Zeit*, ed. Thomas Rentsch, 25, 133-148. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001.

Husserl, Edmund. *Ideas: General Introdution to Pure Phenomenology*. London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1967.

Jaeger, Friedrich, and Jörn Rüsen. *Geschichte Des Historismus*. Munich: C. H. Beck, 1992.

Jaspers, Karl. *Die Grossen Philosophen*. Vol. 2. Erfstadt: Hohe, 1957.

Jenson, Robert W. *Systematic Theology*. 2 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Joachim, Schaper. "Auf Der Suche Nach Dem Alten Israel? Text, Artefakt Und »Geschichte Israels« in Der Alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft Vor Dem Hintergrund Der Methodendiskussion in Den Historischen Kulturwissenschaften - Teil I+Ii." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 118, no. 1+2 (2006): 1-21, 181-196.

Kant, Immanuel. *Kritik Der Praktischen Vernunft Und Andere Kritische Schriften*. Vol. 3. 6 vols. Werke. Köln: Könemann, 1995.

————. *Kritik Der Reinen Vernunft*. Vol. 505, Philosophische Bibliothek. Hamburg: Meiner, 1998.

————. *Kritik Der Urteilskraft*. Berlin, 1790.

Kasper, Walter. *Der Gott Jesu Christi*. Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1982.

Keller, Albert, "Sein." In *Handbuch Philosophischer Grundbegriffe*, ed. Herman Krings, Hans Michael Baumgartner, and Christoph Wild, 3:1288-1304. Munich: Kösel, 1974.

Kenny, Anthony John Patrick. *Aquinas on Mind*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Klooster, Fred H. "Historical Method and the Resurrection in Pannenberg's Theology." *Calvin Theological Journal* 11, no. 1 (1976): 5-33.

König, Eckard. *Augustinus Philosophus: Christlicher Glaube Und Philosophisches Denken in Den Frühschriften Augustins*. Vol. 11, Studia Et Testimonia Antiqua, ed. Vinzenz Buchheit. Munich: Wilhem Fink, 1970.

Labute, Todd S. "The Ontological Motif of Anticipation in the Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37, no. 2 (1994): 275-282.

LaCugna, Catherine Mowry. *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. San Francisco, Calif.: Harper, 1991.

Lohse, Bernhard. *Ratio Und Fides: Eine Untersuchung Über Die Ratio in Der Theologie Luthers*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958.

Löser, Werner. "'Universale Concretum' Als Grundgesetz Der Oeconimia Revelationis." In *Handbuch Der Fundamentaltheologie: Traktat Offenbarung*, ed. Walter Kern, Hermann J. Pottmeyer, and Max Seckler, 2, 83-93. Freiburg: Herder, 2000.

Löwith, Karl. *Weltgeschichte Und Heilsgeschehen: Die Theologischen Voraussetzungen Der Geschichtsphilosophie*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2004.

Luther, Martin. "Disputation against Scholastic Theology (1517)." In *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy F. Lull, 13-20. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.

Marías, Julián. *History of Philosophy*. New York, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1967.

McKenzie, David. *Wolfhart Pannenberg & Religious Philosophy*. Washington, D.C.: University of America Press, 1980.

McTaggart, John M. E. *The Nature of Existence*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927.

Mellor, D. H. *Real Time*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Moltmann, Jürgen. *Der Gekreuzigte Gott*. München: Kaiser, 1972.

Padgett, Alan G. "Response to Paul Helm." In *God & Time: Four Views*, ed. Gregory E. Ganssle, 61-62. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Anthropologie in Theologischer Perspektive*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983.

_____. "Atom, Duration, Form: Difficulties with Process Philosophy." *Process Studies* 14, no. 1 (1984): 21-30.

_____. "Die Aufnahme Des Philosophischen Gottesbegriffes Als Dogmatisches Problem Der Frühchristlichen Theologie." *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 70, no. 1 (1959): 1-45.

_____. "An Autobiographical Sketch." In *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton, 11-18. Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988.

_____. "Christentum Und Platonismus: Die Kritische Platonrezeption Augustins in Ihrer Bedeutung Für Das Gegenwärtige Christliche Denken." *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 96, no. 2 (1985): 147-161.

_____. "Einsicht Und Glaube." In *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I*, 223-237. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967.

_____. "The Emergence of Creatures and Their Succession in a Developing Universe." *Asbury Theological Journal* 50, no. 1 (1995): 17-25.

_____. "Eternity, Time and the Trinitarian God." *dialog: A Journal of Theology* 39, no. 1 (2000): 9-14.

_____. "Faith in God the Creator and Scientific Cosmology." *Communio* 28, no. 3 (2001): 450-463.

_____. "Glaube Und Vernunft." In *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I*, 238-251. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967.

_____. "God as Spirit and Natural Science." *Zygon* 36, no. 4 (2001): 783-794.

_____. "Der Gott Der Hoffnung." In *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I*, 387-398. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967.

_____. *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie*. 2 vols. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967-1980.

_____. *Grundzüge Der Christologie*. Gütersloh: Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1964.

_____. "Die Krise Des Schriftprinzips." In *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I*, 11-21. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967.

_____. *Metaphysik Und Gottesgedanke*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988.

_____. "Notes on the Alleged Conflict between Religion and Science." *Zygon* 40, no. 3 (2005): 585-588.

_____. "Problems between Science and Theology in the Course of Their Modern History." *Zygon* 41, no. 1 (2006): 105-112.

_____. "Redemptive Event and History." In *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. Claus Westermann. Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1963.

_____. "Response to John Polkinghorne." *Zygon* 36, no. 4 (2001): 799-800.

_____. *Systematische Theologie*. 3 vols. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988-1993.

_____. "Theological Appropriation of Scientific Understandings: Response to Hefner, Wicken, Eaves, and Tipler." *Zygon* 24, no. 2 (1989): 255.

_____. "Theological Questions to Scientists." *Communio* 15, no. 3 (1988): 319-333.

_____. *Theologie Und Philosophie: Ihr Verhältnis Im Lichte Ihrer Gemeinsamen Geschichte*. Göttingen: Vandehoeck & Ruprecht, 1996.

_____. *Theology and the Kingdom of God*. Philadelphia, Pa.: Westminster Press, 1969.

_____. *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976.

_____. "The Theology of Creation and Natural Science." *Asbury Theological Journal* 50, no. 1 (1995): 5-15.

_____. "Über Historische Und Theologische Hermeneutik." In *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I*, 123-158. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967.

_____. *Was Ist Der Mensch? Die Anthropologie Der Gegenwart Im Lichte Der Theologie*. 2nd ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962.

_____. "Was Ist Eine Dogmatische Aussage?" In *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I*, 159-180. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967.

_____. "Was Ist Wahrheit?" In *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie I*, 202-222. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967.

_____. *Wissenschaftstheorie Und Theologie*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977.

_____. "Zeit Und Ewigkeit in Israel Und Im Christentum." In *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie Ii*, 202-222. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980.

Pannenberg, Wolfhart, and Niels Henrik Gregersen. *The Historicity of Nature: Essays on Science and Theology*. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2007.

Pannenberg, Wolfhart, and Ted Peters. *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith*. 1st ed. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/J. Knox Press, 1993.

Pannenberg, Wolfhart, Rolf Rendtorff, Trutz Rendtorff, and Ulrich Wilkens. *Offenbarung Als Geschichte*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961.

_____. *Revelation as History*. New York,: Macmillan, 1968.

Pasquariello, Ronald D. "Pannenberg's Philosophical Foundations." *The Journal of Religion* 56, no. 4 (1976): 338-348.

Pike, Nelson. *God and Timelessness*. London: Routledge & Paul, 1970.

Plotinus. *Über Zeit Und Ewigkeit: Enneade III.7*. Translated by Werner Beierwaltes. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995.

Polkinghorne, John. *Belief in God in an Age of Science* Terry Lectures. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998.

_____. *Faith, Science and Understanding*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Universtiy Press, 2000.

_____. "Fields and Theology: A Response to Wolfhart Pannenberg." *Zygon* 36, no. 4 (2001): 795-797.

_____. "Wolfhart Pannenberg's Engagement with the Natural Sciences." *Zygon* 34, no. 1 (1999): 151-158.

Rad, Gerhard von. *Old Testament Theology I+Ii*. Peabody, Mass.: Prince Press, 2005.

Rahner, Karl. *The Trinity*. New York, N.Y.: Herder and Herder, 1970.

Ritschl, Albrecht. *Theologie Und Metaphysik: Zur Verständigung Und Abwehr*. Bonn: Marcus, 1881.

Schmidt, Erik. *Hegels System Der Theologie*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974.

Schmitz, Josef. "Das Christentum Als Offenbarungsreligion Im Kirchlichen Bekenntnis." In *Handbuch Der Fundamentaltheologie: Traktat Offenbarung*, ed. Walter Kern, Hermann J. Pottmeyer, and Max Seckler, 2, 1-12. Freiburg: Herder, 2000.

_____. "Die Fundamentaltheologie Im 20. Jahrhundert." In *Bilanz Der Theologie Im 20. Jahrhundert: Perspektiven, Strömungen, Motive in Der Christlichen Und Nichtchristlichen Welt*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimmler and Rovert Vander Gucht, 2, 197-245. Freiburg: Herder, 1969.

Smolin, Lee. *The Trouble with Physics: The Rise of String Theory, the Fall of a Science, and What Comes Next*. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.

Soden, Hans von. *Was Ist Wahrheit? Vom Geschichtlichen Begriff Der Wahrheit*. Marburg: Elwert, 1927.

Tillich, Paul. *Systematische Theologie*. Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1955-1966.

Vancourt, Raymond. "Préface." In *Les Principes D'une Métaphysique De La Connaissance*. By Nicolai Hartmann. 2 vols. Paris: Aubier, 1945.

Venema, Cornelis P. "History, Human Freedom and the Idea of God in the Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg." *Calvin Theological Journal* 17, no. 1 (1982): 53-77.

Villa-Vicencio, Charles. "The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg." *Journal of Theology for South Africa* 16, no. 1 (1976): 28-41.

Walsh, Brian J. "Pannenberg's Eschatological Ontology." *Christian Scholar's Review* 11, no. 3 (1982): 229-249.

Weigel, Gustave, and Arthur G. Madden. *Knowledge, Its Values and Limits*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973.

Whitehead, Alfred North. *Science and the Modern World*. New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1925.

_____. *Adventures of Ideas*. New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1933.

_____. *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*. New York, N.Y.: Free Press, 1978.

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "God Everlasting." In *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Steven M. Cahn and David Shatz, 77-98. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

_____. "Unqualified Divine Temporality." In *God & Time: Four Views*, ed. Gregory E. Ganssle, 187-213. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

Young, Michael J. "Functions of Thought and the Synthesis of Intuitions." In *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, ed. Paul Guyer, 101-122. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.