INVESTIGATING THE PRESUPPOSITIONAL REAL OF BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY, PART II: CANALE ON REASON

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2.1 Introduction

The first article of this series focused on Dooyeweerd's interpretation of Reason.[1] I intend to draw on Dooyeweerd's conception for the development of an exegetical methodology that does justice to the multiaspectual phenomena of the text as well as to the chosen hermeneutical presuppositions. As mentioned earlier, Dooyeweerd's conception must be critically reflected on if an unbiased application of his thought is to be made. In order to allow for a critical analysis of Dooyeweerd's thought I choose the work of the Christian philosopher Fernando Canale. Thus this article will present (for the first time) Canale's analysis of Reason. The third article of this series will show how Canale's and Dooyeweerd's work can be utilized in order to investigate the ontological foundations of specific methodologies. In the fourth and final article, I will critique Dooyeweerd's and Canale's conceptions and sketch my own basic portrait of the functionality of human reason. My aim is to inspire the reader to begin a critical and productive reflection on methodology in general and biblical exegetical methodology in particular.

The background of Canale's analysis of Reason[2] lies in the great variety of contradicting theological systems.[3] This state, in which the contemporary theological debate finds itself, is most problematic since it seems to hinder mutual understanding and unity. Furthermore, the current state of theological disagreement challenges the very foundation of Christian theology. Consequently, Canale sees the need for an analysis of theological reason in order to discover the root of the problem of the many contradicting theological systems, all of which claim to be rational and reasonable.[4] In his dissertation, "A Criticism of Theological Reason," he inquires into the general formal structure and condition of Reason by means of a phenomenological analysis. Besides this, he searches for a biblical interpretation of the primordial

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[1]Oliver Glanz, "Investigating the Presuppositional Realm of Biblical-Theological Methodology, Part I: Dooyeweerd on Reason," *AUSS* 47 (2009): 5-35.

[2]Throughout this text Reason, Logos, and Knowledge, when used in the specific Canalean sense, will be capitalized.

[3]Fernando Luis Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 10 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1987), 10.

[4]Ibid., 3.

presuppositions of Reason. Both the formal structure of Reason and its biblical interpretation on the level of primordial presuppositions allow him to develop the possibility for theological criticism.

In my presentation of Canale's thought, I will start with a description of his understanding of Reason's formal structure (1.2). Subsequently, I will describe how Canale sees the structure of Reason at work from a biblical perspective (1.3).[5]

2.2 Canale's Structure of Reason

2.2.1 Object of Phenomenological Analysis: Reason

Reason, the object of Canale's phenomenological analysis, is not meant in its narrow sense as an ability that pertains to human being, a typically human cognitive potential or characteristic. Reason goes beyond the intellectual activity or logical thought of the cognitive subject. Therefore, it is fundamentally different from Dooyeweerd's understanding of theoretical thought. The structure of Reason is not the structure of the epistemic; the interpretation of Reason is not an epistemology. Canale uses Reason more broadly as that which makes meaning possible. Reason, therefore, includes all processes and structures by which meaning is constituted.[6] Thus Reason is not limited to, but includes, rational analytic thinking. Different levels, factors, and aspects may pertain to Reason. Canale speaks of Reason as being a *whole*, and the processes and frameworks it entails as being parts. This is important to understand because when Canale talks about the hypotheticity of Reason, he does not refer to epistemology alone, but to all levels and processes of Reason.

In *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, Canale uses "Logos" or "Knowledge" as synonyms of Reason. This may be confusing, but it shows the broad sense in which he analyzes Reason. Reason is understood hermeneutically. The primary function of Reason, then, is to create and formulate meaning, i.e., to provide unity and coherence for that which surrounds us and is in us⸺to provide unity and coherence to the variety of being (entities). In order to make this clearer, Canale explains that Reason as Logos can be described as that which enables the expression of "meaningful words."[7] Theo-logy, for example, tries to express meaningful words about God. Meaning and its expression in words cannot be separated; they belong together as aspects of

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[5]The main source of my presentation is Canale's dissertation. However, his thought on the matter of Reason did not find full expression in his dissertation. Additionally, not all of his thinking had been published yet. For that reason not only Canale's publications, but also e-mail communication with him helped me to clarify crucial elements of his thought. Accordingly, not all the sources of this presentation will be found in the bibliography.

[6]Canale, 45, n. 1.

[7]Ibid., 20, n. 1.

the same rational activity. According to Canale, meaning is always logical in the broad sense of the term.[8] Meaning is always a product of human Logos.

Consequently, Canale universalizes Reason to coincide with human knowledge. However, he does not want to be misunderstood as absolutizing Reason. The absolutization can only take place when it is made a particular capability of human beings. Like Dooyeweerd, Canale criticizes the absolutization of particular reason as observed in the history of philosophy and particularly in classical and modern interpretations of reason.

The central question of phenomenological analysis, then, is how Knowledge as Logos or Reason is possible. What is structurally demanded in order to be able to formulate meaning? This question is central, as Reason represents the human activity that generates meaning.[9] Meaning is always constructed meaning. Consequently, there is no meaning outside of Reason, i.e., no meaning outside of Understanding.[10] This implies that Knowledge can hinder further understanding, as Logos/Reason is the condition for understanding, misunderstanding, and even error. According to Canale, this allows for the experience of meaning in something that is not understood. This is because nonunderstanding takes place when interpretation according to Logos is generated. What is the structure of Logos that makes the expression of meaningful words possible? What levels, factors, and aspects are involved in Reason in order to make Reason function?

To analyze Reason, then, means to analyze the constitution of meaning as meaningful knowledge. In order to prevent the adoption of an ideological starting point, Canale specifies his question in terms of formal analysis. What is it that is structurally needed by Reason in order to construct meaning? He believes that one can discover the structure of Reason only by means of a phenomenological analysis that is concerned with the act of knowing.

Only a phenomenological analysis will make it possible to uncover the given structure of Reason apart from the actual interpretation of Reason. Thus the description of the structure of Reason is not the formulation of a theory of Reason (which necessarily takes place in the development of any ideology). In his phenomenological analysis, Canale seems to be constantly aware of the danger of including any ideology as a framework for interpreting Reason. Basically, he follows Hartmann's phenomenological analysis.

Canale sees an urgent necessity for a structural analysis of Reason because it is only on the basis of a good structural understanding that one can build a theory in the full awareness of its presuppositions. Although it is especially theoretical and scientific thinking that is the object of his critique, nevertheless the structure of Reason can be applied to both naïve

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., 10.

[10]Canale refers to "Understanding" in the most general way, rather than in a specific, concrete way.

and theoretical thinking. The difference is that the structure of Reason is made more explicit in theoretical knowing, while remaining implicit in naïve knowing.[11]

2.2.2 The Structure of Reason

2.2.2.1 A General Description of Reason's Subject-Object Relationship

In order to create meaning, Reason needs a subject and an object. Both a knower (subject) and a known (object) are needed. This relational structure is *a priori* ontic condition for Reason. In any philosophical endeavor, the interpreted subject-object relation is a necessary fundamental of a detailed construction of a philosophical system. Thus the basic framework of Reason is the subject–object relationship, and it is this relationship that is the center of meaning. In the cognitive realm, i.e., Reason's structure, the subject-object relation is at work. By "cognitive realm," Canale means the very basic setting by which understanding is generated in both its general and specific sense.[12] "At work" means that the subject and object sides need to contribute to their relationship in order to create meaning. There are two directions because of the two perspectives that are at work: the perspective of the object (direction: object ⇨ subject) and the perspective of the subject (direction: subject ⇨ object). From the perspective of the object, the communication of its ontic properties (which in biblical rationality are the lines of intelligibility, as I will discuss below) to the subject takes place. In this perspective, the subject is essentially receptive. From the perspective of the subject, the subject creates a logical image/idea of the object through its interpretative activity that enables it to grasp the object and create meaning. In this perspective, the subject is essentially active. The active interpreting of the subject supposes a framework by which interpretation is possible. Consequently, the contribution of the subject to the subject-object relation is presuppositional. This means that in order to generate meaning, the subject always contributes with some content in the form of an interpretational framework. This content basically entails a foundational understanding of the subject-object relation.

2.2.2.2 Reason's Frameworks as Part of the Subject-Object Relationship

The communication on the object's side is characterized by its ontic properties. The epistemic potentiality of the subject and the ontic properties of the object need to be complementary, thus need to unite in the same Logos. This is why the concept of the epistemic (epistemology) must unite with the concept of the ontic (ontology). One can characterize the subject-object relation as

[11]Canale, 27, n. 4.

[12]By "general" I mean the world in its totality; by "specific" I mean any chosen aspect of reality.

communicative when the concept of the epistemic (epistemology) and the concept of the ontic (ontology) are complementary. The presuppositional content that the cognitive subject needs in order to make sense of the received ontic information of the object demands some basic frameworks for interpretation. In the phenomenological analysis of the structure of Reason, on the most basic level one can detect three main frameworks: a concept of reality (ontological framework); a concept of knowing, including a concept of the functioning of cognition (epistemological framework); and a concept of a system that provides unity and guarantees coherence (theological framework). The formulation "epistemological framework" indicates that Reason structurally needs a concept of the epistemic (epistemology) as a part of its realm (framework). The "ontological framework" points to Reason's structural need for a concept of the ontic (ontology). The theological framework, or "system" as Canale puts it, holds together the epistemological and ontological framework in unity and coherence. Thus the structure of Reason demands that the ontic, epistemic, and theos need to be interpreted in order to make Reason function. Therefore, the onto*logical*, epistemo*logical*, and theo*logical* frameworks of the phenomenological structure of Reason should not be understood as referring to an existing concept of the ontic, epistemic, or theos, but to the structural necessity of formulating a concept of the ontic, epistemic, and theos. Reason necessarily works by the "logicalization" or conceptualization of the ontic, epistemic, and theos. The interrelations between the three frameworks are "empty." Their interpretation will bring forth structural interrelations.

The main feature of the subject is its potentiality to become cognitively active: to interpret and create a meaningful image of the object. In its cognitive activity, the subject is epistemically dependent on the object. The epistemological framework of the structure of Reason is mainly centered in the subject's cognitive activity. Because of this, Canale understands the epistemological framework to be dominated by the subject. The main feature of the object in this fundamental relationship is its transobjectivity. Transobjectivity means two things: on the one hand, that the object exists in ontic independence from the subject, and, on the other hand, that the object is open in the sense that it does not hide, but communicates its properties within the structure of Reason. Because of this, the ontological framework in a way transcends the epistemological framework. The ontic can exist without the subject's logic, but the epistemological framework cannot exist without the conceptualization of the ontic as ontological framework. This ontological transcendence, through which all knowledge can be generated by the cognitive activity of the subject, stems from projecting the content of previously experienced and mentally stored subject-object relations on the object. Thus the ontic properties that were communicated in past subject-object relationships constitute the content of the presuppositional contribution of the subject to the present subject-object relationship. In this sense, transobjectivity refers to the fact that the object's ontic properties are materialized in the memory of the subject. Therefore, all knowledge that

originates from the cognitive activity of the subject includes the *objective contribution* of the past. Here one can see how the ontological framework, which is dominated by the object's side, structurally interconnects with the epistemological framework, which is itself dominated by the subject's side. Reason, then, is not subjective Reason, but embraces both subject and object in their interrelation.

Besides the ontological and epistemological, Reason's structure entails a third framework, the theological. To understand its function and place, I will introduce this framework after explaining the ontological and epistemological frameworks.

As we have seen, the basic structure of Reason needs both a subject and an object: the subject, having epistemic potentiality, needs an object that, having ontic potentiality, is complementary in its logic. The epistemological and ontological frameworks need to be complementary in order to have a relationship. Without an ontological framework, the potentiality of the subject cannot be activated. The subject is, therefore, dependent on the ontological framework and its complementarity.

The phenomenological analysis reveals that Reason's frameworks are not external to but intrinsic features of the structure of Reason.

2.2.2.3 Ontological Framework

The concept of ontic reality needs to include an understanding of how a being (entity) relates to other beings (entities). The concept of the ontic strives for unity and coherence among being-diversity in order to establish a meaningful understanding of the ontic. Here Canale emphasizes the "logical" characteristic of the ontological framework. He does not have a particular ontology in mind, but stresses that Reason's structure needs an interpretation of the ontic that corresponds to a certain logic: an ontology. The term "ontological framework" thus refers to the necessity of interpreting the ontic and not to any specific ontology. Consequently, the ontological framework is in need of an interpretation (a specific ontology) in order to let Reason's structure function. An idea of the ultimate as origin of the diversity of entity-beings is structurally needed in order to establish a meaningful concept of the ontic (ontology). The idea of the ultimate as origin allows being to be understood in coherence and unity. Ontology, therefore, needs a concept of Being, the ultimate ground of being from which coherence and unity flow (theos).[13] Being as the ultimate ground of being is to be taken as that which allows for the existence of entities, i.e., what is necessary for the existence of being.

The ontological framework, on which the epistemological framework depends, is itself dependent on the theological framework. One could put it like this: the ontological framework communicates the ideas of coherence and unity from the theological framework to the epistemological framework. This outcome of the analysis leads Canale to the important conclusion that a

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[13]Canale, 35.

criticism of Reason is in urgent need of a criticism of ontology since it is the "center of gravity of Reason."[14]

2.2.2.4 Epistemological Framework

Whereas the ontological framework is part of the ontic realm of the structure of Reason, the epistemological framework belongs to the cognitive realm of the structure of Reason. From the object's side, knowledge is made possible through Being. From the subject's side, knowledge is made possible through the epistemological framework.

The cognitive activity that aims to construct an image of the object demands an interpretational framework, also referred to as "categories." The categories of the subject enable knowledge and the constitution of meaning. They are the necessary concepts to enable the understanding of reality as it appears, and are, therefore, of presuppositional character. Categories can be understood as schemes that are needed to place the properties communicated by the object. Without the categories of the subject, a subject-object relationship is structurally seen to be impossible. The content of the cognitive categories of the subject is prior to the subject-object relationship.[15] This content originates from previous cognitive activity in subject-object relationships. What the subject has received in the past from the object is stored inside the subject as presuppositions. The ontological framework then provides the categories for the constitution of Meaning and the definition of objectivity.[16] Presuppositions, in their broad sense, refer to all the contents that are in the mind of the subject when the subject knows. Every new cognitive experience is incorporated in the existing presuppositional categories in the mind of the subject. These categories are not of logical character only, but involve the complete diversity of experience including, for example, sensations and social memories. In this sense, the subject projects the past onto the present. Through the phenomenological analysis that can uncover the three necessary and, therefore, structural frameworks among the many contents in the cognitive activity of the subject, Meaning, which is generated by the subject's cognitive activity, always assumes a basic interpretation of these three frameworks. One can see that the structure of Reason (which embraces both subject and object) includes the interpretation of Reason's structure in the subject! This is crucial to understanding Canale's analysis: the epistemological framework of the structure of Reason includes an interpretation of the structure of Reason. To put it differently: the global structure of Reason includes a particular interpretation of the structure of Reason within the subject of Reason's subject-object relationship.

[14]Ibid., 36.

[15]Ibid., 39.

[16]Ibid., 41-43.

The subject makes the subject-object relationship meaningful by applying its categories. In order to apply the three frameworks of Reason, they need to be made complementary through a basic common logic. Thus the same logic needs to be applied to all of the conceptualizations of the ontic, epistemic, and theos. It is, however, not only this common logic that characterizes all frameworks, but also the prior subject-object relationships that are stored in the subject's memory. Structurally, the concept of the ontic can not be established without any background in the subject-object relationship. Through the ontological framework, Reason finds the ground for its systematic nature in the actual content that is given to Reason's structure (interpretation of the ontic). That this is the case can simply be seen in the fact that all interpretations of the epistemological framework (epistemology) have a formulated concept of what the "object" or "objectivity" is. These concepts of the object are clear expressions of an interpretation of the ontological framework that is prior to any subject-object relationship.[17] In this context, Canale says that the ontological framework is necessarily implanted in the epistemological framework, since the former provides the latter with the basis for the necessary (epistemological) categories.

Through the cognitive categories (three frameworks of Reason), unity and coherence are created in the process of creating images of the objects through the cognitive subject. This leads us to the important conclusion that although the epistemological framework is grounded in the ontological framework, the subject interprets the ontic. This means that the concept of the object finds its origin in the epistemic capacity of the subject—any concept is of epistemic character. Here one can easily see the circularity of the structure of Reason: the epistemic and the ontic do not exist without each other.[18] This circularity or interdependence stems from the relational character of Reason itself. In any analysis of Reason, one will uncover the subject-object relation as basic presupposition. As Reason embraces both subject and object, the origination of Knowledge cannot be located in either the subject or the object. Knowledge has an intrinsically interdependent and relational character.

2.2.2.5 Theological Framework

As we have seen in the discussion of the ontological framework, the particular concept of unity and coherence is structurally rooted in the idea of the

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[17]Ibid., 42-43.

[18]Canale does not formulate this clearly, but this conclusion flows naturally from his distinction between the "ground" and "form" of the systematic nature of Reason. The functioning of the systematic nature of Reason is determined by the epistemological framework, while the ground of the systematic nature of Reason is deteremined by the ontological framework.

ultimate as theos.[19] The concept of theos is, therefore, the ground for any unity and coherence functioning in the subject's framework of interpretation.[20] The cognitive categories that establish unity and coherence through the interpretative act of the subject are derived from the concept of the ontic reality whose unity and coherence is founded in the idea of the theos. The phenomenological analysis goes beyond ontology as the ground of cognitive categories into the ground of ontology itself: the theos, as ultimate expression of the ontos (being rooted in Being). Again, we see how the concept of the ontic represents the "center of gravity of Reason."[21]

What can be concluded from this analysis is that Reason's systematic nature shows that the constitution of meaning flows from the concept of the whole (basic understanding of the ontic) to the concept of the part (understanding of an object) rather than the other way around. The phenomenological analysis of Reason reveals that the meaning of the whole is not determined by the meaning of any single part. Rather, every part finds its own particular meaning in relation to the meaning of the whole.[22] Consequently, the cognitive subject needs to be backed up by a basic understanding of the whole (i.e., a worldview or cosmology) in order to establish a meaningful subject-object relation. Such a basic worldview enables the subject to create a meaningful subject-object relation because it can formulate a coherence and unified idea of the object. The ground of the cosmology is found in the ultimate idea of the origin, or theos as Being (as Dooyeweerd's terminology would put it).[23] The concept of the theos, the theological framework, ultimately guarantees and articulates the complementarity of the subject-object relationship because the theos is the origin of this relationship.

This dependent relationship, seen from the perspective of the theological framework (theos-ontos-epistemic), is one of the three possible formal directions of the circle of dependencies between the three frameworks of the structure of Reason. Here meaning starts with a concept of the theos (system), from which a concept of the ontic can be established, from which, in turn, the epistemic categories can be derived.

[19]Canale explains that "Theos" is just the theological expression of the secular philosophical concept of "the One." From a Christian perspective "the One" is called "Theos," while from a secular perspective "Theos" is called "the One." Canale, 63, n. 1.

[20]Ibid., 48-49.

[21]Ibid., 36.

[22]Ibid., 47.

[23]"Being" is differently used in Dooyeweerd's writing. "Being" is not understood as a necessary characteristic that allows things to exist, but as the necessary origin that creates the existence of things. Therefore, to Dooyeweerd "Being" is a synonym for God.

Understanding the necessary grounding function of the theological framework of the structure of Reason, we still need to acknowledge that the theos is the ultimate expression of the ontological framework and implies ontological concepts. This acknowledgement is crucial to understand the second of the three formal directions of the circle of dependencies. In this direction, meaning starts with a concept of the ontic. Here the circle runs like this: the cognitive categories of the epistemological framework are formally grounded in the ontological framework, which again is formally grounded in the theological framework, which in turn is formally grounded in the ontological framework, since a concept of the theos implies basic ontic notions.

With this conclusion in mind, one needs to realize that even the concept of the ontic is a concept. Conceptualization itself points to the epistemological framework that allows the cognitive subject to start its interpretative and conceptualizing activity. Here we see the third of the three possible formal directions: meaning starts with a concept of the logos.

2.2.3 Beyond the Perspective of Any
of the Three Frameworks

The phenomenological analysis of the structure of Reason so far revealed that every single framework builds upon the other two frameworks. The structure of Reason does not give priority in the sense of an absolute starting point to any of these frameworks. None of the frameworks is independent from each other and, therefore, none of them can become a starting point within the structure of Reason. Although the theological framework functions as the ultimate ground of being, it cannot represent the ultimate starting point since it conceals a logia and an ontos.[24] The reason for the complementarity of the three frameworks is found in the logic of the interpreting subject. The concepts of the ontic, epistemic, and theos as onto-logy, epistemo-logy, and theo-logy need to share in the same logic in order to be complementary. However, the complementarity does not result from the logical interpretation of the subject alone, but also from the structural interdependence of the three frameworks that have been referred to as the three possible formal directions in the circle of dependencies. Thus what makes the three frameworks interdependent is the fact that they structurally share in a common logic.

What should be clear so far is that the very presupposition of Reason is a subject-object relationship that establishes Knowledge. In order to understand this relationship, an interpretation of the three frameworks of Reason is necessary. Without such an interpretation, we cannot find understanding or express meaningful words since outside of Reason there is no meaning. The interpretation of the frameworks has an interdependent character: every framework depends on the other two frameworks. Although the theological framework formally functions as the source of coherence and unity for all concepts by articulating the interrelation between the frameworks of Reason,

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[24]Canale, 51.

it is not independent.[25] This is not to say that the theos is dependent, but that the concept of the theos is not independent since it implies a basic ontological content while functioning as the ultimate expression of the ontological framework. A further phenomenological analysis should, therefore, make this basic ontological content the object of study. Because of this, Canale's phenomenological analysis proceeds and reveals foundational ontology as the ultimate cognitive reference in the structure of Reason. This conclusion is argued in the following way:

All three frameworks (epistemo-logical, theo-logical, and onto-logical) are structurally built upon Logos. Consequently, what lies beyond the interpretation of all three frameworks is Logos itself.[26] Of what character must the minimum content of Logos be? And where does that minimum content come from—where does the logic of the Logos come from? Canale tries to answer this question by referring to Heidegger, who argues that "-logy hides more than just the logical in the sense of what is consistent and generally in the nature of a statement [. . .] In each case, the *Logia* is the totality of a nexus of grounds accounted for, within which nexus the objects of the sciences are represented in respect of their ground, that is, are conceived." Of importance, however, is that "Ontology, however, and theology are '*Logies*' [*sic*] inasmuch as they provide the ground of beings as such and account for them within the whole. They account for Being as the ground of beings. They account to the *Logos*, and are in an essential sense in accord with the *Logos*, that is they are the logic of the *Logos*."[27]

Canale argues that the logic by which we conceptualize the ontic, epistemic, and theos is grounded in a Logos that is basically identical to the ground of being. This Logos functions as the minimum content of the subject's logic. If one wants to find out what the content of that Logos is, one needs to search for the nexus that is present in all three frameworks. One needs to go beyond the three frameworks of Reason's structure by searching for that which they share as a unity. That which goes beyond any concept is Being. Through the theological framework, all frameworks imply a logic whose categories are grounded in the basic interpretation of the ontic as Being, i.e., an interpretation of that which is necessary for existence, i.e., *foundational ontology*. Because of their logical character, all three frameworks imply the same foundational ontology. Foundational ontology accounts for the complementarity of the frameworks.

[25]It is important to see that in the phenomenological structure the theos cannot be seen as the origin of the ontic. Phenomenologically, the theos needs to be seen as the principle of articulating the ontological and epistemological framework. The understanding of the theos as the origin of the ontic reality belongs to the "material" side of the formal phenomenological structure of Reason. Formally, the theos functions as an empty concept that does not require the notion of creation.

[26]Canale, 52, n. 2.

[27]Ibid., 51.

Here the phenomenological analysis arrives at its most foundational point. Being as foundational ontology is the minimum content of being, and at the same time Being embraces all human concepts.

The meaning of Being can be found in every meaning of being, since it is the meaning of Being that provides the ground for any meaning, coherence, and unity.[28] But "Being" is not understood as a container within which reality takes place, but as "an overall quality shared by everything real."[29] "Being" is "not a thing in which all other things have their being" and does not "appear or is given to us as a 'thing', but co-appears with all things as a basic characteristic of their being."[30] Being cannot be understood as origin of what is, but as adjunct to all that exists (including theos).[31] Therefore, Being does not exist "by itself nor apart from what-is."[32] When Canale refers to Being as *ground* or *foundation* for any interpretation of Reason, it should be understood as the necessary condition for the generation of Meaning.[33] Being should not be confused with the role theos is playing. Being is not the origin of the ontic, but a basic adjunct for the possibility of being. Nevertheless, one could say that Being as the primordial presupposition has the function of the theos in the sense that coherence is established from it.[34] The difference is that the dimensionality is not the logic by which all frameworks are interpreted, but the Logos of the logic. This means that Logos goes beyond the theological framework that functions in the interrelation with the other frameworks of Reason as origin of coherence and unity. The Logos then finds expression within the concept of theos.[35]

One could say the concept of Being is the first and last concept on which all other concepts are built. There is no concept that can go beyond

[28]Ibid., 68

[29]Fernando Luis Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology: Scripture Replacing Tradition* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Lithotech, 2005), §38b.

[30]Ibid., §38a.

[31]Byung-Chul Han, *Martin Heidegger: Eine Einführung* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1999), 11, 13. Canale does not exclude the possibility that there are more primordial presuppositions. But the fact that in philosophy there are at least two different primordial presuppositions at work is for him reason enough to set the stage for a criticism of theological Reason. See Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 74, n. 1.

[32]Heidegger, cited in Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 71, n. 1.

[33]Ibid., 72-73.

[34]By "primordial" Canale means the basic characteristic that conditions our understanding of what is real. Canale, "Basic Elements of Christian Theology," §38.

[35]Theos-Being, then, is the necessary condition for any concept of being.

the concept of Being. The phenomenological analysis, therefore, finds the borderline between Being and the concept of Being. There is no reasoning beyond Being, but all reasoning starts with a concept of Being. The concept of Being functions as an unconditional *whole* to which all the other cognitive categories and frameworks of Reason relate as parts. This is why there is a necessary minimum concept of Being at work in the interpretation of being. As present in every understanding of being, the concept of Being has an overarching meaning. The presence of Being as concept in the human mind is necessarily assumed in the constitution of all meanings and the interpretation of all the presuppositional frameworks of Reason. The very nexus of all three frameworks is to be found in foundational ontology, because the Logos shares in all of Reason's frameworks. When one starts to uncover the different concepts of the foundational ontological level of the structure of Reason, one will discover the different contents it has been given in the history of philosophy. Canale's overview of the primordial presuppositions that have been adapted in history will be briefly discussed in 1.3.1 and 1.3.2.

Because the concept of Being functions as the first and all-embracing concept by which everything else is conditioned, it reveals the primordial, unconditional, or hypothetical character of Reason. The concept of Being, functioning as Logos, is not conditioned by any logic, since it is the ground for logic itself, but by a choice of the subject. In this context, Canale speaks of the spontaneity of the subject: the freedom of the subject to choose its primordial presuppositions that will guide the course of its thinking.[36]

The spontaneity of the subject is the most profound philosophical responsibility of the human subject. Since the primordial presupposition both affects the nexus and ground of all three frameworks of Reason's structure and is spontaneously chosen, we can conclude that, at its very core, Reason is of a hypothetical character. Hypotheticity, thus, pertains to the whole of Reason's structure.

Consequently, Canale is correct in stating that ultimate meaning is not grounded in knowledge in the strict sense of logical deduction, but in a "postulate" or "faith."[37] This "postulate" or "faith" is necessary for Reason's functioning and therefore part of Reason's formal structure. It is this primordial presuppositional framework, or, differently called, "the dimensionality of Reason" or "ground of being," that the subject brings to the subject-object relationship and that predominantly determines the means and end of the process of creating an image of the object.

[36]Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 24, 73. The spontaneity of the subject, however, is not only responsible for the choice of the priordial presuppositions, but also for the interpretation of all *a priori* conditions or hermeneutical presuppositions, i.e., the basic interpetation of Reason's frameworks, required on the subject side for the constitution of knowledge (see ibid., 57).

[37]Ibid., 56, 65, 73.

So all frameworks (epistemological, theological, and ontological) find their source in the meaning of Being. The analysis of the meaning of Being leads us beyond metaphysics, that is beyond cosmology or worldview to the very ground.

The discussion of the phenomenological analysis ends here.

2.2.4 Doing Philosophy

In doing philosophy, the spontaneity of the subject is not only active when a concept of Being as primordial presupposition is to be chosen.[38] Creative philosophizing in general (e.g., interpretation of Reason's frameworks) can only take place due to the existence of a spontaneous subject. In its philosophical endeavor, the spontaneous subject can choose its own direction and complexity. The individually chosen dimensionality of Reason, however, functions as the starting point of philosophy. Starting with the primordial presupposition, which is the minimum knowledge that Reason needs to understand the theos, the ontological framework can be interpreted (as happens, e.g., in traditional metaphysics: dealing with beings as beings). After the ontological framework is developed, the epistemological framework can be established.[39]

According to Canale, the phenomenological reality of the spontaneity of the subject explains the fact that there are different possible interpretations of the same things.

2.2.5 The Need for a Historical Analysis

In a further step of his phenomenological historical analysis, Canale shows what different interpretations have been given to foundational ontology in the course of the history of philosophy. Such a historical analysis is necessary since a further phenomenological analysis will not help to uncover the material interpretation of Being. The material content of the interpretation of Being can be discovered only through a historical analysis.[40]

Time and timelessness will be uncovered as the two possible interpretations of Reason's dimensionality in which philosophy has thought so far.

2.3 Canale's Interpretations of the Structure of Reason

As the structure of Reason shows, there are two crucial decisions the spontaneity of the subject needs to involve itself in. One concerns the actual interpretation of Reason's dimensionality, the other the formal direction

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[38]Ibid., 31, 57.

[39]It is, however, not necessary to develop a complete ontology before an epistemology can be constructed since the required ultimate ground is not found in ontology, but in foundational ontology.

[40]Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 85, n. 1.

of the circle of dependencies. The second choice entails three options of perspective, i.e., ordo: the ontos-perspective, theos-perspective, or logos-perspective. The theos, however, always represents the ultimate horizon of the interpretational activity. The historical overview in this section is categorized in terms of these two decisions.

2.3.1 Classical Timeless Dimensionality

In the following, I present Canale's understanding of the classical interpretation of Reason's dimensionality. In doing so, I will abstain from evaluating his outline, as this is beyond the scope of this paper.

2.3.1.1 Interpretation from the Viewpoint of the Onto-theo-logical Ordo

The interpretation of Being in the early Greek philosophy of Parmenides set the ground for all further developments in Western philosophy. The reflection on being as imperfect and limited and the search for a theos that would provide coherence and unity led to the idea that Being is essentially timeless. This decision implied that perfection was defined in terms of timelessness, which meant that perfection was not considered under the influence of change due to time. Where time was excluded, the realm of the ideal, completeness, and immutable source of being could be located. As being was considered temporal and changeable, and Being timeless and unchangeable, Being could be defined as that which does "not come into being" because of its absolute perfection. An opposition was thus created between the timeless and temporal realms. The distinction was able to account for the wide diversity of the experienced temporal world, while preserving unity and coherence through the origin of all temporal being, i.e., timeless theos-Being.

The ontologically grounded timeless definition of Being as dimensionality of Reason was not only presented by Parmenides, but also adopted and further developed by Plato and Aristotle. It characterized almost all of classical Occidental philosophical thinking. Further, it exemplified an onto-theo-logical ordo. The reflection on the ontic became the starting point for the flow of meaning: from the ontos to the theos to the logos. From the logic of a timeless Logos, i.e., a timeless dimensionality of Reason, ontology, theology, and epistemology are constructed.

2.3.1.2 Interpretation from the Viewpoint of the Logical-onto-theo Ordo

The Cartesian paradigm and the influence of Kant changed the direction of the flow of meaning by grounding the interpretation of the dimensionality of Reason in the epistemological framework. Thus the ontological foundation of Reason's dimensionality was replaced by the transcendental-epistemological

foundation. The interpretation of Reason's ordo therefore changed, but Being was still interpreted as timeless. Starting with Kant, philosophy began to give Reason's structure a different ordo, but not a different dimensionality. Classical timeless Being was substituted by modern timeless Logos. Thus, with the change of ordo, there was not a corresponding change of dimensionality. The turn to the epistemological framework led to an immanent cognitive foundation, the so-called "turn to the subject."[41] This "turn to the subject" was the consequence of grounding the categories of the subject in the epistemic realm rather than in the ontic.

*2.3.1.3 Timeless Dimensionality and Its Consequence
for Ontology and Epistemology*

In order to clearly see how a timeless dimensionality of Reason affects the ontological and epistemological frameworks, they will be discussed individually.

2.3.1.3.1 Ontological Framework

When Being is defined as timeless, the ontological framework consequently conceives ultimate reality as timeless. The idea of timelessness is not to be confused with the ideas of "having no beginning or end," "not restricted to a particular time or date," or "not affected by time: ageless," but strictly refers to exclusion of time. Timelessness further implies that Being exists independently from the cognitive subject.[42] This means that the interpretation of Being as timeless automatically creates a gap between being and Being, as they do not share the same time frame. This gap, albeit in different ways, exists in both the Platonic and Kantian line of thinking.

In the relation between Being as truth and being as *doxa*, the latter is the temporal expression of timeless Being. This means that, in the world of *doxa*, we do not encounter Being itself, but a phenomenon that stands in an analogical relation to Being. The world of *doxa* as the world of temporal imitation of its timeless essence relates to Being by participation in various degrees of analogy.

Timelessness, then, is the conception that ultimate reality (God) is essentially incompatible with time and space. In this line of thinking, reality necessarily transcends the world of *doxa* and appearance, which is bound to historical and analogical *doxa*-reality.[43]

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[41]Fernando Luis Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration: Searching for the Cognitive Foundation of Christian Theology in a Postmodern World* (Landham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), 17-19.

[42]Ibid., 78.

[43]Ibid., 37.

2.3.1.3.2 Epistemological Framework

From the viewpoint of timelessness, a *chorismos* is created between *doxa* and truth. This *chorismos* is also found in the epistemological framework. It enters cognitive activity when the obtainment of true knowledge requires transcending the temporal and sensory world. In order to enter the world of ideas or truth, cognitive activity needs to involve itself in a process of abstraction that seeks to overcome the temporality of being. If reason wants to reach into the realm of timelessness in order to come to true understanding, it must belong to the realm of timelessness itself. This need was the ground of the classical notion of the *agens intellectus*, an entity located in the timeless soul, able to abstract the timeless essence from the temporal and sensory world.[44]

The classical interpretation of Reason as belonging to the timeless realm reveals its ignorance or unawareness of the hypothetical structure of Reason. It is this hypothetical structure that makes the different choices in regard to the dimensionalities of Reason and to the theos idea (having independence-status) possible.

As discussed, in the Cartesian and Kantian paradigm the timeless interpretation of Reason's dimensionality was not rooted in the ontic, but in the epistemic realm. Another difference in these traditions is that the cognitive access to timelessness was made impossible by making the *agens intellectus* temporal. Thus the *agens intellectus* did not enter the world of truth and ideas, or the things in itself, but only the phenomena.

Kant's attempt to ground Reason's dimensionality in the epistemological framework automatically resulted in a "turn to the subject." In this turn, philosophy lost the ability to acquire absolute knowledge, i.e., to reach the thing in itself, since the dimensionality of Reason was not grounded in ultimate reality anymore. The world of truth and ideas became inaccessible. In classical thinking, one tried to overcome the *chorismos* between the timeless essence and temporal appearance by timeless reason. In the modern paradigm, this *chorismos* could not be overcome anymore, as it was not certain whether the ontic world actually had a different dimensionality than the epistemic. The certainty of the complementarity of the two frameworks was lost, and thus the basis for objectivity. With this problem, the cognitive process of "abstraction" got a new limitation. Timeless Logos no longer gained absolute knowledge of timeless Being through abstraction, but gained objective knowledge of the temporal world as scientific knowledge. Later philosophical attempts were made to overcome this gap by seeking means to access the realm of Being. These attempts did, however, fail to fundamentally criticize the whole conception of timelessness. Canale's reference to Jaspers is a good example.[45] Jaspers thought that certainty about the existence of Being is somehow possible through the existential sensitivity of being: the subject is able to "hear" the transcendence

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[44]Ibid., 78.

[45]Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 108-110.

of the timeless realm through a "metaphysical experience." Knowledge of Being clearly lost its objectivity here, and timeless foundational ontology went uncriticized.

2.3.2 Postmodern Temporal Dimensionality

According to Canale, it took centuries until the classical and modern timeless understanding of the foundational ontic world were questioned and criticized. Husserl, and later Heidegger, started to interpret the ontological realm as basically temporal.[46] Heidegger's temporal interpretation of the dimensionality of Reason provided a new definition of time. The character of time was no longer understood from the viewpoint of the timeless, but from the viewpoint of the temporal. This meant that time was understood from the viewpoint of its temporality, i.e., the flux of time. In this new setting, Being was not timeless anymore, but historical.

2.3.2.1 Ontological Framework

The consequence of the notion of temporal dimensionality was that entities did not receive their existence through their timeless essence anymore, but were fully temporal. Interpreting both Being and being as temporal meant to overcome the duality between form and matter, truth and *doxa*. Since both Being and being were temporal and historical, there was nothing beyond the phenomenon anymore. The realm of being and appearance was the realm of Being as well. In fact, *doxa* was Being. There was no reality beyond time. As the gap between subject and object was overcome, the distinction between the thing in itself and its appearance became unnecessary. What classical and modern philosophies meant by the "thing in itself" as ultimate reality became temporal.

2.3.2.2 Epistemological Framework

The epistemological framework also received a new interpretation through the temporal dimensionality of Reason. Mental categories were no longer derived from the immanent transcendental cognitive grounding of Reason's dimensionality (Kant), or from the timeless transcendental ontological grounding (classical philosophy). Instead, the *Lebenswelt* provided the material for the consciousness of the subject.[47] This means that the *a priori* categories of the subject were derived from the historical past. The content of the categories and the creation of a unified and coherent image of the object are thus not determined by the participation in the timeless world of ideas, but by the temporal epistemological flow from past to present to future. Theos lost its timelessness. With this loss, temporal reason needed to redefine the

[46]Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 7.

[47]Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 118, 133-135.

theos and develop a new temporal metaphysics.[48] Further, concepts such as "objectivity" and "abstraction" needed a redefinition. Objectivity and abstraction needed to be understood from the viewpoint of temporal logos, which is in continuity with the *Lebenswelt*. Objectivity as the aim of abstraction did not refer to transcending the sensory-temporal world anymore. The essence of reality was not sought in the realm of timelessness, but in the realm of the flux of time. This new location of essence led to a new understanding of abstraction. Abstract thought would encompass less than the *Lebenswelt*, as the *Lebenswelt* could not be reduced to a final absolute idea. Thus, because of reduction, objectivity became less encompassing than the *Lebenswelt*.[49]

2.3.3 Biblical Temporal Dimensionality

The content of the ground of Being as the first basic ontic concept, through which Being can be understood, is either subjectively guessed or objectively revealed. Only when the ground of Being is revealed can the subject start to uncover its dimensionality without depending on its own imaginative powers. Being a biblical Christian, Canale investigates the biblical expression of the ground of Being. On the basis of a phenomenological analysis of several biblical passages, he shows that the Bible expresses Being. What dimensionality does biblical Being express? Although the Bible does not systematically develop a theory of Being and does not give an explicit interpretation to Reason's frameworks, the Bible as rational fact (as expressing meaningful words) must be structurally seen to contain an interpretation of the dimensionality of Reason. This means that one cannot discover the dimensionality of Reason through a phenomenological analysis of the Bible's epistemological and ontological theory (since they do not exist), but can discover it through the passages where the biblical writer considers Being in a naïve way. At this point, Canale analyzes Exod 3:1-4:17 and Exod 6:2-7. The passage of Exod 3:1–4:17 utters Being prior to any expression of a theory of ontology or epistemology. The understanding of the biblical expression of Being should function as basis for any theorizing activity of Christians and Jews.

2.3.3.1 Biblical Interpretation of the Ground of Being

Canale's phenomenological analysis shows that Exod 3 speaks about Being in the present tense and connects God's existence with an understanding of Being. Canale shows that especially the meaning of the sound-name of YHWH as the God of Israel reveals the dimensionality of God's being as grounded in an understanding of Being that is characterized by temporal openness.

Again, I will not argue for or against Canale's exegetical analysis here because of the scope of this article series, but will simply present his—in my opinion convincing—results.

[48]See the attempt to develop a new temporal metaphysic in ibid., 141-153.

[49]Ibid., 135.

When God appears and explains his sound-name YHWH, the Bible depicts him as essentially a being-mission God. This being-mission character refers to the temporal openness of God's presence to past and future time. It means that God is concerned with and active in the many generations of his people, fulfilling the promises given to past generations. His being-mission identity extends through all three time ec-stasies. Canale understands this temporal extension (ec-stasies) as "temporal openness." "Extension" points to the fact that temporal Being cannot be reduced and frozen to a static reality. Thus extension points to Being's manifold ontic appearances that constitute the ontological basis for cognitive activity. In order to grasp the meaning of a subject matter, the cognitive subject must gather in "tension" the lines of intelligibility that flow from the temporal "extension" in which its object is found.

In Exod 3:2 and its context, the ontic presence of God springs from the self-revelation of God. This shows that God's presence is understood as YHWH himself appearing in time. The biblical verbal expression shows that there is no ontological gap between God's being and his appearance.[50] Thus the appearance of YHWH is YHWH himself. Being is here identified with appearance, and not with something that is behind or beyond appearance. This connection has the character of *co-appearance*: God's being necessarily *co-appears* with the ground of Being. Being appears through God's presence and self-revelation. In this view, ontology cannot precede the study of God because there is no reflection on Being prior to God's ontic presence. Regarding the interrelated frameworks of Reason, the Bible expresses a clear theo-onto-logical order within the flow of meaning. This implies that the ground of Being can only be interpreted when God appears or is present. Since the God of the Bible co-appears with and expresses the ground of his Being, his ontic presence can and should function as starting point for the interpretation of the dimensionality of Reason.

Since the biblical passages depict God's presence as open to all three temporal ec-stasies (past-present-future) while it co-appears with Being, the biblical dimensionality of Being is revealed as temporal.[51]

In the following section, I will briefly sketch how this understanding of Being's dimensionality affects the interpretation of Reason's frameworks, which all need to share structurally in the same temporal nexus.

2.3.3.2 Ontological Framework

The consequence of a temporal dimensionality is that being is necessarily temporal, as it is grounded in temporal Being. Consequently, temporal appearance can be considered real being that co-appears with Being. Meaning, then, is essentially connected with both past and future, as it is grounded in

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[50]The *Nifal* form of ראה shows that God himself is subject and object of the appearance.

[51]Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 393.

temporal Being and the meaning of "presence" is immediately filled by the "lines of intentionality" that come to it from its past and future extension.[52]

The classical problem of the *chorismos* and solution of the *analogia entis* are overcome in biblical philosophy, inasmuch as biblical thought portrays the phenomenon as ultimate reality. Biblical thought, however, does not reject the *analogia entis*, but redefines it. In contrast to the classical timeless dimensionality, biblical temporal dimensionality requires a continuity between that which is given in the presence of appearance and that which is beyond the moment of presence, i.e., the temporal extension of being in past and future appearance. Biblical analogies thus refer to temporal extensions instead of temporal-timeless mediations.

The material character of the being-appearance is not discovered in one moment of present time, but in its temporal extension. The biblical text itself refers to this dynamic character, since it reveals a clear progression in time of the meaning of the sound-name YHWH.

2.3.3.3 Theological Framework

There seems to be a tension between the independent, unconditioned status of theos and foundational ontology, which conditions any interpretation of Reason's frameworks—including the theological framework. The concept of God as grounded in the concept of Being seems to make foundational ontology more foundational than God. Does this relation not dissolve the independent status of God as origin of and condition for everything, since foundational ontology seems to condition our concept of God (theology)?

In response to this question, three important statements must be made. First, the nature of the structure of Reason is logical, not ontical. That is, for the existence of Reason the ontic existence of human being is required but the operation of the structure of Reason is logical and not ontical. Second, Being is not understood as an entity that could function as the originator of ontic reality; it is not perceived as a container within which reality takes place, but as a necessary adjunct to all that exists (cf. 2.2.3). Third, it is true that foundational ontology determines theology.

The first statement indicates that it is crucial to make a distinction between ontic and ontology on the one hand, and theos and theology on the other. Just as ontology is not reality itself but merely a concept of it, theology is not theos itself but just a concept of it. In any concept, logic turns an object (e.g., ontic reality or God) into a cognitive reality. As the ontic "calls" to be understood through an ontology, the biblical God "calls" to be understood through a theology on the basis of his revelation. Thus the ontic being of God is not determined by foundational ontology in the sense that the latter "creates" God, but that the latter allows for a conception of God.

Besides this, the formal structure of Reason would not allow for an understanding of Being as origin, as Being is not understood as a thing that has existence but as no-thing that necessarily co-appears with reality. Thus

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[52]Ibid., 377, n. 2.

foundational ontology has logical priority in the constitution of meaning. Therefore, foundational ontology only describes the most general characteristic of reality, which is merely one of the probably infinite characteristics of God. This excludes the idea that foundational ontology, which is revealed by God, could be independent from God.

2.3.3.4 Epistemological Framework

If Being, and thus theos, are temporal, Logos also needs to function as temporal Logos, i.e., the very ground of the cognitive categories must be temporal as well. This is not just logically deducible from Reason's structure. Exodus 6 explains that true understanding of God takes place when God's being is remembered, experienced, and hoped for in the three temporal ec-stasies. Canale's analysis of Exod 3 shows that the text is concerned with who God is. In the analysis of Exod 6, Canale shows that the text is focused on how to know God.

The connection between the appearance and the knowledge of God in Exod 6 reveals their essential interrelation. Appearance and knowledge share the same ontological foundation or nexus. That all Reason's frameworks share the same nexus finds its biblical expression in Exod 6:3. This text first states that ontologically God's appearance provides the ground for man's knowledge of him. Then it stresses that epistemologically the meaning of the sound-name of God makes knowledge of God's being possible. Thus epistemologically Reason functions in the Being-meaning of the sound-name, i.e., in temporal extension. In the biblical understanding of the epistemological framework, the content of the cognitive categories that create meaning in unity and coherence is derived from past encounters with God's appearance.[53] Thus a prior understanding of (a) theos and (b) his ground of Being enables the epistemological framework to coherently conceptualize the ontic. The cognitive process has to proceed temporally in order to discover the meaning of being through a gathering process of past-present-future extensions of co-appearing Being-appearance.

The concept of temporal Logos demands a new understanding of the process of cognitive activity. Abstraction and objectivity need a new definition. If the ontic extension is the basis for the cognitive process, we need to think of a process that gathers the dynamic ontic extensions of an entity (this is the case both for naïve and scientific thinking).[54] Knowledge is always a construction that builds upon the past, is formulated in the present, and assumes a future. Thus abstract knowledge always takes place in the future,

[53]Ibid., 371, n. 2.

[54]See Oliver Glanz, "Time, Reason and Religious Belief: A Limited Comparison, Critical Assessment, and Further Development of Herman Dooyeweerd's Structural Analysis of Theoretical Thought and Fernando Canale's Phenomenological Analysis of the Structure of Reason and Its Biblical Interpretation (Master's thesis, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, 2006), 64-65.

or there where the knowledge of the future is accessible in the present time. It is in this context that prophecy and fulfillment play an important role in the redefinition of abstract knowledge. Whereas the classical understanding of knowledge involves a process of abstraction that eliminates the historical and temporal world in order to enter the timeless realm of ideas, the biblical temporal understanding of knowledge involves a process of cognitive extension-tension, i.e., gathering the lines of intelligibility (data) generated by the temporally extended subject matter. Here abstract knowledge is not what is timeless, but what is gathered from the temporal lines of a subject matter into a logical concept. Abstraction as the concept of the totality of theos's ontic extensions in logical gathering also includes what has not yet become present or past but is still part of the future ec-stasy of the subject matter. Abstract words are words of promise or prophecy that are generated by the subject matter (e.g., God) and come from its future extension. In this sense, the cognitive process always strives for what is not yet historical, i.e., abstract, not because it is timeless, but because the future temporal ec-stasy needs to become historical in order to arrive at true knowledge. In biblical rationality, abstraction in and of itself is not the end or aim of thinking, but a necessity to come to a full understanding of a subject matter. In this sense, the "abstract" divine predictions are striving toward their historical fulfillment. Whereas in classical thinking that which is abstract cannot become temporal but can only analogically find expression in the temporal world, biblical rationality expects that which is abstract to become historical. Thus truth is decided at the moment the abstract becomes historical, not when it becomes a-historical!

What is tensioned in the cognitive process is what is ontically ex-tensioned. That which is ex-tensioned in the three ec-stasies of time and that which can be tensioned in present time are, in Canale's understanding of the biblical interpretation of the epistemological framework, the lines of intelligibility of the subject matter.[55] The lines of intelligibility flow from the temporally extended subject matter. They can deliver information about the past (e.g., past actions) or the future (e.g., promises, prophecies) ec-stasies of the subject matter. This means that the biblical interpretation of Reason does not assume that the essence of a subject matter is a brute fact from which no lines of intelligibility flow to the cognitive subject. The cognitive subject is therefore not expected to create fully an image of the brute fact by his own hypothetical powers. On the contrary, biblical rationality understands the ontic presence of a subject matter as intellectually graspable, as its meaning can be found in the subject matter's temporal extension that generates lines of intelligibility.

2.3.4 Summary

We have seen that classical philosophy interprets ultimate reality as timeless, whereas the Bible considers reality to be temporal and historical. This difference has a major impact on the interpretation of Reason's frameworks.

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[55]Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 372, n. 2; 378.

In a timeless conception of Being, God's manifestation is consequently of nonhistorical quality. Both divine activity and human abstract knowledge belong to the realm of timelessness. Therefore, God's actions are reduced from true temporal reality to mere cognitive awareness (the epistemological level according to the classical paradigm).[56] Biblical rationality, in contrast, views reality as essentially temporal and historical. These crucial differences are rooted in different understandings of God's ultimate nature.

The meaning of YHWH gives us insight into the reasons behind two decisions made in the biblical interpretation of Reason. First, it introduces us to the temporal interpretation of the primordial presupposition and, second, it reveals the theo-onto-logical ordo this interpretation is rooted in. These two decisions of biblical rationality imply that ontology cannot precede the study of God.

[56]Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 38.