

## The Logic of Being: Plato, Heidegger, Frege

### (Chapter 1 of Draft MS: *The Logic of Being: Heidegger, Truth, and Time*)

In a passage in his late dialogue, *Sophist*, Plato articulates clearly the interlinked problematic of logic, truth, and time in which, as I shall argue, a continuation of the Heideggerian questioning of being and the legacy of the twentieth-century “analytic” philosophy of language today converge. The passage comes in the course of the Eleatic Visitor’s account of the views of his predecessors, amounting to, he says, a “battle of gods and giants” (246a) over the nature of being.<sup>1</sup> The battle is between those who seek to “drag everything down to earth” and define being entirely “as the same as body” and those others who “insist violently that true being is certain nonbodily forms that can be thought about” (245a-b). By contrast with this first group, who despise and refuse to listen to those who claim the existence of anything non-corporeal, the second group “takes the bodies of the other[s], and also what they call the truth, and they break them up verbally into little bits and call them a process of generation instead of being...” (246c). But even those who hold the materialist position, here dealt with in an “improved” form more likely to lead to the truth, must accept the existence of mortal animals. To do so is to accept the existence of ensouled bodies, and thus to count the soul or *psyche* among what is. But as these “rough men” must also admit, souls differ in being just or unjust, intelligent or unintelligent. They must also admit, though, that souls *become* just, or intelligent by the “having and presence” [*hexei kai parousia*] of justice or intelligence; and so it is necessary for even the materialist, if they are to admit souls at all, to admit the possibility of this possession and co-presence within them.

Thus even if the materialist continues to maintain that all that exists is to be understood in terms of its ability to affect bodies, he must be prepared to give a further account of this ability, capacity, or power itself. This account will point, ultimately, to what even those who recognize nothing other than becoming in being must nevertheless identify as the most basic underlying characteristic of whatever is:

Visitor: Then let’s go back to questioning [the materialists]. It’s enough if they admit that even a small part of *that which is* doesn’t have a body. They need to say something about what’s common to [*sumphues gegonos*] both it and the things that do have body, which they focus on when they say that they both *are*. Maybe that will raise some confusion for them. If it does, then think about whether they’d be willing to accept our suggestion that *that which is* [*to on*] is something like the following.

Theaetetus: Like what? Tell me and maybe we’ll know.

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<sup>1</sup> Plato, “Sophist”, transl. by Nicholas P. White, in *Plato: Complete Works*, edited, with introduction and notes, by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

Visitor: I'm saying that a thing really is if it has any capacity [*dunamis*] at all, either by nature to do something to something else or to have even the smallest thing done to it by even the most trivial thing, even if it only happens once. I'll take it as a definition that *those which are* [*ta onta*] amount to nothing other than *capacity*.

The position, which looks ahead, in one way, to Aristotle and, in another, to Nietzsche, identifies capacity, potentiality, possibility, or power as the underlying characteristic of all that actually is or exists. Such a position is, the Visitor suggests, obligatory for the materialists because of their own claim that all that exists is constantly becoming; in particular, once a partisan of the position admits the existence of living souls and *their* possibility of temporal becoming, it is necessary to admit the general existence of possibility or *dunamis* itself.

The discussion now turns to the interpretation of the contrasting position of the "friends of the forms," those who sharply distinguish generation (or coming-to-be) from being, holding that we "interact with" (*koinonein*) the former through the body and senses, but with the latter only through the psyche and logical reasoning (*logismon*) (248a). Both kinds of access, however, whether through the body or through the soul and logos, obviously involve a "dealing with" or having in common (*koinonein*) which must be clarified. As for the materialists, the solution of this difficulty for the "friend of forms," turns on the *actual life of the soul, or psyche*, capable of touching in thought and knowledge on the real of being in itself. In particular, the Visitor suggests, one possible position for the friend of the forms is the one just mooted from the position of the materialists: that the possibility of any such trafficking or dealing is based in the power or capacity of two things to come together and affect or be affected by one another (248c). On this position, the commerce of the soul with both generation and being is again rooted in *dunamis*: power, capacity, or possibility. As the Visitor notes, however, the friend of the forms will not initially agree with this definition. For separating being from generation as they do, they will hold that *only* generation (or coming-to-be) involves such a constitutive power of body and matter to affect or be affected; being, on the other hand, does not "fit" with it:

Visitor: In reply they [the 'friends of forms'] say that coming-to-be has the capacity to do something or have something done to it, but that this capacity doesn't fit with being.

Theaetetus: Is there anything to that?

Visitor: We have to reply that we need them to tell us more clearly whether they agree that the soul knows and also that *being* [*ousian*] is known. (248c-d)

While admitting this last claim – that being is in some way known – the friend of the forms nevertheless still resists the suggestion that this knowing involves doing something, or something's being done to something. For neither can apply, on the view, to being itself, characterized as it is as changeless and immobile.

It is here, though, that the Visitor invokes a consideration that will prove decisive in establishing the actual possibility of a *coexistence* of change and motion with being in itself, that of the actual basis of the understanding of being in the temporal *life* of the being that thinks:

Visitor: But for heaven's sake, are we going to be convinced that it's true that change, life, soul, and intelligence are not present (*me pareinai*) in absolute being (*to pantelos*), and that it neither lives nor thinks, but stays changeless, solemn, and holy, without any understanding?

Theaetetus: If we did, sir, we'd be admitting something frightening.

Visitor: But are we going to say it has understanding but doesn't have life?

Theaetetus: Of course not.

Visitor: But are we saying that it has both those things in it while denying that it has them in its soul?

Theaetetus: How else would it have them?

Visitor: And are we saying that it has intelligence, life, and soul, but that it's at rest and completely changeless even though it's alive?

Theaetetus: All that seems completely unreasonable.

Visitor: Then both *that which changes* and also *change* have to be admitted as being.

Theaetetus: Of course.

Whether or not one can recognize in the position of the "friend of forms" the actual position of Plato himself, or perhaps some earlier version of it, it is clear that what is at issue in the Visitor's challenge is nothing other than the deep temporal problematic of what is indexed elsewhere in Plato's corpus as *mathexis* or participation, the relationship between the always-changing objects of the senses and their timeless and unchanging but thinkable forms. Through the Visitor's argument, the friend of forms is forced to admit that there is some real relationship between the temporal realm of becoming and the static realm of thinkable beings in themselves, and that change and becoming must accordingly *also* be admitted as part of what ultimately is. The consideration that most directly demands this admission is that the living, dynamic soul nevertheless has the capacity to *know* or understand being itself. The problem of this capacity is thus the problem of the *temporal structure* of the *thought of being* as such, or of the possibility, capacity or potentiality by which a being irreducibly situated in time nevertheless grasps the timelessness of what is (on this position) most ultimately real.

On *both* of the opposed views, according to the Visitor, it is thus necessary to admit the privileged existence of a living *psyche* capable of thinking or knowing being as it is in itself. This psyche is, moreover, conceived by both the materialist and the formalist as the privileged nexus of a definitive possibility of a *combination* or *mixing in co-presence* which ultimately demands, on either view, the admission of a real relationship of co-existence and interaction between the changeable and moving and being as it is in itself. Though there are certainly further problems that would have to be addressed in order for this common suggestion to amount to anything like a real solution to the "Platonic" problem of being and becoming, its generality is notable relative to standard conceptions of Plato's own views.

Here, for example, the claim that the soul must be thought of as such a nexus of co-presence capable of allowing the mixing of being and becoming is not at all dependent upon any prior endorsement of the existence of static forms themselves, but is equally addressed to the materialists, for whom it is portrayed as a necessary *consequence* of their own admission that souls can *become* more or less just or intelligent. Similarly, as presented from the materialist position, this conception of the psyche does not at all depend upon any suggestion of, or argument for its immortality; rather, in fact, the portion of the argument addressed to the materialist is premised explicitly only on the existence of *mortal* [*thanatos*] animals.

From the perspective of the Visitor (if not necessarily from that of Plato himself), the suggestion that being and becoming combine in the privileged medium of the soul thus represents at least the beginning of a *maximally general* account of the relationship obscurely indicated by Parmenides himself in the remark that “thinking and being are the same”.<sup>2</sup> In the context of the dialogue, this suggestion will provide, as well, the basis for resolving the formidable Parmenidean problem of the possibility of saying “what is not”. In particular, given the avowed possibility of a mixing or combination between the great types of being, rest and change, it becomes possible for the Visitor as well to argue that one must acknowledge the sameness and difference of these (254e). It is then possible to consider that difference can mix with all of the other great types, and in particular that a mixing of difference with being produces (257b) “something different from” it. This allows, finally, the actual essence or form of “that which is not” (the *me on*) to appear, and allows it finally to be said that it blends with speech or the logos in the deceptive discourse of the sophist (260c).

The actual form and structure of the potential combination of the types in the soul is, at this point, obscure. But as the dialogue moves toward its conclusion, the Visitor develops the suggestion of a superior *logical-syntactical grammar* of essential types figured (in a more than simply metaphorical sense) by the actual relations between phonemic or lexical elements characteristic of language.<sup>3</sup> The suggestion is closely related to the methodology of “collection and division”, or *synthesis* and *diaeresis*, suggested by Plato in a number of late dialogues, and depends also on the recognition, common to the materialist and the friend of forms, of an essential capacity for synthesis or combination rooted in the nature of the soul. In particular, given this possibility of combination in the soul, the Visitor can now argue that such opposite types as *change* and *rest*, even if they cannot associate with one another, must themselves have some capacity for association (*dunata epikoinonein*) with other general types, including particularly *being* itself (251d – 252d). All of those who discuss being and becoming, the Visitor argues, are forced in their very statements to “use *being* about everything, and also *separate, from others, of itself*, and a million other things” (252c). Even those who hold that everything is in motion, in using the signifier “is”, thus admit some possibility of the mixing of being and becoming. In this way, they incessantly “link together... in speech” the various types and attributes determinative of objects and phenomena, and so concretely exhibit the actual mixing and combination of these types.

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<sup>2</sup> “*to gar auto noein estin te kai einai*” (Diels and Kranz, Fr. 3; quoted in Clement, *Stromateis*, VI, 23 and Plotinus, V, I, 8); both the translation and the textual provenance of the remark are controversial. See Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, second ed., (Cambridge U. Press, 1983), p. 246.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* 371: “*Essence is expressed in grammar.*”

Since it is untenable to suppose either that all of the types or elements mix with one another or that none do, it is necessary to recognize the existence of a broader structural determination of the actual possibilities of mixing, and of a specific type of art, or expertise, capable of discerning these possibilities and relationships:

Visitor: Since some will blend and some won't, they'll be a good deal like letters of the alphabet. Some of them fit together with each other and some don't.

Theaetetus: Of course.

Visitor: More than the other letters the vowels run through all of them like a bond, linking them together, so that without a vowel no one of the others can fit with another.

Theaetetus: Definitely.

Visitor: So does everyone know which kinds of letters can associate with which, or does it take an expert?

Theaetetus: It takes an expert.

Visitor: What kind?

Theaetetus: An expert in grammar. (253a)

As is the case, similarly, with the capacity to combine high and low notes to produce pleasing harmonies, the *techne* (or expertise) of grammar requires a specific kind of knowledge (*episteme*) of the capacity of some kinds to blend and others to refuse such combination. This is a knowledge, according to the Visitor, proceeding through *logos* and allowing the possibility of recognizing those types or elements that run through everything else. It involves a singular knowledge of the number and relationships of the forms; such knowledge, the Visitor suggests, may in fact be that characteristic of the philosopher, the knowledge that "free people have" (253c). According to the Visitor, it is in fact none other than the science (*episteme*) of dialectic:

Visitor: Aren't we going to say that it takes expertise in dialectic to divide things by kinds and not to think that the same form is a different one or that a different form is the same?

Theaetetus: Yes.

Visitor: So if a person can do that, he'll be capable of adequately discriminating a single form spread out all through a lot of other things, each of which stands separate from the others. In addition he can discriminate forms that are different from each other but are included within a single form that's outside them, or a single form that's connected as a unit throughout many wholes, or many forms that are completely separate from others. That's what it is to know how to discriminate by kinds how things can associate and how they can't. (253c-d).

Through his special technical understanding of the possibilities for the mixing and separation of forms, the dialectician is thus able to see clearly, using reasoning [*logismon*], in particular, to “stay near the form, being.” Here, the philosopher is difficult to discern, according to the Visitor, because of its intrinsic brightness of this place [*khora*] (254a); nevertheless, the Visitor here suggests that this particular *techne* of discerning the combination and separation of forms is the proper art of the philosopher as opposed to the sophist and that, with respect in particular to the “great types” or genres, reasoning about their structure of possible combination and difference will amount to reasoning fully about them, at least as far as the particular method thereby suggested will allow.

The dialectical method, as the Visitor then develops it, bears a specific relation to the possibility of a *counting* of the most general types of being, as well as of being and non-being themselves in relation to what they characterize. In particular, a brief elucidation of the structure of mixing and separation among the “most important” types leads the Visitor to identify the five great types of *being, rest, motion, identity* and *difference*. Difference, in particular, “permeates them all” in allowing each to distinguish itself from the others. Motion, in particular, is “other than being” in that it is different from being; with respect to motion, thus, “non-being is” (256d), although as has been shown, motion also takes part or participates in being. In fact, this consideration holds generally; in “each of the types” difference is operative to make them “other than being, and therefore non-being.” This allows the Visitor to specify the duality of being and non-being, with respect to what each characterizes, as the problematic relation between a *multiplicity* and an *infinitude*: “And so, in relation to each of the [ideas], being is many, and not-being is infinite in number.” (256e). Thus the realm of the possible application of the dialectician’s art, that of counting the types of being by discerning the ideas, is here set off against the indefiniteness or *apeiron* character of non-being; it is in this infinitude of non-being that the synthetic/diaeretic technique of the dialectic reaches the specific limit of its capacity to discern forms.

It is here that one might begin to suspect that, if the Visitor goes on to specify the very possibility of a real appearance of non-being in the *psuedos logos* as dependent upon a constitutive mixing of the great type of difference with that of being, the solution results only from the suppression and transformation of a different and deeper problematic of genesis enveloping and directing, as if from a subterranean site, the whole positive conception of the specific possibilities of the “mixing” of forms as well as the Visitor’s account of the dialectical *techne* that analyzes and counts them.<sup>4</sup> This problematic is the one to which Plato obscurely gestures elsewhere in invoking the possibly Pythagorean dualism of the limited and unlimited, or in pointing to the principle of an *aoristos duas* (the “indeterminate dyad”) in

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Gilles Deleuze: “By rising to the surface, the simulacrum makes the Same and the Similar, the model and the copy, fall under the power of the false (phantasm). It renders the order of participation, the fixity of distribution, the determination of the hierarchy impossible...Far from being a new foundation, it engulfs all foundations, it assures a universal breakdown (effondrement), but as a joyful and positive event, as an un-founding (effondement)... How would Socrates be recognized in these caverns, which are no longer his? With what thread, since the thread is lost? How would he exist from them, and how could he still distinguish himself from the Sophist?” (*The Logic of Sense*, transl. by Mark Lester and Charles Stivale, ed. by Constantin V. Boundas (New York, Columbia U. Press, 1969), p. 263).

ceaselessly producing and unfolding difference in opposition to the unifying force of the One or monad.<sup>5</sup> For if non-being is here indicated in passing as the specific place of the *apeiron*, then the limited mixing that allows difference to be fixed as a type and to make possible, on the Visitor's official theory, the specific variety of non-being that appears in the Sophist's *psuedos logos*, in fact stands over against an obscure domain of the *unlimited as such* that threatens to destroy the very possibility of the coherent *logos* itself.<sup>6</sup> Here, difference can no longer be fixed as a determinate type and there is no longer any possibility of "discriminating by kinds;" rather, behind the "official" duality of *stasis* and *kinesis* as types (mediated and allowed to combine by the third type of difference and the logical *koinonion* that in makes possible in general) there appears a deeper and more problematic duality for which there is no third term.

The deeper problem here glimpsed is thus, beyond that of the specifically sophistical *pseudos logos*, that of the very possibility of the *logos* as such, as well as of that knowledge of it, in singular relation to the forms, of which the philosopher is characteristically capable. In fact, the structure of limited mixing and separation whose discernment is the specific competence of the philosopher is also singularly connected, as the Visitor goes on to explain, to the structure of the *logos* in the everyday sense of that of the sentence or assertion. In particular, since anyone who wishes to discourse about being necessarily involves himself in an articulated, sentential structure of statement, those who separate all things from everything else wind up denying the coherence of discourse itself. In this sense, it is the "weaving together of forms" that makes *logos* (in the sense of speech) possible for us at all. The capacity of forms and types to mix or separate themselves from one another is thus the inherent precondition for the possibility not only of philosophy but also of ordinary discourse itself; without this doubly logical structure of the combination of forms in themselves and in the unity of an ordinary discourse which reflects them in everyday sentences and claims, it would be impossible to speak coherently about anything and the very possibility of meaning would be destroyed.

The twofold relationship thereby asserted between the relational structure of the forms, as available to the philosopher possessing the grammatical *techne* of dialectic, and the underlying structure at the root of the coherence of ordinary discourse significantly inaugurates the project of a *logical analysis of language* capable of seeing in the characteristic structures of ordinary speech the implicit or presupposed structure of the ultimate types definitive of the thought and knowledge of being in itself. Though chronologically preceding what is usually recognized as the first development of "formal logic" in Aristotle's syllogisms, this twofold conception points to a more original conception of what can already be called *logical form*. In this more original Platonic conception, what is at issue is not an abstractable structure of argument that can be filled by various contingent materials, but the original

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<sup>5</sup> The phrase does not appear in Plato's *corpus* and is known chiefly from secondary reports of Plato's views by Aristotle and other commentators. See, e.g. Geoffery Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved* (Parmenides Publishing, 2005), pp. 76-78 and 96-97.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Philebus* 15d: "...it is through discourse [logos] that the same thing flits around, becoming one and many in all sorts of ways..." and 16c-d (quoted below). Sayre (*Plato's Late Ontology*, pp. 122-124) notes that while there is a close resemblance between the latter passage in the *Philebus* (in the voice of Socrates) and the description of the method of collection and division in the *Sophist* (in the voice of the Visitor), the major and glaring difference is the prominence of the theme of the *apeiron* in the *Philebus* passage.

connection that Plato sees between the discursive logos as such and the philosopher or dialectician's knowledge of the possible combination and separation of the ideas.<sup>7</sup> This conception, as it is developed by the Visitor's argument in the *Sophist*, points to an original solution to the problem of the relationship already invoked by Socrates in his search for an account or definition for each of the various properties or ideas into which he inquires: the problem, in other words, of the relationship between the definitional *logos* and the *eidos* it picks out or to which it points. As we have seen, in insisting upon a real basis of the *logos* in the life and temporality of the embodied soul, the Stranger points to a basis of the possible knowledge of being in the dynamic logical capacity of the soul to gather diverse types into the unity of a rational discourse. The suggestion anticipates, among other things, the project of a logical investigation of the structural form of the *assertoric or predicative sentence* thought as capable of discerning what is obscurely involved in the predicative form as such.

This original conception of the link between the logical structure of sentences and forms leads the Visitor to articulate what has been seen as the first significant conception of the grammatical structure of a *predicative* sentence in the entirety of the Western tradition. Specifically, (261e-262c) a sentence is a combination of names and verbs; it is no more possible for a series of mere names to come together to form a significant sentence than it is for a series of verbs to do so. Rather, someone who utters a simple sentences such as "man learns" puts together a noun with a verb; in so doing, he "gives an indication [*deloi*] about [*peri*] what is, or comes to be, or has come to be, or is going to be." (262d) Such an indication does not simply consist in naming either things or actions; instead, the "weaving together" of names and verbs into a sentence constitutes what is itself an accomplishment, that of *saying something*. As with the earlier example of letters, and the possible combination of forms that it illustrates, the discernment of the specific combinatorial possibilities of these elements thus makes possible the very structure of the logos itself, the possibility of saying or asserting rather than simply naming. And it is this structure, as well, which establishes that every sentence must be *about something* [*tinis*]; formed by the combination of a significant subject or name for an object and the sign for an action, the sentence as such thus has the articulate structure of *saying something about something*. It is through this capacity that it is finally possible for a *logos* to be false; in particular, a false logos says about its subject something *other* than what is (263a-b).<sup>8</sup> As thought [*dianoia*] is actually a kind of "silent inner dialogue" [*dialogos*] of the soul with itself, it is thereby possible for falsehood and illusion actually to occur in thought and in the language that expresses it, and for the formidable problem of the being of the Sophist as the purveyor of falsehoods finally to be resolved.

The Eleatic visitor thus finds the solution to the vexing Parmenidean problem of the possibility of saying and thinking non-being in the power or capacity of a living *psyche* to produce the co-presence of the logos through the dynamic *synthesis* of the "great types", including *being* and *difference*, in communication with the overarching structure of their possible articulated combination or mixing. The point of this communication, which forces the positions of both the materialist and the friends of the

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<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, "form" should be taken as a translation of "*eidos*" rather than "*morphe*", here.

<sup>8</sup> Plato's formulation here closely anticipates the famous "definition" of truth and falsehood that Aristotle gives at *Metaphysics* 4, 1011b, in the course of a defense of the universality of the principle of non-contradiction: "To say that what is is not, or that what is not is, is false; but to say that what is is, and what is not is not, is true..."



forms to admit the possibility of the combination of being and change, is the capacity of such a living soul to know or understand being as it is in itself. For the visitor, this capacity is moreover itself a *logical* one; it is achieved only on the structural basis of the specific structure of the *logos* as the predicative combination of subject and predicate, and through the possibility of appropriately combining the “great types” that this permits. The *topic* of the standing structural capacities of the types to mix with and separate themselves from one another is thus revealed as the superior place of a specifically logical *a priori* capable of dominating both words and objects, open to the philosopher as a practitioner of dialectic but also capable of dominating and determining the meaningful everyday discourse that it structures and constitutes.

The Visitor’s rigorously developed solution to the specific problem of the Sophist thus points to two more general problematics of logic and sense, characteristic of the development of reflection on linguistic meaning up to the present. The first is the problem of the nature of *predication*, of the specific structure of sentences, propositions, assertions or judgments, such that something is said, asserted, or judged of or about something else. The second is the problem of linguistic *intentionality*, or of the link between speech and the external reality that it characterizes, describes, denotes, or refers to. Both problems are discussed, in the *Sophist*, as problems specifically about the structure of the *logos* as such; but both are also properly “ontological” in being addressed specifically to the Parmenidean problem of non-being, to which the Visitor’s argument responds. Both problematics are not only directly tied to the question of linguistic sense, but also articulated at the point at which this question communicates with the ontological problem of the sense or meaning of being as such. The first does so in pointing to what is later thought (by Aristotle) as the “copula,” the synthesis of subject and predicate, or the logical/predicative synthesis that links subjective ideas or representations in the synthetic *unity* of a judgment. The second raises the question of the basis of the relationship through which thought or language has access to the real, and thus of the very possibility of truth.

Whether or not the Stranger’s solution can be considered adequate in addressing these problems, it is significant for their subsequent development that the Stranger determines the ultimate basis of linguistic sense in the superior structure of an *a priori* connection whose privileged temporal medium is the life of the rational psyche, or the capacities of the *living being* capable of specifically *logical speech and thought*. Such a conception of the superior structural basis of the logical form of language and life looks back, from Plato, to the enigmatic remark by Heraclitus in which the imperative of a “common” identified with the *logos* is counterpoised to the privacy or idiosyncrasy that is the characteristic assumption of the many:

Therefore it is necessary to follow the common [*koino*]; but although the Logos is common the many live as though they had a private understanding.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, it looks forward to a problematic of the relationship of logical forms to the commonality of a shared life that is as broadly representative of 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy in its inquiry

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<sup>9</sup> Diels and Kranz, Fragment 2; quoted in Sextus, *adv. Math* VII, 133, translated in Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, p. 187. Kirk, Raven and Schofield note that Heraclitus probably used *zunos* instead of *koinos*, but that the former is simply the usual “epic and Ionic” formulation of the same concept.

into the logic of language and is as pressing today as it was already for Plato. Within this inquiry in both its “analytic” and phenomenological/ontological forms, the question that arises repeatedly and decisively determines methods, considerations, and results, is that of the particular mode of the relationship of the *logical form of language* to the *facticity of a life*. As such, it is the question in the ultimate horizon of which it is possible to envision a joint contemporary inheritance of the methodological and problematic legacy of an analytic inquiry into the specific rational structure of language and that of an ontological inquiry into the structure and meaning of being.

## II

Martin Heidegger’s discussion of the “battle of gods and giants” over being, in his comprehensive Marburg lecture course of 1924-25 devoted to the interpretation of Plato’s *Sophist*, comes just after he briefly discusses the remark of the Visitor which he would use, roughly 2 years later, as the epigraph for *Being and Time*:

For manifestly [*delon*] you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the expression “being”. We, however, who used to think we understood it, have now become perplexed.<sup>10</sup>

The remark, in its original context, is addressed to Parmenides and all those who have earlier attempted a “critical” definition [*epi krisin...diorisasthai*] of the number and types of beings [*ta onta*] (242c).<sup>11</sup> These predecessors, the Visitor avers, have been “careless,” and have told stories [*mython*] as if to children rather than considering whether their arguments [*legousin*] can genuinely be followed out. In particular, Heidegger suggests, in aiming to deal with being, they have instead told stories about beings or particular things, actually only explaining beings in terms of beings; thus they have “moved naively in the dimension of beings” and thereby failed to enter into the “dimension of the *Being* of beings.”<sup>12</sup> , all of those who have tried to explain being by counting the types of the most proper beings, including monists like Parmenides himself as well as those who hold that being is to be explained in terms of a duality or plurality of principles, have necessarily invoked, in so doing, the specific structure of *legein*, the saying or speaking. In so doing they have already, according to Plato as Heidegger understands him, also invoked “something else” that is “co-said” in *all* *legein*, or in all speaking about beings, insofar as the *logos* itself includes the possibility of its own saying as a constitutive and implicit moment. And this “something else” is, Heidegger says, “no less than Being itself” (p. 446). It is thus that the Visitor comes to pose in a radical fashion the question of what is really meant by the sign “Being,” which all those who discourse about beings and their structure ceaselessly presuppose.

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<sup>10</sup> Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 19te. Auflage (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), p. 1 [henceforth: S&Z] (Translated as: *Being and Time*, transl. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Harper San Francisco, 1962).

<sup>11</sup> Παρμενίδης ἡμῖν διειλέχθαι καὶ πᾶς ὅστις πῶποτε ἐπὶ κρίσιν ὥρμησε τοῦ τὰ ὄντα διορίσασθαι πόσα τε καὶ ποῖά ἐστιν.

<sup>12</sup> Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes* (GA 19), herausg. von Ingeborg Schübler (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1992) [henceforth: PS], p. 441. Translated by Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer as *Plato’s Sophist* (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 2003). (pagination as in German text).

In particular, Parmenides and the Eleatics propose the hypothesis "*en to pan*," all is one (244b). Heidegger suggests that we can summarize Parmenides' principle with the slightly different formulation "en on to pan," or "all that is, is one" (though precisely this latter formulation does not occur in the text at this point). With respect to the hypothesis thus understood, according to Heidegger, Plato's demonstration does not have the goal of simply disputing the hypothesis but of showing that in it "there resides a moment which reaches beyond its own proper sense." (p. 453) The hypothesis raises the problem of the signification of the *name* "being" in relation to what it signifies. At 244d11-12, invoking a problematic that is more fully developed in the dialogue *Parmenides* itself, the Visitor states an inherent dilemma involved in assuming "being" to have such a signification within the scope of the Parmenidean hypothesis of the *en on to pan*, that being is one. The dilemma is that admission of a *name* of being, in addition to what is named itself, already requires that *there are at least two*, and not only one, as the hypothesis apparently requires. Far from being a mere sophistical problem, according to Heidegger, the problem in fact concerns the very structure of the *logos* as *legein ti*, or as a saying of something "about something". The fact that every *logos* is a *legein ti*, that every *logos* is about something, here means that the hypothesis, as a *logos* about being, says of being that it is one. Thus the Visitor's consideration shows that, with respect to the number of being, in Parmenides' hypothesis itself "there is already given a whole series of phenomena, a multiplicity of characteristics of Being" (p. 461).<sup>13</sup> Though the articulation of these characters by the Visitor continues to involve, according to Heidegger, "essential unclarities ... residing in the matter itself" (p. 459) nevertheless, the elaboration of these unclarities points to a "univocal basis of ontological questioning, in which the Greek [ontological questioning] is included and hence can come alive..." (p. 460).<sup>14</sup>

Heidegger accordingly suggests that the Visitor's inquiry as to what is meant by the word "being" [on] captures the "genuinely central concern ... of the whole dialogue" (pp. 446-447); this, in particular, is the concern to *prepare* the ground for a possible ontology by posing in a radical fashion the question of the meaning of Being by interrogating the specific relation of the meaning of the *term* "being" in relation to the *logos* that articulates it. The continued trenchancy of the questioning for ontological investigation rests much more, according to Heidegger, in the specific *problematic* it sets up than in any actual solution given by Plato or the Visitor; in particular, "to raise the question of the meaning of Being does not mean anything else than to elaborate the questioning involved in philosophy in general." (p. 448) This question, Heidegger additionally says, "must provide guidance as to the possible meaning in any concrete question about the particular ontological structure of various beings" (pp. 448). As such, the questioning itself both requires and involves an "elaboration... of the *ground* on which the interrogation [*Befragen*] of beings as to their Being is at all possible." (p. 448)

In elaborating such a ground, the questioning involved in the Visitor's challenge to his predecessors in fact itself, Heidegger suggests, already amounts, even simply as a questioning, to a "determinate discovering and disclosing" of the specific possibility of questioning regarding the Being of beings (p. 448). The nature of what is thereby disclosed emerges in the course of the Visitor's questioning directed toward the partisans of materialism and those of the forms. The materialists, in particular, understand

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<sup>13</sup> Transl. slightly modified.

<sup>14</sup> Transl. slightly modified.

“body” and “material thing” to signify the same as *ousia* (or “being” in the sense of the (nominalized) present participle of the verb *einai*) (246a-b), holding that everything is constantly in motion and becoming. The friends of forms, by contrast, identify *ousia* with *eidos*, privileging the static form or idea as that which is most genuinely or substantially real. In having to admit the existence of *phronesis* in the actual living soul, the materialists necessarily admit a more general basis in the structure of the soul for the possibility of combination of the visible with the intelligible. This more general basis is the *dunamis* which, the Visitor suggests to the materialist, might thus be taken as the basic structure of everything that is. For the formalists, by contrast, true being, which is understood as *stasis*, is known only through thought and reasoning; nevertheless, the reality of knowledge as a capacity of the soul again forces the adherent of the position to acknowledge a more general possibility of combination or being-with-one another.

Heidegger suggests that the common form of this solution, for both parties, directly captures Plato’s own solution to the difficult problem of the communion of change and becoming with stasis:

Being itself, then, will mean for Plato, if he is to make both these positions intelligible, *dunamis*, as *the possibility of co-presence with something* [*Möglichkeit zur Mit-Anwesenheit bei etwas*], in short *dunamis koinonias*, or in a fuller determination, *parousia dunameos koinonias*, factual occurrence of the possibility of being with one another [*Vorhandensein der Möglichkeit zum Miteinandersein*]...This concept of *dunamis koinonias*, as the possibility of being with one another, is the focus of Plato’s entire ensuing discussion. (p. 486)

In particular, in proceeding from the two positions discussed to the discernment of a characteristic unified phenomenon, Plato (according to Heidegger) identifies the possibility of knowledge as a “particular *koinonia*”. This *koinonia* “includes, in the first place, a connection, a companionship, of the *psyche*, of *nous*, with the *eide*, i.e. a being of *genesis* with that of the *aei on*.” (p. 487)<sup>15</sup> According to this solution, in particular, “the soul is the being in which we can see that in fact stasis is co-present with movement.” (p. 552).

In this way, according to Heidegger, Plato solves the original problem that is at issue between the two parties in the battle, the problem of the relationship of what moves and changes with static being, of *kinesis* with the *aei on*. But the issue that is thereby resolved itself presupposes, ontologically considered, another problem also at issue between the two parties, at least implicitly: that of the proper “mode of access to what authentically possesses Being” (p. 467).<sup>16</sup> Although this question is not, according to Heidegger, formulated explicitly in the course of Plato’s questioning, it is nevertheless presupposed in that both parties approach the question of the nature of Being by asking what mode of access is most appropriate to what most genuinely is, i.e. whether it is *aesthesis* (or sense-perception) directed toward bodies or *noein* (thinking) directed toward forms that gives the most direct access to genuine beings as they are in themselves. In this way, the question of access at issue between the materialists and the formalists formulates the specific and noteworthy requirement that “...the meaning of Being is ...dependent upon the possibility that beings can be encountered by a being which possesses

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<sup>15</sup> Transl. slightly modified.

<sup>16</sup> Transl. slightly modified.

something like the present [*so etwas wie Gegenwart*] in general” (p. 468). But what is shown in the way Plato poses in placing exactly this requirement on the form of an account of the proper mode of access to genuine beings, according to Heidegger, is the inexplicit but guiding presupposition of a specific understanding of the meaning of Being [*ousia*], which guides not only Plato’s questioning but the whole ontological problematic of the Greeks:

This meaning of Being does not naturally lie in the light of the day but instead can be understood explicitly only by means of a subsequent interpretation. The meaning of Being implicitly guiding [Greek] ontology is Being=presence [*Sein=Anwesenheit*]. The Greeks did not get this meaning of Being from just anywhere, they did not just invent it, but rather it is the one borne by life itself, by factual Dasein, insofar as all human Dasein is interpretative [*Auslegendes ist*], interprets itself as well as everything that is a being in whatever sense. In this interpretation there is operative [*lebendig ist*] an implicit sense of Being. And indeed the Greeks drew their implicit sense of Being out of the natural immediate interpretation of Being by factual Dasein, where Being means to be there already at the very outset [*im vorhinein schon da sein*] as possession, household, property [*Anwesen*] – put more sharply: as presence [*Anwesenheit*]. We will make use of this meaning of Being (which we ourselves first make visible, although of course we cannot discuss it further in this context), namely Being=presence, because *in it lies concealed [beschlossen liegt] the whole problem of time and consequently the problem of the ontology of Dasein.* (p. 467)<sup>17</sup>

The problem posed in the battle of gods and giants thus captures in a very specific way the problem of the ultimate basis of the being of beings as it connects with the problem of time. In particular, according to Heidegger, the problem of the meaning of Being in general here appears specifically as the problem of the most proper mode of access to being in itself, a problem that is already posed with the admission, made by both parties to the battle, that the soul’s knowledge of being is in some way possible. The solution points, according to Heidegger, to what is actually “what today we would call a *consideration of essence [Wesensbetrachtung] or a knowledge of the apriori;*” (p. 342)<sup>18</sup> that is, in locating the specific possibility of a combination of stasis and kinesis in the structure of the soul Plato develops what is actually an original account of the possibility of *a priori* knowledge, which is now treated, Heidegger notes, in the phenomenological theory of eidetic knowledge.

Although Heidegger urges that this solution, in Plato, should not be understood as a subjectivist one or as dependent upon a distinction between what is “immanent” and what is “transcendent” to the soul so conceived, it nevertheless depends, according to Heidegger, on Plato’s assumption that “the grasping of the apriori resides on the same level as the grasping of the ontical in general” (p. 495); in particular, the factual and substantial existence of the *psyche*, as the basis for the possible combination of the essential types of *stasis* and *kinesis*, is here invoked as the basis for the possibility of knowledge of being as such. This leaves open, according to Heidegger, the actual character of eidetic knowledge, which is “connected to the general problem of Being” and to the “question of how something in general can be

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<sup>17</sup> Transl. slightly modified.

<sup>18</sup> Transl. slightly modified.

prior to something else and what this particular order of priority means.” (p. 495) However, for Plato himself, the priority of the *a priori* and the whole possibility that the soul’s synthetic capacities indeed touch on the knowledge of being, depends further on the specific relation of the soul to the structure of *logos*. This is necessary in order to explain how the dynamic capacity of the soul grounds the possibility of a knowledge of being, and how such a capacity underlies the further possibility of designating non-being as well.

In particular, the consideration that being can be called by many names (251a) leads Theaetetus and the Visitor directly to consider the *koinonia* that is needed for access to being and non-being, not only in terms of the structure of the soul, but also as a “*koinonia* within *logos* itself” (p. 500). It is in fact impossible, according to Plato as Heidegger reads him, to deny the actuality of this commonality, which is shown by the specific possibilities of ultimate types to mix as well as differentiate themselves from one another. For as the Visitor emphasizes, those who discourse about being constantly presuppose the specific capacities of types to mix or refuse mixing; in so doing, they already in fact implicitly invoke “a whole theory of Being” (p. 515). In other words, for Plato, “in the *logos*-structure as such, determinate moments of beings, determinate formal-ontological structures, are co-said.” (p. 515).<sup>19</sup> Drawing the formal and methodological analogy to the *grammata* or basic elements of language, Plato considers these types, according to Heidegger, as those knowable beings which have, among all others “those which have the fundamental privilege of universal presence” and thus, since Being is here interpreted as presence, as beings with the “privileged rank” of that which is “always already, in advance, present in all beings.” (p. 520). The “structural manifold” [*Gebildmannigfaltigkeit*] (p. 584) of *eide* thus modeled by the logical structure of grammar provides Plato, according to Heidegger, with a solution to the problem of the accessibility of the structural combinations of ideas on the basis of the spoken *logos* as well as, in that there are specific elements that are pervasively and eternally present throughout everything else, an answer to the problem of the possibility of knowledge insofar as this problem is a problem of being (Heidegger here mentions the analogy drawn in the *Theaetetus* of the soul to a dovecote, saying it expresses essentially the “same phenomenon”).

As a specification of this general structure of correspondence between the dynamic *koinon* within the soul and the “*koinon* of the *logos*” which itself makes the knowledge of being, in general, possible, Plato additionally discerns in the structure of *legein* as such, according to Heidegger, the very basis of the relationship of *intentionality* between thought and its object. Specifically, as the Visitor notes, every *legein* is a *legein ti*; every saying is a saying of or about something. In recognizing this “basic fact of *legein*”, according to Heidegger, Plato discovers the “...basic structure...of every human comportment and in general of the comportment of every living thing that is with and to something in the sense of Being [*das ist im Sinne des Seins bei und zu etwas*]” which contemporary phenomenology calls “intentionality.” (p. 424).<sup>20</sup> The discovery represents a “fundamental insight into *logos*,” one that later becomes “decisive for the entire further history of logic” (p. 597). The specific phenomenon of the *legein ti*, moreover, as a relation “pertaining to the living being with respect to its very Being” (p. 424) has the significance of exposing the “genuine constitution of the possible uncoveredness

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<sup>19</sup> Transl. slightly modified.

<sup>20</sup> Transl. slightly modified.

[*Aufgedecktheit*] of something addressed” and “what in general is said in a *legein* as something said.” (p. 597). Although Plato does not further develop the “genuinely ontological problematic” thereby invoked, the discovery of the *legein ti* thus points, according to Heidegger, to the general structure of being through which it is possible for anything to become unconcealed or phenomenally revealed through a saying or *logos*.

In this respect, according to Heidegger, Plato’s conception of the *logos* as a combination of subject and verb as well as his conception of the *legein ti* as a particular combination or mode of co-presence of the sentence and its intentional object together in fact point back to a more original phenomenon of indication or revealing whereby, as the visitor says, a *logos reveals (deloi)* “the presence of beings or of non-beings” (*ousian ontos kai me ontos*) (262c; p. 593). This more “fundamental” phenomenon, according to Heidegger, is not simply an aspect or outcome of the spoken sentence as such; rather, it is in fact the “primary” phenomenon which harbors the very possibility of discourse to begin with. (p. 594). In particular, Heidegger urges, the capacity of the sentence to disclose or reveal is not somehow the result of a synthesis or combination *into* a sentence of words of various types which are themselves already equipped with disclosive meaning; rather, it is on the basis of the more fundamental phenomenon of *deloun* (revealing) that words can first be grasped as something beyond mere sounds at all. If, then, words are combined into the unified discourse of a *logos*, the “criterion for the unity” of such a *logos* remains their capacity of *disclosing* “the unity of the possible object of the disclosure.” (p. 595). Specifically, at 262e, the Visitor understands a sentence as the result of “combining a thing and an action,” (*pragma praxeis*), or in other words as the combination of a noun [*onoma*] (a sign for a thing) and a verb [*rhema*] (a sign for an action or type of action). According to Heidegger, though, insofar as the sentence is thus a combination of indications, the capacity of the sentence to indicate is: “not the *result* of their composition, but, on the contrary, the *koinonia* of *onoma* and *rhema* is possible at all only because *legein* in itself is a *deloun*.” (p. 596). This does not simply point to a synthesis, but to a more original unity of what is *indicated* in the *logos* as the “proper object of the discourse” which, as Heidegger emphasizes, remains elusive and difficult to capture even today. For as Heidegger emphasizes, “we have no appropriate expressions,” even today, for this peculiar unity of *pragma* and *praxis* that is discovered by Plato but which is nevertheless not, Heidegger insists, “fixed appropriately by Aristotle’s later attempt to do so in relation to the criterion of time.” (p. 595).

With this specific conception of the *logos* as a synthesis of signs and of the *psyche* as the substantial basis for the capacity dynamically to achieve such a synthesis, Plato, according to Heidegger, thus develops a specifically “logical” understanding of the sense of Being, dependent upon the interpretation of Being as presence, which obscures and precludes a more “original” understanding of the ontological structure of presencing. In particular, Plato, as we have seen, proposes to solve the problem of the possibility of knowing being and the underlying problem of temporality to which it points by invoking the dynamic life of the soul as the substantive basis for an interlinked series of logical manifolds in whose linkage or communication in the structural configuration of the *logos*, both in terms of the individual sentence and the larger possibilities of “what can coherently be said” as such, provides the ultimate basis for the intelligibility of beings and any possible knowledge of being in itself. In a summary

formation, Heidegger links this series of manifolds to what is, according to him, the basic determination of the nature of the human animal for the Greeks:

It is no accident that ...Plato refers to this double structural manifold, of *eide* and of *grammata*. ...The structural manifolds are therefore not juxtaposed, isolated realms but instead stand in an intrinsic substantive *koinonia*: the matters at issue, what is properly visible in them, word, word-sound – beings, world, disclosure [*Aufgeschlossenheit*] of beings, discourse, manifestation. This is nothing else than the universal context of phenomena within which man, the *zoon logon echon*, ever exists. This context is ultimately grounded in Being-in, in the antecedent uncoveredness [*Entdecktheit*] of the world. (p. 585)

In particular, according to Heidegger, the specific structure of the *psyche* as a substantial basis for the combination in co-presence of ideas and logically differentiated types allows for the very possibility of the soul possessing knowledge of being in itself; this combination in co-presence itself has its specific basis in the *dunamis* or capacity for logical combination or synthesis that also shows up, in the traditional “definition” of man, as the living being’s “possession” of the specific structure of *logos* or speech. This possession of the *logos*, and hence Plato’s overarching determination of the possibility of some relation of thought to being, is itself grounded, as Heidegger emphasizes, in a specific conception of the temporality and life of this being as such, what Plato thinks as the being of the *psyche* and its *dunamis* or capacity for logical synthesis.

Plato thus ultimately gives, on Heidegger’s reading, what can be called (in an anachronistic but nevertheless accurate sense) a *psychologistic* theory of being and truth. In particular, it is, for Plato as Heidegger reads him, the temporal capacity of the soul dynamically to synthesize logical elements in actually speaking and thinking that ultimately accounts for the sense and meaning of being in itself, insofar as it is thinkable or knowable. The temporal contact of the *psyche* with the larger structural possibilities established by the (presumably timeless) pre-eminently existing types is itself guaranteed by this dynamic structure of the *psyche* as the capacity for combining them into a thinkable *logos*. This dynamic capacity of the soul as capacity for appropriate combination is itself structurally linked, in turn, to the philosopher or dialectician’s privileged technique of discerning the ideas through the study of their logico-grammatical interrelationships. The underlying structural basis for all of these connections between the *psyche*’s capacity to produce intelligibility in the form of the *logos* and the logical structure of being in itself is the intercommunicating series of *koinonia*, or commons, that Plato thus sees in the capacities of the *psyche*, the structure of the predicative sentence, and the intentional relation between sentences and their objects. All of these are linked together, for Plato, in the notion of a *logical/ontological co-presence* that preserves meaning and ensures seamless communication among the different orders of the psychic, the material, and the ideal; the ultimate basis of this co-presence is the manifold *koinon* (or common) of the *logos* itself. From a more penetrating ontological perspective, this assumption of co-presence is open to interrogation by means of an original investigation of the phenomenon of presencing itself. This leads Heidegger to critically challenge the underlying assumption of the unity of presence among ideas, their representation in signs, and the capacities of the soul for rational thought that Plato assumes under the heading of a presumably unified *logos* modeled on the synthetic structure he sees in the logical/grammatical form of the predicative sentence as such.



Both parts of this critique of Plato's psychologism – that which interrogates the being of the psyche as the substantial nexus for the production of co-presence in synthesis and that which interrogates the structural/synthetic conception of logical form that permits and supports this production – are equally essential to generating the broader critique of the “logical tradition” of the West, along the guideline of the radicalized questioning of the sense of being, that Heidegger announces in *Being and Time*. In particular, if this critique necessarily takes the form of a deconstructive interpretation of ancient ontology on the more original basis of the problematic of temporality (p. 25), it engages in particular the ancient determination of Dasein as the *zoon logon echon* or as “that living thing whose Being is essentially determined by the possibility of discourse.” (p. 25) For this conception as it unfolds in the subsequent development of the Western tradition according to Heidegger, the being of the *psyche* enjoys a recurrently marked priority in the description of the ultimate basis of meaning and truth; thus for Aristotle, the soul “is, in a certain way, all things,” and Aquinas the “distinctive entity” that is the soul (*anima*) is “properly suited to come together with’ entities of any sort whatever” in such a way as to produce the possibility of truth and ensure its status as a “transcendental,” something that characterizes any subject matter whatsoever (p. 14).<sup>21</sup>

But the ontological conception that underlies this position depends equally, Heidegger suggests, on taking the presumptively synthetic structure of *logos* and *legein* as “the clue for arriving at those structures of Being which belong to the entities we encounter in addressing ourselves [*Ansprechen*] to anything or speaking about [*Besprechen*] it.” (p. 25) To penetrate beneath this presumptively synthetic structure, it is necessary not only to see it as in fact grounded in a more basic “*apophantical*” structure of disclosure, but also to see that this more original structure, in itself, has nothing to do with the “binding and linking together of representations” or with a “manipulation of psychical occurrences” in an uncertain relation of possible “agreement” with “outside” physical objects (p. 33). In this way, Heidegger's critique of the psychologistic position on truth that originates with Plato's conception of the synthetic logical *koinonia* of the *psyche* dramatically undercuts any conception of truth as correspondence between the psychical and the physical; in particular, the relation of correspondence or “agreement” supposed in such a conception to occur between a psychological representation or judgment and its object or objects is revealed as simply the flattened outcome of the more ontologically basic phenomenon of uncovering or disclosure itself.

Heidegger's critique of the synthetic conception of the *logos* thus motivates the rejection of correspondence theories of truth; but more broadly, it suffices to challenge the priority of any account of the structure of the *logos* as primarily defined by a psychological possibility of combination. If, then, it is possible to question the Visitor's interlinked position on the structure of the psyche, the *logos*, and the specific structure of truth on the basis of a deeper interrogation into the sense of Being and specifically into the problematic of time, this interrogation will unsettle and deconstruct the privilege accorded, in philosophical thinking from Plato to the present, to the fundamental conception of the *dunamis koinonion* in the psyche that makes the *logos*, and hence what is thinkable in being, present for the synthetic capacities of the *zoon logon echon*, the being that speaks and thinks. In particular, as we have seen this synthetic structure is the locus for an interpretation of being as presence that

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<sup>21</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima* 3. 8, 431b21

simultaneously looks two ways: toward the co-presence of representations in the unity of the psyche, and toward the basis of the possibility of this co-presence in what is conceived as the deeper logical/grammatical structure of beings as such. The conception links both unities in an obscure communication or correspondence founded on what is thought as the synthetic structure of the *logos* itself and the particular kind of co-presence it is thought to make possible, the dynamic co-presence of the psyche with the representations in which it traffics. But if, as Heidegger suggests, this synthetic unity and this particular co-presence themselves rest ontologically on the more basic and *essentially non-synthetic* phenomenon of the disclosure of beings, the ontological critique of the visitor's conception also suffices to challenge and deconstruct every conception of the human psychological subject as the privileged bearer of the logical capacity to think and understand beings as such.

If, moreover, the Platonic configuration that Heidegger interrogates in the *Sophist* lectures itself arises specifically in the Visitor's determinate questioning of the Parmenidean hypothesis of the *unity of beings* along the guideline of the *logos* (a hypothesis that articulates the Parmenidean assertion of the 'unity' of thinking and being) then the *logical* problematic thereby elicited retains a priority for Heidegger's deconstruction of metaphysics throughout its whole itinerary. This is so even, and even in a heightened form, after Heidegger's thought undergoes, along with a marked intensification of the problematic of the being of language, the radicalization or "turning" that he specifies in the *Beiträge zur Philosophie* as the move from the "guiding question" of the Being of beings to the historical "grounding question" [Grundfrage] of being's (or 'beyng's') truth.<sup>22</sup> In the altered problematic of the *history of being* to which this leads, the Being of beings is said to be successively "metaphysically" determined according to a series of privileged figures, for instance as *idea*, as *hupokeimenon* and *dunamis*, as *transcendens*, as *cogito* and representing and willing subject, as will to power and technology.<sup>23</sup> Each of these determinations grounds the intelligibility of beings as a whole by essential reference to some particular

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<sup>22</sup> "The question of being is the question of the truth of beyng. When grasped and worked out historically, it becomes the *basic question*, versus the previous question of philosophy, the question of beings (the guiding question)...And yet, if beings *are*, then beyng must occur essentially. But how does beyng occur essentially? And *are* there beings? Out of what else does thinking decide here, if not the truth of beyng? Accordingly, beyng can no longer be thought on the basis of beings but must be inventively thought from itself." *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (GA 65), ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), translated as *Contributions to Philosophy: Of the Event* (transl. by Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana U. Press, 2012), (p. 8). Heidegger uses the archaic spelling "Beyng" (Seyn) to indicate being as it may be thought outside its metaphysical determination as the being of beings. Cf. also my *Philosophy and the Vision of Language*, chapter 7.

<sup>23</sup> The connection of metaphysics with the thought of the totality of beings is already explicit, before the "turn", in Heidegger's 1929 Freiburg inaugural address "What is Metaphysics?" (and develops considerations about "world-view" and totality that go back much earlier, at least to the 1919 "War Emergency Semester" course "The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview.") After the middle 1930s, the attempt to consider beings as a whole becomes the characteristic form of what Heidegger describes as all (onto-theological) metaphysics as such. Compare his statement in the *Beiträge*: "Yet does not philosophy as well, and indeed it above all, claim the 'total,' especially if we define philosophy as knowledge of beings as such and *as a whole*? In fact it does, so long as we are thinking in the form of the previous philosophy (metaphysics) and are taking this philosophy as it was molded by Christianity (by the systematics of German Idealism). It is precisely there, however, that (modern) philosophy is already on the way to 'worldview' (a term which, by no accident, gains ever more validity in the sphere of this 'thinking')." (p. 34). Compare also, "The Age of the World-Picture" in *Off The Beaten Track* (1938).

figure of what is thought as the most essential aspect of their character. Throughout all of these specific determinations, however, the specific structure of metaphysical thinking is visible in its claim to *unify* beings as a whole into a determinate configuration of intelligibility. And according to Heidegger, the specific basis of this claim, through all the various configurations of the metaphysics of the West, is the privilege of the specific structure of the *logos* as the ground and the basis of the thinkability of beings as such.

This privilege of the *logos* throughout the succession of differing metaphysical interpretations of the being of beings is marked in the double hyphenation of what Heidegger specifies in a late (1957) lecture as the “onto-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics.” As Heidegger here explains, metaphysics in its thought of beings as a whole always has a twofold determination, as ontology and theology, uniting the ontological determination of “beings as such in the universal and primordial” with their theological determination in terms of “the highest and ultimate.”<sup>24</sup> But the two kinds of determination of the being of beings (from ‘above’ and from ‘below’) are themselves further linked in the thought of the *unity of being and thinking* that makes possible the intelligibility of beings as a whole for each specific, epochal configuration.

Heidegger finds the basis of this unity, as it is thought throughout Western metaphysics, in the specific structure of the *logos* as a gathering and unification that grounds:

Being manifests itself as thought. This means: the Being of beings reveals itself as the ground that gives itself ground and accounts for itself. The ground, the *ratio* by their essential origin are logos, in the sense of the gathering of beings and letting them be. They are the *En Panta*.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, the two interlinked structures of ontology and theology that together define Western metaphysics have a further and still unthought unity in the structure of the *logos* itself as the grounding basis for the *gathering*, binding, and presentation of beings in the unity of a whole.

Ontology ... and theology are “Logies” 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*. Thus they are more precisely called onto-logic and theo-logic. More rigorously and clearly thought out, metaphysics is onto-theo-logic.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Identity and Difference*, transl. by Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 61. Compare Iain Thomson’s exemplary and perceptive analysis of the “twofold” operation of grounding that is characteristic of ontotheology for Heidegger: “All successful, epoch-grounding metaphysical systems *combine* these two different forms [ontological and theological] of foundationalism, thereby securing our understanding of the being of entities (and so grounding the intelligible order) from *both* the inside out *and* the outside in, microscopically *and* telescopically, floor to ceiling – or, as Heidegger puts it, ontologically *and* theologically, that is, *ontotheologically*.” (Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education*, Cambridge U. Press, 2005), pp. 18-19.

<sup>25</sup> *Identity and Difference*, p. 57.

<sup>26</sup> *Identity and Difference*, p. 59.

Because “metaphysics responds to Being as *logos*,” it is “accordingly in its basic characteristics everywhere logic” and in particular “a logic that thinks of the Being of beings.”<sup>27</sup> In each of the determinate epochal configurations of metaphysics up to the present, the thinkability of beings as a whole in determinate figures of ontological and theological unity is, in fact, itself made possible by the specific grounding unity of the *logos*. In each of these configurations, “logic” is “the name for that kind of thinking which everywhere provides and accounts for the ground of beings as such within the whole in terms of Being as the ground (*logos*).” (p. 59)

If, then, the unifying and grounding character of the *logos* provides an original and pervasive basis for the various determinations of the Being of beings together that are, together, exhaustive of onto-theology, Plato’s thought of logical form as obscurely articulating the specific capacity of combination of logical elements in the soul provides an original determination of the thought of “being as presence” that underlies it. This Platonic figure thinks and grounds the temporality of the logic that links being and beings in the co-presence of the thinkable, according to what it conceives as the adequation between the psychological form of life of the animal possessing the capacity of *logos* and the overarching logical/ontological structure of the forms or types. The unity of this adequation allows being as such, in a figure that for Heidegger is always characteristic of metaphysics, to be determined as the unity of an ontic totality of beings, a thought which forecloses the ontological difference between being and beings and thus determines being as such as the thinkable unity of co-presence toward which Parmenides’ hypothesis – *en on to pan* – originally gestures.

In Heidegger’s historical project, which specifies the matter of thought beyond the closure of the epoch of metaphysics as this difference in itself, the determination of beings from Being itself will no longer be thinkable as any ontic relation of beings to beings. Accordingly, it will no longer be possible to think the basis of the conception of the Being of beings as the logical co-presence of ultimate beings in the soul, as the possibility of their subjective representation in the unity of consciousness, or as the result of the synthetic activity of a constitutive transcendental subjectivity on the basis of an original self-givenness of time. As the “intentional relationship” between subject and world is, here, radicalized into a more ontologically original problematic of unconcealment and disclosure, the logical/metaphysical operation that grounds beings as a whole from the position of an assumed and unquestioned *a priori* deepens into a more basic inquiry into the very temporal structure of ground as the structure of the truth of Being itself. In this deepening, it will no longer be possible to consider the relationship between Being and beings in the figure of a simple limit that bounds and enforces the sense of the totality of beings, theologically and ontologically, from above and below. That there will be no ontic figuration of the limit between Being and beings, except as originary and irreducible difference, means that there is no place from which to draw the line that bounds the metaphysical epoch of presence, unless it be drawn in its own erasure, in the original historical withdrawal of its own definitive trace.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Identity and Difference*, p. 70.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Jacques Derrida: “Since the trace is not a presence but the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates itself, displaces itself, refers itself, it properly has no site – erasure belongs to its structure. And not only the erasure which must always be able to overtake it (without which it would not be a trace but an indestructible and monumental substance), but also the erasure which constitutes it from the outset as a trace, which situates it as

It is in terms of this withdrawal that Heidegger specifies, in *What is Called Thinking?*, the very event of our present:

What must be thought about [*Das Zu-dekende*] turns away from man. It withdraws [*entzieht*] from him. But how can we have the least knowledge of something that withdraws from the beginning, how can we even give it a name? Whatever withdraws, refuses arrival. But – withdrawing [*das Sichentziehung*] is not nothing. Withdrawal is an event [*Entzug ist Ereignis*]. In fact, what withdraws may even concern and claim man more essentially than anything present [*als Alles Anwesende*] that strikes and touches him... The event of withdrawal could be what is most present in all our present, and so infinitely exceed the actuality of everything actual. [*Das Ereignis des Entzugs könnte das Gegenwartigste in allem jetzt Gegenwartigen sein und so die Aktualität alles Aktuellen unendlich ubertreffen.*] (pp. 8-9).

The “infinite” excess of this withdrawal, beyond the metaphysical determination of the “actual” as that, in presence, which is capable of striking and touching us, exerts its claim from the “beyond” of a site whose topology is complex, and that cannot be thought as one of presence, unless it be, as Heidegger says, the place of the very presence of the present. The metaphysical determination that holds beings together as a whole and determines their totality in the figure of a limit, over against the absolute being of the theological transcendent that masters their intelligible sense from above or that of the ontological substrate that supports it from below, thus yields, as I shall argue in the succeeding chapters of this book, to a very different problematic of the limited and the unlimited as such. As I shall argue as well, it is in terms of such a problematic, and what is here specified as the event of withdrawal that it both marks and effaces, that it is alone possible to think the very structure of what the later Heidegger specifies, beyond any ontic figuration, as *Ereignis*, the “event” of Being that opens and closes the epoch of presence as appropriation and disappropriation.

Does, then, a deconstruction of the logical tradition along the guidelines of the problem of time point, in ways both marked and unmarked by Heidegger himself, to a more original problem of the relationship of the finite and the infinite as it both originally determines and subsequently (or even pre-originally) undermines the metaphysical concept of the world as a whole? And if, in this question, the ground of the onto-theo-logical determination of the Being of beings originating with Plato is challenged and unsettled along the guideline of a more penetrating thinking of the ontological difference, do the

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the change of site, and makes it disappear in its appearance, makes it emerge from itself in its production. The erasure of the early trace...of difference is therefore the “same” as its tracing in the text of metaphysics. The latter must have maintained the mark of what it has lost, reserved, put aside. The paradox of such a structure, in the language of metaphysics, is an inversion of metaphysical concepts, which produces the following effect: the present becomes the sign of the sign, the trace of the trace. It is no longer what every reference refers to in the last analysis. It becomes a function in a structure of generalized reference. It is a trace, and a trace of the erasure of the trace.

Thereby the text of metaphysics is *comprehended*. Still legible; and to be read. It is not surrounded but rather traversed by its limit, marked in its interior by the multiple furrow of its margin. Proposing *all at once* the monument and the mirage of the trace, the trace simultaneously traced and erased, simultaneously living and dead, and, as always, living in its simulation of life’s preserved inscription.” (p. 24).

inherent *logical paradoxes of infinite totality* point, at or beyond the closure of the metaphysical epoch of presence, to a deeper logical/temporal problematic of the *inconsistency* of Being as such?

### III

As we have seen, the problematic of thinking and being to which Plato, in the voice of the Visitor, offers the solution of the logical *koinonia* which forms, for Heidegger, the original basis of the subsequent logical thought of the West, is originally the problem of the specific *temporality* of logical thought insofar as it touches on what is thinkable in being itself. In a characteristically trenchant methodological passage in the *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik*, Frege takes up the consequences of precisely the same problematic as it bears on the issue of truth:

For me truth is something objective and independent of those who judge...We can generalize this still further: I recognize a domain of the objective but non-actual, whereas the psychological logicians automatically assume that the non-actual is subjective. And yet it is not at all obvious why what persists independently of anyone's making judgments is actual [*wirklich*], that is, must clearly be capable of acting [*wirken*] directly or indirectly on the senses. Such a connection between the concepts [of objectivity and actuality] is not to be found.

Because the psychological logicians fail to recognize the possibility of the objective non-actual, they take concepts as ideas [*Vorstellungen*] and thereby consign them to psychology. But the true situation asserts itself too powerfully for this easily to be carried through. And thus a vacillation arises in the use of the word 'idea' [*Vorstellung*], appearing at one moment to refer to [*bedeuten*] something that belongs to the mental life of an individual and that combines with other ideas with which it is associated, according to psychological laws, and at the next to something that confronts everyone in the same way, an owner of the idea being neither mentioned nor even merely presupposed. These two uses are incompatible...<sup>29</sup> (pp. 204-205)

The basis of Frege's conception of this specific mode of objectivity of the logically articulated concept, like that of so much else in Frege's thought, is the specific link between logic and truth. In particular, if logic is, as Frege says near the beginning of an 1897 work, "the science of the most general laws of truth," this is because its task lies in saying "what holds with the utmost generality for all thinking, whatever its subject matter;" (p. 228) in this way the "word 'true' can be used to indicate" the goal of logic, as "good" points to the goal of the study of ethics, or "beautiful" that of aesthetics.<sup>30</sup> (p. 227). As Frege suggests in a roughly parallel passage of the late (1918) article "Thought," if "the reference [*Bedeutung*] of the word "true" is spelled out in the logical laws of truth," it is thus accordingly necessary to consider logic as articulating the laws governing *what is* true, rather than "the laws of taking things to be true or of thinking" as a process or activity.<sup>31</sup> It is thus necessary, in order to preserve this definition

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<sup>29</sup> In *The Frege Reader* [subsequently: *FR*] ed. by Michael Beaney (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997)

<sup>30</sup> "Logic" (extract) in *FR*

<sup>31</sup> "Thought" in *FR*, p. 326.

of logic as articulating the laws of truth, to recognize also the privileged link between logic in this sense and being in the sense of *what is*, as opposed to the illusory or false objects of opinion, appearance, or fallible judgment. Recognizing this link is, in turn, sufficient, as Frege says in the *Grundgesetze* passage, to break any presumed link between the being of what is and “actuality” in the sense of the sensible, or of whatever has the capacity to affect or be affected.

A basis for this position can be found in the argument that Frege gives, both in the 1897 “Logic” and in “Thought,” for the conclusion that *truth is indefinable*, and in particular that it cannot be identified with any property, feature, or relationship of objects:

Now it would be futile to employ a definition in order to make it clearer what is to be understood by ‘true’. If, for example, we wished to say ‘an idea is true if it agrees with reality’ nothing would have been achieved, since in order to apply this definition we should have to decide whether some idea or other did agree with reality. Thus we should have to presuppose the very thing that is being defined. The same would hold of any definition of the form ‘A is true if and only if it has such-and-such properties, or stands in such-and-such a relation to such-and-such a thing.’ Truth is obviously something so primitive and simple that it is not possible to reduce it to anything still simpler. Consequently we have no alternative but to bring out the peculiarity of our predicate by comparing it with others. What, in the first place, distinguishes it from all other predicates is that predicating it is always included in predicating anything whatever.<sup>32</sup>

In other words, if the truth of sentences were indeed definable in terms of any property, relation, or set of properties or relations, the usefulness of the definition to determine what is involved in the truth or falsity of a particular sentence would depend, in turn, on a determination of whether that sentence indeed *had* the requisite property (or stood in the right sort of relation to something else); and the need to make this determination in each case would lead, Frege suggests, to an infinite regress which would have to be traversed in order for the purported definition to be applicable at all. Frege formulates the argument primarily as applying to sentences, but if the argument is sound and valid, it in fact suffices to show the untenability of any definition of truth as correspondence (or indeed in terms of any other relation), however understood; whether the “correspondence” relation is understood as a relation of mind to world, ideas to objects, or sentences to states of affairs. On the other hand, the argument also suffices to defeat any “epistemic” or other definition of the truth of sentences (e.g. as warranted assertibility, coherence with the belief system of a community, etc.). For any such definition would presuppose for its application the further question of truth to which Frege points, and would thus begin the regress once more.

The argument, if sound and valid, thus has an exceedingly general bearing against putative theories of truth and bears radical implications for any conception of its metaphysics. At first, however, it is not apparent that it is indeed sound and valid: in particular, supposing truth to be definable as some feature or relationship X, why should it be necessary, in order to determine *that* a sentence has feature X (or

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<sup>32</sup> “Logic,” p. 228; the parallel passage in “Thought” is pp. 326-27.

stands in relationship X to something else), *first* to determine (in terms of the purported definition) whether it is *true* that the sentence has X (or bears relation X)? One might certainly reasonably hold, for instance, that a single act of determination is enough (i.e. that once we determine the sentence in question to have the requisite property or stand in the requisite relation, this by itself suffices to determine simultaneously the truth of all the infinite series of statements formed by iterations of “it is true that...”); in that case, though a regress threatens, it is not a vicious one, and the argument has no force.

But the argument is improved, and rendered valid, by noting that it has as an unstated premise another claim that Frege was probably the first to make, and that has elsewhere been called the “redundancy” or “equivalence” principle.<sup>33</sup> The claim is that the assertion “It is true that ‘A’”, or the predication of the truth of A, is (in some sense) *equivalent* to the assertion “A” (or to predicating what A predicates). Frege states this equivalence principle elsewhere,<sup>34</sup> and he asserts it in the last sentence of the current passage by holding that “predicating [truth] is always included in predicating anything whatsoever.” Given this, however, it is clear that any definition of truth in terms of any property, feature, or relation is untenable. For given any such definition, even while asserting “A,” it would still be open to us to inquire whether “A” had the requisite property, feature or relation (thus, whether “A” is true). But that this is in fact *not* open to us is a direct consequence of the equivalence principle itself.

It is thus an interesting irony that the principle at the basis for Frege’s general and powerful argument for the indefinability of truth in terms of correspondence or any other notion is, at its basis, just the same one that was subsequently used by Tarski to capture what he considered to be the most important formal constraint on the definition of a *truth predicate* for a particular formal language, L. For *if* applied, in this way, as a constraint on possible definitions of such a language-specific truth predicate, the equivalence principle becomes Tarski’s notorious T-schema:

(T):     *s* is true-in-L if and only if *p*

where ‘*s*’ is replaced with a description of a sentence, and *p* is replaced by the same sentence, or a translation of it.

The schema would prove decisive in the development of many of the formal as well as informal approaches of the analytic tradition to the interlinked problems of meaning and truth; in particular, in application to natural rather than formal languages, it would become the basis for Davidson’s powerful conception of the possibility of providing a theory of meaning, grounded in a Tarskian truth-theory, for any particular natural language, on the basis of the evidence available to an interpreter of that language who at first lacks any knowledge of it.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, as Davidson himself argues in the posthumously published text *Truth and Predication*, the applicability and definability of Tarski-style truth predicates for

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Michael Dummett, “Can Truth be Defined?” in *Frege: Philosophy of Language* (London: Duckworth), pp. 442-470 (esp. pp. 443-45).

<sup>34</sup> E.g., in “Thought” he says: “It is also worth noticing that the sentence ‘I smell the scent of violets’ has just the same content as the sentence ‘It is true that I smell the scent of violets.’” (p. 328).

<sup>35</sup> See the essays collected in Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford U. Press, 2001), especially “Truth and Meaning,” “In Defence of Convention T,” and “Radical interpretation.”



any number of particular languages in a situation of radical interpretation still leaves open a general question, not solved by any number of such definitions: that of the *general* concept of truth, or what is held in common by every language and formulated in *each* of the language-specific truth predicates.<sup>36</sup>

It is in this sense, the sense of the “general concept,” that truth is plausibly “normative” in the sense that it provides (as Dummett has suggested) a “norm of assertibility” or, as Frege says, that it “points the way” for logic, where logic is, again, the theory that articulates the laws of truth rather than simply those of what is held true.<sup>37</sup> Any such theory will never, if Frege’s argument is correct, amount to a *definition* of truth; in fact, as Davidson emphasizes, it is futile to look for any *definition* of the general concept of truth itself.<sup>38</sup> But if there will never be a definition of this general concept, it nevertheless remains open to hold that, as Frege himself says, it is “indicated” or “pointed toward” by the logical/semantic theory that captures the general structure of language itself. If this is indeed the case, the consequences of the equivalence principle that yields the general argument against the tenability of any definition of truth in terms of objects and their relations will have a special and pivotal role in producing the possibility of this indication; in particular, if, as Frege says, the peculiarity of the predication of truth is that it is always “included in” any predication whatsoever, a logical/semantic theory that articulates the constitutive logical structure of predication itself, gestures beyond the properties and relations of beings, toward the constitutive connection of the sentences of a language and the conditions of their truth. Beyond beings, such a theory would thus gesture toward the indefinable point at which the sentences of a language bear, in the structure of predication itself, the inarticulate mark of their Being.

What does it mean, then, that “predicating [truth] is included in predicating anything whatsoever”? On the one hand, as we have seen, it means that truth cannot be defined as any property, relation, or feature of entities. But on the other hand, it is possible to discern in Frege’s remarks explicating the significance of the redundancy principle the thought that the structure of truth is in a particular way *shown*, albeit problematically, in the structure of predication, without it, however, being simply reducible to this structure. As is shown by the redundancy principle itself, in fact, predicating truth is ‘included in predicating anything whatsoever’ in that any predication as such ‘includes’, in a problematic way, the possibility of *asserting* something to be the case or, equivalently, asserting that the sentence formed by the predication is true.

As is well known, Frege officially distinguishes “assertoric force”, the particular kind of force which is applied to a sentence or its content when it is asserted, from the content itself, holding that *asserting* is just one of several possible actions that can be performed with one and the same content. In a 1906

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<sup>36</sup> “My own view is that Tarski has told us much of what we want to know about the concept of truth, and that there must be more. There must be more because there is no indication in Tarski’s formal work of what it is that his various truth predicates have in common, and this must be part of the content of the concept ... The concept of truth has essential connections with the concepts of belief and meaning, but these connections are untouched by Tarski’s work.” Davidson, *Truth and Predication* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press, 2008), pp. 27-28.

<sup>37</sup> Dummett, “Truth” in *Truth and Other Enigmas* (London: Duckworth, 1978).

<sup>38</sup> *Truth and Predication*, chapters 1 and 2; cf. Davidson, “The Folly of Trying to Define Truth,” *Journal of Philosophy*, 93:6 (June, 1996), pp. 263-278.

summary of his “logical doctrines,” for instance, Frege placed at the top of the list his having “dissociated assertoric force from the predicate.”<sup>39</sup> Along similar lines, he treats one component of what would become the familiar logical turnstyle as a “judgment stroke” signifying that what follows is in fact judged, or that its truth is recognized.<sup>40</sup> According to Frege, it is necessary in particular to use the symbolism in that it is necessary to separate the act of judgment, when it occurs, from its subject matter; for otherwise it would be impossible to distinguish the judgment (or assertion) that some content does in fact hold true from a mere supposition of the same content.<sup>41</sup> The maintenance of both claims (about the separation of assertoric force from the content and about the significance of the judgment stroke) invite difficult questions about the proper description of the activity of judgment and of force itself from a Fregean perspective.<sup>42</sup> The problem is, specifically, that of how the logical structure that characterizes a language and determines the sense of its terms communicates with the dynamic actuality of its use, and particularly with this use insofar as it characteristically involves the possibility of making assertions that are true or false. More generally specified, the underlying problem is that of the general (linguistic or non-linguistic?) context in which *force* communicates with *meaning* in general, or the broader contextual space *in which* the specific structure of communicative sense relates to that of meaningful intersubjective action and *praxis*.<sup>43</sup>

At other places, Frege gestures toward the inarticulate relationship between logic and force that shows up, not indeed in the sense or reference of any linguistic term by itself, but in the peculiar *failure* of the predicate “true” to contribute positively to the sense of sentences in which it figures:

If I assert ‘It is true that sea-water is salt’, I assert the same thing as if I assert ‘Sea-water is salt.’ This enables us to recognize that the assertion is not to be found in the word ‘true’, but in the assertoric force with which the sentence is uttered. This may lead us to think that the word ‘true’ has no sense at all. But in that case a sentence in which ‘true’ occurred as a predicate would have no sense either. All one can say is: the word ‘true’ has a sense that contributes nothing to the sense of the whole sentence in which it occurs as a predicate.

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<sup>39</sup> “A Brief Summary of my Logical Doctrines,” in Frege, *Posthumous Writings*.

<sup>40</sup> “A judgment will always be expressed by means of the symbol | - which stands at the left of the symbol or complex of symbols which gives the content of the judgment. If the small vertical stroke at the end of the horizontal one is *omitted*, then the judgment will be transformed into a *mere complex of ideas*, of which the writer does not state whether he recognizes its truth or not.” (*Begriffsschrift*, p. 52)

<sup>41</sup> “Function and Concept,” p. 142.

<sup>42</sup> On the ambiguity involved in any treatment of the judgment stroke as having logical significance (for instance the significance of a predication of facthood or of truth) see Wayne Martin, *Theories of Judgment: Psychology, Logic, Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2006), chapter 3. Here, Martin convincingly argues that any attempt wholly to separate what is signified by the judgment stroke from the content judged must fail, and that this failure points to a necessary and ineliminable “expressive limit” in the logical representation of judgment.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Jacques Derrida, “Signature, Event, Context” (in *Margins of Philosophy* (transl. by Alan Bass, U. of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 309: “To the semantic field of the word *communication* belongs the fact that it also designates nonsemantic movements. Here at least provisional recourse to ordinary language and to the equivocalities of natural language teaches us that one may, for example, *communicate a movement*, or that a tremor, a shock, a displacement of force can be communicated – that is, propagated, transmitted.”

But it is precisely for this reason that this word seems fitted to indicate the essence of logic. Because of the particular sense that it carried any other adjective would be less suitable for this purpose. So the word 'true' seems to make the impossible possible: it allows what corresponds to the assertoric force to assume the form of a contribution to the thought. And although this attempt miscarries, or through the very fact that it miscarries, it indicates what is characteristic of logic ... 'true' only makes an abortive attempt to indicate the essence of logic, since what logic is really concerned with is not contained in the word 'true' at all but in the assertoric force with which a sentence is uttered. (p. 323)

In particular, according to the passage, it is the unique structural role that 'true' plays (in that, specifically, it adds nothing to the sense of *any* sentence in which it figures) with respect to *all* the sentences of a language that allows it to "[seem] to" manifest the specific force of assertion that is involved in any predication whatsoever to appear *as* an element of a predicative sentence. But the attempt "miscarries"; it is not, in fact, possible for a predicate signifying this involvement to appear significantly as a predicate within a sentence. Nevertheless, in the miscarriage itself, "what is characteristic of logic" is formally and negatively "indicated".<sup>44</sup> The indication, though it is not of something that *can* figure within a sentence as the sense of any term, nevertheless points to the characteristic force of assertion that is "included" in all predication as such, and thus to the specific structure of predication insofar in, and as, it itself includes the possibility of truth.

Frege's formulation of this inclusion, that "predicating [truth] is included in all predicating whatsoever", thus invites comparison with Heidegger's claim with respect to the broader ontological significance of Plato's inquiry into the *logos*, that "in every *logos*, [Being] is co-said". In particular, what the predicate "true" "tries" and fails to bring to expression (or seems to bring to expression, and actually does not) is the "transcendent" dimension of linguistic *use* insofar as it structurally involves the specific possibility of truth. In the later development of the analytic tradition, this "transcendent" dimension has often been understood as explicable in terms of the unity of regular linguistic practices, intersubjective agreements, language communities or culturally specific "language games." However, as the structure of Frege's argument makes clear, no such reference to an empirical or sociological unity can in fact succeed in characterizing the basis of the structure of predication, insofar as it constitutively structures the domain of sense. For any such characterization would figure assertoric force as a particularly empirically describable structure of practice or action, and thereby break the specific link that it enjoys to the specific structure of the predicative sentence that makes it capable of enjoying (indefinable and impersonal) truth.

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. Martin (2006), p. 96, who discusses the passage: "What Frege here calls a miscarriage is ...exactly what befell him with his paraphrase of the judgment stroke in the *Begriffsschrift*. He tried to import the mark of assertion as a contribution to the content judged as true. The miscarriage exhibits the limits of Frege's representation of judgment: the expressive limit of the judgment stroke and the impossibility of fully excluding the truth-claim from the content available for judgment." Martin goes on to argue that this miscarriage or failure points to necessary features of logic in relation to truth that bear close comparison with what Heidegger formulates as the implications of the "ambiguity of the copula", and in particular that the work of both philosophers on the relationship of logic to judgment points to the necessity of a "pre-logical understanding of truth and judgment" (p. 102) in our understanding and use of natural language. See also Michael Dummett, *Frege and Other Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), esp. pp. 247-48.

Although Frege's conception of truth does not resolve the problematic of logical force and combination that is already invoked by the Visitor's conception of the *dunamis koinoneon* as the specific structure of the logos, it thus radicalizes and deepens this problematic on the basis of Frege's thoroughgoing appreciation of the consequences of the impersonality and indefinability of truth. This appreciation plays a decisive role, along with the new quantificational logic itself, in producing a completely new understanding of the logical structure of the sentence with revolutionary consequences for the interlinked problems of linguistic meaning and truth. The methodological consequences of this new conception are displayed, in perspicuous form, in Frege's statement in the *Foundations of Arithmetic* of the principles guiding his investigation there into the logical basis of number:

There must be a sharp separation of the psychological from the logical, the subjective from the objective;

The meaning of a word must be asked for in the context of a proposition, not in isolation;

The distinction between concept and object must be kept in mind.<sup>45</sup>

Whereas the second principle directly challenges any synthetic conception of the unity of a sentence, on which it is composed fundamentally of individually representative words, the third points to the very different conception of this unity that Frege positively proposes. The first consequence of this new understanding is already drawn in the *Begriffsschrift*; it is that judgments as represented in a logically perspicuous language do not have the form of subject and predicate.<sup>46</sup> In particular, since Frege considers what is relevant to the logical content of a judgment to be limited to the structure of its possible consequences, and that judgments expressed variously in subject/predicate form may nevertheless have the same content in this sense, it is essential to distinguish the superficial subject/predicate structure of a sentence (and, more broadly, all aspects of its superficial grammatical form) from its real underlying logical structure.<sup>47</sup>

The new devices of quantification that Frege had already developed in his close consideration of the logical structure of mathematical judgment permitted this distinction to be drawn and allowed relations of multiple types of generality to be displayed as complex predicates. It is impossible on this conception of logical form to portray the structure of a predicative sentence simply by means of the grammatical distinction between subject and predicate. Rather, within the sentence it is necessary to distinguish concept-words from object-words, and to recognize the fundamental difference in their logical structure. Whereas an object-word has an object as its reference, what a concept-word signifies is inherently "unsaturated," or requiring completion by means of an object; more generally, the references of concept-terms are *functions* from objects (or sequences of objects) to truth-values. The unity of the sentence as such is thus fundamentally not the outcome of the combination of separately representative elements on the same level, but rather results from the way it captures the logical structure of truth.

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<sup>45</sup> *Foundations of Arithmetic*, p. 90.

<sup>46</sup> *Begriffsschrift*, p. 53.

<sup>47</sup> *Begriffsschrift*, p. 54

This leads to a fundamental distinction in the modes of signification of concept- and object-words, which issues in the notorious restriction upon which Frege rigorously insists; namely that a concept-word must never be used in the logical place of an object-word.<sup>48</sup> It is thus impossible to *refer* to concepts as we logically would to things. In particular, we cannot predicate *of* concepts; as much as we would like to say “the concept ‘horse’ is a concept easily attained,” to do so would be to violate a fundamental aspect of logical structure and to utter what could only be nonsense.<sup>49</sup> For Frege, this is no arbitrary restriction, but one that cuts to the very underlying heart of sense in its privileged link to truth. Indeed, insofar as this shows that it is not possible to treat concepts as (any kind of) objects without changing the sense of the terms referring to them, it also shows that it is impossible to consider the features of the concept, and thus of what they make it possible to present (to say), as features that the concept has. It is thus impossible to treat the concept *as* an item that achieves the representative or designative power that it has, in the context of a sentence, by means of its designating a particular object self-standing object capable of its own separate existence.

Accordingly, on this conception, the reality or event of predication can never be understood as establishing a simply *ontic* relation between entities; in a Heideggerian paraphrase, the being of beings, such as it is expressed or indicated in a predicative sentence, is never itself a being. Or equivalently: *between* what metaphysics since Aristotle thinks of as substances and what are thought as their properties, there lies the genuinely *ontological* structure of unsaturated concepts and saturated objects, which links sentences in a language to the conditions of their truth. Like the ontological difference itself, the distinction between concept and object thus points, in a fashion that resists direct summarization and also leads to its own original paradoxes of meaning, to the generation of sense at the ontological point of the insistence of a fundamental difference that cannot be positively schematized in a figure or captured as a positive substrate.<sup>50</sup>

It is from this perspective, as well, that it is possible to grasp the radical significance of the second of the principles that Frege articulates at the beginning of the *Foundations*, the notorious “context principle” that holds that the meaning of propositions or sentences holds a methodological priority over that of individual words. In its methodological application there, and in particular in its application to the definition of the concept of number, it is intimately linked, as Frege immediately says, to the observance of the first methodological principle, that of the distinction of logic from psychology. For in particular, “If the second principle is not observed, one is almost forced to take as the meaning of words mental images or acts of an individual mind, and thereby to offend against the first as well.” (p. 90). The connection is this: if one seeks to find the meaning of a sentence involving a number-term, for instance “There are 29 students in the class,” by first asking after the meanings of the individual words, one has to find something to separately identify as the meaning of “29”. But the images one might form of this number, or the means by which one might represent it intuitively within one’s own psyche, are various and idiosyncratic. Moreover, in the case of large numbers, it is highly doubtful whether it is even (so

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<sup>48</sup> “On Concept and Object”, pp. 181-193.

<sup>49</sup> “On Concept and Object”, pp. 184-85.

<sup>50</sup> And thus, *a fortiori* (as we shall see), a difference that cannot be captured as a “type” of “form” capable of mixing with others, as in the *Sophist*.

much as) psychologically *possible* to represent them with an intuitive image. Thus, if the meaning of the number-symbol is supplied wholly from the psychological realm, it will be impossible to connect the meaning of the sentence as a whole to its objective possibility of truth or falsehood. If, on the other hand, the meaning is supplied in a way that does connect it to this possibility, the context principle will be respected and even the meaning of the individual terms will be determined logically rather than psychologically. In fact, as Frege argues further on in the *Foundations*, it will be possible to capture the actual meaning of sentences involving number-terms *only* if we give number-terms itself such a “logical” definition in accordance with a systematic consideration of the conditions for their truth or falsity.

The decisive significance of the context principle for the subsequent development of the analytic tradition has often been pointed out.<sup>51</sup> In particular, Frege’s application of it, in the *Foundations*, stands at the beginning of a development of systematic thinking about the logical, grammatical, or inferential structure of language that underwrites the initial projects of logical analysis that would ultimately give the tradition its name, as well as the broader projects of ordinary language philosophy, clarification of grammatical structure, and radical interpretation that arose from these initial projects around the middle of the twentieth century.<sup>52</sup> In Quine’s inquiry into the consequences of radical translation and Davidson’s development of it, along with the Tarskian framework for truth-definitions, into the project of a systematic semantics of natural language, the contextualism suggested by Frege’s context principle is developed into a *holistic* conception of the structure of a language, according to which the significance of individual terms and expressions can be understood only within the structure of a systematic *translation manual* or *theory of meaning* for the language as a whole

If the context principle thus underlies, in a significant way, the structuralist picture of *language* on which many of the most significant linguistic projects of the analytic tradition, in turn, rest, it is also intimately connected, as Frege’s application of it in the *Foundations* shows, to the problem of the nature of number and the basis of arithmetic judgments. For Frege’s appeal to the principle in the *Foundations* suffices, as we shall see in more detail, to refute any conception which bases number in the provision of an intuitive image or schematization to the individual *psyche*; indeed, it suffices to refute the conception, equally Aristotelian and Kantian, according to which the origin of number (and hence of the possibility of counting) is ultimately to be found in the givenness of its sensible schema, or in the intuitive figuration of the temporal form of inner sense. The basis of this challenge is Frege’s commitment to the *impersonality* of truth, which demands that logic and logically articulated content cannot be referred to the realm of the private, individual, psychological, or intuitive. This impersonality itself demands the recognition, as Frege says, of a distinction between objectivity and actuality, and of a

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<sup>51</sup> For instance, in *Origins of Analytical Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press, 1993), p. 5, Michael Dummett defends the claims that ‘analytical’ philosophy is born with the ‘linguistic turn’ and that this turn is taken specifically when Frege invokes the context principle in the *Foundations*. In “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” (*Philosophical Review*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Jan., 1951), pp. 20-43), Quine portrays the recognition of the sentence or statement as the “unit of significance” in the early stages of the analytic tradition as a decisive step forward on the way to his own recognition of entire theories as the basic units of empirical significance.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. “Frege on the Context Principle and Psychologism” in my *Philosophy and the Vision of Language* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

specific mode of unity of the (potentially true or false) proposition that is in no sense simply an act of combination, or a synthesis of elements. Rather, the distinction between the objective/impersonal and the actual in the sense of causal activity is ensured as soon as the relation between truth and the structure of a proposition is itself acknowledged.<sup>53</sup>

This relation is, again, at the conceptual core of the particular conception of sense, as distinct from reference, that Frege articulated a few years after the *Foundations*. According to this conception, the sense of a nominal term is a mode of presentation of or of givenness of a referent, and the sense of a sentence as a whole is a thought with a truth-value. The motivation to which Frege appeals is the distinction is the need to account for the possibility that a judgment of identity has the value of positive knowledge.<sup>54</sup> As Frege recognizes, it is not sufficient, in accounting for this possibility, simply to assume (as on his own earlier account in the *Begriffsschrift*) that the informativeness of an identity judgment consists in its recognition that two *signs* designate the same object. For if that were the case, the identity judgment “ $a=b$ ” would concern *only* the signs rather than the object itself, and its possible value for knowledge would remain inexplicable. The use of signs is, moreover, “arbitrary” in that anyone can use “the arbitrarily producible event or object as a sign for something.” (p. 152) In order to explain this value, it is thus necessary to recognize that a positive identity judgment concerns not simply the signs, but rather the different *modes of presentation* of the object itself. Frege thus argues that it is

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<sup>53</sup> In a forthcoming work (*Thinking and Being*, forthcoming, Harvard U. Press), Irad Kimhi argues, drawing chiefly on considerations about negation and force, that Frege’s first principle (of the separation of logic from psychology) actually “undermines” (Chapter 2, page 26) the other two principles in that it commits Frege to a “psycho-logical dualism” of content and force, thereby making it obscure how actual acts of predication can be thought to be constrained by logical principles or norms and actually effacing the “radical” distinction between naming and predicating that Plato had been the first to point out. Kimhi contrasts with this a “psycho-logical monism” according to which the “locus” of assertoric activity is the structure of predication (or “the predicate”) itself; the conception harkens back, as Kimhi notes in a detailed discussion of the “Sophist”, to Plato’s conception on which predication is itself an “accomplishment” and force is not separated from the locus of predication or from the whole sentence more broadly. Kimhi goes on to argue that the predicative frame of a sentence should be seen as the “locus” of activity of a “two-way” or asymmetric ability of the soul that is differently invoked or realized in the assertion or denial of a particular sentence (type).

Although it is clear that Kimhi’s account provides a reasonable reconstruction of what were probably Plato’s views, and perhaps Aristotle’s as well, of the relationship between predication and activity, it is far from clear that it solves (rather than simply ignores) the problem to which Frege’s distinction between logic and psychology responds. In particular, whereas Kimhi’s solution restores a close connection between logical principles and the activity of predication, it depends on the existence of an infinite multiplicity of “capacities” held within the soul and realized in activities of asserting and negating, one for each possible predicative sentence-type (in a particular language). Without denying that there is a real problem about the relation between force and content in Frege, it should be noted that it is obscure, on the conception Kimhi suggests, how such abilities as types are attained or maintained within the individual soul, unless it be by grasping precisely what Frege would describe as language-independent “contents” or sentential senses (which are, again, defined primarily by their inferential relations and are independent of any particular force). More broadly, it is clear that Kimhi’s account, insofar as it depends on invoking the activity of (or in) the soul of someone with the requisite capacity in order to make possible a meaningful act of assertion or denial, is incompatible with Frege’s conception of sense as *impersonal* and hence capable of “confronting everyone in the same way” (regardless of what particular linguistic abilities they may possess).

<sup>54</sup> *Erkenntniswert*; standard translations render this as “cognitive value,” but this is somewhat misleading, given Frege’s thoroughgoing separation of sense from anything “cognitive” in the sense of “psychological.”

necessary to recognize, beyond or behind the contingencies of the actual uses of signs, the real differences in the ways in which objects are presented and thereby made available as the objects of possible judgments, including judgments of identity, capable of truth. The “realm “of senses is thereby separated from the domain of signs and their use, on one hand, and from the “realm” of references, on the other. The basis for the separation is the need to recognize a constitutive and essential link between the possible *truth* of judgments and the ways their objects are presented or disclosed in them.

The structure of these ways or modes of givenness is spelled out in the concept of objective sense, which accordingly cannot be identified with any ontic domain of entities but rather exhibits the constitutive link between truth and their presentation. This is the motivation, as well, for the Fregean conception, which some commentators have found problematic, according to which the reference of a true or false sentence is one of the two unique objects, “the true” or “the false,” but which we must rather understand, again in the Heideggerian jargon, as pointing to the thought that the employment of a true sentence, in addition to presenting its referent or referents, *also* in a certain way structurally presents or co-discloses the specific phenomenon of truth itself. That this structure is manifest in the structural form of the sentence, again, indicates the privileged logical connection between that structural form and “being in the sense of truth.” The structure thereby elicited, and articulated (without being defined) through the articulation of the laws of logic themselves, is the one that Frege identifies in the *Grundgesetze* passage as the objective and non-actual domain of the contents of judgments, itself ultimately demanded by the impersonality of thought.

#### IV

As subsequent developments of Frege’s thought have often noted, Frege uses two distinct kinds of metaphors to characterize the structure of the realm of sense, both in fact suggested by the underlying conception of the impersonality of thought. The first is the notorious metaphor that Frege employs in the late article “Thought,” namely that of a “third realm,” beyond the realm of the physical (or spatiotemporal) and that of the subjective or psychological; but second, there is the implicit or explicit reference to the intersubjectivity or publicity of language as that which speakers of a language must be considered to share and which facilitates common access to the shared meanings of terms and objective senses of sentences. In the subsequent development of the analytic tradition, the second conception of the positive basis of the “objectivity” of sense has been much more widely developed than the first, yielding social, pragmatic, and structuralist theories of linguistic meaning as explicable in terms of public activities, practices, or dispositions to behave. It is significant, however, that Frege himself never accounts for the impersonality of sense in terms of the empirical, contingent and anthropological unity of a shared natural language; quite to the contrary, in fact, on Frege’s conception the same sense can be expressed by sentences in *any number* of natural languages. Thus, the impersonality of thought and the conception of sense to which it leads is never specified positively as grounded in any positive figure of community, whether social, linguistic or culturalist in specification; nor is it intelligible, as Frege’s



argument in “On Sense and Reference” makes clear, as a matter of the contingent use of signs.<sup>55</sup> Quite to the contrary, the conception underlying Frege’s idea of sense as well as its real significance in the context of an analytic project that traces and decomposes what it envisions as the structure of language is not any positive figure of intersubjectivity or community, but rather the purely *privative* specification of the *impersonality* of thought, the conception that yields the claim that the thought “confronts everyone in the same way.” As I shall try to show, this logical conception is so little grounded in any consideration of the sociological or anthropological unity of languages, practices, or cultures that it, rather, provides the basis for a systematic logical deconstruction of any conception that understands them as the ultimate basis of meaning and sense. The fixed point that makes this deconstruction possible, and necessary, is the reality of impersonal truth, which is radically subtracted both from any assumption of empirical actuality and from any personal determination.<sup>56</sup>

As I shall argue, it thus necessary to recognize behind the analytic tradition’s sustained development of the motif of the public and intersubjective another conception of sense, one that ultimately figures its non-actual place as that of a logico-structural virtuality, real but not effective, indicated without description or definition in the structure of ordinary life and practices of assertion and judgment but nevertheless irreducible to any description of them. On this conception, rather, senses are impersonal, and they are modes of presentation, both of objects and of truth; it follows that presentation is here thought, also, as impersonal, as the a-subjective place of what confronts everyone equally. This impersonality is not, however, positively determined as the unity of a common set of practices, conventions, or agreements; here there is, in other words, no *koinoneon*, not even that of the “public” and the intersubjectively “shared”. Rather, the place of presence is thought as the virtual limit of the specific structure of truth that is articulated in the laws of logic, and hence as a peculiar and articulate unity. This unity is not reducible to the synthetic structure of the sentence or even to the specifiable structure of a particular language; nevertheless it is indicated ubiquitously in the everyday life of our discursive comportment insofar as it touches on the indefinable-real of truth.

Only a superficial reading could identify this conception with a “Platonism” in the sense in which that term is usually used today, that in which its reference is to a “theory of the forms” as substantial, timelessly enduring or sempiternal entities to which ordinary sensory objects are connected through the obscure relationship of “participation.” The distinction between concepts and objects, for example, by itself suffices to clarify that the mode of relationship that makes for the unity of a predicative sentence on Frege’s conception is, in no sense, a relationship between two self-standing entities of any kind, but rather the peculiar kind of unification that occurs in the figuring of a specific object as a definite value of

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<sup>55</sup> “The sense of a proper name is grasped by everybody who is sufficiently familiar with the language or totality of designations to which it belongs, but this serves to illuminate only a single aspect of the *Bedeutung*, supposing it to have one. Comprehensive knowledge of the *Bedeutung* would require us to be able to say immediately whether any given sense attaches to it. To such knowledge we never attain ... The same sense has different expressions in different languages or even in the same language.” (p. 153).

<sup>56</sup>See K. Green, “Was Wittgenstein Frege’s heir?” (*Philosophical Quarterly* 49:196, pp. 289-308) for a version of this point.

a variable function.<sup>57</sup> In the further development of this conception of unity made by Tarski, the formal theory of truth turns on the interpretation of this relation as “satisfaction,” a relation whose dynamics is modeled, not by any memetic or representational account of the relation of universals to individuals, but rather in terms of the mathematical set theory developed by Cantor and Frege among others at the inauguration of the analytic tradition. In this connection, it is necessary to consider both the specific relationship of set theory to mathematics, including the mathematics of the infinite, and the inherent paradoxes definitive of it; in fact, rather than simply replicate the Platonic problematic of the “one over many” that figures in the official conception of the *methexis*, they actually overturn this Platonic problematic by figuring the relationship of the one and the many on a radically new and original basis.

As I have argued elsewhere, specifically, In conceiving of the concept of a set as that of a whole in which a plurality, indifferently finite or infinite, of distinct entities “can be thought as one,” Georg Cantor transfigured the ancient conception of the problem of the one and the many on the basis of what amounts to a new and transformative formal theory of the relation between thinking and being itself.<sup>58</sup> Crucial to this transformation is the possibility of formally conceiving of the infinite as the real domain of an ordered succession of positive wholes, by contrast with the conception dominant since Aristotle on which the infinite is thinkable only as the open potentiality of the unlimited. If the Fregean conception of sense thus points to an original structural domain of formal unity at the basis of the possibility of presentation, it is thus no mere accident that Frege’s own project of logicist reduction of mathematics founders at the point of the dramatic paradox demonstrated by Russell in 1901 at the very formal center of this theory in its naïve conceptualization. In the context of Frege’s attempt to reduce arithmetic truths to purely logical ones in the *Grundgesetze*, this conception has the consequence that is formulated in his notorious basic law V, which requires that every coherent concept pick out a determinate set or range of objects as its extension. It is this consequence which leads, when applied to the consideration of the possibility of making reference to the totality of beings as a whole, to the contradiction witnessed in Russell’s paradox, that of a totality that both is and is not self-membered.

The possibility, and problem, of this reference to totality is equally characteristic of the structure of linguistic predication and that of the basis of mathematical reasoning and arithmetic itself. In particular, while for the contemporary thought that figures the unity of thinking and being as the possible application of predicative language to the features and relations of beings, such a reference to the totality of beings is both constitutively necessary and necessary paradoxical, it is equally so with respect to conceptual foundations of the arithmetic reasoning about the one, the many, and the unlimited that ensure the unlimited possibility of counting beings itself. If Cantor’s theory, through its radical new thinking of the possibility of intelligible unity, thus puts the ancient problem of the limited and unlimited on a new and transformed formal footing on the basis of the thinkability of the infinite as such that it witnesses, the problem on which Frege’s logicist project founders in his attempt to the unlimited assumption of comprehension also witnesses a profound original structure of being as such,

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. Michael Dummett, “Quantification” in Frege: Philosophy of Language (second edition, London: Duckworth, 1981): “The very sharpness of Frege’s distinction between objects and concepts makes it impossible to compare his doctrines at all fruitfully with those actually advanced by Plato.” (p. 541)).

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *The Politics of Logic*, chapter 1.

insofar as it is thinkable as a unity at all. This aporetic structure is, as I shall argue in the following chapters, by no means avoidable or dispensable in the context of an ontologically oriented questioning of the meaning and truth of Being itself. Rather, it points, at the very historical limit of the “metaphysical” or ontotheological reference to the ontic totality, to the inherent logical paradoxicality in which the foundations of this reference elicit their own actual incoherence.

Thus, as I shall try to show, the aporeas of totality in set theory, far from suggesting a defect or a flaw for the set-theoretical *thought of* the structure of being, can and must be recovered as constituting a *positive* phenomenon and a decisive formal indication of the very underlying structure of the real in which metaphysics (ontotheology) constitutes and decomposes itself. What Russell’s paradox and the closely related set-theoretical and semantic paradoxes of totality and reflexivity ultimately witness, in other words, is not a flaw in the set-theoretical thought of being, but a flaw in the very structure *of* being, as it necessarily appears in determining and determined relation to the “ontic” totality of beings. It is in such a paradoxical figure of the ultimate logical incoherence of the presentation of the ontic totality of presented beings that it is uniquely possible, as I shall argue, to trace the event of what Heidegger suggests is the problematic contemporary (in)-closure of the “metaphysical” epoch of presence.<sup>59</sup>

It is from the position of the altered problematic of predication determined by Frege’s logic that we can understand, as well, the specific problems that contemporary “analytic” commentators on the *Sophist* have seen in the Visitor’s apparent “solution” to the problem of non-being, or to the question of how it is possible to say what is false. On the kind of interpretation that is by far the most widely adopted in recent interpretation, to utter a falsehood, e.g. “Theaetetus flies,” is to say of Theaetetus something that is different from everything that is “of him.” The Visitor’s basic claim with respect to the structure of a falsehood such as “Theaetetus flies” is thus that it is false in that the action (or action-type) signified by the verb (“flies” or “is flying”) is different from, or perhaps incompatible with, everything that actually holds of the subject (Theaetetus); or perhaps in that the subject (Theaetetus) is different from everything “of which” the action signified (“flying”) actually does hold.<sup>60</sup> Both the false “Theaetetus flies” and the true “Theaetetus sits” are thus the results of a specific combination of two distinct lexical elements, one of which is the signifier of a person and the other the signifier of a type. In the case of the falsehood, what ultimately makes possible the combination of something that “is not” with respect to Theaetetus with Theaetetus himself is, furthermore, the logical capacity of *difference* to mix with *being* to produce what is *not being* (or what is *different from being*).

There are, accordingly, two problems that must be solved if the account is to succeed: first, it must be explained how the relation of mixing between the great types of Being and difference itself produces the structure of predication evident in the false sentence; second, it must be explained how the

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<sup>59</sup> For the terminology and structure of “inclosure” see Graham Priest, *Beyond the Limits of Thought*, (second edition, Oxford: Clarendon, 2002). Cf. also my *The Politics of Logic: Badiou, Wittgenstein and the Consequences of Formalism* (New York: Routledge, 2012), esp. chapter 1.

<sup>60</sup> For a helpful discussion of the position and citations to those who hold it in different varieties, see Paolo Crivelli, *Plato’s Account of Falsehood: A Study of the Sophist* (Cambridge U. Press, 2012), especially chapter 5.

combination of lexical elements that separately signify a person and an action-type suffices to explain the capacity of a sentence (whether true or false) to say something (possibly true or false) at all.

As Davidson emphasizes in *Truth and Predication*, the Visitor's solution is incapable of answering the second question, and the root of this incapability lies in the way that it answers the first. For because it treats the structure of the sentence as a combination of separately representational elements, the Visitor's theory inevitably produces a vicious infinite regress closely related to the "Third Man" problem that Plato and Aristotle had already themselves discussed:

The sentence 'Theaetetus sits' has a word that refers to, or names, Theaetetus, and a word whose function is somehow explained by mentioning the property (or form or universal) of Sitting. But the sentence says that Theaetetus *has* this property. If the semantics of the sentence were exhausted by referring to the two entities Theaetetus and the property of Sitting, it would just be a string of names; we would ask where the verb was. The verb, we understand, expresses the relation of instantiation...But this cannot be the end of the matter, since we now have three entities, a person, a property, and a relation, but no verb. When we supply the appropriate verb, we will be forced to the next step, and so on. (pp. 85-86)

In order to solve this problem, it is not sufficient to refer simply to the capacity of forms to mix with and separate from one another; although such a reference might be seen as preceding a more modern or contemporary conception of the logical structure of concepts, what remains obscure is how such a topology of conceptual relations can be related to the possibility of predication itself without producing the regress. The problem, which as Davidson says is just "one of the ways in which the problem of predication may be posed" is, moreover, not one that is solved by Aristotle's invocation of the copula:

Aristotle seems at one point to suggest that the copula, written separately, or combined with the verb, tells us that the named entity, for instance Theaetetus, *is* an entity with a certain property. It is easy enough to sympathize with Aristotle's insistence that the copula itself brings in no new entity. We sympathize because if it did bring in a new entity, we would once more face the regress. But sympathy is one thing; clear understanding is another. What is impossible to understand is why, if the function of a verb is to introduce a universal, the copula, expressed or not, does not in turn introduce another universal, this time a relation that must be expressed in every sentence. Aristotle has not solved the problem of predication. (pp. 93-94).

Despite his awareness of the issue, Aristotle's theory of the copulative "tie" thus does not solve the problem of the regress that always threatens in the context of the assumption that each significant lexical element (and in particular each verb) represents a separately existing entity. Aristotle's thought, in particular, that the copula is present (whether expressed or unexpressed) in every sentence, threatens in fact, in the context of this assumption, to intensify the problem and in a certain way absolutize it, for the universality of the copula then apparently requires that there be a particular relation that is referred to in every sentence insofar as it asserts anything at all, that of predication or of being "in a predicative sense." But being is not a being; and the attempt to determine the copula as having any ontic referent, whether to a substantial entity, an obscure relation of beings, or the

assertoric act or performance of a mind, psyche, or subject, inevitably (as Frege says) “miscarries,” producing the infinite regress to which Davidson points.<sup>61</sup>

It remains that something is shown in this miscarriage; and that in particular the place of truth is thus, as I have argued, demonstrated as the obscure structural *limit* of a structure of predication that is indicated, not as any form of ontic relation, but nevertheless by way of the specific structural resources requisite to a systematic theory of linguistic meaning. In concluding his discussion of Plato’s conception of predication in the Sophist in relation to the modern one developed in the wake of Frege’s new logic, Davidson gestures toward the way in which his own inquiry into the systematic structure of a theory of meaning for a natural language transforms and deepens the problem at the basis of both conceptions:

The notion of ‘places’ in a predicate is the key to the modern concept of a predicate. Any expression obtained from a sentence by deleting one or more singular terms from the sentence counts as a predicate; the spaces left in a predicate when singular terms are removed are the places...The resources of quantificational languages and logic mirror the resources of natural languages well enough to justify treating the problem of predication as it applies in such cases. The problem of this form includes the problem as it came to life in the work of Plato and Aristotle. In its modern form, the problem is both clearer and more formidable – clearer because exactly what counts as a predicate is better defined, more formidable because of the infinity of structures that general quantification and the truth-functional connectives introduce. (pp. 96-97)

If, in particular, the logical conception of the Visitor shares with that of Aristotle the central thought of the *dunamis koinonian* of the psyche, which obscurely combines the problematic of force with that problematic of an ontic or representational combination in the unique nexus of co-presence that is the soul, the Fregean conception decomposes this configuration term for term. It does so, in particular, by insisting upon the problematic distinction of force from the predicate and locating the possibility of the formation of the predicative sentence outside the *nexus* of the finite psyche and in a completely different, non-psychological, and (as Davidson points out) constitutively infinite structure. This is not to say that Frege solves, or even provides the basic ingredients needed to solve, the underlying problem of the relationship of force and sense. Rather, his account of the impersonality of sense provides at most, as I have suggested, the positive terms in which this problem must be grasped and intensified today. As

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<sup>61</sup> Paolo Crivelli (*Plato’s Account of Falsehood: A Study of the Sophist*, Cambridge U. Press, 2012) argues convincingly that on Plato’s view as expressed by the Visitor, there are no unified or composite entities that are involved in the assertion of sentences (or other acts involving them); rather, like a violin player combining bow and violin in action, in the utterance of a sentence “a speaker puts together two entities (namely an action and an object) by performing a single act in which each of the two entities involved is employed in a distinctive way” (p. 231). The suggestion is reasonable as an interpretation of the Visitor’s views, but it does not suffice to solve the problem of regress that Davidson points out. In particular, holding that the utterance of a sentence is itself an event of combination of significant terms of different types does not clarify how these terms gain their own independent significance, and thus how an “action and an object” (rather than simply the terms for them) can be said to be combined by the utterance of the sentence itself. The difficulty, as noted, is sharpened in the case of a false sentence, where either the signified object, the signified action (-instance), or the particular combination asserted or represented to hold between them by the sentence does not exist.

Davidson's own development of the implications of Frege's logic and Tarski's semantic conception in the context of radical interpretation witnesses, these are the terms in which the problematic of truth can be formally *indicated as a problematic* in the actual structure of judgments, in the structure of language as we use it or apply it in the course of a life, without being in any way reducible to or definable in terms of this use or to this life considered as an empirical fact.

## V

In the 1925-26 course *Logic: The Question of Truth*, given just one year after the *Sophist* course, after describing the structure of the uncovering [*Entdeckens*] of "something as something" as the "basic hermeneutical structure of Dasein" (p. 160) which ultimately underlies the structure of the *logos* and the possibility of its being about something, Heidegger considers the specific possibility of the false *logos* through a close analysis of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, book 9, chapter 10.<sup>62</sup> In the chapter, Aristotle discusses the meaning of truth and falsity with respect to both composite and incomposite things. Whereas, with respect to composite things, being amounts to synthetic unity and the truth of statements about them thus depends on whether or not the composite is unified, in the case of non-composite or simple entities or statements about them (Aristotle gives the examples: "the wood is white" and "the diagonal is incommensurable"), neither being nor truth can be understood in terms of *synthesis* and *diaeresis*. In fact, according to Aristotle, in these cases there is *no* possibility of falsehood; all that is possible to is to "simply touch and address" the entity. The possibility of falsehood, error, or deception is thus dependent, according to Aristotle as Heidegger reads him, on the possibility of a synthesis of these ultimate entities into a unity of co-presence, whereas this possibility of synthesis is itself, in turn dependent upon the standing existence of the ultimate non-composite elements that are simply and always present. (pp. 183-84)

The twofold analysis confirms, according to Heidegger, that Aristotle understands being as "presenting or presence" [*Präsenz, Anwesenheit*] and understands the "corresponding comportment [*Verhalten*] to beings as beings" as one with the basically "presentative" [*Präsentisch*] character of being the "rendering present" [*Präsentierens*] or "making present" [*Gegenwärtigens*] of something (pp. 191-92). Whether it is a case of the synthesis of composite entities or the simple encounter with things that always are, this "making-present" is furthermore, according to Heidegger, a *temporal* phenomenon. In particular, it is "letting a present being be encountered in a now-moment [*Anwesendes in eine Gegenwart begegnen lassen*]" (p. 192) and this "presence-now" is a characteristic of time. [*Gegenwart ist ein Charakter der Zeit*] (p. 193).

This provides the basis for Heidegger to turn, in part II of the course, to the deeper analysis of the "abyssal problematic" (p. 193) which now opens up with respect to being and time. In particular, if the analysis of Aristotle has elicited that "truth, being, and consequently falsehood, synthesis, and assertion are in some kind of, up until now, wholly obscure sense, connected [*im Zusammenhang*] with the

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<sup>62</sup> *Logik: Die Frage Nach der Wahrheit* (GA 21). Frankfurt: Klostermann (2. Auflage, 1995). Translated as *Logic: The Question of Truth* (transl. by Thomas Sheehan, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010).

phenomenon of time” (p. 198) this recognition points toward a phenomenological investigation of the characteristics of truth, falsehood, synthesis and statement whereby they are grounded in a more basic *temporal* determination. This “phenomenological chronology,” Heidegger clarifies, will not characterize the phenomena simply in terms of how they are temporal [*Zeitlich*] in that they “run their course in time”; rather, it will aim to elucidate their more fundamental temporal determinedness of the phenomena by means of a basic study of temporality itself. (p. 199) Kant, Heidegger says, is the only philosopher up to the present to have even suspected the possibility of such an investigation (Heidegger here quotes the notorious passage in Kant’s discussion of the schematism that calls it a “hidden art in the depths of the human soul”); but even Kant was kept from “understanding... the idea” of a phenomenological chronology by the rigidity of his distinction between the sensibility and the understanding and by his having understood the character of time as “primarily and solely related to nature.” (p. 203). In particular, if Kant has essentially followed Aristotle in determining time as the countable time of natural processes and as “something just there on hand,” [*vorfindlich*] the task that falls to phenomenological chronology is that of asking whether there are other possible determinations of the overall character of time, and in particular whether the hermeneutically basic “as-structure” itself has a basic temporal significance that is lost in the Aristotelian conception of truth as the unity of synthesis or co-presence in the now (p. 205).

In this way, the basic temporal determination of Aristotle’s conception of the truth of the logos as grounded in the gathering of eternally existing elements into the unity of a co-presence is elicited and subjected to a more fundamental inquiry into its temporal ground. The conception is obviously very closely related to the Visitor’s conception of the logical basis of the unity of the logos, as discussed by Heidegger in the Sophist lectures, and if, as Heidegger says here, Aristotle has with the conception in a certain way, identified thinking and Being, then the critical analysis that subjects the logical conception of presence to the deeper question of temporality applies just as well to the Visitor’s conception of logical form. In particular, if *synthesis* is, as Heidegger says, for both Plato and Aristotle a “chameleon-like concept [*schillernder Begriff*], sometimes logical, sometimes ontological – or more precisely, usually both at the same time...” (p. 141), then the critical question of the temporality of synthesis requires that the basis of the configuration according to which the unity of the sentence is thought, by Plato and Aristotle alike, on the one hand as the logical unity of subject and predicate and on the other hand as the ontological unity of basic elements *itself* be further interrogated in terms of the conception of temporality that makes *it* possible. This conception is none other than the conception of presence as grounded in the unity of a “now,” or in the simultaneous co-presence that allows the articulate structure of the *eide* to appear together in the unified nexus of the sentence and in the unified cognitive act of the thinking soul.

At the beginning of the summer 1925 course, *History of the Concept of Time*, Heidegger further specifies the task of a phenomenological chronology as that of a “history of the discovery of time” and a “history of its conceptual interpretation” that amounts to a “history of the question of the being of entities.” This investigation will take as its guideline the particular understanding of time that has made it possible

to determine the various domains of reality according to their temporal characteristics, for instance as “temporal, extratemporal” or “supratemporal reality.”<sup>63</sup> (p. 6)

The phenomenological chronology thus investigates in particular the temporal conditions for the separation of domains of entities, most significantly the separation of the domains of “nature” and “history,” and provides a phenomenological disclosure of the “original and undivided context of subject matter” that “remains hidden” behind the division (p. 2) by investigating the specifically temporal basis of the concepts of positive science and their origin in pretheoretical experience.

...both historical reality and natural reality are continuities that run their course *in time* and are traditionally understood as such. In natural science, especially in its basic science of physics, the *measurement of time* plays a fundamental role in defining its objects. The investigation of historical reality is completely incomprehensible without a *chronology*, an ordination of time. Viewed simply from the outside, history and nature are temporal. To the totality of temporal reality we tend to juxtapose the *extratemporal* constituents which, for example, are the topic of research in mathematics. In addition to these extratemporal constituents we are familiar with *supratemporal* constituents in metaphysics or theology, understood as eternity. (p. 5)

The investigation amounts, Heidegger says, to “what I call a *productive logic*”; this is, in particular, “an anticipatory disclosure and conceptual penetration of potential domains of objects for the sciences”. (p. 2).

Unlike traditional philosophy of science, which proceeds after the fact of an accidental, historically given science in order to investigate its structure, such a logic leaps ahead into the primary field of subject matter of a potential science and first makes available the basic structure of the possible object of the science by disclosing the constitution of the being of that field. This is the procedure of the *original logic* put forward by Plato and Aristotle, of course only within very narrow limits. (p.2)

The particular need for such an investigation into the givenness of the domains of objects and objectivities studied in the various fields of science is shown, Heidegger says, by the “crisis of the sciences” much discussed at the time. Specifically, the sciences have thus lost the “original understanding of their subject matter” that is needed to give them a positive ontological foundation, throwing them back upon the tendency, and the need, to secure their basic concepts in a more original way and thus “forge their way back to the field of subject matter which is thematizable in their research.” (p. 3) But although the need for this renewed fundamental reflection is thus sharpened and made evident by the situation of crisis, it points to the appropriate way to further develop the sciences positively, for “genuine progress in the sciences occurs only in this field of reflection [i.e. in the attempt to secure ...concepts in a more original understanding of its subject matter].”<sup>64</sup> The phenomenon of

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<sup>63</sup> *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1979. Transl. by Theodore Kisiel as *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena* (Indianapolis: Indiana U. Press, 1992) (page #s as in translation).

<sup>64</sup> Cf. S&Z, p. 9: “The real ‘movement’ of the sciences takes place when their basic concepts undergo a more or less radical revision which is transparent to itself. The level which a science has reached is determined by how far it is



crisis thus points to the need, and the possibility, of a more original logical research grounded in the consideration of the specific structure of *temporality*, and Heidegger next points to a series of examples of contemporary sciences whose individual “crises” manifest this need.

The first and most “characteristic” example that Heidegger gives is in fact the crisis in the *foundations of mathematics* that yields the dispute between Hilbert’s formalism and the intuitionism of Brouwer and Weyl. The dispute, which developed over a period of several decades but came to a head in the late 1920s, concerns centrally the question whether the foundations of the mathematical sciences can be understood as consisting in purely formal propositions within an axiomatic system or whether “what is primarily given” is, rather, “the specific structure of the objects themselves” (including the continuum in geometry, which, as Heidegger notes, provides the basis for the integral and differential calculus) (p. 3).<sup>65</sup> In the dispute, “what is *prima facie* the most firmly established science manifests the tendency toward a transposition of the entire science onto new and more original foundations.” (p. 3).

Though Heidegger gives further examples of the contemporary crises in existing sciences, including the issues surrounding relativity theory in physics and the question of the definition of life in biology, the problems involved in the “foundations crisis” in mathematics clearly have a certain priority (both marked and unmarked) for the more general questions of the phenomenological chronology itself. In particular, insofar as mathematics provides a general grounding for empirical science as a whole and thus determining the “domain” of nature itself, the issue of the availability of and proper mode of access to mathematical truths and objects amounts to a crisis for the positive possibility of empirical science as such, not limited to any specific ontic dimension of objects or objectivity. Moreover, the priority that Heidegger himself marks of the question of *measurement* with respect to the broader question of the fundamental constitution of temporality as it is understood both within and without the natural sciences points to the depth of the issue of the problem of the nature of number, counting, and measurement, and to the depth of the problem of the continuum, or of the relationship of the discrete to the continuous, to which formalists and intuitionists offered opposite solutions.

If, in particular, the domain of the mathematics, though historically determined as that of the “extra-“ or a-temporal, nevertheless underlies the specific structure of natural time as it has been determined since Aristotle, the phenomenological chronology that provides an “original logic” of the being of beings by interrogating the basis of this determination must apparently interrogate specifically and with regard to its own temporality the problematic point of the intersection of mathematics and logic (to which Frege’s own researches into number are, of course, unremittingly devoted). The problem is, again, none other than the one to which Plato’s visitor responds, that of the specific temporality of thought in relation to what is thinkable in Being itself. Although the specific problematic (actually the threefold problematic) at issue between the logicism, intuitionism, and formalism of the 1920s was never univocally resolved, but rather transposed into a whole different domain by logical and syntactical research in the subsequent decades (chiefly by Gödel’s incompleteness results in 1931), that the debate is specifically

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*capable of a crisis in its basic concepts.”* There follows a compressed version of the *HCT* discussion of the present crises in various sciences, with the formalist/intuitionist crisis in mathematics again at the head of the list.

<sup>65</sup>For a helpful overview, including original sources, see Paolo Mancosu, ed., *From Hilbert to Brouwer. The Debate on the Foundations of Mathematics in the 1920s* (Oxford University Press, 1998)

motivated by the problem of the *infinite* is far from irrelevant here and in fact, as I shall argue, provides a fundamental and requisite imperative for the contemporary continuation and radicalization of Heidegger's own project of chronology.

In the 1928 lecture course *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, Heidegger points to the way in which such a chronological investigation of traditional logic provides for the possibility of radicalizing the underlying metaphysical assumptions of that logic toward the deepening of the problematic of ground itself. In particular, Leibniz, along with the tradition since Plato, understands the specific structure of the logos as that of a *koinenon*, a linkage in unity of subject and predicate. (pp. 30-31).<sup>66</sup> For Leibniz this is essentially a structure of inclusion; in a true judgment, in particular, the predicate or its concept is in some way included in the concept of the subject (p. 33). The consideration wavers between an ontological level, on which the containment is the real containment (or *in esse*) of a property in a substance, and a purely logical one, on which the primary relation of containment is exhibited in the true sentence itself (pp. 33-35). For both determinations, the specific nature of the connection is furthermore, insofar as truth is *idem esse*, *identity*, here thought as the basis for the unity of the unitary structure of the sentence or judgment as such. This conception in turn provides the basis for Leibniz's own conception of the monad as individuated drive, capability of representative apprehension (p.90), and reflection of the totality of the world. It further underwrites, Heidegger suggests, Kant's subsequent determination of the highest principle of subjective unity as that of the synthesis of transcendental apperception. (p. 69).

Leibniz's notorious principle of sufficient reason, moreover, expresses the implication of this originally and undecidably logical/ontological unity in identity for the problem of *grounding*. This is the problem of the nature of beings, understood ontologically and metaphysically as the problem of the *basis* of beings as a whole. The problem of grounding is, according to Heidegger, here specifically that of a "rather than" which takes up being insofar as it asks: why beings *rather than* nothing? (p. 114)<sup>67</sup> If the problematic of grounding thereby identified as developed on the basis of an original ontological/logical unity of identity must be radicalized along the lines suggested by invoking the problematic of the ontological difference between being and beings, the radicalization replaces the unity of the monad as subject with the transcendence of Dasein, understood in its constitutive relationship to the possibility of world-disclosure. Such a relationship is not simply a relation of Dasein to an ontic totality of entities; nevertheless in a suggestive "appendix" to the first section of the second part of the course, Heidegger points to the need to develop, alongside the fundamental ontology of Dasein, a "metontology" capable of considering the "factual extantness of nature" as a possible totality of beings as a whole within which Dasein *itself* is factually extant (p. 157).

This possibility is manifest in the structure of "world-entry," which itself is based more on a more "primal" "temporalization of temporality." (p. 209) Both structures, though, bear a somewhat ambiguous relation to the metaphysical totality of the world as such, as is shown by Heidegger's brief

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<sup>66</sup> *Metaphysische Anfangsgrunde der Logik im Ausgang vom Leibniz*. (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1978). Transl. by Michael Heim as *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. (Indianapolis: Indiana U. Press, 1984) (page #s as in translation).

<sup>67</sup> Cf. *Introduction to Metaphysics*.

concluding comparison of the underlying temporality of Dasein's own transcendence with Leibniz's conception of the monad as mirroring the universe on the basis of its own temporal constitution as drive:

Time is essentially a self-opening and expanding into a world. I will not go into the comparison [with Leibniz] any further, particularly the question of the extent to which one might conceive the interpretation of Dasein as temporality in a universal-ontological way – just as the monadology is presented as an exposition of the whole universe of beings. This is a question which I myself am not able to decide, one which is completely unclear to me. (p. 210)

What is literally undecidable for Heidegger in 1928 is thus the question of the relation of Dasein's being in the world to the ontic totality of beings *and thus* to the temporality at the basis of the possibility of counting them (of totalizing them).

This undecidability of the question of world and world-entry in relation to the ontic totality of beings remains characteristic, as I shall argue, of Heidegger's inquiry into the epochal conditions for the historical intelligibility of beings even after the "turn" of the 1930s, and can in fact, as I shall also argue, be understood as a positive phenomenon that remains *constitutive* of the problematic thereby developed. In particular, if Heidegger's description of the conditions for the possibility of the various epochal determinations of the being of beings retains the structural ambiguity of the undecidability of the question of world-entry in relation to the totality, then the underlying structural cause of this undecidability remains the aporetic relationship of finitude and the infinite. One might begin to surmise, here, the existence of a problem of limits and the unlimited that determines the whole late Heideggerian consideration of the constitution of the metaphysical epoch of presence and its problematic in-closure, the withdrawal of Being as the matter for thinking, and the exteriority of Ereignis to the metaphysical epoch that it ostensibly both determines and exceeds. In venturing to think the problem of the metaphysical thinkability of beings from out of a more originary difference, Heidegger will have evoked this problematic constantly, even as it is prevented from appearing at the surface of Heidegger's text by the assumption that the infinite can only be thought as the absolute, or in the figure of an onto-theological closure.

Such an undecidable problematic of the finite, the infinite, and the constantly unstable limit between them, thought by modern formalism in the aporias of set theory and as the problematic being of language in its relation to the totality of the world, would then be, as I have argued here, the specific site of a contemporary thinking, with and beyond Heidegger, of the temporality of Being in relation to the closure of the epoch of metaphysics that decides it as presence. It is in such a problematic, and the aporetic temporality that it reveals, that one might locate the problem of ideal genesis, of what is treated since Plato as the origin of the idea.

This temporality, suspended between the most ancient and the radically futural, in which the very intelligibility of Being as such is unfolded as the undecidability of limit and the unlimited in determining the intelligible Being of beings, in a way that simultaneously opens and closes the entire epoch of presence, is the one that Plato himself seems to evoke, behind or beyond the Visitor's official logical

solution to the problem of thinking being and non-being, in a passage he puts into the mouth of Socrates near the beginning of the *Philebus*:

And the people of old, superior to us and living in closer proximity to the gods, have bequeathed us this tale, that whatever is said to be consists of one and many, having in its nature limit and unlimitedness. Since this is the structure of things, we have to assume that there is in each case always one form for every one of them, and we must search for it, as we will indeed find it there. And once we have grasped it, we must look for two, as the case would have it, or if not, for three or some other number. And we must treat every one of those further unities in the same way, until it is not only established of the original unit that it is one, many and unlimited, but also how many kinds it is. (16c-d)

## VI

As we have seen, both Heidegger and Frege, in different but complementary ways, thus point to a transformative deepening of the problematic that is already laid out in the Visitor's discussion of the positions of the materialists and the friends of the forms. The problematic is that of the *relationship of thought to being* that allows, within what is there determined as a human life, for the *specific possibility of thinking being as such*. If the solution suggested by the Visitor to the problem of this relationship turns on the particular conception of logical form, as *duamis koinoneon*, that has set the terms for the subsequent development of thought about the relationship in the Western tradition, both Heidegger and Frege, in their radical thinking about the logical structure of the sentence and its relation to the structure of world as such, challenge the specific solution by deepening the general problem to which it responds. Whereas Heidegger does so by pointing toward the more original *ontological* phenomenon of unconcealment, which relates Dasein to the very structure of world as such, thereby relating Dasein's factual being back to its sense, i.e. to the Being of beings, Frege does so by pointing to the place of impersonal and ineffectual *sense* and to its constitutive link with indefinable truth. But if truth is indefinable for Frege, being is equally so for Heidegger, and for similar reasons.<sup>68</sup> In particular, in both cases, the attempt at definition collapses the phenomenon into an empirical or ontic one that appears then to be both ubiquitous and empty; this is the basis of the prejudice which, according to Heidegger, keeps us from raising the question of Being today and of the inevitable vicious regress which, according to Frege and Davidson, results from any ontic account of the basis of predicative truth. In neither case, however, does the impossibility of definition point to the emptiness or meaninglessness of the phenomenon itself. Quite to the contrary, in fact, for both philosophers the possibility of re-interpreting what at first appears as the mere indefinability of being and truth, instead, a positive phenomenon

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<sup>68</sup>“‘Being’ cannot be derived from higher concepts by definition, nor can it be presented through lower ones. But does this imply that ‘Being’ no longer offers a problem? Not at all. We can infer only that ‘Being’ cannot have the character of an entity. Thus we cannot apply to Being the concept of ‘definition’ as presented in traditional logic, which itself has its foundations in ancient ontology and which, within certain limits, provides a justifiable way of characterizing “entities”. The indefinability of Being does not eliminate the question of its meaning; it demands that we look that question in the face.” (S&Z, p. 4)

grounded in the matters themselves, will point in significant ways to the possibility of reconsidering the very structure of the logical/ontological context in which all definition takes place.

For both philosophers, as we have seen, this reconsideration implies a radical challenge to any and all *correspondence* theories of truth, according to which truth consists in the structural resemblance, correlation, or representation of a thing or state of affairs by a sentence or mental item. But in both cases the challenge is actually more general, since it also, and equally, challenges *any* ontic figure of truth whatsoever (and hence, I have argued, not only any “correspondence” account of truth, but also any coherentist view, or any view of truth-as-assertibility, warranted assertibility, or any other “epistemic” notion). The challenge is radical because what it questions in both cases is the very possibility and ground of *identity*, thereby undermining the thought that truth can be understood, in any sense, as having any ontic ground in antecedently *identifiable* beings at all. Thus, in both philosophers, the thought that truth can be grounded in identity cedes to a more basic thinking of *difference* as the positive basis for the phenomenon of truth. To identify this positive phenomenon, in each case, it is necessary to recognize a specific mode of phenomenalization operating at the very boundaries of the ontic totality and indicated, from within the specific activities, concerns, and judgments of a human life, as the initially obscure supplement of their sense. For if “truth is included in all predication whatsoever” for Frege, and “being is co-said in every logos” for Heidegger, both statements point to the obscure structural point of presupposition within the activities of judgment and predication where these activities or their result touch on the real of being in itself.

The precise term for the mode of this demonstration is, as we shall see in chapter 2, the one used by Heidegger in a variety of early lectures and treatments: it is the *formal indication* [*formale Anzies*]. Though it is neither reference nor sense, formal indication is precisely a *non-universalizing* mode of demonstration of the structural surrounding in which the being of beings is evinced in a human life. Here, formalization is not generalization or universalization, but rather points to the conditions for possibility of the singular as such; it captures the particular mode in which a pervasive intelligibility of being in which we inexplicitly live can be explicitly recovered for theoretical understanding. As I shall argue, the terminology, though it is Heidegger’s, is equally appropriate for Frege; for as we have seen, Frege identifies the place of sense as precisely indicated, without definition, in the formal structure of our everyday judgments and acts of assertion insofar as these involve the specific possibility of truth.

For both philosophers, moreover, recognizing the essential link between sense and truth poses a radical challenge to the traditional account of the unity of the sentence, or proposition, as the *synthetic* combination of subject and predicate. This points the way, for both, to the need to understand the sentence as such out of a broader holistic and contextual surrounding that ultimately encompasses and even *points beyond* the totality of the world (of beings or of referents) as such. Nevertheless this “beyond” cannot simply be described, for either philosopher, as the place of the “transcendental” in any traditional (e.g. Kantian) sense. For both philosophers, in particular, the effect of pointing to the broader contextual surrounding in which the truth of individual sentences is ultimately lodged is not simply to insist upon the reference to the world as an ontic totality or locate it with respect to an unproblematic “beyond”, but rather to decompose the ‘metaphysical’ figure of the world as the totality of beings by means of a more original thinking of the structural aporias inherently involved in the

thinking of this totality as such. It is this thought that produces for both philosophers the necessarily supplement or *virtual* surrounding of sense as the non-actual and ineffective surrounding of the ontic totality insofar as it touches on being (truth) as such. This supplement is produced as the correlate of a questioning whose topic and site, for both philosophers, is the singular difference between being and beings. The proper phenomenon of this difference is *truth* as the formally indicated structure of the impersonal *presentation* of beings in their determinate *being-thus-and-so*. In both cases, it is a question of the conditions for presencing, as appears immediately if we can take seriously the thought of sense as “mode of presentation” that is in fact shared (in different but related ways) by both philosophers.

These connections point, as I shall argue in detail in chapters 3 and 4, to the contemporary possibility of a unified *logic of truth*, drawing both from Heidegger and from theory in the analytic tradition, that elicits its structure along two perpendicular but complementary directions: that of the “semantical-logical” description of the logical structure of language as such; and that of the “ontological-logical” conditions for the disclosure of beings without prejudice to their linguistic or discursive status. Both dimensions can be pointed out, as I shall argue, by means of a unitary configuration of formal indication; and both dimensions, in their articulation of the structure of judgments and practices of everyday life, are essentially “hermeneutic” in the sense of a “hermeneutics of facticity.” This conjoint hermeneutic configuration cross-cuts at a basic methodological level the usually assumed “divide” between the methods and results of “analytic” and “continental” philosophy. It is hoped that the demonstration of such a unitary problematic configuration, if successful, can help to provide terms for a continuation of the problems invoked at a conceptually and historically conceptual level in both “traditions” in such a way as to provide the possibility for a substantial surpassing of the distinction.

The suggestion of such a reconciliation of analytic methods of primary linguistic/logical analysis with Heidegger’s ontological inquiry into the truth of beings will seem to some flatly incompatible with the criticism that Heidegger constantly makes of what he treats as a constitutive and misguided prejudice of traditional logic, namely its tendency to treat the linguistic *assertion* [*Aussage*] as the basic locus of truth. By contrast with this prejudice, as Heidegger recurrently emphasizes in *Being and Time* and elsewhere, for the ontological problematic truth is to be seen as *aletheia*, or unconcealment, and thus as primarily and essentially a phenomenon whose locus is the disclosure of beings rather than assertions, sentences, judgments, or anything linguistic in nature. Though Heidegger in fact never engages in any serious or sustained way with Frege’s logic or with any of those who have followed out its consequences methodologically, his recurrent employment of this criticism, alongside the criticism of correspondence theories, in his own positive argument, can appear to suggest that Frege and the post-Fregean tradition are, in their prioritization of the structure of the sentence and in particular in the orientation of their research toward language, party to a “logical prejudice” that they share with the “logical tradition” since Aristotle and consists in seeing the logical structure of the predicative sentence as the “basic” or fundamental place of truth.<sup>69</sup> By contrast with this, Heidegger is sometimes supposed to have had a

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<sup>69</sup> This suggestion is made, e.g., by Daniel Dahlstrom in *Heidegger’s Concept of Truth* (Cambridge U. Press, 2001), especially pp. 23-28. In particular, Dahlstrom holds that various partisans of the “Fregean tradition” (p. 24) hold the “logical prejudice” of “conceiving truth primarily as a property of a proposition” (p. 17) insofar as they have conceived of “a ‘thought’ or ‘proposition’...as the truth-bearer” (p. 25) or insofar as they have held “redundancy,”

definitive insight into truth's actual "pre-linguistic" or "non-linguistic" ontological foundations which leads him to a position that is fundamentally different from and irreconcilable with anything developed in the subsequent analytic inquiry into truth in the wake of the "linguistic turn."

The suggestion is, I think, overstated on the basis of Heidegger's text and the implication of irreconcilability accordingly misguided. The suggestion that there is a basic disagreement about the "primacy" of the sentence as the "basic" locus of truth has little meaning, in particular, unless it is further specified what sense of "primary" and "basic" is at issue; and once this sense is disambiguated, the impression of a deep irreconcilability between the two conceptions largely dissipates. To begin with, we should note that the problem of the structure of the predicative sentence is a central, perhaps *the* central, concern with which Heidegger occupies himself in the investigations leading up to, and including, *Being and Time* in which he radically and recurrently poses the problem of truth itself. Moreover, as we have seen, the investigation yields a deep-seated critique of the traditional conception of the structure of predication and of the whole traditional conception of the subject/predicate form of the sentence that shares much, as we have seen, with Frege's own similarly motivated critique of this conception. More importantly, however (and as I shall argue in more detail) it would be highly misleading in the broader context of Heidegger's own ontological problematic to portray the ultimately hermeneutic structure of truth as *aletheia* that he opposes to the traditional conception as *simply* "pre" or "non-linguistic." Though there is certainly a sense in which truth is "pre-logical" for Heidegger – namely, that the disclosure of beings, rooted in an ontologically basic structure, can and does take place without and prior to the active *formation* of predicative judgments or their expression in an assertoric act -- the kinds of disclosure to which Heidegger points as basic are explicitly rooted in a basic *hermeneutic* structure, the "as" structure of something-as-something, which is certainly not simply unrelated to the possibility and structure of *logos* as such.

If, then, truth is not basically "logical" for Heidegger, it nevertheless remains that, as in the title of the 1925-26 course, the *question* of logic *is* in a basic sense the *question* of truth, and the problematic of truth is unthinkable without a constitutive reference to the problems of logic that unfold and point to it. This is not to say that either the actual structure and nature of the *logos* or sentence, or, more broadly, the problem of the being of language to which it ultimately points, are adequately clarified in Heidegger's approach, especially at this time. It is only to say that the critique he voices of the substantialist and representationalist assumptions underlying the traditional conception of subject/predicate logic gives us simply no reason to suppose that the analytic problematic of the logic of language inaugurated by Frege should similarly be rejected on its basis.

Nevertheless, the suggestion of a unitary hermeneutic configuration that I shall make here *does* point to the possibility of deepening *both* problematics of sense thereby conjoined – i.e. the Heideggerian "ontological/hermeneutic" problem of Being and the Fregean/Davidsonian "semantic/hermeneutic" problem of the general concept of truth – each in ways suggested by the other. In particular, as I shall

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"semantic," or "pragmatic" theories of truth (pp. 25-28). Dahlstrom does not, however, discuss the implications of Frege's argument for the indefinability of truth, which has, as we have seen, the consequence that truth is precisely *not* the property of a proposition or any other entity, and also that any definitional *theory* of truth is untenable.

argue, on the one hand Heidegger's ontological /temporality problematic suggests the possibility of an ontological interpretation of the specific conception of *the being of language* underlying the possibility of a Davidsonian "theory of meaning" as well as the specific kind of temporality that is involved, on the conception, in the learning, attaining, communicating and possessing of a language as such (chapter 5). But on the other, the problematic of the basis of *number and mathematics* suggested by the Fregean problematic and in particular by the constitutive problems of set theory in its dual reference to totality and infinity points the way to a deepening of the Heideggerian theme of the ontotheological and metaphysical determination of the being of beings and *its* "historical" and ultimately eventual temporality.

The suggestion, again, may seem to fly in the face of Heidegger's own self-description of his methods; for as is well known, he constantly and unequivocally rejects the applicability of "logic" in the sense of formal, mathematical logic or logistics to the ontological/hermeneutic problematic with which he is concerned. The point of this rejection is not, as is abundantly evident from Heidegger's own use of the terminology and methodology of "formal indication," to reject the relevance of any and all formal methods to the problems of hermeneutics; rather, it is to oppose what is here seen as the "empty," merely calculative or "formalistic" technique of logical symbol manipulation to the substantiality of a concrete and disclosive indication or demonstration of the things themselves. The opposition, which has its roots in the distinction which Husserl adopts from Kant between a "formal" logic capable only of such empty calculation and a "transcendental" one capable of going beyond this to demonstrate the "truth" of beings in the sense of manifestation, is in fact overcome in Frege's radical conception of senses as modes of presentation and as thereby constitutively linked to truth. On this conception, as we have seen, the constitutive nexus of sense is the domain of *impersonal* presentation, or of a presentation of beings and truths that founds and decomposes equally the identity of beings and the possibility of linguistic reference to them.

The conception is not without its own constitutive problems, including eminently those constitutively involved in the possibility of the extensional reference to *beings as a whole*, which language as such appears to presuppose but which is nevertheless, as shown by the development of the set-theoretical paradoxes, essentially contradictory. But I shall argue (chapters 6 and 7) that these problems, including ultimately the problematic of the relationship between the finite and the infinite which the set-theoretical aporias of totality and infinity display in precise form, cannot ultimately be separated from an ontological inquiry which interrogates the formal and ontological conditions for the possible presentation of beings in their being, up to and including the formal conditions for the metaphysical determination of being as presence itself. It is, moreover, ultimately necessary in the context of this problematic to find terms and means structurally to indicate the place of truth as the anonymous, a-subjective and ineffectual structural "place" of unconcealment. To find these terms and means is not, as I shall argue, to dispute or cast doubt on Heidegger's recurrently reiterated claim of the ultimate dependence of disclosive truth on Dasein, but rather to think Dasein itself, outside any reference to the biological or psychological nature of the human subject, as the *impersonal* structure of truth; and the place of unconcealment, outside any reference to beings, as the *ineffective* structure of Being.



For this conception, there will be no *privileged* access to truth, not even the privilege that determines Dasein within the limit of an “authentic” finitude whose individuating end is found in its capability of death.<sup>70</sup> It is necessary, in other words, to follow out the ultimate consequences of the claim that Dasein is, independently of any human or subjective determination, a structure of being in the world; and one that cannot any longer be thought as a subject of capacities in any sense. Such a conception will be, I shall argue, the one requisite to any legitimately *realist* conception of being and truth that also takes seriously the implications of Heidegger’s ontological interpretation of truth as unconcealment. It is such a conception of truth that is moreover needed, as we shall see, in order to overcome what has seemed to many commentators to be a significant limitation of Heidegger’s approach to truth in relation to ontological constitution: its apparent failure adequately to treat *ahistorical* events and occurrences in the realm of nature (up to and including the “natural” origin of Dasein itself).

If we look beyond Heidegger’s own official disavowal of the problems of the “foundations” of mathematics and number, it is in fact possible, as I shall argue, to discern and verify in other parts of Heidegger’s text the applicability and even a certain conceptual *priority* of these problems in connection with the ontological problematic of being, time, and history. In discussing the possibility and structure of the “metaphysical” conception of being as constant, standing presence, Heidegger often makes reference to a conception of time based ultimately on the domain of nature and the kind of (regular, countable, calculable and mathematizable) time characteristic of it. In the culmination of metaphysics, i.e. the contemporary regime of technological enframing correlative to the dominance of a “calculative thinking” that appropriates objects and resources as standing reserve, it is the calculability or mathematical form of natural science that ultimately co-determines the possibility of the technological regime of handling and trafficking with beings. The two sides of this configuration – the dominance of calculative thinking modeled on mathematical computation, on one hand, and the treatment of beings as raw material for mechanistic manipulation and trafficking – converge, in a way that is predicted by Heidegger himself, though never developed in detail, in the contemporary pervasiveness of what is today called “information technology.”

This dominance is linked, both historically and conceptually, very closely to the developments of contemporary mathematical logic inaugurated by Frege; in particular, the specific conceptual origin of the computer lies in Alan Turing’s analysis of the implications of this logic, at the very boundaries of its effectiveness, for the formalization of the specific question of the solubility of mathematical problems by regular, algorithmic means. As I shall argue in chapter 5, the undecidability and essential ineffectivity that Turing’s results (along with Gödel’s closely related ones) elicit in fact point in a significant way to the positive phenomenon of undecidability at the limits of calculative effectivity themselves.<sup>71</sup> The phenomenon, formally demonstrated at the origins of the contemporary regime of computing technology, points, as I shall argue, to an apparently necessary *inexhaustibility* of the mathematical-real in relation to any regime of practice that attempts to capture and totalize it. The regime of “calculative

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Aporias: Dying – awaiting (one another at) the ‘limits of truth’* (transl. Thomas Dutoit, Stanford U. Press, 1993). For some trenchant critical considerations about Derrida’s position, see Iain Thomson, “Can I Die? Derrida on Heidegger on Death”, *Philosophy Today* 43:1, (1999), pp. 29-42.

<sup>71</sup> Compare also *The Politics of Logic*, especially chapters 6 and 10.

thinking” that comes to dominance and to enjoy an unquestioned privilege in the contemporary configuration of “late capitalist” life and *praxis* is thus, as I shall argue, already prepared from long afar in implicit or explicit thought of the basis and applicability of number as such that underlies a specific conception of time, long dominant in the Western tradition; while simultaneously, the positive phenomenon of undecidability and the ultimate ineffectivity that it elicits provide essential terms in which this regime can be interrogated and even perhaps transformed.

In particular if, as Heidegger suggests, the “metaphysical” interpretation of being as presence is itself determined by a particular conception of time, the inauthentic, everyday or “vulgar” one according to which time is a succession of present, punctual “nows”, this determination is explicitly and decisively co-original in Aristotle’s *Physics* with a particular and specific conception of the nature of number. According to this conception, on which “time is ... number of motion in respect of ‘before’ and ‘after’”, time is definitively that which can be mathematically counted and numbered.<sup>72</sup> It is thus possible to see the history of metaphysics, as Heidegger describes it, as in fact opened and closed with determinate and decisive reference to number and mathematics. In this respect, the total “mathematization” of nature achieved in the Enlightenment by Descartes and Galileo is but one determinative moment of a larger regime of thinking and *praxis* that opens with Aristotle and closes or culminates in the contemporary regime of technological enframing.

This leaves, in the other direction, the issue that will perhaps appear to many Heideggerians to be the biggest thematic obstacle to a sympathetic reading of Frege’s project: Frege’s determination (or metaphorization) of the realm of sense as a *timeless* or *extra-temporal* “third realm.” In relation to the problem of the origin of number and mathematics, the determination may seem to replicate the traditional determination of the temporality of mathematical beings as those which are maximally separate from history and temporal becoming; the question arises of how the being of mathematical objects can be thought on the basis of a more originally grounded interpretation of the modes of temporal being themselves. The question, if posed in relation to Frege’s literal or metaphorical picture of the “third realm,” bears a strong resemblance to the critical question the young Heidegger repeatedly posed to Husserl’s own determination of phenomenological “laws of essence” as grounded in a realm of ideality wholly distinct from the spatiotemporal world: the question of the *being* of such a realm in relation to time. Here, the question of the “a priori” as a specific temporal designation of ontological existence is not simply criticized, but rather modified and deepened in Heidegger’s particular inquiry into the conditions for the possibility of a temporality that transpires structurally “before” all that is empirical.

In reading Heidegger’s problematic together with the “analytic” one that arises from Frege’s initial conception of the atemporality of sense, it is thus necessary to pose radically the question of the original temporal determination of the structural picture of language that dominates in the analytic tradition. This is the picture on which language as a whole is a structural configuration of signs governed in their combination and use by comprehensive, logically tractable rules. In fact, in the tradition inaugurated and underwritten by this conception, the underlying logical or grammatical structure of language

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<sup>72</sup> *Physics* 219b1-9.

appears in various guises: not only (as in Frege) as a timeless, supersensible structure of laws and norms, but again as a system of conventions (Carnap), as the empirical regularities of language use (Quine), as the explicitation of what is grasped or understood implicitly in coming to understand and master a language (Davidson, Dummett, Brandom), or again as the unique resource of a special type of “imagination”, the “projective imagination” that unfolds and projects the ordinary uses of words into ever-new contexts (Cavell). This conception equally underlying Frege’s discussions of the scope of the laws of logic with respect to language as well as Davidson’s conception of a “theory of meaning” for a particular natural language. In this conception, as I shall try to show, the analytic conception of the nature of language grounded in Frege’s logic finds its specific ontological expression as a positive description of the ultimate nature of language as such. The inherent problems of this conception, including its structural aporias, then point to the depth of the problem of the being of language and its unique relation to the problem of being.

It is thus necessary, in order to grasp and reawaken the ontological problematic as it characterizes our present, to perform a twofold reading with respect to the philosophical traditions that dominate today: on the one hand, to interrogate Heidegger’s text with respect to the question of the basis and status of number and mathematics as it is linked both to the problem of thinking the totality of beings as a whole and to the problem of time; and on the other, to perform an “ontological” reading of the conception of the structure of language that dominates in the analytic tradition and determines its own key problems and insights.

The result of such a twofold reading should be to elicit terms and problems with a critical and even potentially transformative bearing on the overarching determinants of contemporary life and practice insofar as they are rooted in the contemporary ontological situation itself. In particular, if, as Heidegger suggests, this contemporary situation is characterized by a certain exhaustion or completion of the metaphysical epoch of presence, then such terms for its critique can only be found by developing the contemporary implications of the original Parmenidean unity of thinking and being as they figure in the determination of contemporary life.

In a decisive passage in the *Beiträge*, Heidegger specifies the contemporary form of this unity as the hidden unity of *machination* [*Machenschaft*] and *lived-experience* [*Erlebnis*]:

If machination and lived experience are named together, that indicates an essential belonging of the two to each other but at the same moment conceals an equally essential non-simultaneity with the ‘time’ of the history of being ... The belonging of the two to each other can be grasped only through a return to their most disparate non-simultaneity and through a dispelling of the semblance of their extreme oppositionality. If thoughtful meditation (as questioning of the truth of being and only as this) achieves knowledge of such belonging, then at the same time the basic thrust of the history of the first beginning (the history of Western metaphysics) is already grasped out of a knowledge of the other beginning. Machination and lived experience constitute as a formula [formelhaft] the more original version of the one expressing the guiding

question of Western thought: beingness (being) and thinking (as representational grasping). (p. 101)<sup>73</sup>

In the contemporary configuration that is dominated by thinking as calculation and thereby by the “machinations of technology, which are epistemologically grounded in mathematics,” the attitude of action and practice that Heidegger calls *machination* comes to dominate; this is an unlimited and totalizing trafficking in and with beings that determines them in “rules and guiding principles,” a regime for which “nothing” is “impossible” with respect to them, everything must conform to the priority of planning and organization, and accordingly, “the question of the essence of truth is no longer needed.” (p. 95). This is the regime, in other words, of the unbridled assumption of the priority and totality of the *actual*, where all and only what can act and effect (or be acted or effected upon) in a regular, calculable regime of organization is thought as real.<sup>74</sup> Here, there is “no problem that is not solvable, and the solution is merely a matter of number applied to time, space, and force.” (p. 98)

It is under the heading of the critique of machination that Heidegger first raises, accordingly, the question of the dominance of technology in the sense of technique, and above all in the sense of that attitude of calculation that totalizes the calculable as the real, whose essence he would later designate as enframing [*Gestell*].<sup>75</sup> But the hidden and necessary obverse of this priority of calculable machination in the contemporary handling and organizing of beings, Heidegger suggests, is the dominance of the humanist conception of “lived experience” as the basic structure of the appropriation of beings to the human subject of experience; here, everything counts as a being only insofar as it can be “lived through” and experienced by the living human being, ultimately determined as the *animal rationale* (p. 102). This dominance is closely connected with a dominant “anthropology” which, regardless of whether it is “dressed in an enlightened/moral, psychological/natural-scientific, human-scientific/personalistic, Christian, or political/ethnic coiffure” simply postpones the “decisive question,” that of whether “the modern era is grasped as an end and another beginning is sought.” (p. 106). Nevertheless, the interlinked configuration of machination and lived-experience, which figures the original Parmenidean link between being and thinking, *if thought and grasped as a unity and in their non-simultaneity with the original configuration*, the coming together of machination and lived experience contains a peculiar event within the hidden history of being.<sup>76</sup> (p. 105). In particular, “Machination as the essential occurrence of beingness provides a first intimation of the truth of being itself.” (p. 100).

It is thus that Heidegger’s identification of the essential non-simultaneity of the formulas of unity that determine metaphysics in its entirety – thinking and being (in the sense of beingness or presence) and lived-experience and machination – bound the era of metaphysics and, Heidegger suggests, point to the futural possibility of its opening into a wholly other history. The opening of this other history is indicated in what is precisely the critique of the closure of the modern configuration that figures being

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<sup>73</sup> I discuss the passage and the link between *Erlebnis* and *Machenschaft* in more detail in my “Thinking and Being: Heidegger and Wittgenstein on Machination and Lived-Experience” (*Inquiry* 46:3 (2003), pp. 324–45).

<sup>74</sup> “It seems to be a law of machination...that the more prescriptively machination unfolds...all the more obstinately and machinationally does it conceal itself *as such* ... in modernity behind *objectivity* as the basic form of actuality and thus of beingness.” (p. 100)

<sup>75</sup> Cf. “The Question Concerning Technology”

as the capacity of beings to be effected, acted upon, represented and experienced by the human subject of capacities, in particular the anthropological or psychological bearer of the capacities of thought and language. When applied as a dominant configuration of practice and conviction, this configuration looks simultaneously in two directions: on the one hand to the individual as the center of the capacity of a language, endowed with “culture” and an empirical autonomy correlative to it; and on the other, to the “commonality” of shared practices lodged within the anthropological unity of a culturally determined natural language.<sup>76</sup> In this picture, there is no longer anything like the *impersonality and ineffectiveness of truths*, both of which, as we have seen, Frege emphasizes as much as Heidegger; rather, truth can here only be determined as assertibility, as conformity with the empirical unity of established and effective practices, or as “correctness” in the sense of the ontic correspondence of experience with experienced.

If, on the other hand, as Heidegger suggests, the matter of difference, in its withdrawal, gives us cause to think, then the very conception of the impersonality and ineffectivity of truth that Frege and Heidegger share claims our thinking of the “logical” event that has the ultimate significance, as Heidegger suggests, of the closure of metaphysics itself and its temporal opening to a wholly other relation to being. This opening can take place, as Heidegger emphasizes, only through a questioning that, by contrast with what is determinable in the contemporary configuration, “is not the purposive act of an individual nor something delimited and calculated by a community;” rather it is “the passing on of an intimation that comes from, and remains assigned to, what is most question-worthy.” (p. 6). This matter that is today most “question-worthy” is, as we have seen, the abyssal ground of difference that amounts, in its withdrawal, to a singular event that exhibits what Heidegger calls an “infinite excess” over all that is calculable and actual. It remains to be seen whether such an “excessive” futural event of being to come is indeed, as Heidegger suggests, legible today as the obverse face or hidden correlate of what is most present in the practical/technological configuration of the present, which absolutizes the calculable; or whether rigorously logical contemporary reflection on the origin of number and the ultimate nature of language rather discerns in this configuration an undecidability of being and thinking for which there are no longer signs, hints, or disclosures, but only the original insistence of the unlimited, which surrounds and ultimately decomposes every delimitation of the present and every determination of time as such.

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<sup>76</sup> One can usefully compare Heidegger’s gesture here, then, to the one made more recently by Alain Badiou in opposing, at the beginning of his 2006 *Logics of Worlds* (transl. by Alberto Toscano, London: Continuum, 2009) the axiomatic statement of prevailing contemporary conviction according to which “There are only bodies and languages” to the statement of his own “materialist dialectic,” which holds that “There are only bodies and languages, except that there are truths.”: “In order to validate the equation ‘existence=individual=body’, contemporary *doxa* must valiantly reduce humanity to an overstretched vision of animality. ‘Human rights’ are the same as the rights of the living. The humanist protection of all living bodies: this is the norm of contemporary materialism...Moreover, it is essentially a *democratic* materialism. That is because the contemporary consensus, in recognizing the plurality of languages, presupposes their juridical equality. Hence, the assimilation of humanity to animality culminates in the identification of the human animal with the diversity of its sub-species and the democratic rights that inhere in this diversity.” (p. 2). It is thus clear that, despite differences in emphasis, Badiou’s foundational insistence, in exception to this contemporary axiomatic of the human animal and linguistically determined community, on the existence and essential structure of truths should be seen as repeating Heidegger’s gesture in more than one way.