

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

### Chapter plan and abstracts

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

#### Part I

2. The Early Heidegger and the Givenness of Form
3. The Logic of Sense and Transcendental Truth: Heidegger, Tugendhat, Davidson
4. Heidegger's *Sophist* and the Logic of Presence

#### Part II

5. The History of Being and the Undecidability of Sense
6. The Sense of Finitude and the Finitude of Sense
7. Becker's Heidegger and Lautman's Heidegger: Plato, Mathematics, and Ideal Genesis
8. Undecidability, Recurrence and Time: Nietzsche, Deleuze, Derrida
9. Conclusion: From *Gestell* to *Ereignis*

### 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 Stranger, 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. According to Heidegger, this solution yields the first logical/structural account of the basis of intentionality as well as a prioritization of the logical structure of the sentence and its psychological representation which will subsequently characterize the tradition of Western logic, leading to the gradual obscuration of the originally hermeneutic and disclosive character of language and the greater and greater predominance of correspondence and representationalist accounts of truth. This claim of the priority of logic in the determination of the logical tradition of metaphysics continues in the late Heidegger's discussion of the "onto-theo-logical" structure of metaphysics, according to which the priority of the logos and the logical structure of the sentence enjoy a privileged role in obscuring the ontological difference and determining the very possibility of an epochal constitution of the (ontic) totality of beings.

Gottlob Frege's innovative mathematically oriented picture of logic and sense, beginning in the *Begriffsschrift* of 1879, begins with a radical challenge to the 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 transformed structural picture of language and predication, on which truth is not correspondence or any other definable property but is structurally indicated through the articulation of the laws of logic. On this anti-psychologistic picture, sense can no longer be understood as the psychological phenomenon or representational activity of an individual subject. Rather, the articulation of the logical structure of language points toward the identification of senses as modes of presentation underlying the possibility of meaningful reference to entities as well as their linguistic intelligibility. At the same time, the aporias of set theory (including importantly the paradox discovered by Russell in 1901) point to the metalogical complexity of sense, in particular in relation to the mathematical determination of the totality of beings.

I argue that, despite important differences, 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. According to this transformed picture, although truth is articulated in language, it has an ultimate ontological basis in sense as the mode of presentation of entities and states of affairs. The possibility of such a picture raises further questions, both about the ontological and temporal status of the underlying logical structure of language as it is developed and articulated in human practice, and about the logical status of the historical phenomena of world-entry and epochal transformation.

## 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. His pursuit of this problem leads Heidegger both to his methodologically decisive device of "formal indication" and to his increasingly penetrating and radical critique of Husserl's phenomenology of consciousness. One positive strand in this development is Heidegger's recognition of Husserl's theory of categorial intuition as providing the possible basis for a characterization of the possibility of reflective access to the *a priori* and thereby to the underlying ontological character of beings. The problematic thereby pointed to, as Heidegger recognizes, 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, in increasingly radical terms, the temporal status of the ideality of content which Husserl presupposes as well as the subjectivist and "personalistic" understanding of consciousness that underlies Husserl's transcendental idealism. The basis for both questions is Heidegger's increasingly deep posing of the question of the structure of temporality underlying the positive possibility of the intelligibility of entities, a questioning that culminates in the project of a "philosophical chronology" announced in the *History of the Concept of Time* (1925) and the radical reading of Kant developed in the second half of *Logic: The Question of Truth* (1925-26). 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.

On the other hand, a major obstacle to the direct reconciliation of Heidegger's and Davidson's views about truth is Heidegger's rejection of the assumption that the basic *locus* of truth is the sentence or proposition, an assumption that plays an essential role in Davidson's account and most others in the analytic tradition. In his habilitation, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*, Ernst Tugendhat articulates a series of objections to Heidegger's conception of truth as *aletheia* or unconcealment from the perspective of the propositional assumption. These objections include: i) that Heidegger's picture makes truth an ontic event rather than an ontological structure; that ii) it fails to grasp the aspects of logical structure that yield inferential relations among concepts and judgments; and iii) that it provides no ultimate basis for distinguishing between true and false statements about the same entities. I argue that Heidegger's conception can be defended against all three objections by recalling and developing the specific features of what he conceives as the basic "existential-hermeneutic" "as-structure" of unconcealment. According to this conception, the basic structure underlying the possibility of truth is the disclosure of "something as something" in practical comportment, and this basic structure is hermeneutic in that it supports the hermeneutic intelligibility of any entity whatsoever. Developing this conception further in connection with Davidson's late views, I argue for a two-dimensional hermeneutic conception of the structure of truth, which has propositionally articulated logical/linguistic intelligibility as one dimension and non-propositional, disclosively articulated intelligibility as another. Neither dimension is more "basic" than the other, but both point toward the unitary phenomenon of world as the formally indicated horizon of their possible application.

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

In his massive 1924-25 interpretation of Plato's *Sophist*, Heidegger develops the implications of the interpretation of the history of metaphysics he had first reached around 1923, according to which Greek ontology interprets being fundamentally as presence. This is the basis for Heidegger's specific critique

of Plato's response to Parmenides in the dialogue, according to which the structure of the *logos* or sentence provides the logical/phenomenological basis for the possibility of an actual manifestation of non-being in the person of the Sophist. On Heidegger's reading, this response allows Plato 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. Nevertheless, Plato fails to see the ontological structures actually underlying these phenomena, according to Heidegger, insofar as he develops them only through the interpretation of the *logos* and conceives of words and sentences themselves as ontically present entities. In particular, according to Heidegger, in distinguishing between accurate and inaccurate copies of the forms, Plato does not account sufficiently for the structural possibility of a "free-floating *logos*" becoming cut off, through repetition and publicity, from the ontological truth of the matters themselves originally disclosed in it.

I argue, first, that attention to the details of Plato's text reveals a more basic structural problematic of the structure of the *logos* that is genuinely ontological, in Heidegger's sense, in that it shows how the specific structure of the *logos* is co-articulated with the possibility of any disclosure or phenomenalization of beings for Plato, but which Heidegger himself largely misses. Second, 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 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.

##### 5. 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" in his Heideggerian interpretation of the history of being as presence (*Broken Hegemonies*), 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. I argue that in order to understand how historical

epochs structure everyday life and practice, it is necessary to consider this underlying logic of undecidability and how it provides a basis for the determination of the sense of ordinary entities in use. This undecidability furthermore points to a specific structure of “strong incommensurability” which structurally underlies the dynamic temporal possibility of radical and fundamental structural changes in the overarching determination of the sense of beings.

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

For Martin 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, somewhat differently: 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. In suggesting both determinations of finitude, Heidegger argues that a traditional understanding of the infinite as absolute, according to which human life is a finite limitation or privation of this “theological” infinite, must be rejected in favor of the claim that the infinite is produced out of the finite.

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. This conception has its roots in Hilbert’s study of formal systems, but is productively applied by early analytic philosophers such as Carnap, Schlick, (the early) Wittgenstein, and Tarski to produce important results about language, its structure, and its limits. One of the most developed applications of this conception is Davidson’s; specifically, Davidson makes central use of the assumption of a finite recursive determination of the infinite meaning of language to constrain the structure of what he calls a “theory of meaning” for a natural language.

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.

## 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 and unjustly passed over in most

contemporary discussions. As I argue, Becker's and Lautman's work on the nature of mathematical existence and the implications of mathematical practice, in dialogue with Heidegger's fundamental questions of the meaning and truth of being, point the way to important new ways of understanding Heidegger himself and yields unanticipated directives and new resources for making progress with some of his most important questions. These include the question of the thinking of Being from out of, and beyond, the ontological difference, the ultimate nature of truth as disclosure or *aletheia*, and the original structure of time as it is given both in history and in nature.

Oskar Becker's 1927 treatise, *Mathematical Existence*, seeks to intervene in the then-contemporary debate in the foundations of mathematics between Hilbert's formalism and Brouwer's intuitionism by considering the concrete phenomenological basis of mathematical objects and objectivity from a perspective informed by Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and Heidegger's ontological hermeneutic. Brouwer considers, in particular, the problem of the possible givenness of actual-infinite structures to human cognition and finds a motivating basis for this givenness in the phenomenon of the "transfinite structure-complication of Dasein," or the constitutive capacity of Dasein to achieve concrete reflective access to its own horizontal structure, which (as Becker argues) can be continued to infinite and transfinite levels, on analogy with the "generation principles" suggested by Cantor for the development of the hierarchy of transfinite sets, as well as with Emil Lask's account of the iterable formal/categorical "shaping" of given material contents. While this, as Becker argues, provides a concrete ontological/hermeneutic basis for the actual givenness of completed mathematical infinities, it also raises questions, especially in light of the set-theoretical paradoxes, about the coherence of the totality of all beings and about the nature of continuity. Becker argues that the latter problem, formulated in contemporary work as Cantor's continuum problem, in fact has deep roots in the ancient Greek investigation into the classification of magnitudes and ratios, and that the problematic of limit and unlimited as it appears in the discussion of the discrete and continuous plays a deep and important role in structuring Greek conceptions of both the nature of number and of time. In particular, Aristotle's classical discussion in the *Physics* of time as "the number of motion with respect to before and after" arises on the substrate of an earlier Platonic conception of formal or eidetic numbers as generated from an original synthetic/diaeretic process relating the limited and the unlimited.

This Platonic conception of ideal genesis also underlies Lautman's account of the structure and genesis of mathematical objectivities in his essay "New Research on the Dialectical Structure of Mathematics," first published in 1939. Drawing on Heidegger's distinction between the ontic and the ontological, Lautman seeks to demonstrate a specific kind of genesis of mathematical theories and the effectiveness of mathematics in what he calls a "dialectic" that governs mathematics in its constitutive structures as well as its concrete realization in practice. In particular, developing the account of "world-entry" given by Heidegger in his 1929 essay "Vom Wesen des Grundes," Lautman theorizes the basis of mathematical objectivities and their applicability to the world as what Heidegger calls the "transcendence of Dasein," the ontico-ontological structure whereby beings are given in their intelligibility on the basis of a prior but inexplicit basic understanding of being.

Both Becker and Lautman thus 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. In concluding, 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. Derrida’s analysis evinces an essential undecidability at the basis of time and presence as these are constituted in metaphysics; and I argue (drawing on the analyses of earlier chapters) that this undecidability can be understood in terms drawn from contemporary logical and metalogical reflection.

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.