

Introduction  
PRINCIPLES OF THIS STUDY

1. *Interpretation versus "historical and objective explication."*

The present study was born in the conviction that the very well-known and recurrently commented work, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, remained yet to be disclosed in its deep signification, and, *at the same time*, to be rendered readable in the detail of its architecture, indeed in the turns of its phrasing. The complete freedom of the interpretation has revealed itself to us, indeed, not as a distance or as an infidelity with respect to the texts, but, on the contrary, as the means of making them *appear* (and appear *themselves in themselves*), in a light of which the source, however, was not to be discovered in themselves.

That this light, like all *real* light, throws shadows in its turn, speaks only in its favor, and it is what distinguishes, for the naked eye so to speak, *interpretation* from "historical" and "objective" *explication*. When the latter grasps hold of a work, it leaves no corners untidied. The "thought" of the author is reconstituted in an intelligible order which is supported by the texts (by the citations), but is not found in them, and of which they would be rather the sensible and confusing envelope. The speech of philosophers is thus accorded the transparency one supposes it *should* have. But alongside this palace of crystal, and all around it, spreads the dark night of philosophical *étrangeté*. What are the great texts then if to understand them one must first absorb all the erudite literature which "translates" them? Do they not become something most daunting: a sort of foreign language, and foreign moreover to itself? Since before anything else the works have been withdrawn from an actual reading of them, we no longer find in an objective explication anything but the obscure appearance of a clear construction, which resides "elsewhere." Thought has thus disappeared in its explication and deserted the texts. The more frequently the latter are cited, the less they are respected, for they serve merely as props and as material for the objective construction, and appear as though destined from the beginning to be cited in the true order of their explication.

This manner of proceeding presupposes that it is impossible for philosophers to say precisely what they wanted to say and how they wanted to say it. The totality of their works is considered from the outset as a sort of blind and empirical effort to "translate" a fundamental meaning and order, which the works themselves manage only to approach in places, while remaining by essence either short of it or beyond it. On the other hand, the explication supposes a translucent nature of what is in question in the thought itself. It has no doubt that philosophy is

a univocal language and an absolute construction, that it is precisely an intelligible text of which the work of the philosopher is but the more or less obscure translation. But if thought by itself has the nature of crystal, then one wonders why it incarnates itself in the actual opacity of texts. In short, everything is clear in attempts by historians of philosophy to explain philosophers, except for the need of having to explain them at all.

This *étrangeté* makes itself evident right from the start, for it is the nature of explications to absolutely distinguish the thought from the texts, and yet to “consult” the texts in order to infer the thought. It is hard to see what regulates this play of inference. If from the decomposition of a light I can get back to the knowledge of a living source which has none of the colors of the spectrum, it is not without knowing the nature of the bodies which decompose it, the number of its facets and their disposition, the angles they form, etc. But in philosophy this knowledge would be that of all the forms that transcendental appearance<sup>1</sup> can take and the way in which these forms can be found in the history of thought. The cold objectivity which places side by side the texts, in the contingency of *their* obscurity, and the explication of these same texts in the self-evidence of *its* clarity, thus supposes the absolute knowledge of all the intermediaries even as it supposes, in addition, that one has not deigned to provide them.

But the explicators have no such power nor such malignity, of course. The truth is rather that the preceding supposition has no reality. Philosophy, in fact, does not have a clear, univocal, obvious meaning, the “spectrum” of which would be grasped by all philosophers, each one to his measure and in his manner. The relation between transcendental truth and transcendental appearance is not an extrinsic relation of decomposition. Their unity is at the origin and it persists everywhere as a unity. Everywhere, that is to say first of all in the obscurity of texts, which is not “something other” than their clarity—as if the fall of day were something other than the fall of night. All that the texts of the Tradition say which is true is said not *via* a certain obscurity, but *in* it, and the reality of the saying is no more enveloped in the appearance of texts than being is enveloped by the sensible. The works are thus absolutely sufficient, although absolutely difficult, like appearing [*le paraître*], like the world. It is inevitable that in rediscovering the bloom of things contemporary thought also rediscover the bloom of texts. If Kant clearly retains his pollen for Husserl, who nonetheless mistreats him, and is no longer but a herbarium plant for all those who

---

<sup>1</sup> What is meant here is the “natural illusion of Reason” whose logic is that which Kant calls “dialectical.” This does not mean that we conceive the limits in strictly the same way that Kant conceives them. It is characteristic of the “transcendental illusion” to enclose thought in a self-evident universe where it only perceives, and *can* only perceive, what it thinks constitutes, not the absolute it imagines, but a certain transcendental situation which remains at a determined distance from “the thing itself” which is in question in this thought. In this way, Kant reveals the transcendental naivety of Leibniz, and Husserl that of Kant himself. Behind this problematic of transcendental naivety stands the distinction Heidegger recognized between a thought and its un-thought [*im-pense*], a distinction which at the same time is an essential union.

in their explications dread deviating from him by a hair, it is due to the fact that a text is not a *manner of saying* something which would reside elsewhere and of which there would be a *pure saying* (as phenomena for Leibniz are manners of being of a substance which is itself equal to none of them, except in the way that God sees them), but that on the contrary *the saying is in the manner*, that obscurity is the place of meaning and that, consequently, interpretation, in contrast to explication, infers only from itself the light it seeks to throw upon works, at the same time that it ensures that the latter are illuminated *in* their obscurity and become, in the strange life with which they are thus infused, once again entirely *readable*.

This link between reading and interpretation, which is established in a unique manner, is what we would like to expose in our exploration of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

## 2.) *On the internal benefits of interpretation.*

Before even specifying that by “interpretation” no “arbitrary” attitude is implied which would make itself too readily at home in the work of a great thinker and claim to reduce it to some “personal point of view,” it is necessary to try to respond to a question which minds that are most inclined towards a hermeneutical conception of the history of thought would precisely be the first to ask. Indeed, they would point out that the exegesis of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that we say we wish to attempt has already not only been tried, but achieved, by Heidegger, more than thirty-five years ago, in his famous *Kant und das problem der Metaphysik*<sup>2</sup>. To which two more recently published works must be added, *Kants These über das Sein*<sup>3</sup> and *Die Frage nach dem Ding*<sup>4</sup>. Certainly in these works—of which it would be superfluous to say that each of them, in its manner, is decisive—what we have called “the deep signification” of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is indeed disclosed. In what sense, then, may we legitimately consider that the *Critique* “remained yet to be disclosed in its deep signification”? The response to this question is multiple; in attempting to provide it, we shall at the same time delimit, as one has a right to expect of us, the nature and the reach of our study.

It will be observed in reading it that this study moves, indeed, in the universe of questions opened by Heidegger. Heidegger seeks to make Kant appear in himself, not in “explicating him by himself,” nor from a point of view exterior to Kantism, but in attempting to rediscover *this unique form* of Western thought confronted with its metaphysical destiny *which defines the “critical” moment*.

---

<sup>2</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, fifth edition, enlarged, trans. Richard Taft, Indianapolis, Indiana UP, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Kant’s ‘Thesis about Being’” (1961), in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeil, trans. Ted E. Klein, Jr. and William E. Pohl, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1998, p. 337-363.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning the Thing. On Kant’s Doctrine of the Transcendental Principles* (1962), trans. James D. Reid and Benjamin D. Crowe, New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

One will observe, however, that what is said in our study is never related to any of Heidegger's three works on Kant, that it is a matter here neither of taking up his theses, nor of prolonging them (what could possibly be the sense here of this notion of "prolonging"?), nor of correcting any imaginary shortcomings. This situation has the noteworthy advantage that our weaknesses and errors will in no way reflect upon an author whose paths appear admirable to us and which suffice perfectly to themselves. And yet, if we attempt to trace our *own* path here towards Kant, it is not only *reverentia* with respect to Heidegger's thought which has determined our doing so; even less is it a matter of a puerile stubbornness to produce who knows what "personal thought."

Of what then is it a matter precisely? Of the internal fecundity of the interpretation itself. One should notice, precisely in reading Heidegger, that the commerce between thought and its tradition, of which this thinker himself first established the possibility—much like explorers of the late 15<sup>th</sup> century established the possibility of world commerce by revealing that the world was round (as if a certain *circularity* was the principle of all *circulation*)—and of which he next explored certain "imperial routes," amassing experience and instituting language amidst perturbations and clearings, is an *open* commerce, the amplitude of which is that of a world and the *inventio* of which awaits only our faith and our courage for it to increase and to multiply. This liberty and the breadth of this field, which we say holds promise for interpretation, are by no means mere images, and least of all "literary images," which an immature enthusiasm would cause to waver before our eyes: if they hold "promise" for interpretation, it is that they are grounded in the essence of "the thing itself," in the essence of the relation between contemporary thought and its metaphysical tradition. This relation is indeed such that it always restores to works that punctuate the Tradition, not only their own "right" and their own "necessity," but also a right and a necessity which are those of a language. Each great thought of the past thus appears as a constellation of sense where *all is sense*, in the same way that all is language in language. Interpretation (at least that which is in question here) is indeed in no way similar to what Merleau-Ponty very aptly named "a thinking by overview": it does not hover over works at an altitude from which its "detail" would be reduced to the point of finally disappearing; on the contrary, it sees the detail of texts emerge and abound in a clearness and a readability which the myopia of objective erudition, lost in the tangle, does not even suspect. Or perhaps one should say rather that there is no detail in an ensemble which has been recognized as language, and as *such* language. Once recognized in this manner, however, it becomes what it is, which is to say an *entirely speaking* ensemble. The ontological situation which has been disclosed as its own does not concern then the work of a thinker in one or another of its theses merely, but rather, prior to any thesis, fully penetrates each text, in its awkwardness and its clarities, because it is itself that to which the thought in question *responds*, response in which it constitutes itself in the

first place and comes to exist as thought, however hidden this situation might and indeed must remain for it. It follows from this that any interpolations offered by the work to interpretation—even though the latter remains always “the same” in its principle—are as numerous as the aspects by which a determined language reveals itself precisely in its determination. Such “aspects,” it is true, are nowhere in the text; but on the condition that the texts themselves are not read “from nowhere.” Conversely, as soon as they are read from the transcendental place to which the thought in question responds, they *all* offer themselves as so many signs and paths for interpretation. The latter thus possesses for reasons of principle the possibility of constituting itself as a *reading* for which there are no crumbs in a work, no possible “sorting” between what would be important and less important, revelatory or insignificant. The thoughtful reading of a thought finds that *everything* in it is essentially “readable,” without being held for all that to “reading everything” in the sense that an objective explication is, whose ideal of exhaustiveness implies the completeness of erudition. One should therefore not be surprised if works of the past offer abundant possibilities, properly inexhaustible, of free and faithful exegesis (free and faithful at the same time, and in the same movement) to contemporary thought.

Such is the way in which it is possible to say that a thought which has been disclosed in its fundamental signification remains yet to be disclosed in this very signification. The latter is not a univocally intelligible representation, which would be attained by a univocal “method” and possessed by a univocal “formulation,” a representation according to which texts would be reduced to their sense as appearances in science are reduced to their object, that is to say once and for all and in one possible manner. The deep signification of a thought, on the contrary, streams through a thousand channels in all the articulations and all the developments of this thought; it is to be found in each of them, as they are to be found for the first time in it, such as they *are*, across incredible gaps, apparent abysses between one sense formation and another, or else alongside an imperceptible “nuance” buried in the self-evidence with which a text first presents itself, and which, however, in parting its waters, defines the broad underlying places to which it belongs, the geography by which it becomes readable. Before this profusion of its own past, which resembles in a certain way the liberty of proliferations in nature, the contemporary mind undertakes a task of “recognition” [*reconnaissance*] (in both senses of the term [recognition and gratefulness]), for which it is not only possible, but good, to be several.

It does not suffice, however, to show that Heidegger’s thought, far from blocking the horizon, opens the disciple to the possibility of an inexhaustible reading of the past, and in this case of the Kantian past; it remains necessary to specify how the reading of Kant that we propose here situates itself with respect to this thinker’s, and in doing so of what it itself consists.

One will have already understood that the difference does not lie in the principle of interpretation itself. The fundamental thesis of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, according to which the *Critique of Pure Reason* is “an instauration of the foundation of metaphysics” which “is grounded in time,” is a thesis which shall not be revisited here. It is only that *towards* which we wish to return, and as something that is rather more, in truth, than a mere “thesis,” with which one has nothing more to do once it has been established. To return towards the fundamental signification of Kantian thought such as it has been disclosed in Heidegger’s *Kantbuch*<sup>5</sup> (and such as it had been announced in *Sein und Zeit*), does not imply simply a “reformulation” of what is said there. It is to show rather, in another manner than in the *Kantbuch*, how this signification restores the texts to themselves. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is a work whose “revolutionary,” and almost adventitious, character is no longer truly discernible to us today, for whom the philosophical atmosphere of the years 1925-1930 has thoroughly dissipated. We *know* of course that the mass of cultural self-evidence under which Kant was buried and which Heidegger was the first to penetrate and to throw off was incredibly thick.<sup>6</sup> But we measure poorly the real effort of clearing away, one should say of un-recovering [*dérecouvrement*], that is supposed by this interpretation. Such an effort calls upon thinking in its entirety; the latter thus explains not only the strenuous nature of the language and the massiveness of the construction, which one recognizes in a simple reading of the *Kantbuch*, but implies that the fundamental situation of Kant’s thought has been recognized there only in its crudest delineation. Compared with later developments of the “*Seins-geschichte*”—for instance in the reading of Leibniz or of Nietzsche—the *Kantbuch* has the colossal roughness with

---

<sup>5</sup> *Kantbuch* is a term from German university jargon, employed to designate the book on Kant that most Germanic philosophers of some importance have produced. If it is not elegant, this usage is helpful in that it suppresses the obligation to reproduce the work’s title all the time. That is why we have decided finally to adopt it.

<sup>6</sup> It is not only, as one might think, the reigning conception according to which Kant’s thought was taken for a “theory of knowledge” which Heidegger had to break free from, but also the *Husserlian* interpretation of Kant itself. Indeed, in this interpretation, which, in contrast to Heideggerian hermeneutics, has the character of an annexation, Kant ceases to appear as a simple “theoretician of knowledge,” but only to figure in the gallery of ancestors as the most ingenious of naïve phenomenologists. Was the “*kritische Ideengeschichte*,” which constitutes the imaginary museum of phenomenology as a *Erste Philosophie* (1923-24 Husserliana, t. VII, Nijoff, La Haye), included among of the unpublished texts that Heidegger declared in *Sein und Zeit* to have become “largely acquainted with” during his years as an assistant at Fribourg? These texts are at any rate contemporary with the period of gestation of *Sein und Zeit*. It is striking that the beginning of *Sein und Zeit*, which is entirely devoted to affirming the *ontological* sense of the “phenomena of phenomenology,” and where, despite the courtesies, it is clear that this sense is deeply buried beneath the self-evidence (the *Selbstverständlichkeit* strictly speaking) in which Phenomenology encloses itself in its turn along with the entire tradition, if not more completely even than any other moment of the tradition, — it is striking that this beginning includes a reference to Kant as “the first and only” to have already accomplished a few steps in the direction of the thought that Heidegger proposes in these pages to set forth. Heidegger, in “separating” himself from Husserl, takes Kant along with him. The affiliation of Heideggerian thought coming into possession of itself with Kant’s thought is this a *unique* affiliation. But that will hold our attention further on.

which everything that is newly born envelops its miracle and its fragility. Fragile, indeed, is the situation of interpretation itself here, which appears to want to “bend” Kant’s thought to the project of *Sein und Zeit* in an arbitrary manner. In the preface to the second edition of *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, twenty years after the work’s initial publication, Heidegger expresses in the following manner the consciousness he has of this appearance: “Readers have taken constant offence at the violence of my interpretations. Their allegation of violence can indeed be supported by this text.”<sup>7</sup> It is particularly remarkable, however, that Heidegger renounced bringing any “changes” to the work which might have dissipated this impression of arbitrariness, which is all the more reason to abstain from giving our own work the character of a “development” of *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*. The true relation that we must maintain with this work is also indicated by the author: “Those who think,” he concludes this same preface by saying, “will learn more from its shortcomings.”<sup>8</sup> What must such “shortcomings” derive from, then, if not from the fact that the authenticity of the interpretation disposes of too small a space to manifest itself and triumph over appearances? It is not only a matter here of the appearance of arbitrariness, but correlatively, and at the precise opposite extreme, of an appearance of dependence upon the self-evidence of the architecture and of Kant’s language. All this signifies simply that if *the basis* of the interpretation is delineated with accuracy in the book of 1929, it nonetheless is not extensively liberated for itself: thought originates in this basis and returns to it, of course, but it scarcely resides there. This is probably because this thought is acquiring its own place at the same time it carries out its “*Erörterung*” [debate, discussion] with Kant. That such is the case appears to be suggested by indications in the passage from *Sein und Zeit* that is referred to in the preface to the first edition of the *Kantbuch*. We have already noted that Kant appears there as “the first and only philosopher” to have sketched out (in a certain sense and a certain measure) the destruction of the history of ontology that Heidegger has proposed for himself. This destruction—or rather this deconstruction—supposes thought to be capable of recognizing “the foundation of metaphysics”; but the foundation of metaphysics is itself this “*Abgrund*,” this “Without-Ground,” which is constituted by ontological Difference as it destines thought to the forgetting of Being, that is to metaphysics. Interpretation thus finds itself with respect to Kant in a much more difficult situation than with respect to Descartes or Leibniz, for example. For Emmanuel Kant is in Heidegger’s eyes the only philosopher in whom the History of Being itself vacillates, or oscillates an instant as the metaphysical destiny of thought. For “an instant” only, since this destiny will close upon the *Critique*

---

<sup>7</sup> *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, p. xx.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xx, translation modified.

itself to give Kant's work the general sense of a consolidation of metaphysics as *Mathesis universalis*.<sup>9</sup> But this instant, or rather this "moment" properly speaking, is what gives the *Critique of Pure Reason* its equilibrium and its weight. The *Critique* thus has its center of gravity at a depth which no other work of the Tradition, either before or after it, since the Greeks, has ever attained or ever will attain. In going back to the place where the foundation of metaphysics establishes itself in the withdrawal "without ground" of ontological Difference itself, Kant situates himself at a "place" where interpretation can begin looking for it only if it has itself *deployed* the question of the sense of Being, in such a way that it can, let us not say "master" this sense (since it can only be a question here of obeying and not of dominating) but remain faithful to it through all appearances and all difficulties. This capacity for fidelity to the sense of Being, the forgetting of which constitutes the entirety of metaphysics, and which, to be brief, we shall call its "phenomenal" sense, must have been particularly great in the interpretation of the sole thinker to have approached such a phenomenal sense, even while he belongs entirely to the metaphysical destiny of modern thought.

This is where the proposition in *Sein und Zeit*—on the same page once again to which the preface of the *Kantbuch* refers us—acquires all its weight, the proposition according to which: "The destruction of the history of ontology essentially belongs to the formulation of the question of being."<sup>10</sup> One must even recognize that, applied to Kant, this proposition weighs double, so to speak. For Kant's thought—to the extent that it, and it alone, has for its *impensé* the phenomenal sense of Being itself—is such that it must itself contribute to leading interpretation towards its place or its origin. At the same time, it can only serve in this way as a path to interpretation if it is illuminated within the latter as such a path. The circularity of the relation between contemporary thought and its own tradition is thus perfect when this relation is established with Kant, and it carries this relation to its most extreme difficulty. The same goes, moreover, for us too. But the particularity of the difficulty for Heidegger in 1929 is that the question of being attains with the interpretation of Kant one of its very first formulations, and perhaps one of the very first understandings of itself. That is why it lacks the means for extending and for clearing away its place of origin or its own basis, towards which it is but in the process of opening a path. What we must do for our part then is clear, we for whom the ensemble of Heidegger's work has precisely opened up the broadest understanding of the question concerning the sense of being: it must consist in the attempt at a "repetition" of the interpretation, bringing it *closer to its own possibility* or liberty, even

---

<sup>9</sup> To the extent that Heidegger's other works on Kant are devoted precisely to the recognition of this "general sense," they differ profoundly from *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, which is why we shall not speak of them here.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2010, p. 22.



while, in the same movement, we restore the texts *more clearly and more completely to themselves* and to themselves alone.

What this means, given what has been said previously, is that we shall try above all to grasp in Kant's language the echo of the "non metaphysical," or "phenomenal," thought of the sense of Being, of which *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* "indicates" the presence (as a thinking of temporality) in the heart of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, more than it effectively *reveals* it, as constituting the sense in which, and in the "forgetting" of which, the texts are readable (or else, quite simply, *are*). We shall attempt thus to get closer to phenomenality as that which Kant "properly thinks," or "wanted to say" [*a voulu dire*], and above all closer to the dissimulation of this thinking of phenomenality in the self-evidence of a theory of the possibility of representation, which is the theory that constitutes the thematic object of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. What this implies is that we have liberated the *ontological equivocality* which enables a thought to construct itself upon two worlds at once (upon two significations of being itself), while keeping in its own eyes, however, the appearance of univocity and autonomy.

In truth, the *accomplishment* of this study also implies, in relation to Heidegger's reading of Kant, another difference besides the one we have just identified. This difference concerns the path by which the interpretation gains access at once to itself and to the texts. This path is traced for us by the question of perception. If the work, and above all the posthumous work, of Merleau-Ponty did not exist, we would have some trouble making it understood in what sense "perception" can become an essential question for contemporary thought, and consequently "meet" with the Heideggerian meditation on the sense of Being. We shall limit ourselves, in this introduction, to this general reference to the thought of Merleau-Ponty,<sup>11</sup> to gain acceptance, provisionally at least, of this intrusion of the question of perception into the ontological interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. We think that what follows will reveal not only the legitimacy, but even the absolute necessity, of this way of proceeding. Indeed, is not in just any manner that the *Critique of Pure Reason* approaches the sense of Being as a non-metaphysical or a phenomenal sense; it is very precisely as a thinking of perception, always present albeit never thematized in it, that the work tends to develop its ontological ramifications *beneath* the dominant language, which remains that of the metaphysics of the Moderns. The reason that the *Kantbuch* of 1929 seems to encounter a certain constraint, as if the interpretation was prevented from acquiring its full amplitude and had to sink into itself as

---

<sup>11</sup> The precise form of which is given by Merleau-Ponty himself: "The 'amorphous' world of perception of which I spoke with respect to painting—a perpetual resource for redoing a painting—, which contains no mode of expression and which nonetheless calls for them and requires all of them and re-suscitates with each painting a new effort of expression, —this world of perception is at bottom Being in Heidegger's sense...". *Le Visible et l'invisible*, Paris, N.R.F., 1964, p. 223.

into a canyon, no doubt has something to do with the fact that perception does not appear to Heidegger as a possible path towards the original sense of Being. Such as it appears in Leibniz, *perceptio* belongs to the history of Being<sup>12</sup> in which the “loss” of the original sense of Being is precisely *that of which* this history is the history. If one attempts to consider perception for itself, without concerning oneself with the history of Being, as one of the acts or one of the experiences of a subject, then one shall most assuredly submit oneself to the domination of this history that one claims to ignore. Even if one supposes, however, that the thinker who pursues a description of perception is sufficiently “well-informed” phenomenologically, that is to say even if he is “wary” from the outset of any confusion between presence and representation, if he puts quotation marks around the “naïve distinction” between subject and object, it remains that a meditation on perception is not necessarily a means of escaping from “metaphysics.” It may even lead phenomenology to constitute an absolute form of the reign of metaphysics, as is the case with Husserl, or—as is the case with Merleau-Ponty’s *The Phenomenology of Perception*—to lower itself merely to the level of a sort of philosophical competence, at the cost of an enormous and unsuspected metaphysical equivocation.

It is thus not a “circumstance” without gravity that the existential analytic which serves as the point of departure of *Sein und Zeit* is not an analytic of *Homo percipiens*, an eidetic of the perceived, but rather a description of the standing-reserve of being and of man’s concern or solicitude. What Heidegger avoids “like fire” is thus nothing more nor less than the evidence of “representation” itself, as is necessary if one wants to get back to the sense of Being prior to metaphysics [*en deçà de la métaphysique*]. None of these remarks should divert us, however, from following the question of perception as our guiding thread in the labyrinth of Kantian equivocality. Indeed, none of them signify—nor can signify—that the perceived [*le perçu*] does not have its own truth, which can be discerned on the basis of a thinking of the original sense of Being, and which, on this condition, can be followed in its turn as a path for discerning this sense and the “fragility” of this sense. That is why Merleau-Ponty did not have to disrupt the unity of his work in passing from the equivocality of his first works to the flawless interrogative power of his final book in pursuing all along the same “question of perception.” It thus suffices that this question be possible as a path towards the original sense of Being (from this sense itself) for Kant’s master work to open itself to a “new” reading, for which we wish only one thing: that it appear, once discovered and understood, as ancient as old stones.

### 3.) *Division of the present work*

---

<sup>12</sup> See Heidegger’s *Nietzsche, II*, Neske, Pfullingen, p. 438 sqq.

This reading thus has its center in what is here called the ontological equivocality of Kantian thought, which requires that this equivocality be identified and defined with rigor. But there is a prerequisite to this task, for Kantian thought has constructed itself as an ontological equivocality only in response to a certain initial situation, which must first be circumscribed and meditated upon for itself. This initial situation, in the strict sense, is that of the Aporia into which Kant stumbled shortly after the *Dissertation* of 1770—very precisely in the winter of 1771-1772—and which, foiling the hopes to which the *Dissertation* had given birth, threw him into a more than ten-year silence. Two letters testify to this crisis, the contours of which must be specified and the import carefully considered if one wishes to understand the *Critique of Pure Reason*, since the latter is in a certain manner nothing other than the resolution of the initial aporia.

We shall therefore begin our reflection upon the initial situation of Kantian thought, that is to say our inquiry into the reasons of Kant's silence after 1770, with the reading of these letters. Still older than these difficulties, however, older even than the *Dissertation*, there is in Kant a very firm conviction, completely new with respect to the metaphysics of the Cartesian age, concerning the nature and the proper rights of the "sensible," its irreducibility to the intelligible. How this embryonic thought of phenomenality co-existed with the hopes of 1770, the aporias of 1771 and the solution of 1781, without the ontological ramifications of the *Transcendental Aesthetic* ever clearly appearing to Kant, is what must be described and understood before we tackle the de-construction of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This will be for us like an exercise in discerning, in the limit texts, the hidden ontological equivocality which supports the weight and determines the architecture of the entire work. Our study then will have the following divisions:

## FIRST SECTION

### THE INITIAL SITUATION OF KANTIAN THOUGHT

First Chapter: Kant's Silence after 1770.

- a.) The Metaphysical Presuppositions of 1770
- b.) The Turning-Point of the Winter of 1771-1772

Second Chapter: Transcendental Aesthetics as Ontological Equivocality.

## SECOND SECTION

### THE DE-CONSTRUCTION OF PURE REASON

First Chapter: The Principle of this De-construction and the Determination of the  
Equivocality of *The Critique of Pure Reason*.

Second Chapter: The Architectonics of *The Critique of Pure Reason* and its “Flattening-Out.”

Third Chapter: Sensibility, Understanding, Reason.

a.) Sensibility and Understanding

b.) Reason

Forth Chapter: The Problem of the Limit.

Fifth Chapter: Mathematics and Dynamics.