

## Preface

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

The aim of this book is to develop, under contemporary conditions, several interrelated problems about logic, sense, truth, and time. It does not solve or resolve these problems, but just tries to clarify their underlying and relational structure, as they give themselves to be thought today. The problems treated here are “ontological” in that they are closely related to what Martin Heidegger specified as the questions of the meaning and the truth of being, and because of this, I have centrally engaged here with Heidegger’s thought and work. Nevertheless, this book is not intended primarily as a contribution to the exegetical or secondary literature on Heidegger. Rather, it is an investigation into problems that, as I will argue, already posed themselves in an original way to Plato and Aristotle and are also seen clearly, although also in a different light, in other leading philosophical discourses of the twentieth century, including especially “analytic” philosophy.

The problem most centrally taken up is that of the relationship of *thought* to *time* whereby both being and becoming are *given* to be thought and understood within the life of a being that is itself situated in time. This problem already motivated the research of the later Plato, in the *Sophist*, into the specific sense of being and non-being and led him, therein, to formulate the first logical theory of the articulate predicative unity of a sentence, which allows, against the Parmenidean strictures, change and non-being to be truly thought and said. It is renewed, under contemporary conditions, not only in Heidegger’s ontological questioning, but also in the analytic tradition’s investigations into the nature of language and linguistic meaning and in the problematic results of formal meta-logical investigation into the structure and limits of syntactical rules and effective procedures. In the investigations to follow, I consider the interrelationships of all three approaches and attempt to extract their implications for the basic problems of the sense of being as it is given to thought and of the phenomenon of truth in its specific relationship to time.

The problem of the ontological basis and structure of the logical form of thought is, from the beginning, intimately linked with the question of *mathematical* existence and truth. The idea of the relationship of thought and being as determined and determining with respect to number is already explicit, for instance, in the Parmenidean monism that determines being as a whole as One. Subsequently, it was developed and problematized in Plato’s consideration of the specific structure of the idea as the “one over many” at the basis of unitary sense. Under the condition of his later questioning and problematizing of the relationship of the idea to its participant, witnessed in the dialectical paradoxes of the *Parmenides*, Plato finally seems to see an inherent dialectical engagement logical and structured sense with the insistent principle of the *apeiron*, which constantly threatens to overstep all bounds and disrupt all fixed structures.

Here, I argue that it is as situated in such an original and basic relationship with the structure of the infinite, as it is indicated and thought in contemporary mathematics, that the problem of the meaning

and truth of being must be, once again, taken up today.<sup>1</sup> The specific results of mathematical reflection are not seen, here, simply as internal to mathematics as an extant body of theory or as problems for what is only a “regional” ontology of mathematical objects or objectivities. From this perspective, in particular, the problems of the givenness of number and the counting of beings are not simply external to problems of the givenness of sense and time as they are given and determined historically. If, rather, the history that determines and is determined by this co-givenness essentially involves the problems of the givenness of number in relation to the infinite, then its contemporary condition of its culmination or fulfillment in a seemingly univocal regime of calculability and technological control itself constitutively involves the problematic and paradoxical structures of the availability of the infinite as such. This can provide the basis, as I argue here, for an investigation of the specific structures of given sense and time as infinite that also provides critical terms for the illumination of the problematic and paradoxical basis of this contemporary condition and the presumptive terms in which it is established and held in force.

The main results of this investigation are, first, that the question of being, if it is to be taken up anew today, must be understood in relation to the specific structure of the infinite and transfinite as these are also determined in contemporary logical and mathematical thought; and second, that this understanding itself motivates and demands a *realist* doctrine of given time that provides formally motivated terms for overcoming any conception of time as determined by the representational capacities or activities of a thinking subject. This realism about given time might, as I argue, also be the necessary condition for an *ontological* realism in general, and thereby for a thought of objective and natural time and the events within it that does not subject either, in anti-realist fashion, to the condition of their thinkability in finite or human forms. Nevertheless, this is also not simply the development of an objectivism about time or meaning, since what is interrogated is not time or sense as simply present phenomena but, rather, the basis and structure of their givenness as such. As I argue here, the structure of this givenness can be formally thought as indicated in a reflexive structure of ontico-ontological difference without, thereby, necessarily being thought in limitative terms as necessarily constrained by the determined or imagined forms of possible representation or finitely determined effectivity. To see it as indicated in this way is nevertheless to situate it within the inherent reflexivity that Heidegger sees as ontologically conditioning Dasein in its particular relationship with truth, and (later) provides the very structure of the more basic “clearing” in which Dasein has its original site.

That sense and time are thought in ontological relation to reflexivity in this way also means that they are essentially structurally determined in relation to the inherent real of the infinite that both determines them and that they unfold. This is not the real of the infinite-absolute (as it is thought, for instance, theologically), but rather of the structural inherence of the infinite and unlimited transfinite with the givenness of the iterative structure of number as such. If, as I argue, time has been thought, since the beginning, as co-given with the structure of number as counting or measure and also with the specific idea of the infinite that is implied in it, then the givenness of time must also, under contemporary conditions, be thought as conditioned by the paradoxical formal structure of the infinite as it is indicated by contemporary mathematical thought. Here, that time is given as infinite does not and cannot mean

---

<sup>1</sup> An interpretation of the ontological implications of the infinite as it is unfolded and thought in contemporary mathematics is attempted, along partially similar lines, by Alain Badiou in *Being and Event*.

that it is given as the *eternal permanence* of objects, beings, or phenomena, or any selection from among them. Rather, that it is formally indicated as given in an infinite that can never, without contradiction, be gathered into the unitary form of a presence. The infinite as thought this way might then be the principle of a formally motivated overcoming of the “metaphysics of presence” that links the thought of being, in western philosophy since the Greeks, to that of presence or to the form of presence in general.

The methodological guideline followed throughout the book is that of reflection on the *consequences of formalism* in the sense that formalism and the possibility of formalization are employed both as an object of reflection and as a privileged indicative resource with respect to the structure of truth, being, and time. That formalism is both a resource and an object of investigation here does not mean that claims or expressions are analyzed in terms of one particular formal language or that the correctness of any specific formal calculus is simply presupposed. Rather, what provides the decisive methodological guideline are those considerations, actually paradoxical or nearly so, in which formalism itself encounters and demonstrates the inherent limits of its own scope of application and sense. In taking these results as demonstrative in this way, I have made an extended application of the formal methodology that Heidegger himself describes and applies as that of *formal indication*. Formalization, in this sense, is to be sharply distinguished from generalization or the demonstration of the formally universal. It is rather the indicative methodology by means of which the singular phenomena are shown in their own proper self-givenness in each case. Seen this way, such an indication is already, as I shall argue, an essential aspect of what Plato understood as the demonstrative force of the idea, at a great conceptual distance from its subsequent development under the heading of the formal-categorical universal.

In *The Politics of Logic* (2011), employing a similar guideline of reflection on the consequences of formalism, I distinguished among four formally possible orientations of thought, each determined by the specific way it conceives of the constitution and limits of the totality of thinkable beings as a whole. In that book, I did not discuss Heidegger in any detail, and the specific problems of truth and time were also treated only briefly and in passing. Nevertheless, because of the way each orientation constitutively involves a specific conception of the possibility or impossibility of thinking beings as a whole, the problematic developed there was already essentially related to that of what Heidegger calls the ontological difference. The critique of the onto-theological orientation of thought, in particular, essentially parallels Heidegger’s critique of metaphysics as constituted onto-theologically by the forgetting or erasure of the ontological difference. But as I argued there, the metalogical terms and results that allow for the critique of ontotheology also equally provide grounds for the rigorous critique of the *constructivist* orientation that, by contrast to onto-theology, understands the totality of thinkable beings as constituted and limited by what it specifies as the finite powers of specifically human thought. In this book, I further develop the implications of formalism in overcoming both of these “pre-Cantorian” (as I called them there) orientations and thereby, not only the theological dispensation that assigns beings as a whole to a transcendent infinite-absolute, but also the anthropologism that seeks to constrain them within a constitutive analytic of human finitude.

The point at which both orientations are overcome, as I argue here, is that of the insistence of *difference* at the level of the real of being, over against its repression or dissimulation in thought under the form of identity. The idea of a development of the ontological problematic as involving such an ontological insistence of difference prior to identity and identification is familiar from recent French thought, particularly that of Deleuze and Derrida. But what will perhaps be less familiar is the suggestion of its communication with the conceptions of logical and linguistic structure whose theoretical development is broadly characteristic of the analytic tradition. In 2003, I published an article, "Thinking and Being: Heidegger and Wittgenstein on Machination and Lived-Experience," in which I suggested some connections between the later Heidegger's critique of technology and Wittgenstein's own critique of rule-following in the *Philosophical Investigations*.<sup>2</sup> The decisive consideration in each case, as I suggested there, was the way in which the idea of thinkable difference overcomes a formally determined configuration that pre-determines the sense of beings and the possibility of their representation in terms of the general form of identity or in terms of the rule, conceived as the infinite repetition of the same. In Wittgenstein in particular, the point at which the insistence of difference can be positively demonstrated is that of the indication of the paradox whereby every rule, in order to be applied, would seemingly call for another one to show how to interpret it. The recognition of this underlying paradox shows how the determined thought of the linguistic rule as the formal repetition of the same necessarily communicates with a deeper thought and experience of difference at the very basis of what is formally thought as the structure of interpretation and truth. Here, I argue that such a thought of prior and insistent paradoxical difference can also be seen as decisive in producing and underlying some of the logical and formal innovations that represent the best innovations of analytic thought, including Frege's argument for the distinction between sense and reference, and Davidson's development of the semantics of natural languages on the formal basis of the structure of Tarskian truth theories.

It has been said, and with insight,<sup>3</sup> that one can see clearly the methodological difference between "analytic" and "continental" philosophy by considering the contrast in the titles of two books written by leading practitioners of each: Michael Dummett's *The Logical Basis of Metaphysics* and Heidegger's *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. It is true that the difference in the relative prioritization of logical and metaphysical thought shows a marked distinction, important at many decisive moments in both traditions' self-conceptions, between what are markedly different senses and methods of "grounding", basis, or founding. But what the distinction, even if understood this way, leaves open is the possibility of a *twofold* formal-hermeneutical investigation into the factually given phenomena themselves. In this investigation, on the one hand, the specific implications of logical structures and results are interrogated with a view to their "metaphysical" (or actually ontological) implications and on the other, the foundations of "logic" in a broad sense are interrogated in their specific foundation in the formally indicated questions of the sense and truth of being. It is such a method, as I suggest here, that might represent *one* way in which the best thematic and methodological insights of both traditions could be accommodated within a unified theoretical framework and further pursued thereby.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Inquiry* 46:3 (2003), pp. 324-45

<sup>3</sup> First, I believe, by Mark Wrathall.

This twofold hermeneutics of the facticity and givenness of the phenomena of sense, truth, and time provides a basis, in part I of the book, for a twofold interpretation of the structure of (specifically) *linguistic* truth as doubly founded, both ontologically in the deeper underlying sense of the being of beings as given, and formally-logically in the specific structure of a language that is revealed by means of a formal consideration of the structural ability of its sentences to express truths and falsehoods. The broader basis of what appears as this logical structure of language, specifically determinative of the possibilities of truth and falsehood, in the ontological problematic is pursued, in chapter 4, through the ontological interpretation of the specific sense of negation, and is there shown to depend on the phenomenon of an original difference that cannot be thought in terms of representation, identity, or presence in general. In part II, the formal-indicative hermeneutic investigation is deepened as an investigation into the relationship of sense and time as given; this leads to an “ontological” consideration of the temporal character of natural or “historical” languages as they change and develop over historical time. The question of the original sense of time, as co-given with number, is taken up by reinterpreting, under the condition of contemporary mathematical and formal results, the thematic and methodological linkage that is drawn, from Aristotle to Kant, between the sense of time and the givenness of number as its measure. Finally, I suggest that such a rereading offers to illuminate and evince the problems most pervasively characteristic of our technological present, in its institution and enforcement of the global regime of the total calculability and manipulation of beings in the abstract forms of capital, technological determinacy, and effectivity. With such a development of the ontological problematic in its contemporary form, I argue, one may also find terms in which to expose this contemporary configuration to the ontologically clarified terms of its radical, immanent, and possibly transformative formal critique.

Wittnau, Germany

14 January, 2014