

## The Logic of Being: Heidegger, Truth, and Time

### Brief chapter abstracts

#### 1. Introduction: The Logic of Being: Plato, Heidegger, Frege

In the *Sophist*, Plato raises the Parmenidean problem of the possibility of saying *non-being* or *what is not* and answers it, in the voice of the Eleatic Visitor, with the first discussion in Western philosophy of the articulate logical unity of the proposition or sentence. In his 1924-25 lecture course on the *Sophist*, Heidegger reads Plato as proposing an original solution to the problem of being and non-being through his suggestion of a logical *koinonia* in the subject-predicate structure of the sentence which allows the “mixing” or “combination” of the “great types” of being, rest, motion, sameness, and difference. Gottlob Frege’s innovative mathematically oriented picture of logic and sense, beginning in the *Begriffsschrift* of 1879, challenges this traditional conception of the unity of the sentence as the combination of subject and predicate. Frege’s distinctions between concept and object, sense and reference, and force and content underlie a picture on which truth is not correspondence or any other definable property but is formally/structurally indicated through the articulation of the laws of logic. I argue that reading Frege and Heidegger’s implicit and explicit critiques of the Eleatic Visitor’s conception of logical unity together can point toward a transformed picture of sense and truth and elicit fundamental questions about the temporality of language and thought in relation to being.

#### 2. The Early Heidegger and the Givenness of Form

I argue that Heidegger’s development of the project of a hermeneutics of facticity and an ontological analytic of Dasein from 1919 to 1926 can be understood in terms of his pursuit of a problematic that he shares with Plato and other historical philosophers, that of the *givenness* of form or of the formal dimension of concretely experienced life. The problematic thereby pointed to is the same as that of the Platonic *methexis* or participation: that of the being of categories or categorial types and their relationship to entities as intelligibly unconcealed in our factual life. In this development, Heidegger retains important elements of Husserl’s anti-psychologism and his positive characterization of intentionality while questioning the temporal status of the ideality of content which Husserl presupposes, as well as the subjectivist understanding of consciousness that underlies Husserl’s transcendental idealism. This questioning leads Heidegger ultimately to conceive of the ontological basis for the temporality presupposed throughout the metaphysical tradition as resting in a more original formally indicated structure of Dasein as original temporality, to be understood as a self-givenness of time that reflexively produces the temporality of the world from a position within it.

#### 3. The Logic of Sense and Transcendental Truth: Heidegger, Tugendhat, Davidson

In his last, posthumously published book, *Truth and Predication*, Donald Davidson suggests that the application of Tarskian truth-definitions for particular languages within the scope of radical interpretation depends upon a pre-existing grasp of a general concept of truth (that is not simply truth-in-L for a particular language, L). I consider whether and to what extent Heidegger’s understanding of truth as unconcealment or *aletheia* can underwrite a general understanding of the basis of truth and

predication in such a way as to be capable of synthesis with Davidson's Tarski-inspired picture. I argue that Davidson and Heidegger agree in rejecting: i) correspondence theories of truth; ii) the idea of timeless propositions as truth-bearers; and iii) "epistemic," verificationist, subjectivist, coherence, communitarian, or pragmatist theories of the basis of truth. Furthermore, there is positive ground for a synthesis of Davidson and Heidegger's views in that both claim that the phenomenon of truth plays a constitutive and normative role in the interpretation of language and the linguistic intelligibility of entities.

#### 4. Heidegger's *Sophist* and the Logic of Presence

In his massive 1924-25 interpretation of Plato's *Sophist*, Heidegger develops the implications of his interpretation of the history of metaphysics, according to which Greek ontology interprets being fundamentally as presence. On Heidegger's reading, Plato's response to Parmenides in the *Sophist* response allows him to discover the specific structure of the intentional relation as well as an original mode of the phenomenal appearance of nothingness that underlies the logical possibility of negation. Developing some suggestions made by Deleuze in his reading of Plato in *The Logic of Sense* and by Derrida in "Plato's Pharmacy," I suggest that this structural problematic ultimately points to an original logical phenomenon of primary *difference* at the root of all possible phenomenalization. This conception of originary difference, as a logical development and radicalization of the ontological difference itself, undermines both Plato's mimetic distinction between the good and the bad copy and Heidegger's own conception of the univocal foundation of logic in ontology. It also points to the possibility of a conception of negation and nothingness according to which neither is the more basic ontological foundation of the other, but they are structurally co-given at the problematic point of the fixation of an ontic totality of beings. The conception has further implications for the nature of appearance, deception, and illusion.

#### 5. The Sense of Finitude and the Finitude of Sense

For Heidegger in *Being and Time*, human existence (Dasein) is essentially *finite* in that the specific kind of temporality that characterizes its basic structure is directed, in each case, toward death as an "utmost" and unavoidable individuating possibility, which ultimately grants to a human life the possibility of its projects being meaningful. In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger specifies the finitude of Dasein, following Kant, as the capacity to be affected by objects external to us, which gives rise to the problem of the relationship between sensibility and the understanding and, importantly, the temporality of their synthesis. I argue that there is also an idea of constitutive finitude that is decisive in the analytic tradition, and that this idea can usefully be compared with Heidegger's. In particular, major results achieved within the tradition turn on a conception of *language* as an essentially finite system of terms and recursively applicable rules capable of infinite application.

I argue i) the implications of this recursive, rule-determined conception of the relationship between the finite and the infinite in language can be understood, in Heidegger's terms, as determining structurally a specific understanding of the sense and meaning of a human life; and ii) that certain structural aporias and paradoxes that arise, in different ways, from this picture of language in the work of the late

Wittgenstein, Cavell, and Turing/Gödel collectively point to the possibility of a different determination of the relationship of language and sense to the infinite, one which allows us to envision a constitutive *infinity* of sense which is nevertheless not the *theological* or *absolute* infinite rejected by Heidegger.

#### 6. The History of Being and The Undecidability of Sense

Heidegger's project during and after the "turn" or *Kehre* of the mid-1930s is characterized both by the transition from the "guiding" question of the being of beings to the "grounding" question of the truth of Being itself and by an intensified inquiry into the structure, origin, and being of language. Both developments are decisive in producing the late Heidegger's analysis of the history of being and the historical determination of the various epochal interpretations of the being of beings and of the epoch of metaphysics itself. In this chapter, drawing on the structure of what Reiner Schürmann has called "hegemonic phantasms," I consider the structure of the constitution of the sense of beings in particular being-historical epochs. I argue that we must understand this determination as having an underlying logical structure of undecidability, in that the determination of the sense of beings in a particular historical epoch involves reference to an organizing structure that is itself undecidable in terms of the ontological difference between beings and being. This undecidability is structurally analogous or homologous to the undecidability that Derrida has located at the necessary boundaries of determined textual regimes, and bears at least important structural similarities to the necessary undecidability of formal systems and procedures demonstrated by Gödel and Turing.

#### 7. Becker's Heidegger and Lautman's Heidegger: Plato, Mathematics, and Ideal Genesis

In this chapter, I consider the work of Oskar Becker and Albert Lautman, two mathematically oriented philosophers whose interpretations of Heidegger have been largely passed over in most contemporary discussions. Both Becker and Lautman find a basis in the specific reflective and ontico-ontological structure of Dasein for the constitution and accessibility of mathematical ideality and, thereby, of the constitution of countable time as understood in Greek ontology. I consider the implications for this of the undecidability and incompleteness results demonstrated by Gödel in 1931 and (in a slightly different form) by Turing in 1936-37. I argue that, in the context of these results of contemporary formal and metalogical reflection, the metaphysical determination of the eternal as the continually recurrent iteration of the discrete, punctual "now" yields to a more problematic conception of countable time as grounded in a more basic genesis from the continuous and unlimited, itself grounded in the undecidability of the ontological difference. Finally, I suggest that such a conception of genesis can provide the basis for a formal and ontological *realism* about time that allows the time of nature and natural science to be seen as based in historical temporality without, however, reducing it to social construction or convention.

#### 8. Undecidability, Time and Recurrence: Derrida, Deleuze, Nietzsche

In "Ousia and Gramme: Note on a Note from Being and Time," Jacques Derrida raises the question of the historical and ontological basis for the determination of what Heidegger calls the "vulgar time" of the metaphysical tradition in *Being and Time*. Derrida reads Heidegger's distinction in the light of

Hegel's discussion of the structure of time in the *Philosophy of Nature* and Aristotle's seminal discussion in *Physics IV*, suggesting that this reading complicates Heidegger's own attempt to identify a single and unified "vulgar concept of time" characteristic of the metaphysical tradition as a whole and raising the further problem of how punctuality and continuity are related in the constitution of time as continuous.

In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* and *The Logic of Sense*, Gilles Deleuze draws out the implications for the metaphysics of time of just such a structure of undecidability, connecting this to the inherently paradoxical structure of sense. Deleuze's identification of a time of the Aion as opposed to the chronological time of Chronos identifies an underlying problematic "virtual" structure at the basis of the possibility of chronological or countable time. Drawing on Deleuze, Klossowski, and Becker, I consider the relationship of this "virtual" structure to Nietzsche's doctrine of the eternal return of the same, and consider in this light Heidegger's complex attitude toward Nietzsche's doctrine, whereby it is presented both (e.g. in "The Word of Nietzsche") as the culmination of metaphysics and also (e.g. in "Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra") as pointing enigmatically beyond the closure of the metaphysical epoch of presence.

#### 9. Conclusion: Being and Thinking: From *Gestell* to *Ereignis*

The late Heidegger repeatedly makes the claim that the current dominant regime of *Gestell* (enframing or positionality) can be seen as a kind of negative image or first glimpse of *Ereignis*, the event of appropriation that allows being to come into its own beyond the closure of metaphysics. I argue that this claim has its basis in a suggestion that Heidegger makes already in the *Beiträge zur Philosophie* of 1936-1938, that the hidden unity of *Erlebnis* (lived experience) and *Machenschaft* (machination) in contemporary life witnesses the long-deferred outcome of the original identification of thinking and being achieved by Parmenides at the start of the western tradition, and that thinking the ultimate ground of this unity can prepare the way for a "leap" into "another history." I consider the possible implications of this thinking for contemporary life and practice. In particular, I argue that the development of the theory and dominance of what is called "information technology" manifests the consequences of a further development of *Gestell*, which Heidegger anticipated but did not exhaustively theorize. Understanding the aporetic conceptual foundations of information technology in Alan Turing's consideration of the constitutive concept of effective procedures can point the way to a rigorous logical-ontological critique of contemporary assumptions of technological effectiveness and of the metaphysics of the human subject of capacities as this operates in the ideological and material support of prevailing technological and economic practices.