The History of Being and the Undecidability of Sense

(Chapter 7 of Draft MS: *The Logic of Being: Heidegger, Truth, and Time*)

Over the past two chapters, I have argued for a conception of the structure of *given time* according to which it is founded in a formally indicated meta-logical structure of difference, which is itself an articulation or figure of the ontological difference between being and beings.   Because the obscuration or withdrawal of this jointly ontological and metalogical difference is here grasped as the historical condition for the "metaphysical" understanding of being in terms of presence, there arises the question of way in which this underlying structure itself determines the succession of historical interpretations of being, under this condition of metaphysical withdrawal and obscuration. On Heidegger's own conception, the successive epochs of the metaphysical history of being, on the one hand, determine what is in each case a *total* conception of the being of beings, a particular mode of interpretation of "beings as a whole and as such," and are, on the other, themselves ultimately determined by being itself in the event of its truth, or *Ereignis*. Emphasis on the first point to the exclusion of the other can appear to suggest that Heidegger's picture of the historical interpretation of beings must be a *relativist* one: that, in particular, the empirical or factical truths determined by inquiry or reflection within any particular historical epoch are to be understood as holding only relative to the particular way that epoch determines beings as meaningful or intelligible and cannot ultimately be seen as surviving into a successive, differently constituted one. I shall argue in this chapter that this impression is mistaken. In particular, the "ultimate" determination of empirical or ontic truths on the basis of the historical truth of being itself is not in tension with a non-relativist or realist understanding of them but in fact provides the essential temporal basis for such an understanding. This can be seen more clearly, as I argue, if the dynamics of the disclosure of truth as the unconcealment of beings under the condition of any particular epochal determination is itself related explicitly to the underlying structure of meta-logical difference and undecidability which is, as we have seen, one articulation of the ontological difference itself. Here, as I shall argue, the articulation of ontological or metalogical difference is thus not the basis for an epochal relativization or localization of truth, but rather the positive explication of the temporal sense of its universality itself.

These considerations can be related to contemporary and recent discussions of languages and relativism in the "analytic" tradition. In "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme", Donald Davidson argues on the basis of linguistic considerations against the relativism of (what have been called) "conceptual schemes." Because of the holistic character of language and the necessity of employing "principles of charity" in any linguistic interpretation, Davidson argues, it is not coherent to see different historical languages as embodying distinct "conceptual schemes" or total ways of organizing contents or "the world." The argument can seem to threaten pictures of the history of science, such as Thomas Kuhn's, according to which this history has been shaped or determined by a series of particular configurations of intelligibility or understanding of things. It can seem that such pictures demand that successive regimes of intelligibility, or partisans of successive paradigms, are mutually *incommensurable* in a sense that is incompatible with Davidson's anti-relativist argument. I shall argue that Heidegger's conception of the

epochs of the history of being, as determined by the original differentiation of being with itself, provides grounds for resolving this apparent tension. This points, in turn, to the irreducibly *temporal* dynamics of undecidable sense that characterizes historical languages as such. As I shall argue, these dynamics involve a phenomenon of "strong" incommensurability which is an inherent characteristic feature of any historical language that structurally introduces principles or paradigms that govern the total intelligibility of entities as a whole. This "strong" incommensurability is not the incommensurability of "no common measure" between separately and independently constituted languages, cultures, practices, or schemes. Rather, it stems from the ultimate failure of each language consistently and decidably to measure itself. This points to a temporal determination of the changing interpretations of beings that is not in competition with Davidson's anti-relativist conclusions, and introduces considerations bearing against humanist, anthropological and culturalist conceptions of the foundations of sense. Additionally, it provides relevant terms and concepts for a formally motivated critique of the technological "present."

I

In the *Beiträge zur Philosophie: vom Ereignis*, Martin Heidegger specifies the transition from the previous "guiding question" [Leitfrage] of philosophy, that of the nature of beings, to the "grounding" question [Grundfrage] of the "truth of beyng". With the transition, as we have seen (chapter 4 above), it is no longer possible to understand being overall in terms of, or by reference to, beings. There is no longer any possibility for thought to decide on the being of what is, except from out of the truth of beyng. Thus, "beyng can no longer be thought on the basis of beings but must be inventively thought from itself [muβ aus ihm selbst erdacht werden]."[1] At the same time, the thought of being itself makes it possible to view the "metaphysical" interpretation of being hitherto as the history determined by the prevalence of the previous "guiding" question itself. Here, the ongoing and increasing withdrawal of being thus leads to the succession of historical epochs in which beings are determined metaphysically or onto-theologically, each time in terms of the overall character of "beingness" as determined by a maximally universal or most elevated being which serves as ultimate standard or highest organizing principle.

The sequence of historical epochs that characterizes the history of the interpretation of being hitherto is specified, with minor variations, in the *Beiträge* and several other texts. In the 1943 lecture "Nietzsche's Word: God is Dead," the ontic principles that have governed collective understanding and action through the history of metaphysics as the history of the basic constitution of entities as a whole [*das Grundgefüge des Seienden im Ganzen*] are given as "the supersensory World, the Ideas, God, the moral Law, the authority of Reason, Progress, the Happiness of the greatest number, Culture, Civilization…".[2] In the 1957 lecture "The Onto-Theo-Logical Constitution of Metaphysics," Heidegger specifies the "historical stampings" [*geschicklichen Prägungen*] of being, somewhat differently, as "*phusis, logos, hen, idea, energeia*, substantiality [Substanzialität], objectivity, subjectivity, will, will to power, will to will." [3]

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[1] GA 65, p. 7.
[2] GA 5, p. 204/221; also quoted in Schürmann (1987), p. 230.
[3] Stambaugh, *Identity and Difference,* p. 134.

The historical succession begins with the Greek conceptions of the character of the world and thought and proceeds through Descartes' interpretation of thinking and being in terms of subject and object, eventually culminating in the configuration of contemporary technology, which Heidegger identifies as prepared by Nietzsche's metaphysics of will. The Nietzschean principle of the will to power is here ultimately understood as a redoubled "will to will" in which entities are constantly handled, circulated and calculated without any overarching purpose or goal except instrumentality itself.

Along with this explicit consideration of the epochal history of being, Heidegger's turn toward the "grounding question" of beyng itself in the 1930s is also marked by a renewed attention to the ontological and historical character of *language*. While on the one hand Heidegger now understands the epochal configurations of metaphysics as intimately related to the "historical languages" that successively articulate them, on the other he now poses the question of the "being of language" itself as one closely related to the radicalized "grounding" question of the truth of beyng itself.[4] During this period, Heidegger considers the investigations of Herder into the origins and expressive structure of languages.[5] These considerations can be related to a more general mystery or paradox of the origin of language in its referential, descriptive, or nominative relation to the world. In particular, *prima facie* there is a paradox that arises whenever language is thought to be originally connected to the world through some initial act of institution or primary naming: the paradox is that, for the requisite connections between words and things to be set up, it must apparently be presupposed that things are already understood in determinate ways. But this understanding plausibly only comes *through* language, and so *cannot* be thus presupposed. The institution of meaning thus appears to presuppose that meaning already exists, and so the possible origin of language itself remains obscure on any such picture.[6]

For Heidegger, this paradoxical situation that arises in considering the origin of language is actually positively indicative of an ontologically characteristic feature of language in relation to its being: its tendency to withdraw or refuse itself to positive overall description. In 1957, in the course of reading of a poem of Stefan George, Heidegger specifies this *positive* characteristic of the "being of language" that appears in its withdrawal:

> There is some evidence that the essence of language flatly refuses to express itself in words [daβ das Wesen der Sprache es gerade verweigert, zur Sprache zu kommen] – in the language, that is, in which we make assertions about language [nämlich zu der Sprache, in der wir über die Sprache Aussagen machen]. If language everywhere withholds [verweigert] its essence in this sense, then this withholding [diese Verweigerung] is in the very essence of language. Thus language not only holds back [hält die Sprache nicht nur dort an sich] when we speak it in the accustomed ways, but this its holding back [ihr An-sich-halten] is determined by the fact that language holds back its own origin [daβ die Sprache mit ihrer Herkunft an sich hält] and so denies its essence to our usual representations [und so ihr Wesen dem uns geläufigen Vorstellen

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[4] Cf. Beiträge, sections 36-38 and 281.
[5] *Vom Wesen der Sprache* (GA 85); cf. also *Logik als die Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache* (GA 38), esp. sections 6 and 29, and *Sein und Wahrheit* (GA 36/37)
[6] Cf. Livingston (2012), chapter 1.

versagt]. But then we may no longer say that the essence of language is the language of essence [das Wesen der Sprache sei die Sprache des Wesens], unless the word "language" in the second phrase says something different, in fact something in which the withholding of the essence of language – speaks [solches, worin die Verweigerung des Sprachwesens – spricht].[7]

The paradox of the institution or origin of language is thus, according to Heidegger, actually positively indicative of a claim in which something "speaks". This "something" is nothing other than the "withholding" [Verweigerung] of the essence [Wesen] of language, the resistance of language to any positive description, within itself, of its own total basic structure, and in particular of the ultimate basis of the relationship it sets up between words and things.

Seen in the context of the history of being, what is indicated in the paradox of origin and in the withdrawal and refusal of language to its own positive description can also be grasped as pointing toward that deeper character of language that is thought, through the Western tradition, as the character of the "logos". This, in particular, in connection with the relation that is thought since early in western history as that of "language to an entity as such":

> As soon as we consider that what is named here [in Stefan George's poem "The Word"] is the relation between thing and word [das Verhältnis von Ding und Wort], and with it the relation of language to an entity as such [zu einem jeweils Seienden als solchem], we have called poetry over into the neighborliness of thinking. Thinking, however, sees nothing strange in that [vernimmt dabei nichts Fremdes]. In fact, the relation between thing and word is among the earliest matters to which Western thinking gives voice and word [mit das Früheste, was durch das abendlandische Denken ins Wort gelangt, ist das Verhältnis von Ding und Wort], and does so in the form of the relation between being and saying [von Sein und Sagen]. This relation assaults thinking in such an overpowering manner [uberfällt das Denken so bestürzend] that it announces itself in a single word [es sich in einem einzigen Wort ansagt]. The word is *logos*. It speaks simultaneously as the name for Being and for Saying."[8]

Throughout the succession of historical determinations of the beingness of beings, *logos* names simultaneously Being and Saying, and thus points to the assumed basis or actual ground for the possible linguistic expressibility of things as such. Within the ambit of this overarching determination, the various specific ontological and theological determinants of beingness capture beings insofar as they are thinkable and expressible at all. Throughout the history of metaphysics, this determination occurs through the particular historical languages that privilege such specific determinants of the nature of beings as such and as a whole.

How should we understand the basis of this determination, whereby historical languages themselves become structured by the privileged standards or measures of beingness that in turn determine how beings "as a whole and as such" appear and can appear? In *Heidegger on Being and Acting* and *Broken Hegemonies*, Reiner Schürmann interprets Heidegger as pointing to a series of "principal economies"

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[7] GA 12, p. 186/175. Transl. slightly modified.
[8] GA 12, p. 185/174.

that have successively unfolded over the historical time. Each is stabilized by a particular "epochal principle" or "hegemonic phantasm" which functions to stabilize and orient practice by elevating a *particular* entity to the rank of an absolute measure or standard for the interpretation of *all* beings.[9] This structure of the stabilization of organizing referents replicates, at each moment of transition from one epoch to the next, the original paradox of the institution of language itself. In particular, since each epochal economy achieves, by means of the elevation of an epochal standard, the ability to refer to and express beings as a whole, each one instantiates the general structural paradox of the authority of a particular element over the totality of which it is a part. If each hegemonic phantasm "measures measures", setting up in its institution a total system of legitimacy in which beings become intelligible as such and regulating what can appear at all, then each also constitutively implies the paradox that the measure itself cannot be measured in its own terms.[10] The ultimate standard both is and is not an entity; it is the source of all measurement and regulation that, for this very reason, cannot itself be measured.[11] This is the condition under which it can be simultaneously elevated from within, and held above, the realm of beings as such. This paradox also provides the structural condition under which, according to Schürmann, a prinicipial economy, once instituted in terms of such an ultimate referent, must ultimately wither.[12] Here, the "singularization" involved in the institution of any economy of presence, whereby one being is separated from all others to serve as a standard for their regulation, itself succumbs to an underlying "differend" (Wiederstreit) that both supports and undermines the separation, pointing to their deeper underlying condition in the differentiation between presencing and presence itself.[13]

According to Schürmann, Heidegger with his description of the history of the interpretation of being as the history of the institution and diremption of epochs, will thus have pointed out an ultimate origin of all phenomenalization in a differentiating difference that precedes and conditions all instituted economies of principles. It is thus the original character of *Ereignis* itself which appears as the paradox of institution that is repeated at each moment of the institution of a new epoch and the destitution of an old one. The paradoxical situation that ultimately brings about the destitution of each instituted epoch itself is an expression of the more general paradox of the original institution of language, which is obscured or stabilized through the assumption of the stable correspondence of word and thing in the *logos*, but is not thereby removed. Structurally, this paradox itself points to the underlying character of Being itself, beyond the epochal determinations of it, in its "granting" or determination of each of the particular epochs and in the history of the metaphysical determination of being as presence in its totality.

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[9] Schürmann (1987), p. 17.

[10] Schürmann (2003), pp. 96-97.

[11] Cf. Wittgenstein (1953), §50: "One would like to say, however, that being cannot be attributed to an element [Man kann dem Element nicht Sein beilegen], for if it did not *exist*, one could not even name it, and so one could state nothing at all about it [und also gar nichts von ihm aussagen]. – But let us consider an analogous case. There is *one* thing of which one can state neither that it is 1 metre long, nor that it is not 1 metre long, and that is the standard metre in Parip."

[12] Schürmann (2003), p. 614.

[13] Schürmann (2003), pp. 34-36; p. 527.

But if epochal measures, in their determinative reference to beings as a whole, cannot measure themselves, then this structure of paradox points to a basic type of *strong incommensurability* that characterizes each historical language in relation to itself. This "strong" incommensurability is the direct result of the way in which each epoch determines the structure of its possible reference and expression by elevating a particular referent to the status of a regulative standard for beings as a whole. But no such measure can ultimately measure itself; each instituted economy is thus structurally characterized by a basic incommensurability or failure of measure, whereby the language itself fails to ground and measure the standards by which it measures all beings. This incommensurability is not the familiar incommensurability of "no common measure" between two separately constituted languages, but rather a more basic structural failure of measure of each total language with respect to itself under the condition that it achieves and attempts to stabilize reference to the totality of beings by elevating a particular being or type of beings.[14]

If the principles that determine the character of being for an epoch thus yield to the paradox of strong incommensurability, then the guidance they provide for decisions on the sense of things must itself yield to a deeper structural undecidability. This is particularly clear when the sense of words and linguistic expressions is seen, as it is for Heidegger, as inevitably pre-determined by a previous understanding of the being of beings that first makes them available as intelligible objects of reference and description. For Heidegger in *Being and Time*, *sense* is understood as the specific kind of temporal *projection* upon possibilities by means of which Da-sein renders entities intelligible. The concept of sense fixes the formal framework [*das formale Gerüst*], in particular, "wherein the intelligibility [Verständlichkeit] of something maintains itself [hält]" as the "upon-which" [Woraufhin] of the "projection" structured by "a fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception" [durch Vorhabe, Vorsicht und Vorgriff strukturierte Woraufhin des Entwurfs…]"[15] It is thus grounded in the hermeneutic structure that makes possible all interpretation, itself defined by these "fore-structures", as well as constitutively related to the structure of truth as unconcealment or disclosure.[16] This projection always has a totalizing character in that it first "opens" the domain of entities as a whole by providing an overarching conceptual fixation of their overall way of being; both in particular domains and with respect to beings as a whole, sense is thus determined by the interpretive projection that first renders the relevant beings intelligible in their being. In the *Beiträge* and Heidegger's later thought generally, this conception of sense as the projective opening of a domain of entities is retained, while the ground on which it takes place is radicalized.[17] In particular, the basis of sense is here no longer seen as a specific activity of Dasein but rather as involving the prior phenomenon of what Heidegger calls the *clearing*: the underlying structure of concealment and unconcealment within which Da-sein itself is, alone, in fact possible and achievable. But even after

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[14] In Livingston (2012), pp. 285-87, I contrasted this "strong" incommensurability, or incommensurability of the immeasurable, with the claim of "weak" incommensurability that characterizes the spontaneous conviction of contemporary belief in its emphasis on cultural difference and the pluralism of communities and cultural practicep.
[15] GA 2, p. 151.
[16] GA 2, p. 150.
[17] Cf. *Beiträge*, p. 10: "The question of 'meaning,' ['Sinn'] i.e. according to the elucidations in *Being and Time*, the question of the grounding of a projected domain [nach der Gründung des Entwurfsbereichs], or, in short, the question of the *truth of beyng*, is and remains *my* question and is my *unique* question, for at issue in it is indeed what is *most unique* [und ist meine *einzige*, denn sie gilt ja dem *Einzigsten.*]"

this radicalization of the specific structure of truth, sense remains connected to it at a basic level, as that which is opened in the temporal projection by means of which a domain of entities, including entities as a whole, are first opened for intelligibility and thus for the subsequent possibility of explicit linguistic discussion and referent.

In the history of being, the projection of sense thus has a basic relationship to the constitution of the historical languages of metaphysics. This temporal projection, in making entities accessible, prepares the possibility of determinate reference that subsequently characterizes the structure of a language overall. It thereby yields the determinate standards and principles of logic, grammar, and practice by which its speakers measure beings in their being. Once instituted, these principles and standards provide a basis for linguistic decision on sense within the constituted domain. But they cannot ultimately decide on themselves; in particular, they cannot provide a univocal basis for deciding on their *own* scope of application. There is thus a structurally necessary undecidability of linguistic sense that can be shown to be a necessary feature of each historical language and can even be positively demonstrated in the course of a formal analysis of the conditions of semantical structure for such languages.

Within instituted languages, this structural undecidability arises at the inherent point at which these languages reflexively figure or envision their own constitutive relation to being in the sense of truth. For whereas each such language includes within itself, as an inherent structural moment, the capacity to describe and consider the sense and meaning of its own sentences in general, each one also involves a going conception of these sentences as capable of truth or falsehood which relates their behavior, at least implicitly and in general, to being as such. On the internal conception each historical language has of itself, sense is thus constitutively linked to truth; but the fixation of sense by determinate standards and rules allows what can only be, from the perspective of this constitutive link, limited and relative procedures of decision. As I shall argue on semantic and formal grounds, in relation to new phenomena and unanticipated cases, it is thus, on one hand, never possible fully to specify unitary procedures which will always completely and exceptionlessly determine the sense of linguistic terms. But this undecidability is, on the other hand, not merely limitative, since it also points to an original ontological structure linking historically instituted languages to the structure of truth, and thereby to being itself. In particular, the gap between the reflexive self-conception of a language that opens it to truth and the determinate procedures that decide sense within it means that each such language, even in totalizing beings according to determinate standards, is necessarily, and structurally, open to the possibility of its own transformation. This ultimate undecidability of historically instituted languages, based in the paradoxical behavior with respect to self-reference and totality thus points to the underlying *temporal* structure of the historical as such.

II

7

In "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," Donald Davidson gives a well-known and far-ranging argument against the "heady and exotic" doctrine of conceptual relativism.[18] In particular, Davidson argues that it is incoherent to suppose that different systems of categories, conceptual perspectives or conceptual organizations of experience are embodied in "conceptual schemes" that are both identical with or contained within particular languages and significantly distinct from one another. The basis of Davidson's argument is his inquiry into the structure linguistic interpretation; this inquiry also forms the methodological core of his influential program for the provision of theories of meaning for natural languages. On Davidson's program, a theory of meaning for a language is a recursive structure which allows the systemtic derivation, from a finite number of semantic primitives, of the truth-conditions of the totality of the language's sentences.[19] These sentences have the form suggested by Tarski in his own theory of the structure of truth-definitions for particular languages, systematically coordinating sentences with their truth-conditions; for each sentence of the interpreted language, the Davidsonian theory of meaning thus yields a sentence in the language of the interpreter stating the conditions under which it is true.   Davidson further requires that the theory of meaning must itself be worked out under the condition of "radical interpretation." Here, the interpreter has no initial knowledge of the language to be interpreted and must reconstruct its meaning on the basis only of the intersubjectively available evidence, including speakers' assent or dissent to particular sentences under particular conditions.

Under this constraint, as Davidson argues "Belief and the Basis of Meaning", it will be impossible actually to interpret the language of a speaker unless a significant amount of agreement between the interpreter and the interpreted is actually assumed at the outset. In particular, since it is not possible to interpret another speaker's beliefs by means of her utterances unless it can be largely assumed that they express truths, there is always a necessary trade-off of belief and meaning in interpretation. It is thus obligatory to apply what have been called "principles of charity" in interpretation: it must be assumed that the beliefs of the speakers under interpretation are largely identical with one's own in order for the interpretation even to be possible in general.[20] For this reason, the very possibility of interpretation involves a "vast amount of agreement on plain matters" and the possibility of disagreement is generally only intelligible against an assumed background of "widespread" agreement.[21] Because of the way charity thus figures in the necessary conditions of any possible interpretation, Davidson argues in "On the Very Idea," it is in fact impossible to judge the concepts or beliefs of the speakers of another language to be "radically" different from our own, given that interpretation is possible at all.[22]

As Davidson notes, a defender of the idea of multiple conceptual schemes might take refuge in the idea of mutually untranslatable languages, so that two languages embodying wholly distinct conceptual schemes might be thought of as simply incapable of being translated into one another. But here Davidson challenges the basis of the underlying metaphor that makes sense of the idea that a pattern of

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[18] Davidson (1973), p. 183.
[19] See Davidson (1965), Davidson (1967), Davidson (1970), and Davidson (1973).
[20] Davidson (1967), p. 27; Davidson (1974), p. 153.
[21] Davidson (1974a), p. 153.
[22] Davidson (1974b), p. 197.

behavior embodies a linguistic "conceptual scheme" at all. On the most common accounts, such a scheme is successful insofar as it succeeds in "organizing" or "fitting" the world, objects, or the "given" of experience.[23] These metaphors of organization and fit themselves have various versions, but Davidson argues that none of them are ultimately coherent. For, to begin with, the idea of a relationship of "organizing" between language and reality (or experience) presupposes the prior existence and determinate ontology of the entities that are supposed to be organized. Once this is assumed, however, there is no longer any room for a radical difference in the ontologies of different conceptual schemes. Variant conceptual schemes will then just be different ways of expressing the same ontology rather than the embodiment of radically different ones.[24] The idea of an accurate scheme or theory as being correct in that it accurately or appropriately "fits" the totality of experience or the world is similarly idle, Davidson suggests, in that we understand the appropriateness of the "fit" only as a matter of the scheme or theory being largely *true*.[25] But we understand truth only through the kind of translation or interpretation of sentences that is modeled explicitly by the corpus of Tarskian T-sentences. Once a Tarskian truth-theory for a language is given, the metaphor of "fit" adds nothing substantive. In particular, it again cannot serve as a basis for comparing what are thought of as distinct "conceptual schemes" set over against the world or the totality of experience.

Davidson suggests that the idea of a dualism of "scheme and content" embodied in the metaphors of fitting or organizing is a dogma, a "third" dogma of empiricism to be added to what Quine treated as the dogmas of reductionism and the analytic/synthetic distinction.[26] According to Davidson, the dualism of scheme and content underlies the idea that two languages or "theories" may be *incommensurable* in the sense that there is no neutral or empirical way to settle substantive differences or disagreements between them. This appears, in particular, in the example Davidson gives, to be the position of Kuhn in his interpretation of the history of science as structured by a series of successive theories or "paradigms" which replace one another discontinuously in the events that Kuhn calls "scientific revolutions."   Specifically, Kuhn holds that:

> In the transition from one theory to the next words change their meanings or conditions of applicability in subtle ways. Though most of the same signs are used before and after a revolution – e.g. force, mass, element, compound, cell – the way in which some of them attach to nature has somehow changed. Successive theories are thus, we say, incommensurable.[27]

Davidson suggests that Kuhn means "incommensurable, " here, in the sense of "not mutually translatable": the supposed difference between two theories in their "way" of "attaching to nature" is thus taken to imply that the similar-sounding locutions used by the two theories are not in fact capable of being translated into one another without loss. At any rate, it is clear that, as Davidson now suggests, the very possibility of making sense of alternative or older theories as determinate theories at all undermines this claim of untranslatability. The proponents of older theories or paradigms might be

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[23] Davidson (1974b), p. 191.
[24] Davidson (1974b), p. 192.
[25] Davidson (1974b), pp. 193-194.
[26] Davidson (1974b), p. 189.
[27] Davidson (1974b), p. 190, quoting Kuhn (1970), pp. 266-267.

seen as ignorant of phenomena of which we now know, or confused in grouping together some entities now distinguished or drawing distinctions where no real ones exist.   But if we can understand their theory at all there is no general ground for the claim of untranslatability, and Kuhn's metaphorical picture of different theories as embodying distinct "ways of attaching to nature," which again turns on the dualism of scheme and content, is itself incoherent.

At first glance, it can seem that Davidson's argument in "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme" poses a direct challenge to Heidegger's conception of the history of being. Like Kuhn's successive "paradigms," Heidegger's successive "epochs" explicitly involve basically different global ways of understanding the nature of things and the larger contours of reality. Indeed, for Heidegger these differences are both farther-ranging and deeper rooted than they are for Kuhn, since they do not only characterize particular scientific theories or scientific practices, narrowly defined, but extend to the whole unity of possible thought and practice at any given historical time.   Moreover, as we have seen, the distinct orientations or positions that are involved in each of the historical epochs as described by Heidegger are indeed conceived as both individually *total* in their determinative relationship to beings as a whole and deeply different from one another. In particular, on Heidegger's account, the successive epochs or "principial economies," each yield a standard or measure that, for a time, determines and regulates the appearance and relations of all beings. Like Kuhn's "paradigms," the epochal principles serve as examples and as measures for thought as well as practice; by figuring and determining the basic conditions under which entities are intelligible, they also determine in a basic way what can be considered to exist at all. Since each of the different epochal principles "measures" the being of beings by onto-theologically grounding beings as a whole, and the measures are distinct, there is also a clear sense in which the economies of presence involved in distinct epochs are themselves "incommensurable", having no common, higher ontic "standard" that itself could be used to measure their differences.

For all of these reasons, Davidson's argument against the kind of conceptual and ontological relativity embodied in the widespread idea of distinct "conceptual schemes" may seem to pose a direct challenge to the intelligibility of Heidegger's account of the history of being, as it does, explicitly, as well, to Kuhn's account of the history of science. The impression of conflict can begin to lessen in both cases, however, as soon as we consider that both Heidegger and Kuhn have in view a primarily *temporal* problematic of difference and change. In particular, neither the Heideggerian history of being nor Kuhn's picture of scientific revolutions centrally involves the question of the comparability of distinct schemes, patterns or languages set against one another *synchronously*. Rather, both involve most centrally an idea of discontinuous, diachronic change, whereby one large-scale pattern of organization comes to replace another, preserving the significance of many terms while also replacing some and transforming others.

On Heidegger's account, in particular, this kind of change may take place within languages but is often more characteristically indicated by shifts between them; thus, for example, the early but distinct conceptions of *idea* and *hypokeimenon* correspond to the "Greek" configurations represented by Plato and Aristotle, each of which is obviously distinct from, but also continuous with, the "Latin" conception of a creator God as the highest being and the figure of transcendence. In an obvious sense, the organizing conception of a later epoch, or at least a sense of its "point" or "purpose," may not be

directly accessible, at least not without significant indoctrination or education, to the partisans of an earlier one. In some cases, Heidegger suggests, the organizing referent of an age may even be largely invented or constructed by means of semantic shifts or new interpretations performed by philosophers, as (for example) when Plato creates a new sense of *idea* by shifting from the established sense of the "outward look" of a thing to a new sense involving the supersensible and unchanging, or when Descartes gives a fundamentally new significance to the *cogito* as thinking substance.[28]

Because of the way the principial economies thus succeed each other temporally within the unitary configuration of the metaphysics of presence, there is in fact no reason to suppose that this involves any actual *untranslatability* between them. The idea of incommensurability, in the sense of non-translatability, which Davidson attributes (whether correctly or incorrectly) to Kuhn, thus does not figure in the motivation or implications of Heidegger's picture. Nor is there, on Heidegger's picture, any dualism of scheme and content, either with respect to particular languages or to language in general. Rather, as we have seen, a language is integrated into the world as a single, holistic system of meaning, grounded and exhibited in the specific possibility of interpretation, that simultaneously gives meaning to words *and* to the things they describe.

This holistic picture of the integration of language and world, far from coming under the scope of Davidson's anti-relativist argument, is in fact familiar from Davidson's own picture of linguistic behavior as intrinsically integrated with practice and with worldly objects and phenomena. For this inherently world-involving structure as Heidegger describes it, "syntactic" components cannot simply be separated from "semantic" ones and the structure of a language as such, is as we have seen, constituted by means of the projective understanding that renders entities intelligible according to a particular interpretation of their being. Each of the successive understandings of the being of beings is different from the one that came before; but they are all nevertheless situated within a larger *unitary* configuration that itself clarifies the structure of their discontinuous temporal succession. This is the unitary configuration of the history of metaphysics, determined as the history of successive interpretations of being or beingness as presence, but ultimately (as we have seen) from the truth of beyng itself. Given this unitary configuration, the impression of relativism that at first may seem to be a consequence of Heidegger's picture of conceptual change can dissipate. Here, it is in fact decisive for Heidegger's own picture that every actually spoken "historical" language must be considered to co-imply, as such, the world as a totality of beings. For this reason, it must be intertranslatable (in a broad sense) with every other such language. At the same time there are, nevertheless, different ways of making and stabilizing this constitutive reference to the totality which can shift over time while translatability is maintained.

What, then, of the discontinuous succession between different epochs of presence? Here, it is again important to note that what is at is at issue In Heidegger's picture is not simply the meeting of languages or schemes considered different from each other and juxtaposed, but also the *internal* development of an essential *continuous* trajectory. The unfolding of this trajectory, as we have seen, involves radical and discontinuous shifts in principial referents; but it also involves a basically continuous with the interpretation of entities in terms of beingness and presence. In the course of this development, older

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[28] See, e.g., *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit. Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet* (GA 34), esp. section 9 ff.

epochal principles and the economies they organize are not simply rendered inaccessible or the conceptions they have organize incomprehensible from the perspective of newer ones. Rather, they become specifically visible, in their destitution, as the ontic referents they always in fact were, victims of the singularizing undertow that leads ultimately to the eventual unfolding of all ontologies of presence. At the moments of transition from one principial economy to the next, this makes for a specific dynamics of transformation which, as we have seen, becomes fully visible only retrospectively, from the position of the new understanding looking backward. But the structure of such transitions is itself, on Heidegger's account, recurrently determined by the underlying structure of Being in its granting and withholding of presence. This granting and withholding determines, in each case, the total measure of beings that a particular epochal principle allows and maintains. The specific dynamics of transition at these moments of crisis thus reflect the more general structure of the *strong incommensurability* that, as I have argued, characterizes every such totalizing system of reference and which implies that each such instituted system ultimately fails to measure itself.

By noting these structural features of stabilizing referents and the theoretical structures they produce, it is possible to see a formally grounded alternative to standard accounts of the dynamics of theory change. These accounts often refer it to political or sociological factors themselves conceived as simply external to rational and empirical scientific inquiry. In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, for example, Kuhn suggests that at a moment of crisis, the shift from one paradigm to the next is largely or fully determined by such factors as the surrounding political climate, the availability of a cohort of younger researchers not already convinced by the existing paradigm, or the overall organization of the "community life" of scientists. [29]   By contrast with this, the dynamics of large-scale change that we have considered in connection to Heidegger can be characterized both formally and "ontologically": since, as I have argued, it is structurally related to the very underlying structure of sense itself, the general dynamics involved are plausibly involved in any historically constituted linguistic situation, and not just those in which certain contingent sociological or political features are present. But the specification of the general dynamics of this structure as formal and ontological in this sense does not, at the same time, exclude its constitutive involvement with the actual phenomena or process discovered in the course of empirical inquiry; the picture is, rather, that such inquiry reflects, as an ongoing process, the complex conditions of truth as disclosure, up to and including the kind of transformative disclosure in which the overall character of entities changes in a basic sense. On the picture here suggested, positive inquiry into any "domain" is impossible and basically unintelligible if this domain is not first opened to the possibility of inquiry by this manifold projection of sense. Nevertheless, this projection is not simply "prior" to empirical inquiry and discovery, but rather is an inherent structural moment of the larger holistic phenomenon of interpretive disclosure, of which ordinary empirical inquiry is *also* an integral part. In this way, as I have argued, it is thus actually possible to see revolutionary changes in paradigms and theories as determined *structurally* from the implicit dynamics of instituted sense, insofar as it is formally and ontologically related to truth.

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[29] See, e.g., Kuhn (1962), pp. 92-96.

In fact, far from being directly opposed to it, the suggestion of a temporal and paradoxical dynamics of sense insofar as it is related to truth receives motivation from another structural part of Davidson's own Tarskian account of truth and meaning. As we have seen, Davidson follows Tarski in holding truth and meaning to be systematically interconnected in the structure of a language. In particular, for Davidson, under the condition of radical interpretation a theory that gives a Tarskian T-sentence for each sentence of the language will clarify the structure of meaning for the language as a whole. The application of such a structure to any natural language will also involve, however, that some of the sentences whose meaning is thus characterized themselves involve reference to language, and in particular to truth. And as is well known, the inclusion of the possibility of discussing truth within a language leads directly, when combined with the general apparatus of the T-sentences themselves, to structural paradoxes.

The most basic of these paradoxes is the famous paradox of the Liar, the sentence which says of itself that it is not true. But as we have seen (chapter 3, above), more broadly, consequence of the inclusion of a truth-predicate within a natural language (which is also capable of forming names for its own expressions) that the totality of T-sentences for such a language is not consistently decidable: that is, there is no finite procedure capable of consistently determining the totality of the (true) T-sentences. This undecidability remains, as we saw there, *even if* explicitly "paradoxical" sentences such as the Liar are treated as meaningless and so as neither true nor false (for instance in connection with an intuitionist or anti-realist semantics of them). For even then, it must be possible to construct sentences involving the criterion of meaningfulness itself, which will again render the T-sentences as a whole undecidable. In the context of Davidsonian assumptions about the relationship between the structure of the T-sentences and natural-linguistic meaning, this points to a basic phenomenon of the *undecidability* of linguistic sense, whereby meaning in the sense of a Tarskian *any* language that includes its own truth-predicate and the general ability to make reference to its own sentences will fail to be consistently decidable by means of any finite procedure.

On the usual model-theoretic interpretation of Tarski's construction of theories of truth for formal languages, such a theory is grounded by first specifying relations of "satisfaction" for primitive terms and predicates. Within the Tarskian construction, the satisfaction relations function as axioms for the recursive definition of the truth-predicate by specifying formally in detail what is intuitively the "reference" of simple nominative terms and the extensions of primitive predicates.   It is crucial to the construction that there be only finitely many such axioms, considered as giving the extensional definitions of simple or "primitive" terms of the language's (finite) vocabulary; otherwise there will be no tractable explanation for the infinite capacity of the language to produce new sentences capable of truth or falsity (compare the discussion in chapter 6, above). The axiomatic specification of these satisfaction relations might be thought to be analogous to the moment of the institution of a language in its specific relation to the world; through the specification, the language is specifically defined in its "semantic" bearing on reality. But the structural paradox introduced by the inclusion within a language of its own truth-predicate means that no language thus instituted can ultimately be axiomatized in such a way as to render its sense ultimately decidable.

It appears to follow that the sense of the terms and sentences of such a language, even if conceived as a direct outcome of the organizing principles and epistemic procedures constitutive of the language as

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such, must ultimately be undecidable in terms of these very principles and procedures.   The constitution of particular languages in terms of ultimate principles that function axiomatically cannot, then, ultimately stabilize meaning; the further question of the ground of the principles that govern sense points to a deeper phenomenon of truth that cannot be completely captured by any consistent set of intra-linguistic principles, standards, or procedures. In connection with such principles and procedures, there is thus always a residual undecidability which becomes explicit in the question of *their* grounding and points to the always-open possibility of their radical transformation. In this way, the specific axiomatic or principial constitution of languages, which makes them capable of objective reference to a totality of entities and stabilizes the ontological sense of this reference by providing a ground for decisions on meaning, always evinces the structural undecidability of sense that points to the deeper conditioning of all standards and (ontic) grounds in the more original structural context of (ontic-ontological) truth.

How should we understand the implications of this structural undecidability for the actual determination of meaning and truth in languages as spoken? One conclusion that might be drawn is simply that we should abandon the attempt to characterize such languages as structurally based in determinate standards or axioms at all; on this kind of view, the inclusion of a truth-predicate within such a language itself would seem simply to render it, because of the phenomena of paradox and hence contradiction that it introduces, irredeemably incapable of being positively illuminated in structural or formal terms.[30] However, it is clear that each actually spoken language involves, as a constitutive and essential aspect of its own structure of sense, a going conception of *itself* as a determinately structured unity arising under historical and temporal conditions but allowing it the general capability of reference to the world as a whole. This conception is, moreover, not simply that of a syntactical structure of rules governing the formation or transformation of expressions on wholly internal grounds. Rather, it includes a constitutive sense of the range of the language as a whole including a going concern with the constitution and boundaries of what the language *can* allow to appear in the horizon of its (inexplicit) reference to the world as a whole. This image is generally not, as long as a particular principial economy is in place, explicit; it becomes more so retrospectively, once a new economy is in place. Nevertheless this, at least implicit, inclusion in each language of a more or less determinate self-conception appears most directly in those regions of the language where it makes explicit reference to its own expressions and sentences. As we have seen, it is these regions, as well, that the paradoxical behavior of sense and the grounds for its ultimate undecidability most basically show up. Here, the structural paradoxes of each language's "foundational" image of itself thus point to the deeper structural phenomenon of undecidability and to the possibility of radical transformation that is implied by it. The undecidability of actually spoken languages that appears here is thus the formal indication of a basic and significant aspect of their structure, despite, or rather because of, the paradoxes and contradictions it inevitably introduces.

Furthermore, there are good reasons, internal to Davidson's account, to consider this paradoxical dynamic of reflexive sense as having not only a positive structural but also a fundamentally *temporal*

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[30] This appears to have been Tarski's own view of the (dim) prospects of clarifying the structure of truth for natural, as opposed to artificially constructed formal, languagep.

significance. As we have seen in chapters 1 and 3, above, in his last book, *Truth and Predication*, he Davidson acknowledges that a Tarskian truth definition – the structural definition of truth-in-L for a particular language, L – does not show us anything about how to define truth for *another,* distinct language M or how to apply the concept of truth to *new* cases.[31] For both reasons, Davidson concludes that although the Tarskian pattern of truth-definitions tells us "much of what we want to know about the concept of truth," but there must be more to say.[32] In particular, Davidson suggests, the general concept of truth to which the various specific Tarskian definitions point, without defining or exhausting it, also plausibly guides inquiry and interpretation in each of the specific languages.[33] Both the dynamics of the transformation of language in view of new phenomena or structural realities and the paradoxical status of sentences discussing truth are clearly relevant to the structure of this more general (and non-language-specific) concept of truth.   Here, the temporal transformation of language in relation to what appear as new and shifting realities does not simply mean that new expedients or constructions are introduced *ad hoc* to deal with hitherto unfamiliar phenomena. For the underlying relation of sense to truth also itself creates, as I have suggested, the structural basis for the possibility of punctual and discontinuous total change. In particular, the dynamics of temporal change that characterize every actually existing natural or "historical" language are plausibly deeply linked to the inherent capacity of these languages to consider, implicitly or explicitly, their own totality and the total structure underlying their own truth-claims. But because of this, the structural basis for such change can be seen as resting in the undecidability of sense which is characteristic of each language bearing total expressive power, and becomes visible in the specific structure of the paradoxes which manifest internally a language's self-relation to its own total structure.

III

As I have argued, the kind of difference that characterizes the transitions between the successive epochs of metaphysics for Heidegger is not the "conceptual relativity" that Davidson opposes in "On the Very Idea." Once we grasp the kind of diachronic unity that is at the structural basis for Heidegger's account of the conditioning of epochal truth by the deeper underlying phenomenon of the truth of being itself, it is clear that his conception avoids relativism by basing itself on the inherently paradoxical dynamics of possible change that emerge forcefully from the way that every metaphysical language grounds beings as such and *as a whole*.

In this way, the Heideggerian account provides the elements for an account of the *temporality* of linguistic change that is essentially absent from Davidson's account. It is not that Davidson actually denies that languages originate at a particular time and are transformed in various ways over the course of their careers; he just does not address the issue. What form, then, can an account of linguistic transformation take, if it acknowledges the paradoxical and ontological dynamics of totality and

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[31] Davidson (2005), p. 17.
[32] Davidson (2005), p. 27.
[33] Davidson (2005), p. 55.

undecidability that I have considered here? In the 1928 treatise "On the Essence of Ground," Heidegger considers the way in which the availability of entities for positive reference, consideration and description is grounded, in each case, in the phenomenon of projection whereby Dasein opens a particular domain through a projective understanding of the being of the beings thereby defined.[34] The ultimate condition for this opening is to be found in the structural "transcendence" of Dasein, whereby it is always already "outside itself" in its original structural relation to truth as unconcealment and thereby *grounds* in its own structure the ontological difference between beings and being.[35] In this sense, according to Heidegger, the availability of any domain of entities is always conditioned by a prior interpretation which makes accessible a particular domain on the basis of an interpretation which is itself grounded in Dasein's (initially inexplicit) understanding of Being itself. In this interpretation, new entities may "enter" the world through sudden shifts that allow something of the character of a domain of beings, hitherto obscure, to appear. The phenomenon of "world-entry" is thus to be characterized on ontological grounds as a basic possibility of Dasein insofar as Dasein itself is "world-forming" [*Weltbildend*], structured by a basic transcendence that relates it to the ontological difference.[36]

This conception of world-entry as grounded in interpretation and in interpretive shifts in the total understanding of domains of beings again invites comparison with Kuhn's account of scientific revolutions in *The Structure*. In particular, as Kuhn also suggests, it is through such interpretive shifts in the sense of whole domains of entities – Kuhn's notorious "paradigm shifts" – that genuinely "new" entities and phenomena can be thought to enter the world. Along these lines, there is moreover even a sense in which, as Kuhn says, partisans of different paradigms live in different "worlds" marked by very different ontological determinations, although (as we have seen) any such formulation must also preserve the important dimension of continuity between older and newer theories.[37] As I have

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[34] GA 9, p. 131-33.

[35] GA 9, p. 133-34.

[36] GA 9, p. 158-59: "As the respective wholeness [jeweilige Ganzheit] of that for the sake of which Dasein exists in each case [des Umwillen eines Daseins], world is brought before Dasein through Dasein itself … Yet just as it does not explicitly grasp that which has been projected [wie er das Entworfene nicht eigens erfaβt], this projection of world also always *casts* the projected world *over* beings [ist…so auch immer *Überwurf* der entworfenen Welt über das Seiende]. This prior casting-over first makes it possible for what is as such to manifest itself [daβ Seiendes als solches sich offenbart]. The occurrence of a projective casting-over, in which the being of Dasein is temporalized, is being-in-the-world [Dieses Geschehen des entwerfenden Überwurfs, worin sich das Sein des Daseins zeitigt, ist das In-der-Welt-sein]. 'Dasein transcends' means: in the essence of its being it is *world-forming*, [weltbildend] "forming" [bildend] in the multiple sense that it lets world occur, and through the world gives itself an original view [Anblick] (picture [Bild]) that is not explicitly grasped, yet functions precisely as a paradigmatic form [Vor-bild] for all manifest beings [alles offenbare Seiende], among which each respective Dasein itself belongs [das jeweilige Dasein selbst gehört].
Beings, such as nature in the broadest sense, could in no way become manifest unless they found *occasion* to enter into a world. This is why we speak of their possible and occasional *entry into world*. Entry into world is not some process that transpires in those beings that enter it [kein Vorgang am eingehenden Seienden], but is something that 'happens' 'with' beings [sondern etwas, das 'mit' dem Seienden 'geschieht'.]"   (transl. slightly modified).

[37] Cf. Kuhn (1962), p. 111: "Examining the record of past research from the vantage of contemporary historiography, the historian of science may be tempted to exclaim that when paradigms change, the world itself changes with them…It is rather as if the professional community had been suddenly transported to another planet where familiar objects are seen in a different light and joined by unfamiliar ones as well… In so far as their only

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suggested, it is generally not possible to clarify the underlying hermeneutic dynamics of these shifts, in any case, without considering the specific phenomena of constitutive reference to the world *as a whole* and how these phenomena themselves condition the possibility of large-scale shifts in the intelligibility of entities and phenomena.[38] This significance of totality, as I have argued, must be considered integral to the possible phenomena of world-entry, projection, and paradigm shift; in this way, the dynamic and temporal structure of languages in relation to entities is shown to have a positive formal basis in the paradoxical dynamics of total self-reference itself.

For Heidegger, the "world-forming" structure of projection thus provides an ontological basis for the phenomenon of world-entry, whereby new entities as well as whole new ways of understanding the totality of beings are grounded in the specific structure of truth as disclosure. But what is it to form a world? In the 1930s, as we have seen, Heidegger replaces the earlier conception of truth as grounded in Dasein's "transcendence" with the more explicitly historical conception of a plurality of historical epochs, themselves grounded as a whole in the unitary configuration of the interpretation of Being as presence and the progressive withdrawal of Being itself. In 1935, in "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger develops on the basis of a consideration of the temporal and ontological nature of artworks a penetrating new conception of the ontological and temporal conditions under which it is possible for "a world" to be "set up" or "opened up" through the "setting-to-work" of a work of art. On this conception, the process of "setting up" by which worlds are formed or set up is a "worlding" of the world whereby a whole domain of objects, practices, and possible perceptions is first made available:

> To be a work means to set up a world [eine Welt aufstellen]. But what is that, a world? [Aber was ist das, eine welt?] … World is not the mere collection of the countable or uncountable, familiar and unfamiliar things that are at hand [die bloße Ansammlung der vorhandenen abzählbaren oder unabzählbaren, bekannten und unbekannten Dinge]. But neither is it a merely imagined framework added by our representation to the sum of such given things [ein nur eingebilter, zur Summe des Vorhandenen hinzu vorgestellter Rahmen]. W*orld worlds*, and is more fully in being [ist seiender als] than the tangible and perceptible realm in which we believe ourselves to be at home. World is never an object that stands before us and can be seen. World is the ever-nonobjective [das immer Ungegenständliche] to which we are subject [dem wir unterstehen] as long as the paths of birth and death, blessing and curse keep us transported into Being [uns in das Sein entrückt halten].[39]

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recourse to [the world of their research engagement] is through what they see and do, we may want to say that after a revolution scientists are responding to a different world."

[38] Here, for instance, the structure of negative existential statements has an obvious significance; in the shift from one paradigm to the next, a large part of the transition consists in the determination that certain entities previously referred to routinely do not in fact exist, as such ("there is no such thing as phlogiston"). But negative existentials are themselves logically related to the determination of the whole, for they are logically equivalent to universals (For all x, x is not phlogiston) whose domain of quantification must be considered to be the totality of the world or universe.

[39] *GA 5*, p. 33/30-31. Transl. slightly altered.

This possibility of "opening up" a world is itself understood in close relation to the essential "opposition" [*Gegeneinander*] that Heidegger describes as the "strife" [*Streit*] of earth and world.[40] In particular, whereas world is the "self-opening openness of the broad paths of the simple and essential decisions in the destiny of a historical people [der einfachen und wesentlichen Entscheidungen im Geschick eines geschichtlichen Volkes]", earth is that which is "continually self-secluding [ständig Sichverschließenden] and to that extent sheltering and concealing" although nevertheless in a certain way also brought forth in the world-opening work.[41] The specific phenomenon of the strife of world and earth is, on Heidegger's description, the tension or rift [*Risse*] that makes it possible for a work to not only to "set up a world" but to "set forth the earth"; it is in this way that "historical man" [*geschichltliche Mensch*] grounds life in the world.[42] The grounding is, specifically, an "instigating of the" strife and thereby a "setting to work of truth". [43] Truth is, here, understood as the "essence" of the true," and in particular as *aletheia* and unconcealment. But that there is truth as unconcealment means that there is "already manifest something to which we can conform ourselves."[44] The more original condition for this manifestness is what Heidegger calls the clearing [*Lichtung*]:

> And yet – beyond beings [über das Seiende hinaus], not away from them but before them, there is still something else that happens [geschieht noch ein Anderes]. In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs [Inmitten des Seienden im Ganzen west eine offene Stelle]. There is a clearing [Eine Lichtung ist]. Thought of in reference to beings [vom Seienden her gedacht], this clearing is more in being than are beings [seiender als das Seiende]. This open center is therefore not surrounded by beings; rather, the clearing center itself encircles all that is [alles Seiende], as does the nothing, which we scarcely know.[45]

The "setting up" of a world that a work can accomplish is thus related back to the specific phenomenon of the strife between earth and world and thereby also to the deeper condition of the clearing, which itself "opens" all that can be discussed or considered as existing. This opening is itself the constitution of world from and in the dynamics of opening and setting-up that the work exemplifies in its "setting to work" of truth.

As commentators have noted, the late Heidegger's grand picture of Western history as constituted and exhausted by the series of epochal transformations ultimately "sent" or "granted" from or by Being itself stands in some tension with a culturalist or humanist picture on which essentially contingent human cultural practice or institutions set up the conditions under which entities are understood and experienced in particular and differing ways over historical time.[46] On the other hand, Heidegger himself may seem at times to suggest such a culturalist picture of the origin and structure of worlds. For example, his development of the example of the Greek temple in "The Origin of the Work of Art" and in

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[40] GA 5, p. 37/35.
[41] GA 5, p. 37/35.
[42] GA 5, p. 35/32.
[43] GA 5, p. 38/36.
[44] GA 5, p. 41/39.
[45] GA 5, p. 41/39-40.
[46] See, e.g., Rorty (1991).

his own description (for instance) of the specific phenomenon of world as constitutively related, in each case, to a "historical people" may seem to suggest that he understands "worlds", in the plural, in each case as an instituted correlate of localized practices or of the languages that surround them.   On this kind of picture, the availability and intelligibility of beings themselves is constituted by such a configuration of practice and language, and the "setting up" of a world which first "discloses" such a totality is to be understood as primarily a matter of conventionally or culturally instituted practice, in principle comprehensible in sociological or pragmatic terms.

It is not that commentators who hold this kind of picture simply deny that the later Heidegger also characterizes the conditions for the institution of world that relate it ultimately to the "destining"[*Schicken*] of Being itself and to ontic-ontological structures that, on Heidegger's own account, cannot ultimately be rooted exclusively in the phenomena of "culture" or "practices."[47] But it has nevertheless been tempting, given the apparent obscurity of the notion of "Being itself" and its "destining" of history, to correct Heidegger by supplementing or replacing his conception of world-formation with this culturalist or pragmatist picture. Here, what is seen as most obscure is exactly *how* something like "Being itself" could itself be responsible for those large-scale shifts in which the entire character of the world appears discontinuously to change, or for the evident differences between such large-scale understandings that appear to occur over historical time.

By contrast with this, however, I have argued that the institution as well as the destitution of languages and practices themselves can and must be seen, in an ontological context, as subject to an inherent structural necessity that also has its ontological and temporal ground in the structure of disclosive truth. Here, far from being obfuscatory or mystifying, a consideration of the determining ontological dynamic of truth as unconcealment is in fact essential. This dynamic does not have to be explained in mystifying, mystical, or nostalgic metaphors in order to be clarified in its underlying structure. To the contrary, it can, as I have argued, be put on a firm metalogical basis by considering the specific implications and dynamical paradoxes of the institution of languages by means of the fixation of epochal referents. This

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[47] Cf., e.g., *Beiträge,* p. 98-99, in the course of a discussion of the "decision" regarding "history" as the "playing out of the strife between earth and world": "Does the decision once again bring about the grounding of the site of the moment [die Griindung der Augenblicksstätte] for the grounding of the truth of beyng, or does everything simply roll on as 'battle' over the bare conditions of surviving and thriving in gigantic proportions [die nackten Bedingungen des Fort- und Auslebens in den riesigen Ausmaβen] , such that 'worldview' and 'culture' are also only supports and resources of this 'battle'? What prepares itself, then? The *transition to the technologized animal* [*Übergang zum technisierten Tier*], the one that, through the gigantism of technology, is beginning to replace the instincts, which are already becoming weaker and coarser.
For this direction of decision what is characteristic is not the technologizing of 'culture' and the imposition of a 'worldview,' but is the fact that 'culture' and 'worldview' become resources of a battlefield technology for the sake of a will that no longer wills any goal [zu Mitteln der Kampftechnik werden fiir einen Willen, der kein Ziel mehr will]; for the preservation of a people is never a possible goal but is only a condition of the setting of a goal. If the condition turns into the unconditioned, however, then what comes to power is the not-willing of goals, the cutting off of all expansive meditation [das Abschneiden jeder ausgreifenden Besinnung]. What then disappears completely is the possibility of knowing that 'culture' and 'worldview' are already the scions of a world-order which presumably is to be overcome [bereits Ableger einer Weltordnung sind, die angeblich iiberwunden werden soll]."
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points to an underlying determination of the phenomenal constellations in which beings appear that is not simply culturalist or pragmatic, since it points to the ontological and hermeneutic basis of disclosive truth that is plausibly the ground for any possible formation of cultures and practices themselves. And although it does not depend in any essential way on the transcendence of a "mystical" beyond, this structure of truth in itself also owes nothing to any prior cultural or humanist reference.

IV

I have argued that Heidegger's conception of the history of being can be defended from the charge of conceptual relativity, and understood on the level of its real structural problematic, only if we see it as unfolding a specifically temporal structure of undecidable sense. This structure is also separately motivated by a metalogical reflection on the structure of axiomatic principles in relation to the totality of a language that they institute and maintain. Seeing it in this way involves acknowledging that the shifting configurations of epochal economies of presence, each constituted by a particular determination of the being of beings, themselves have a larger determinative unity in the itinerary of what Heidegger calls the epoch of "metaphysics" itself. Heidegger's understanding of the history of these determinations, as a whole, is itself directional.   It is oriented by the growing gap between an original or inceptual determination of being *as* presence and the ever-greater obscurity, forgetting or withdrawal of being itself in the sway of the successive epochal principles. For Heidegger, this history, moreover, has a culmination and an end. Specifically, it ends in the contemporary configuration of the metaphysics of technology and the unchallenged sway of a universal *calculability* and *ordering* of beings in which being itself no longer appears at all. I have argued that in order to understand the specific kind of temporality that is constitutive of, and constituted by, metaphysics as the history of presence, we need also to see the unifying basis of the entire regime or epoch of metaphysics in the self-differentiation of Being as it both grants the possibility of presence, and holds itself back, in the epochal constitution of each specific economy of beings. This involves, as well, comprehending in the contemporary condition of universal technology and "enframing" the *closure* and specific boundary of the metaphysics of presence itself. In this final section, I shall consider how the specific phenomenon of the undecidability of sense itself points to and articulates this closure, and also in a certain way intimates or indicates its "beyond".

If Heidegger sees in the contemporary configuration of advanced technology a culmination or end of the metaphysical interpretation of being in terms of presence that also begins to indicate a specific "beyond" to metaphysics, then the structure of this indication itself can be clarified by reference to the differential structure, between presence and presencing, that lies at the basis of any constituted discursive realm of sense.   As Schürmann points out near the end of his own analysis of the contemporary closure of metaphysics, this "middle term" of difference is not itself any human or sociological construction, but rather the underlying differential structure of "originary" time. Specifically, if Heidegger does not interrogate the contemporary situation "as a historian of culture" or "in order to gain further information about man," but rather to locate in it, like all the other historical configurations of the interpretation of being, the threefold difference between beings, their determining

being (or beingness), and being itself, the final significance of this location must be the illumination of time as the original basis which also ultimately refuses any epochal determination:

> If it is admitted that the starting point of the deconstruction is one particular economy, it becomes clearer why the ontological difference unites the three terms I have just sketched and not two (e.g. *ta onta*, "entities" and *to einai*, "the to-be"). The middle term is that order which, following Heidegger, other authors have located in discourse and called *episteme* or discursive regularity. In Heidegger, the three-tiered difference is generally described as between 'entities', their 'beingness' and 'being' (as a verb, as 'to-be'). This way of formulating it, however, passes in silence over the decisive factor, time. In his last writings, he therefore characterizes beingness and being with some subtlety as two moments of 'letting', as "letting-*be-present*" and as "*letting-be*-present." Originary time has 'letting' as its essence, which is to say that it remains unintelligible within any metaphysical quest for ultimate causes, grounds, or principles.[48]

As I have argued, the undecidability of sense which appears necessarily to characterize the logical structure of any instituted language or discursive regime itself structured according to the ontological differentiation of entities and their being, and thereby evinces the "middle term" which is the ontological difference or originary time itself. This undecidability is thus itself nothing other than a structural manifestation of the inherently differential "self-regulation" of the event of presencing of which Schürmann speaks. In this differential self-relation, the event both grants the specific conditions under which entities can be phenomenalized in particular configurations of intelligibility, and also withdraws in itself, hiding the ultimate eventual and differential bases of presencing beneath the assumption of a stable ontic referent. Heidegger himself thinks this originary self-differentiation of presence and the ground of presence in increasingly radical terms. At first, he conceives it as the ontological difference between beings and their being; later it is the self-differentiation of being in itself through which it grounds its truth as event, outside and prior to any reference to beings. In the context of any particular principial economy constituted by reference to assumed standards and principles, as I have argued, this original temporal differentiation or "differend" introduces both the possibility of a determinate configuration of sense and also the essential undecidability that also characterizes each such configuration. But as Schürmann points out, grasping this temporal difference as the ultimate basis for instituted sense can also point to the specific closure of the metaphysics of presence itself and its possible opening to a transformed condition.[49]

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[48] Schürmann (1987), p. 285.

[49] One should also compare here Derrida's (1968) conception of *différance* as a more originary differentiation related to, but not the same as, the ontological difference. According to Derrida, *différance* as the more basic condition for the differentiation of being and beings cannot itself be understood in positive terms as any entity or positively described phenomenon; it is visible, rather, in its trace, or in the erasure of its own "withdrawal" from the text of metaphysics. Elsewhere, Derrida connects this play of *différance* to the specific phenomenon that he describes as the "undecidable" of specific texts or textual regimes. For some discussion of the relationship between undecidability in this sense and undecidability in the sense demonstrated by Gödel and Turing, see Livingston (2010).

The thought of this original differentiation and the structure of paradox and undecidability in which it is manifest can become the basis for a renewed critique of ideology that draws on the methods and forms of post-Kantian critique but radicalizes them on formal grounds. In particular, for the contemporary critique of technological society, the interlinked positive phenomena of structural paradox, undecidability, and ultimate ineffectivity thus have a determinate and rigorous formally indicative significance. They can be structurally interpreted as pointing to the broader conditions for systematization as such, and to the inescapable double bind of systematic regulation that characterizes the underlying structure of any specifically constituted system of meaning, communication, or social regularity or practice.

In an essay on "Tautology and Paradox in the Self-Descriptions of Modern Society," Niklas Luhmann suggests from the perspective of a "second-order cybernetics" and reflexive theory of systems the way in which the inherently paradoxical structure of societal self-description can suggest terms for this positive critique. As Luhmann notes and as we have seen here, the unrestricted self-reference that is apparently involved in any language in its specific capacity to capture truth leads inevitably to tautologies and paradoxes.[50] According to Luhmann, the characteristic response of a social system to this situation is to "'unfold' self-reference" by interpreting it in a hierarchical or ordered configuration that allows its "deparadoxicalization," or its self-description without apparent paradox. This operation of unfolding is specifically related to the constitution of a temporality in which the society is either conserved or seen as an object of possible progressive transformation. In either of these ways, the unfolding of paradox that is needed to avoid contradiction gains the significance of the constitution of an ordered temporality of conservation or transformative action. But this operation of temporal unfolding only takes place at the cost of obscuring the basis of this operation itself, as well as the underlying structural problematic to which it ultimately responds.[51] Undecidable sense is thus, according to Luhmann, rendered decidable by the unfolding of paradox along a temporal dimension that rationalizes the activity of society to itself. But the basis of this operation is the obscuration of the structural ground of paradox in the very constitutive structure of social self-reference. This process of deparadoxization is in fact identical, according to Luhmann, with the transformation of descriptions of society into "ideologies" which then come to play a privileged role in "directing and justifying social action" while at the same time insulating themselves from global critique by appearing to be contestable only by means of the competing "holistic systems" of their specific ideological opposites.[52] It is thus that, according to Luhmann, the concept of ideology itself comes to display a "particular reflexivity that appears immune to empirical evidence and criticism" which results in the outcome that "descriptions of societal self-descriptions face the antagonism of ideologies instead of reflecting on the more fundamental problems of tautology and paradox."[53]

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[50] Luhmann (1990), p. 137.
[51] Luhmann (1990), p. 127.
[52] Luhmann (1990), p. 128.
[53] Luhmann (1990) pp. 128-29.

If Luhmann is correct in seeing an actual basis for the whole structure of positive ideologies, including their holistic systems and mutual antagonisms, in the socially constitutive function of de-paradoxicalization, then the only rigorous ground for their critique must rest in pointing out on logical, systematic, and metalogical grounds this underlying necessary structure of paradox itself. In this way, the elaboration on metalogical grounds of the underlying paradoxical structure of sense and the structural necessity of paradoxical foundations that it evinces can thus provide a specific and concrete metalogical basis for a renewal and reinvigoration of the traditional critique of ideology.   For any ontologically grounded critique of the present, the interlinked positive phenomena of structural paradox, undecidability, and ultimate ineffectivity thus have a determinate and rigorous formally indicative significance. They can be structurally interpreted as pointing to the broader conditions for systematization as such, and to the inescapable double bind of systematic regulation that characterizes the underlying structure of any specifically constituted system of meaning, communication, or social regularity or practice. As such, and as I have tried to elaborate here, pointing out their specific structure and their relationship to the ontological conditions of presence and presencing can thus provide rigorous grounds for a critique of the technological present. At the same time, this indication points to the underlying *ontological* situation of the positive grounding of constituted regimes and languages in the arche-original structure of a self-differentiating difference at the root of all possible presencing.

Heidegger's thought of originary "Being itself" thus involves an underlying self-differentiation that is at the very basis of the possibility of any economy of presence.   This points to the specific significance of the purported contemporary "closure" of the whole epoch of presence, or the history of metaphysics, itself.   The significance of this indication is as much temporal, or rather arche-temporal, as it is ontological. As Schürmann says, beyond the epoch of the various principial economies, it points to the *plural* temporalities of a condition that no longer stabilizes presence in terms of "causes, grounds, or principles".[54] Seeing the possibility of transition to such an an-archic condition in the contemporary configuration of advanced technology involves grasping the specific ways in which this contemporary configuration itself points, at the boundaries of the totality of its claim over beings, to the paradoxes underlying its own structural constitution. This involves, in particular, seeing the concrete basis for a demonstration of this underlying paradoxical structure in the actual structure of the technologies and techniques that constitute and make possible the contemporary regime of unlimited technology, both in ways that Heidegger himself pointed out and in ways he did not.

In particular, Heidegger sometimes suggests that the "end of metaphysics" is determined not only by the universal mechanical or instrumental enframing and manipulation of beings but also, and perhaps even more deeply, by the totalization of calculability, information exchange, or cybernetics as a "regulating-regulated" technology of the exchange of information.[55] In connection with this, the

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[54] Schürmann (1987), p. 285.

[55] Cf., e.g. Heidegger's description of this contemporary condition in "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking": "It suffices to refer to the independence of psychology, sociology, anthropology as cultural anthropology, or to the role of logic as symbolic logic and semantics [als Logistik und Semantik]. Philosophy turns into the empirical science of man, of all that can become for man the experiential object of his technology [was für den Menschen erfahrbarer Gegenstand seiner Technik werden kann], the technology by which he establishes himself in the world by working on it in the manifold modes of making and shaping. All of this happens

conditions of the contemporary existence and predominance of what are called "information technologies" gains a particular and telling indicative significance. Here, the interrelated problems of self-referential paradox, axiomatic incompleteness and metalogical undecidability themselves prove decisive in pointing to the specific constitution of these concrete conditions as well as their specific limitations. For the very demonstrations that yield the contemporary sense of an algorithmic procedure that thus underlies all communicative and computational information technologies also decisively limit the claim of such procedures to total effectivity by demonstrating the actual necessity of undecidability and incalculability with respect to any such procedure.   In an ontological perspective suggested by Heidegger but also separately motivated by the theoretical and technical problematic of logic and its foundations in the twentieth century, this amounts to an immanent critique of effectivity that demonstrates, at the basis of any constituted procedural realm of the application of regular procedures of calculation or information processing, a more basic *ineffectivity.* As I shall argue, this mobilizes the critical reserve of what, in any effectively regulated system of meaning, resists the force of its constitutive rules and standards.   With respect to the regime of assumed technological effectivity (as "actuality") that is the culmination and fulfillment of the history of metaphysics, this critique then takes the form of the articulation of the interlinked problems of logic, force, and being that surround and condition this history as a whole, and insist at its beginning and end. It is to this critique and some of its contemporary consequences that we will turn over the next two chapters.

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everywhere on the basis of and according to the criterion of the scientific discovery of the individual areas of beings [der wissenschaftlichen Erschließung der einzelnen Bezirke des Seienden].

No prophecy is necessary to recognize that the sciences now establishing themselves will soon be determined and regulated by the new fundamental science that is called cybernetics.

This science corresponds to the determination of man as an acting social being [als des handelnd-gesellschaftlichen Wesens]. For it is the theory of the regulation of the possible planning and arrangement of human labor. Cybernetics transforms language into an exchange of news [bildet die Sprache um zu einem Austausch von Nachrichten]. The arts become regulated-regulating instruments of information." GA 14, p. 71-72.