Heidegger, Davidson, Tugendhat, and Truth

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(Abstract)

In this paper, I consider the relationship of Heidegger's theory of truth as *aletheia* or "unconcealment" to the propositional theories of truth developed within the analytic tradition by Wittgenstein, Tarski, and Davidson. I argue that the classic critique of Heidegger's conception of truth developed by Ernst Tugendhat in the 1960s still poses deep and foundational problems for Heidegger's account, and that these problems turn largely on the contrast between Heidegger's disclosive understanding of truth and the propositional (but non-correspondence) conception characteristic of much of the analytic tradition. In a recent book, Mark Wrathall reconstructs Heidegger's theory of truth and argues that it can be seen as paralleling Davidson's account of truth in that it identifies social practices as the ultimate foundation of truth; I argue, however, that because of the problems Tugendhat finds in Heidegger's account these alleged parallels cannot succeed. In the final section, I consider the possibility of accommodating at least some of what Heidegger says about practices and comportment within a broadly Davidsonian picture and conclude that, although such a picture would necessarily involve important modifications in Heidegger's theory of truth, the most important elements of his underlying fundamental-ontological project could nevertheless be preserved.

Heidegger, Davidson, Tugendhat and Truth

This paper is part of a larger project investigating the significance of the phenomena of *logos* and language for the phenomenological tradition, and attempting to situate this significance within a broader horizon of twentieth century (and now twenty-first century) philosophical thought. For this project, it is indispensible to consider the significance of logos for Heidegger's investigation into the question of being (both the question of the "meaning" or sense" of being in *Being and Time* and, later, the question of the historical "truth of Being" in his work after 1933).[1] However, at the same time, we can hardly afford to ignore the definitive results of the analytic tradition in the twentieth century, which, as I have argued elsewhere, can itself be understood as amounting to a philosophically transformative experience of *logos*.

In this paper itself, my aim is twofold. First, I shall attempt to *situate* Heidegger's unique conception of truth within a broader framework of thought and discussion about truth and meaning developed largely within the twentieth-century analytic tradition. Second, I shall suggest that this framework, although it is not Heidegger's own conception and indeed is in many ways in conflict with it, can nevertheless be quite useful in bringing out what is involved in some of Heidegger's own most pervasive concerns with the truth and meaning of being. In particular, I shall argue that the broad framework of the *propositional* conception of truth and meaning developed by analytic philosophers such as Frege, Wittgenstein, Tarski, and Davidson can contribute to our understanding of these phenomena in ways that support, rather than undermine, the ultimate aims of Heidegger's own project. It does so by showing what is involved in a conception of meaning and truth as ultimately *logically* structured and hence as determined in important ways by the phenomena that Heidegger himself theorized as *logos* and language.

On its face, the propositional understanding of truth held in common by these analytic philosophers contrasts quite sharply with much of Heidegger's own official theory of truth. For Heidegger's theory

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[1] For the transition from the "guiding question" to the "grounding question" see GA 65: *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, hg. V. F.-W. v. Hermann, 2., durchgesehene Auflage, 1994.

holds that truth is not primarily a property or feature of propositions, but rather an aspect of the disclosure or "unconcealment" of objects or entities. In the 1960s, Heidegger's student, Ernst Tugendhat, criticized this "disclosive" conception of truth on the ground that it is in fact unable to capture the most important dimensions of the "full" or "proper" concept of truth itself. As we shall see, one upshot of Tugendhat's critique is that Heidegger's official conception of truth essentially ignores the possibility of the very kind of "propositional" conception that characterizes some of the most prominent theories formulated within the analytic tradition. These conceptions, in general, combine an account of truth as *primarily* a feature or property of sentences or propositionally structured items with the *refusal* of any "correspondence" relation between such truth-bearers and *objects* and *entities* in the world. Thus, these are "propositional" theories of truth that are not "correspondence" theories, and in many cases are simply neutral or deflationary about the "substance" of the truth-relation (if any such there be).

It is not that Heidegger, in defending his own disclosive conception, ever explicitly argues against just this kind of view. Rather, as we shall see, his own discussions recurrently *identify* propositional theories with correspondence theories under the unified heading of the "traditional" conception of truth, and so appear simply exhibit a massive blind spot with respect to it. Unfortunately, recent exegetical works on Heidegger tend to replicate this blind spot, and because of this, as I shall argue, do not really succeed in bringing things together in such a way as to yield the improved discussion of the fundamental issues of truth and meaning that they seek to produce.[2]

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[2] Other recent commentators who appear to misplace the point of Tugendhat's critique along partially similar lines are Taylor Carman (Carman, T. (2003) *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in Being and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press)) and Daniel Dahlstrom (Dahlstrom, D. (2001) *Heidegger's Concept of Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press). For a helpful critical discussion of these commentators' readings of Tugendhat, as well as of an earlier reading by Wrathall, see: Smith, W. (2007) "Why Tugendhat's Critique of Heidegger's Concept of Truth Remains a Critical Problem", *Inquiry,* 50:2, pp. 156-179.

I

Throughout much of his career, Heidegger seeks to account for truth as *aletheia* or unconcealment

[*Unverborgenheit*]. In *Being and Time*, this account largely takes the form of a description of the

"original" phenomenon of truth as uncoveredness [*Entdeckendheit*].[3] Thus, in section 44 of *Being and*

Time (the section that concludes Division I's "Preparatory Fundamental Analysis of Dasein"), Heidegger

defines the truth of assertions as their uncovering or disclosure of entities:

> To say that an assertion "*is true*" signifies that it uncovers the entity as it is in itself. Such an
> assertion asserts, points out, 'lets' the entity 'be seen' (*apophansis*) in its uncoveredness. The
> *Being-true* (*truth*) of the assertion must be understood as *Being-uncovering* [Entdeckend-sein] …
> "Being-true" ("truth") means Being-uncovering. [Wahrsein (Wahrheit) besagt entdeckend-sein].[4]

In defending this conception, Heidegger also wishes to dispute in its very "ontological foundations" what

he sees as a still-dominant "traditional conception of truth." The traditional conception, as Heidegger

describes it, has two main substantive components: first, the claim that the *primary* "'locus' of truth is

the assertion or judgment;" and second, the claim that "the essence of truth lies in the 'agreement' [or

correspondence] of the judgment with its object."[5] This "traditional" conception is generally seen,

according to Heidegger, as beginning with Aristotle. Aristotle uses *apophansis* in the original Greek

meaning of a "showing-from" or demonstration, but in *Peri Hermenieas* (or de Interpretatione) he also

uses it in connection with the first definition of an assertoric or propositional statement, what Aristotle

terms a *logos apophantikos*.[6] Nevertheless, we can still find in Aristotle a clue, according to Heidegger,

to "what was primordially surmised in the *oldest* tradition of ancient philosophy and even understood in a

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[3] Heidegger (2006) *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag; henceforth: *S&Z*). Translated by
John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (1962) as *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Harper
and Row). Page numbers are as in Heidegger's original German text.
[4] S&Z, pp. 218-219.
[5] S&Z, p. 214.
[6] *De Interpretatione* 17a 1-3. Cf. Sheehan, T. (1988) "Hermeneia and Apophansis," in: F. Volpi (ed.),
Heidegger et l'idee de la phenomenology, pp. 67-90 (Kluwer) (see esp. pp. 76-77.).

pre-phenomenological manner."[7] This "oldest" conception, as Heidegger glosses it, holds that the "being-true" [*Wahrsein*] of *logos* (or of a *logos*) is "*alethenein* in the manner of *apophinesthai*." This means it is a matter of "taking entities out of their hiddenness [*Verborgenheit*] and letting them be seen in their unhiddenness (their uncoveredness)."

Thus, for Heidegger, *logos* is *primarily apophansis* in the sense of the *showing*, demonstrating, "uncovering" or indicating of entities; and only *secondarily*, and derivatively, is *logos* (or 'a *logos'*) something structured like a sentence, judgment, assertion, or proposition. This conception of the relative primacy of *apophansis* with respect to "judgment" and "assertion" underlies much, if not all, of what the early Heidegger says about the nature and basis of truth. In *Being and Time* itself, the conception of truth as basically disclosive is announced already in the Introduction (section 7b)[8] and plays an essential role in many of the further structures of the book, for instance in the analysis of the worldhood of the world (which is supposed to be "revealed" by truth in its more primordial sense as *aletheia*, although it cannot be revealed by propositions) (Div I, chapter 3), the analysis of "Being in as such" (Div 1, chapter 5), the

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[7] S&Z, p. 219.

[8] "Even if *logos* is understood in the sense of "assertion", but of "assertion" as 'judgment', this seemingly legitimate translation may still miss the fundamental signification, especially if "judgment" is conceived in a sense taken over from some contemporary 'theory of judgment'. *Logos* does not mean "judgment", and it certainly does not mean this primarily – if one understands by "judgment" a way of 'binding' something with something else, or the 'taking of a stand' (whether by acceptance or rejection)." (p. 32); "Furthermore, because the *logos* is a letting-something-be-seen, it can *therefore* be true or false. But here everything depends on our steering clear of any conception of truth which is construed in the sense of 'agreement'. This idea is by no means the primary one in the concept of *aletheia*. The 'Being-true' of the *logos* as *aletheuien* means that in *legein* as *apophainesthai* the entities of *which* one is talking must be taken out of their hiddenness; one must let them be seen as something unhidden (*alethes*); that is, they must be *discovered* (*entdeckt*). Similarly, 'Being false' (*pseudesthai*) amounts to deceiving in the sense of *covering up* [*verdecken*] : putting something in front of something (in such as way as to let it be seen) and thereby passing it off as something which it is *not*.

But because 'truth' has this meaning, and because the *logos* is a definite mode of letting something be seen, the *logos* is just *not* the kind of thing that can be considered as the primary 'locus' of truth. If, as has become quite customary nowadays, one defines "truth" as something that 'really' pertains to judgment, and if one then invokes the support of Aristotle with this thesis, not only is this unjustified, but, above all, the Greek conception of truth has been misunderstood." (p. 33) "When something no longer takes the form of just letting something be seen, but is always harking back to something else to which it points, so that it lets something be seen *as* something, it thus acquires a synthesis-structure, and with this it takes over the possibility of covering up. The 'truth of judgments', however, is merely the opposite of this covering-up, a secondary phenomenon of truth, with *more than one kind of foundation*. Both realism and idealism have – with equal thoroughness – missed the meaning of the Greek conception of truth, in terms of which only the possibility of something like a 'doctrine of ideas' can be understood as philosophical *knowledge*." (p. 34)

care structure (Div 1, chapter 6), and Dasein's attestation of authenticity and resoluteness (Div 2, chapter 2).

By (apparently) stark contrast with this, the tradition of Frege, Tarski, Wittgenstein, and Davidson sees items with the structure of sentences, judgments, assertions or propositions (rather than simply objects or entities, or names or symbols for them) as the *primary* bearers of truth and falsity.[9] This structure is, minimally, one that cannot simply be specified in terms of an individual object or entity, but rather attributes properties or relations *to* one or more objects and so says (or perhaps shows) *what is the case*. *That such-and-such is the case* can, familiarly, be characterized as a "fact," a "state of affairs," or perhaps the *obtaining* or *holding* of a fact or state of affairs.[10] In what follows, I will call any conception of the bearers of truth as structured in this complex way a "propositional conception," bracketing the differences between these specific characterizations and also bracketing, except where they matter, the differences between judgments, assertions, sentences, and propositions.

A good example of a propositional conception is the view that comes powerfully to the fore in the first remarks of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*:

> The world is all that is the case.

And

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[9] There are questions to be raised here about what is meant by "primacy," especially in view of Heidegger's apparent commitment to a distinctive "ontological" or even "historicial" (in the sense of *Geschichte*) sense of primacy and "primordiality". Without judging as to the coherence of these apparent commitments, I take it for the purposes of this paper that the relevant sense of "primacy" is an *explanatory* one, in which A will be prior to B if B is to be explained, partly or wholly, by or in virtue of A. Thus, for instance, I shall argue (against Heidegger's own theory of truth) that we can explain the use of "true" as a noun modifier (as for instance in the phrases, "true gold" and "true courage") only if we first have an understanding of the use of "true" in connection with sentences and the contents of judgment.

[10] In what follows, I shall remain neutral about what terminology is most appropriate here, emphasizing simply the distinction between such structures or complexes and individual (and not otherwise structured) items or things.

The world is the totality of facts, not of things.[11]

Here, the contrast is drawn explicitly between a conception of the world as inherently *structured* in such a way that it can only be adequately revealed or described by means of sentences or propositions and a conception (to be rejected) on which it does not have this kind of structure, but is instead simply a collection or totality of *individual* things or objects. The availability of this conception belies, as we shall see, one of the main assumptions underlying Heidegger's own conception of the "traditional" conception of truth, namely the assumption that a propositional or "assertoric" theory of truth *must* be a "correspondence" theory as well. Heidegger does distinguish between these two components of what he sees as the "traditional" account of truth, but throughout *Being and Time* and in other texts dating from both before and after its composition, Heidegger assumes again and again that these two components *must* go together.[12] In fact, this is not so; and philosophers in the analytic tradition have indeed often adopted a view of truth that holds that it is primarily propositional while clearly *rejecting* a correspondence account of (propositional) truth. Thus, whereas the scholastic motto which Heidegger most often mentions in discussing the "traditional" conception of truth, according to which truth is the *adequatio intellectus et rei*, calls on its face for correspondence or "adequation" between the intellect and a *thing* or *object (rei)*, and so does not immediately suggest a propositional conception of truth at all, on the other hand the conceptions of those twentieth-century philosophers who have held a propositional conception of truth can almost universally be separated from the idea of truth as correspondence or adequation, and indeed in many cases involve conceptually devastating critiques of this idea. [13]

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[11] Propositions 1 and 1.1 of Wittgenstein (1961) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Transl. by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness. London and New York: Routlege).

[12] Other places where Heidegger makes this assumption include: GA 19 (1924-25), pp. 23-28; GA 21 (1925), pp. 127-28; GA 24 (1927), pp. 294-95; GA 26 (1928), pp. 154-58; GA 34 (1931), pp. 2-4. Heidegger's explicit concern with what he takes to be Aristotle's propositional understanding of truth seems to have entered his thought as early as 1921; see Kiesel, T. (1995) *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: U. of California Press), p. 230ff.

[13] Heidegger identifies this conception as underlying theories of truth in Aquinas, Avicenna, Kant, and nineteenth century neo-Kantianism. (S&Z, pp. 214-215).

In "The Semantic Conception of Truth," (drawing on the earlier article "The Concept of Truth in Formal Languages") Alfred Tarski attempts to describe the systematic structure that must be exhibited by any extensionally adequate definition of the term "true" as it is used in a (formal or natural) language.[14] According to Tarski, any such definition will be adequate only if it implies all sentences of a certain form, what he calls form (T):

X is true, if and only if, p.

Here, 'p' stands for any sentence of the language and 'X' is to be replaced with a name for that very sentence, typically by enclosing the sentence itself within quotation marks.

Thus, for instance, a Tarskian theory of truth will imply that

"Snow is white" is true (in English) if and only if snow is white.

And

"Snow is red" is false (in English) if and only if snow is not red.

Since it plausibly claims to show what is involved in any extensionally adequate theory of the truth of propositions, we may, following Tarski, take this convention to express the *core* of any propositional conception of truth.[15] As Tarski himself suggests, indeed, it is plausible that it exhibits the central constraint that any more specific theory of the "nature" of truth will have to respect, the constraint that it "get right" the truth-conditions of the sentences of which we *can* predicate "truth." Additionally, since the Tarskian truth-conception analyses truth as a property of logically structured sentences, it fits

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[14] Tarski, A. (1944) "The Semantic Conception of Truth", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *4* (3), pp. 341-75.

[15] For obvious reasons, this kind of conception is also often called a "truth-conditional" conception; the label is innocuous, as long as one does not construe it as involving any specific conception of what the relevant "conditions" consist in.

integrally within the framework of analytic projects that attempt to display the relations of inference and deduction between sentences that characterize the meaning of terms in a language overall.

In relation to Heidegger, though, the most important thing to note here is that Tarski's propositional conception of truth, like other propositional conceptions typical of the analytic tradition, *in no way* implies a correspondence theory of truth and is indeed quite consistent with the denial of any such theory.[16] To see this, we should note that as Tarski indeed emphasizes, what is embodied in the form (T) is not *itself* a theory of truth, for it says nothing about what truth *is* or *in what* it consists.[17] In fact, it is quite consistent, in principle, with a number of different possible accounts of what truth consists in or what "makes" a true sentence true. For instance, though we can hold, without violating Tarski's conception, that correspondence to facts or states of affairs is the ultimate "truthmaker" for sentences, it is also possible to see the truth of sentences (as Tarski goes on to suggest) as grounded in a "semantic" relation of "satisfaction" between the *general* terms of a language and *ranges* of individuals. Another possibility is to refuse to give any metaphysically binding account of the "truthmaking relation" (if such there be) at all.[18]

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[16] Philosophers have often been misled by the superficial form of the T-sentences into thinking that Tarski's conception does indeed embody a kind of "correspondence" theory of truth. However, although Tarski does say in passing that the label "correspondence theory" might be used for a theory of truth based on the claim that "The truth of a sentence consists in its agreement with (or correspondence to) reality," and notes that *this* formulation might be offered as a modern paraphrase of Aristotle's statement from *Metaphysics*, he also emphasizes that this, like all other modern formulations, are insufficiently "precise and clear" to yield a "satisfactory definition of truth," and this is precisely why, he suggests, it is necessary to find a "more precise expression of our intuitions," which takes the form of his own semantic conception. As we shall see in more detail below, in fact (and as Davidson brings out quite clearly), not only do the T-sentences not need to be seen as embodying any substantial relation of "truth" or "truthmaking" between two objects, but it is very likely in fact *impossible* coherently to suppose them to do so.

[17] Since it is neutral in this way on the level of the "actual" nature of truth, it is probably better to call Tarski's view (as he himself does) a "conception" rather than a "theory" of truth, and I will maintain this practice in what follows.

[18] On Tarski's own "semantic" conception, the reference to *general* terms in specifying ranges of satisfaction is, however, essential, since it is clear (see below) that it is impossible to formulate a semantic theory that accords with convention (T) if the only semantic relation is between (proper) names and isolated individuals.

This last option will be particularly attractive if we have good reason to think that "true" is not definable in terms of *any* relationship holding between sentences, mental representations, or ideas, on one hand, and items or objects in the world, on the other. Some years before Tarski wrote, Frege had already argued for precisely this conclusion on the basis of his own thoroughly propositional conception of truth. In the 1918 article "Thought," Frege holds that "the only thing that raises the question of truth at all is the sense of sentences."[19] That is, what for Frege makes a sentence more than just a collection of words or sounds is just that it has what he calls a sense, which is to say that it is a candidate for truth or falsity. This is closely connected with the famous "context principle," adopted by Frege years earlier, which holds that "a word has meaning only in the context of a sentence."[20] *In other words (and glossing over many details), truth is systematically connected, for Frege, to sense or meaning (compare Heidegger's guiding question in Being and Time, the question of the sense [Sinn] of Being); and the fact that words alone are not candidates for truth or falsehood, but that truth emerges first on the level of the sentence, points strongly to the suggestion that any systematic understanding of meaning must be dependent, in the first instance, on propositional truth.*

This excludes any conception of truth as grounded primarily in relations of correspondence between ideas (or anything else) and objects, and in the article, just after formulating the propositional conception of truth, Frege goes on to argue vehemently against the possibility of any theory holding that truth consists in any such relation:

> *But could we not maintain that there is truth when there is correspondence in a certain respect? But which respect? For in that case what ought we to do so as to decide whether something is true? We should have to inquire whether it is true that an idea and a reality, say, correspond in the specified respect. And then we should be confronted by*

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[19] Frege, G., (1997) "Thought" in: Beany, M. (ed.) *The Frege Reader* (London: Blackwell), p. 327.
[20] The context principle is already suggested implicitly in Frege's *Begriffsschrift* of 1879 and is explicitly formulated as a methodological maxim in the *Grundlagen der Arithmetik* of 1884. For some discussion, see Livingston, P.M., (2008) *Philosophy and the Vision of Language* (New York: Routledge), chapter 2.

a question of the same kind, and the game could begin again. So the attempted

explanation of truth as correspondence breaks down. For in a definition certain

characteristics would have to be specified. And in application to any particular case the

question would always arise whether it were true that the characteristics were present.

So we should be going round in a circle. So it seems likely that the content of the word

'true' is sui generis and indefinable.[21]

Frege puts his argument here as bearing primarily against conceptions according to which truth consists

in a correspondence between ideas and objects. No such conception can succeed, Frege suggests, since

the description of such a relation of correspondence still leaves open a further question of the truth of the

description, and so presupposes what it is supposed to explain. It is helpful, in fact, to notice that this

argument against correspondence theories of truth resembles arguments that Heidegger himself gives

against correspondence theories in several passages, most notably a notorious passage in Being and

Time in which Heidegger considers the judgment "The picture on the wall is hanging askew."[22] Here,

Heidegger argues that it is inappropriate to construe the relationship between the judgment and the

picture itself as one of "representation," in that it is the real picture, and nothing else, that is the actual

object of the judgment and toward which one is directed in judging about it. Just as for Frege, therefore,

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[21] "Thought", p. 327.

[22] S&Z, pp. 217-18. In fact, as Tugendhat points out in his own critique (Tugendhat, E. (1967) *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter &Co.) (Henceforth: *DW*), p. 331), Husserl himself had actually given a similar argument against "picture" theories already in the *Logical Investigations*, some 25 years before Heidegger's writing of *Being and Time*, which makes the basis for some of Heidegger's criticisms of Husserl as a "correspondence" theorist rather mysterious. One version of Husserl's own version is given at in the *Logical Investigations,* vol. 2. See Husserl, E. (2001) *The Shorter Logical Investigations* (transl. by J. N. Findlay, ed. and abridged by Dermot Moran. London: Routledge), Investigation V, pp. 238-41.   Husserl's formulation of the argument also bears close comparison to Frege's: "Since the interpretation of anything as an image presupposes an object intentionally given to consciousness, we should plainly have a *regressus in infinitum* were we again to let this latter object be itself constituted through an image, or to speak seriously of a 'perceptual image' immanent in a simple percept, *by way of which* it refers to the 'thing itself'." (p. 239)

for Heidegger there can be no reasonable account of the truth of the judgment in terms of the agreement or correspondence of "ideas" – mental representations – with things, since any such account would substitute for our direct relation to things a secondary relation to a representation, and thus deny the very possibility of that direct relationship in which all intentional "aboutness," according to Heidegger, essentially consists.

But despite these similarities, Frege's argument against correspondence goes much further than Heidegger's. For Frege's claim is not simply that correspondence accounts introduce an indirectness into (what is actually) our direct relationship to things by introducing secondary relata such as representations, but also that any account of truth as consisting in any kind of relationship at all raises the question of the truth of the claim that the relationship in question actually obtains, and so will lead to an infinite regress. Frege's argument thus bears not only against "representationalist" and psychologistic versions of the correspondence theory, but indeed against any theory that makes truth consist in a real relation, whether direct or indirect, at all.

In the Being and Time passage and elsewhere, Heidegger takes it that his own arguments against correspondence theories confirm that truth is essentially a "being towards Real entities" and, in particular, a manner of "uncovering" these entities. It is not completely clear whether or not we should take this kind of talk as asserting that truth consists in a specific kind of factually existing relation between Dasein (or "a Dasein") and its object, but if we do take it this way, then the account falls afoul of Frege's argument, every bit as much as do the representationalist theories that Heidegger himself criticizes. (For given any such real relationship, it will always be possible, as Frege says, to pose once more the question of the truth of the assertion that that relationship holds). At any rate, it is evident, at least, that whereas Heidegger repeatedly suggests that the refutation of the correspondence theory is simultaneously an argument against propositional conceptions of truth, if anything like Frege's view is remotely tenable, this identification is not justified. An argument against the tenability of a

correspondence theory is not by itself an argument against a propositional view of truth, since it is

perfectly possible to hold the propositional conception of truth without a correspondence theory of truth,

as Frege himself did. Indeed, it may be that it is precisely this combination – of a propositional view of

truth with the denial of a correspondence theory – that turns out to have the best chance of underwriting

the explicitly structural claims we wish to make about our complex and situated being-in-the-world.

Familiarly, the propositional conception of truth first suggested by Frege and formulated by Tarski would

later come to play a decisive role in some of the most prominent analyses of truth, language, and meaning

within the analytic tradition. One of the most important of these is the "radical interpretation" project of

Donald Davidson, which draws centrally on Tarski's specific formulation of the schematic form of

theories of truth.[23] On Davidson's conception, a "theory of meaning" for a natural language recursively

embodies a compositional structure of assignments of meaning to the language's primitive predicates; as

in Tarski, this compositional structure, in turn, must be adequate in the sense that it yields as deductive

consequences the whole *corpus* of T-sentences for the language in question. A speaker's understanding

of the language may then be considered equivalent to her knowledge of this recursive structure, and an

interpretation of it in another language may be considered to be a precondition for successful

understanding of speakers of the first language by speakers of the second.[24]

In particular, where what is at issue is the interpretation of an unknown language (as it is in the situation

of "radical interpretation"), the theory of meaning will, in yielding the T-sentences for the language under

consideration, specify truth-conditions for each sentence of the considered language by means of the

interpreter's own distinct language, thus yielding a systematic translation or interpretation of the alien

language as a whole. Davidson follows Quine in arguing that, under these conditions, certain aspects of

the translation will be inherently indeterminate and hence that it cannot be completed unless certain

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[23] See, especially, "Truth and Meaning" (1967), "In Defence of Convention T" (1973), "Radical
Interpretation" (1973) and "Belief and the Basis of Meaning" (1974), all of which are collected in
Davidson's (1984) *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon.)
[24] "Truth and Meaning," p. 17; "Radical Interpretation," pp. 125-26

essentially ungrounded interpretive assumptions are made at the outset. In particular, Davidson holds, it will be essential to the work of interpretation that a certain kind of trade-off is maintained between truth and meaning; it will be possible to interpret the meaning of the majority of the alien language's terms only if we assume that the claims that are made by its speakers are, by and large, true.[25] As Davidson would go on to argue, this suggests that it will in fact be impossible to interpret another language unless we make the assumption that its speakers agree with us, by and large, about most features of reality; this leads to the famous anti-relativist argument of "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," according to which we must abandon the relativist claim that speakers of different languages may inhabit different conceptual schemes or worlds.[26] For since the very possibility of interpretation requires that we first attribute widespread truth and agreement, there is no room in interpretive practice for the kind of large-scale disagreement that the theorist of alternative conceptual schemes envisions.

In Davidson's last work, *Truth and Predication*, he returns to the Tarskian framework and its implications for our understanding of meaning and truth. He emphasizes the utility of this framework for resolving some of the problems involved in the ancient problem of predication, as well as the virtues of Tarski's conception of truth in its own right. Chief among these virtues, according to Davidson, is the complete extensional match between Tarski's conception and what is involved in our intuitive notion of truth; and this itself depends, as Davidson emphasizes here, on the way in which Tarski's conception puts the truth of sentences before any relation to objects (such as satisfaction or correspondence):

> …[T]he key role of Convention-T in determining that truth, as characterized by the theory, has the same extension as the intuitive concept of truth makes it seems that it is truth rather than reference that is the basic primitive. [This] is, I think, the right view. In his appeal to Convention-T, Tarski assumes … a prior grasp of the concept of truth; he then shows how this intuition can be implemented in detail for particular languages…The story about truth generates a

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[25] "Belief and the Basis of Meaning," pp. 145-51.
[26] "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme" (1974) in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation.*

pattern in language, the pattern of logical forms, or grammar properly conceived, and the network of semantic dependencies. There is no way to tell this story, which, being about truth, is about sentences or their occasions of use, without assigning semantic roles to the parts of sentences. But there is no appeal to a prior understanding of the concept of reference.[27]

This primacy of the sentence in the characterization of truth, Davidson goes on to explain, is essential to the application of Tarski's framework within the broader project of interpreting a language. For whereas, as Davidson admits, the Tarskian truth-definition for a language does not yet capture everything that is necessary for a full-fledged theory of meaning for a natural language, all we need to do in principle in order to arrive at such a full-fledged theory is coordinate the T-sentences given by the Tarskian theory with the actual empirically observable behavior of speakers in using sentences. Although this procedure will, through its recursive truth-definitions, effectively yield determinations of the "meanings" of the individual terms of the language, there is no need Davidson emphasizes, to supplement the meaning theory with any additional account of the relation of "reference" or satisfaction that does not emerge from the (propositional) theory itself.[28] What is more, there can be no benefit in doing so, given the extensional adequacy that any theory that accords with Tarski's convention T already possesses.

This also makes it clear that the Tarskian/Davidsonian conception is in no way, as Davidson emphasizes, a "correspondence" theory of truth. Indeed, Davidson argues that given the primacy of sentences and propositions in any adequate truth-theory, there is no tenable relation of "correspondence" between language and the world to be found at all, for "there is nothing interesting or instructive to which true sentences correspond." (p. 39). This is because, as Davidson argues drawing on Frege, Church, Gödel,

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[27] Davidson, D. (2005) *Truth and Predication* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press), pp. 34-35.

[28] "The perspective on language and truth that we have gained is this: what is open to observation is the use of sentences in context, and truth is the semantic concept we understand best. Reference and related semantic notions like satisfaction are, by comparison, theoretical concepts…There can be no question about the correctness of these theoretical concepts beyond the question whether they yield a satisfactory account of the use of sentences…There is no reason to look for a prior, or independent, account of some referential relation." (*Truth and Predication*, p. 36).

and Neale, if a sentence is said to correspond to one entity in the world, it must ultimately be said to correspond to *all* of them.[29] Once we have made the transition from the traditional assumption of the primacy of names or individual terms to the improved Tarskian understanding of sentences as primary, we must therefore abandon any conception of truth as consisting in correspondence with the world, as Davidson says, in any interesting sense at all.[30]

II

In what is by now a classic critique, Ernst Tugendhat in the mid-1960s considered Heidegger's disclosive conception of truth in his *Habilitationsschrift* and a shorter lecture presenting its core ideas.[31] As William Smith has recently argued, one of the central questions at the center of Tugendhat's critique is the question of with "what right" and with "what meaning" Heidegger can use the term 'truth' to characterize the phenomena of disclosedness, uncovering (*Entdeckenheit*), or *aletheia*, which are, on Heidegger's account, *preconditions* for propositional truth.[32] *But this is not, I hasten to point out, simply a question about the extent to which Heidegger's suggested usage matches the ordinary usage of the term "truth." Philosophers are, after all, free to invent new terms or usages, and to use old terms as they wish. Nor is*

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[29] The argument for this, though already at least implicit in Frege's arguments for the claim that the "reference" of a sentence is always one of the two truth-values (True or False), is sometimes called the "slingshot" and is given in (slightly different) classic forms by: Church, A. (1956) *Introduction to Mathematical Logic, vol. 1* (Princeton: Princeton U. Press) and Gödel (1944) "Russell's Mathematical Logic," in P.A. Schlipp (ed.), *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern U). For the discussion and further references, see Davidson, *Truth and Predication*, pp. 126-30.

[30] Davidson had earlier suggested in "True to the Facts" that the Tarskian truth-theory is understandable as a (special kind of) correspondence theory owing to its employment of a concept of reference or satisfaction; later on, he also called this "correspondence without confrontation." In *Truth and Predication* (pp. 38-41), however, Davidson explains clearly and directly that to call the Tarskian theory a "correspondence" theory in any respect was a mistake.

[31] *Der Wahrhetisbegriff bei Husserl and Heidegger* (1966) and "Heidegger's Idea of Truth" (1964) (in Wolin, R. (ed.) (1993) *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Richard Wolin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press). Whereas the earlier, shorter piece has been translated into English, the *Habilitationsschrift* remains untranslated. Quotations from it here are my own translations.

[32] Smith, W. (2007) "Why Tugendhat's Critique of Heidegger's Concept of Truth Remains a Critical Problem," *Inquiry* 50:2, pp. 156-179.

what is at issue here the question whether it is possible to "reduce" propositional truth wholly and

without remainder to "disclosive" or aletheiac truth. The real question here is just whether the

phenomena of disclosedness that Heidegger identifies are indeed explanatorily more basic than

propositional truth, or whether (as adherents of propositional truth such as Davidson are likely to hold)

the explanatory relationship goes the other way, accounting for disclosedness (or objectual reference, or

any other "semantic" relations to objects) in terms of what is conceived of as a more basic structure of

propositional truth.

Heidegger's position on this question is tenable only if the features of aletheiac truth are indeed sufficient

to explain the most important features of propositional truth, those aspects or dimensions of propositional

truth which clearly characterize the phenomenon if anything does. And the first part of Tugendhat's

argument attempts to show that, in fact, aletheiac truth, as Heidegger describes it, is *not* sufficient in this

regard. In particular, Tugendhat focuses on the familiar feature of bivalence: the capability of genuinely

truth-evaluable items to be either true *or* false. [33]   As Tugendhat suggests, it is reasonable to suppose that

we understand the claim that something is true only if we are also able to understand, as well, the claim

that it is false: that is, if we have the actual concept of truth in view, it must include, as part of its basic

structure *both* the possibilities of truth and falsehood. However, on the view that Heidegger argues for,

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[33] It is important to note here that what is at stake is not "bivalence" in the relatively demanding sense in which it has been contested by intuitionists and discussed by Dummett and others. In this (relatively demanding) sense, a system of propositions is bivalent if and only if every proposition in the system is determinately *either* true or false. "Bivalence" in Tugendhat's sense, by contrast, is much more relaxed: it demands only that a proposition which is *capable* of being true that it also be capable of being (i.e. we can understand what it would mean for it to be) false.
What general reasons are there, then, for supposing that bivalence in this sense must indeed characterize *any* genuine truth-concept? I think the most general and telling consideration in favor of this requirement is that we just do not understand what it means for something (anything) to be "true" unless we understand how it *could* also be "false." As Tugendhat makes clear, especially in the article "Heidegger's Idea of Truth," part of his own motivation for pursuing the critique of Heidegger is that he (Tugendhat) suspects that a notion of truth that lacks bivalence also forfeits an essential dimension of "normativity," and hence cannot be used for the critical purposes to which we would normally like to put a concept of truth. Although these concerns about normativity and the critical utility of a concept of truth appear to be at least somewhat legitimate, they go significantly beyond the issue of bivalence itself, so I have not pursued them any further here.

the truth of an assertion consists in its disclosure or uncovering of an entity; it is this uncovering or disclosure that deserves the name "truth" in the *primary* sense.[34] And throughout the passages wherein he argues for his conception, Heidegger speaks of uncovering as an *event*, in particular something that happens to "entities" or "an entity." This "being-uncovered" (*Entdeckend-sein*) of the entity thus appears to be (and Heidegger's grammar in section 44a consistently suggests this) simply something that either *happens* or *does not* happen; it is not something that itself can happen "truly" or "falsely", or that admits of a distinction between truth and falsehood. Thus the concept of truth as uncovering or uncoveredness is missing something that is, according to Tugendhat, essential to propositional truth itself: it is missing, namely, the property of *bivalence*, the capability of having a truth-value, or of being true *or* false.

As Tugendhat argues, if Heidegger indeed considers truth to consist in uncovering, then he must apparently consider *all* uncovering to be in itself "true," and thus must consider even a false proposition to depend on the uncovering of the entities involved in it.[35] Indeed, Heidegger himself says that in a *false* assertion "the entity" is "already in a certain way uncovered."[36] But if this is right, and the concept of uncoveredness does not include or support a bivalent distinction between truth and falsehood, then it is also clearly insufficient to account for the bivalence of propositions, one of the key defining features of propositions on any reasonable view.

Heidegger's formulation at the beginning of section 44b, that "Being true (truth) means being-uncovered" ["Wahrsein (Wahrheit) besagt entdeckend-sein"] therefore appears to be simply inadequate. Tugendhat suggests that Heidegger can reach this formulation, in fact, only through a crucial equivocation. In section 44a, he has moved from the claims that an assertion is true when it "uncovers the entity as it is in itself" to the simple claim that the assertion's truth is simply its "uncovering" of the entity (full stop).[37] With the first claim, we still have bivalence; for an assertion can presumably disclose an entity (or

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[34] S&Z, pp. 217-19.
[35] *Der Warheitsbegriff*, p. 333.
[36] S&Z, p. 222.
[37] S&Z, p. 218.

perhaps, as Tugendhat suggests, a state of affairs) as it is in itself *or otherwise*; in the first case, it will be true, and in the second, false. But with the slide to the third claim, we have lost the possibility of bivalence; uncovering either occurs or it does not, and we no longer have any ground to distinguish between a "true" and a "false" kind of uncovering.

As Tugendhat notes, Heidegger sometimes does appear to suggest a possible line of response to this criticism. At times, in particular, Heidegger suggests that (contrary to the suggestion of his apparent *definition* of truth as being uncovered at the beginning of section 44b) basic uncovering should be considered to be bivalent, or capable of being either true *or* false, after all. For instance, in explaining why the primordial concept of truth should be conceived privatively (as a-letheia) rather than simply as a positive concept, he says that "The uncovering of anything new … takes its departure from uncoveredness in the mode of semblance. Entities look as if . . . That is, they have, in a certain way, been uncovered already, and yet they are still disguised."[38] This suggests that the primary concept of disclosive truth for Heidegger is indeed the disclosure of something either *as* it is in itself (uncoveredness as truth) or *as* something else ("uncoveredness in the mode of semblance" or falsehood). This suggestion gains support, as well, from Heidegger's identification in sections 32 and 33, of a basic and fundamental "'as'-structure" grounded in the totality of our involvements with the world and underlying any possibility of the disclosure or uncoveredness of entities whatsoever. This primary "as" structure – what Heidegger calls the "existential-hermeneutical 'as'" to differentiate it from what he now calls the "apophantical 'as'" of assertions – always characterizes, in a fundamental way, any possible understanding or interpretation of entities.[39] This appears to suggest that anything that is given (with whatever degree of explicitness, and with or without our forming any propositions about it) is always given as something or other.

However, for the suggested analysis that sees originary, pre-propositional truth as already exhibiting the "as-structure" that allows us to take something either as it is in itself *or* in some other way, there are still

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[38] S&Z, p. 222.
[39] S&Z, p. 150, p. 158.

at least two major problems. One is that it is not clear that this conception does not simply reinstate the

structure of *propositional* truth after all. For the content of an act of taking something *as* something is, in

general, readily convertible to the content of a proposition which says that something *is* something, i.e.

has some property or feature.[40] For instance, on the suggested analysis, I may uncover the necktie (which

is in fact red) either *as* red or (if the light is bad, for instance) *as* orange. In the first case, I uncover the

entity as it is in itself (namely, as red); whereas in the second case I fail to do so and uncover it otherwise

than it is in itself (namely, as orange).   The problem is that what I have seen in each case is *precisely*

equivalent to the content of some proposition, namely the content of the propositions "the necktie is red"

(which is true) and "the necktie is orange" (which is false). Thus, I have seen or perceived in each case

something which is best, and indeed probably *only*, expressible by a proposition; even if I do not

explicitly formulate or utter such a proposition, it captures *precisely* what has been disclosed in my act of

disclosing. So it seems as if we, indeed, again have no understanding of what happens in the "primordial"

act of uncovering other than that which is dependent on an understanding of it as propositionally

structured.

Secondly, though, it is not clear that the account of the "as-structure" as the basis of propositional truth

can even succeed in accounting for the basis of many kinds of propositional truth at all. For as

Tugendhat suggests, "the assertions of which Heidegger is thinking are primarily simple predications of

individual objects ... Only here is the talk of indication, uncovering and concealing clear without further

ado."[41] And such a theory, whose most basic model involves relations to individual objects rather than

facts, propositions, or states of affairs, encounters extreme difficulties in accounting for the truth or

falsity of sentences that do not simply attribute single properties to individual objects. For instance, if we

begin with sentences such as "Socrates is tall" simply predicating a property of an individual object, we

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[40] Indeed, Heidegger suggests as much when he holds, on p. 159, that the unity of the individual *logos* or
proposition is to be understood as based on the more basic structure of the "something as something" and
that in the explicitly formulated sentence, the copulative "is" indeed bears the significance of this "as".
[41] *Der Wahrheitsbegriff*, p. 342.

may indeed readily be led to an account of the truth of this sentence as consisting in the uncoveredness of Socrates as he is in himself (namely as tall). However, it is not at all clear from this account what we are to do with even a simple relational sentence such as "Socrates is older than Plato." Should we think of the truth of this as grounded in the disclosure only of Socrates (since he is the grammatical subject)? But then we must think of his being disclosed in terms of a relational property (being older than Plato) as his being disclosed as he is in himself. This would threaten to make all relations into internal properties of an individual, and since each object is related somehow or other to all others, it would imply that the full disclosure of an individual object also discloses the whole universe. Or should we think of the relevant disclosure here as that of Socrates and Plato jointly, as they are in themselves? But this too is inadequate, since in addition to the disclosure of Socrates, and that of Plato, we evidently need the disclosure of the relationship between them as well. And this relationship can hardly itself be attributed to either of the "things" as they are "in themselves." An even harder case is that of (true) negative judgments of existence, for instance the judgment "Santa Claus does not exist" or "there are no unicorns." It is not at all clear how the truth of these judgments can be grounded in the "disclosure" of the entities mentioned, since these entities do not even exist.

In sum, then, it appears to be impossible for Heidegger to explain the bivalent character of propositions by means of aletheiac or disclosive truth, unless it is possible to see bivalence as already operative on the level of basic events of disclosure; but if we adopt this latter conception, we seem to fall back into what is essentially the propositional conception of truth anyway. It is thus apparently impossible to maintain the view that propositional truth is grounded in a prior level of disclosure, unless this prior level is already fully propositionally structured.

Moreover, as Tugendhat notes, even leaving aside these questions about the relationship between disclosive and propositional truth, Heidegger's disclosive theory leads to idealist and anti-realist implications that are problematic in themselves. Specifically, since Heidegger wishes to identify truth

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with what transpires in *acts* of disclosure or unconcealment rather than the *contents* of these acts, he

essentially makes truth into the result of an (factual and "ontic") *event*. But this results in quite

implausible consequences about truth itself, up to and including its relativity to human acts of inquiry and

discovery.

Heidegger's own favored terms for talking about what I have called "propositional" truth and truths are

Aussage (assertion) and *Urteil* (judgment); in German as in English, these terms are ambiguous between

the *act* of asserting or judging and *what is* thereby asserted or judged to be the case. And the claim that

disclosure has an evental rather than a static nature is crucially important to Heidegger's conception of

temporality, even in *Being and Time*, and becomes even more important later when "Ereignis", or the

"event," becomes the central term of his being-historical project. Nevertheless, Heidegger's failure to

draw the general distinction between the individual, datable act and its content (which it presumably

shares with any act that is "directed toward" or "disclosive of" the same object) leads to what are,

according to Tugendhat, highly implausible consequences. One is the suggestion of a strong idealism, or

anti-realism, with respect to truth. This yields, for instance, Heidegger claim in section 44c that

"Newton's laws … are true only as long as Dasein *is*" and that "Before Newton's laws were discovered,

they were not 'true.'" This general sort of claim about the dependence of the truth of natural laws on

human inquiry or discovery might well be contested, of course, from any even moderately realist position.

But even without presupposing this sort of general realism-based objection, there are further problems

here that stem from the specific features of Heidegger's disclosive conception of truth. As Tugendhat

points out, for instance:

If a state of affairs, so long as it is unrecognized, is not true, then it would indeed seem appropriate to say as a consequence of this that it stops being true when it is no longer recognized by anyone, and that its truth grows greater the more people recognize it.[42]

Again, lacking a distinction between the individual act of assertion and the content of acts *in specie*, Heidegger must, according to Tugendhat, simply identify the truth of an assertion with something occurring when this truth is first asserted or recognized. This then leads Heidegger to assert that " 'There is' truth only insofar as and so long as 'there is' Dasein." However,

Insofar as one can assume that Heidegger indeed has in mind in this section the specific sense of truth, the ontical and ontological levels are simply confused: on the ground of the indubitable ontological relativity of truth as such to the Dasein, the ontic independence of the occurent truth from its factually being known is denied.[43]

That is, according to Tugendhat, *because* Heidegger fails to see the kind of propositional structure that is already involved in the very disclosure of anything as anything at all, he fails to make the distinction between the occurrence of acts of disclosure individually, and their content *in specie*.[44] In so doing, he essentially makes truth into an (ontic) event: that is, he makes it seem (with respect to Newton's laws, for instance) that the truth of these laws – whether they are true, false, or neither – depends on the event of their disclosure.[45] And since such events of disclosure are indeed individual and datable – they happen at

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[42] *Der Wahrheitsbegriff*, p. 344.
[43] *Der Wahrheitsbegriff*, p. 345.
[44] On pp. 216-17 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger considers briefly the possibility of drawing a distinction between act and content and dismisses this because he thinks it leads necessarily to an ontological distinction between real and ideal entities. But there are two things wrong with this as a response to Tugendhat's objection; first, that it is not at all clear that the act/content distinction must indeed yield an ontological distinction between reality and ideality (this is why Tugendhat discusses this as the distinction between the individual act and the act *in specie*), and second, that Heidegger's argument against the supposedly necessary real/ideal distinction is just, once again, his argument against correspondence theories of truth.
[45] This notwithstanding that Heidegger nevertheless allows that the entities "such … as have been uncovered and pointed out by [Newton's] laws" (S&Z, p. 227) are indeed revealed *as* having pre-existed

one time and one place to one person (in this case, Newton) – we then would have to raise the difficult

question, as Tugendhat points out, whether something like Newton's laws become *more* true when

disclosed to more people, or would become *untrue* if everyone forgot about them.

III

To sum up, then, there are two distinct but interrelated substantial criticisms of Heidegger's disclosive

theory of truth that we may draw from Tugendhat's critique. The first is that the disclosive theory is

incapable of accounting for the bivalence of propositional truth, unless it presupposes what is essentially

(already) propositional truth at the level of disclosure; the second is that the disclosive theory fails to

distinguish between act and content and therefore implausibly grounds the truth of propositions in the

acts of an "individual Dasein." Both of these criticisms are intimately related to Heidegger's blind spot

for non-correspondence but nevertheless propositional conceptions of truth that became evident in

section II. For it is only because Heidegger supposes that the phenomenon of truth must be grounded in

the actually occurring disclosure of individual entities that he must adopt a conception of truth that does

not leave room for bivalence and that fails to draw the distinction between act and content. But if this

assumption is in fact largely motivated, as I have suggested, by Heidegger's arguments against

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the act of the discovery of the laws. Tugendhat's response shows how much Heidegger's analysis is here crippled by the failure to connect truth essentially to propositional structure: "Heidegger indeed allows that something be presupposed to the factical production of the expression, except that he no longer can conceive this as truth: 'That Newton's laws were, before him, neither true nor false, cannot mean that before him there were no entities such as have been uncovered and indicated by those laws … With the uncoveredness of the being it shows itself directly as the being that already was before.' One would like, here, to ask: is, then, what Newton's laws show "a being"? How can one conceive of what Newton uncovered otherwise than precisely as Newton's laws? One sees that since Heidegger locates the sense of truth in factical showing, he can now also no longer maintain (as seems to be implied by his conception of the assertion as a showing) that the shown and the showing are not to be distinguished as separate things; what preconditions the factical showing cannot carry the showing structurally in itself, in that the individual assertion and the assertion in specie are not distinguished, but rather is "a being.""

correspondence theories, then the actual availability of propositional theories that are not (in any sense)

correspondence theories can remedy these problems in a way that remains sympathetic to these anti-

correspondence arguments.

Although Tugendhat's critique has been available since the 1960s and has been widely discussed since

then, commentators sympathetic to Heidegger's account of truth have generally, in their haste to defend it,

missed the significance of these broader underlying issues, and so also missed the genuine possibility here

of applying the lessons learned from the critique in order to better understand and further other

dimensions of Heidegger's own project.   This remains the case even today, and even where

commentators have announced the intention to read Heidegger in a way that allows him to be reconciled

with significant elements of the analytic tradition.

In his recent and generally helpful book, *Heidegger and Unconcealment: Truth, Language and History*,

Mark Wrathall undertakes to give a comprehensive account of Heidegger's understanding of truth as

unconcealment, an understanding that, as Wrathall argues, deeply influences the most fundamental

conceptions of Heidegger's thought about being, meaning, history and time throughout the course of his

career. According to Wrathall, Heideger's conception of truth and unconcealment is, throughout all of

these developments, decisively linked to the thought of actual events or processes of manifestation of

entities to us; thus, according to Wrathall, "To think unconcealment as such is to reject the idea that there

are entities, we know not what, existing as they are independently of the conditions under which they can

manifest themselves."[46] With respect to "propositional entities like assertions or beliefs," Wrathall

suggests, this implies that their truth is also grounded in unconcealment; in particular, "we can grasp a

proposition as potentially true or false only to the extent that we can understand how to use it to uncover

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[46] *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, p. 1.

or make salient a fact or state of affairs"[47] and it is, according to Heidegger as Wrathall reads him, the "ontological function of truth" to accomplish this and other activities of uncovering.

In the first chapter of the book, Wrathall reconstructs what he calls Heidegger's "considered" view of truth as consisting in a "platform" comprising four distinct "planks" or commitments, whose justificatory and supportive relations to one another change over the course of Heidegger's career. The first of these "planks," according to Wrathall, formulates an account of propositional truth according to which "An assertion or proposition is true when it corresponds with a state of affairs."[48] Thus, according to Wrathall (and somewhat at variance with many interpretations of Heidegger's views on propositions and correspondence), Heidegger actually endorses a correspondence account of truth, at least in the specific case of propositions, here understanding the correspondence that underlies the truth of propositions as a matter of the assertion's "orient[ing] itself" toward the state of affairs which it asserts to be the case. This "correspondence" is, however, to be grounded, according to the second plank of Wrathall's platform, in a more basic "truth of entities" that consists in their being "uncovered" or "made available for comportment."[49] As Wrathall emphasizes, this is not to be taken as meaning that Heidegger wishes to define propositional truth as unconcealment, but rather only that unconcealment functions as "the ground of propositional truth" in that it first makes "available" the entities or states of affairs to which propositional truths may correspond.[50] Such entities as are later available for propositional assertions are generally first disclosed, Wrathall argues, in a "more primordial givenness of the world" which is generally "prepredicative", "nonconceptual" and is "articulated along the lines of our practical comportment;" much of the richness of this pre-linguistic givenness is subsequently lost,

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[47] *Heidegger and Unconcealment,* p. 4.
[48] *Heidegger and Unconcealment,* p. 12.
[49] *Heidegger and Unconcealment,* p. 13.
[50] *Heidegger and Unconcealment,* pp. 15-16.

according to Heidegger as Wrathall understands him, in the formation and articulation of explicit propositions.[51]

Wrathall thus emphasizes, no doubt correctly, that one of Heidegger's primary goals with his account of truth as primarily unconcealment is to display the basis of explicit propositional judgments in our practical and everyday engagements with the world, our ordinary activies of (among other things) dealing with and handling familiar objects and entities. This means as well, as Wrathall says, that we make "a complete mess of things" if we, forgetting this level of dependence, construe our practical activities (for instance "swinging a hammer") as "true in the same way that a proposition is true" and thus conclude that the abilities involved in such activities consist simply in something like the knowledge of propositions.[52] On the other hand, though, given all that Wrathall says about the relationships between the disclosive truth of entities and propositional truth, it not completely clear how we are to make sense of the truth of even a maximally simple relational proposition such as "The hammer is on the table." Certainly, if we are to make any sense of the truth of this proposition as "dependent on" the prior disclosure or "availability" of entities, the only entities that can possibly be at issue are the hammer and the table. Nevertheless, just as clearly, the mere disclosure of the hammer and the table – even if they are disclosed as they are "in themselves" as opposed to some other way – fails entirely to account for the *relational* structure of even this very simple proposition. Nor does it, similarly, account for the rational and inferential relations this proposition bears to other propositions ("The hammer is not under the table," etc.) or even for the obvious and transparent connection (which is precisely what Tarski's conception formulates) of the truth of the proposition with what we may describe as its truth-condition, the state of affairs that the hammer is in fact on the table.

Of course, Wrathall himself is not primarily to blame for these failings, since they are (as we have seen) grounded in the ambiguities in Heidegger's own account of the linkage between disclosive and

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[51] *Heidegger and Unconcealment,* p. 20.
[52] *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, p. 4.

propositional truth, which Tugendhat points out. *These ambiguities make it difficult to tell whether Heidegger indeed thinks of propositional truth as grounded in a correspondence to entities which must "first" become or be made available (as Wrathall at least sometimes suggests) or whether on the contrary the true proposition is to be thought of as directly corresponding (or, at any rate, "being addressed to") an already structured state of affairs. Sometimes, indeed, Wrathall suggests the latter conception as well, as for instance when he holds that for Heidegger, "a true assertion uncovers a state of affairs by elevating it into salience or prominence, thus allowing it to be seen..."[53] This suggests, of course, that the state of affairs is indeed already constituted or formed as a unity at the time at which the proposition is formed and thus that the truth of the proposition does not (after all) depend on the prior disclosure of the various entities involved. However, there are still deep problems here that trace to the underlying claim of the dependence of truth (of any variety) on unconcealment. For instance, even if the state of affairs is conceived as formed into a unity prior to its unconcealment or uncovering, the conception of truth as consisting in this uncovering raises again the question of whether the meaningfulness of a false proposition – hence one not corresponding to any state of affairs that actually obtains – can also be understood as depending on such "uncovering" and if so, of what. Moreover, the claim that the truth of propositions is a matter of "elevating" a state of affairs into "salience or prominence" threatens to make irrelevant propositions, or ones that are not being attended to at the moment, false or at least untrue; at any rate, it is not evident that the truth of a proposition such as "the hammer is on the table" is in any sense dependent on its prominence or salience within any activity or mode thereof.[54]*

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[53] *Heidegger and Unconcealment,* p. 19 (emphasis added).

[54] It's also evident that, if salience *is* somehow at issue, such a proposition could potentially become salient in the course of any number of different activities or practices (and would have different kinds of "significance" in each), and so on an account that sees truth as resulting from practical significance in Heidegger and Wrathall's sense it would have many different kinds of "truth." On the other hand, the proposition quite evidently has a uniform sense, regardless of the specific practice or kind of practice in which it becomes "elevated" into salience.

In a brief "appendix" following the first chapter, Wrathall discusses and dismisses what he takes to be

Tugendhat's critique of Heidegger's account of truth. The dismissal is based, however, on several

misinterpretations of Tugendhat's main points and, as a consequence, fails significantly to engage with

any of the issues I have discussed above. In particular, Wrathall construes Tugendhat as holding, first

(and incorrectly, on Wrathall's account) that "Heidegger redefines propositional truth … as uncovering

simpliciter."[55] Second, he construes Tugendhat as holding that Heidegger illicitly extends this "revised

concept of propositional truth" to the disclosure of entities and being itself. Third, Wrathall construes

Tugendhat as claiming against Heidegger that uncovering and disclosure "lack the right to be called

truth" in that they do not capture the specific features of the "natural [i.e., the propositional] conception

of truth."[56]

Wrathall swiftly argues that Tugendhat is "simply wrong" about the first two (interpretive) claims, and

then proceeds to consider the third, which he construes as embodying a "rights argument" against

Heidegger. This argument, on Wrathall's reconstruction, turns on Tugendhat's challenge to Heidegger's

"rights" to call the phenomena of disclosure and unconcealment by the name "truth" at all. As we have

seen, however, Tugendhat is not in fact committed to either the first or the second claim (or at any rate,

he does not need to be for his critique to be successful): what is at issue in Tugendhat's critique is not

whether propositional truth can be defined as "uncovering simpliciter" or whether this supposedly

redefined notion can then be more broadly extended, but rather simply whether unconcealment and

disclosure are indeed explanatorily more basic than propositional truth, as Heidegger indeed recurrently

claims. The third claim that Tugendhat is supposed to have made (in posing the question "with what

right" and "what meaning" Heidegger uses the name "truth" for unconcealment or disclosure) is also

not substantially (despite apparent misreadings on this point by Lafont and Smith) at issue in Tugendhat's

critique as I have construed it. In particular, as I have construed it, this critique does not challenge the

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[55] *Heidegger and Unconcealment,* p. 35.
[56] *Heidegger and Unconcealment,* p. 35.

application of the word or name "truth" to disclosure, unconcealment, or any other phenomenon, but rather the possibility of explaining the phenomenon of propositional truth in terms of the phenomena of the disclosure and unconcealment of entities. The questions of which is the "natural" or ordinary conception of "truth" and whether Heidegger is justified in deviating from this conception are also not evidently relevant here. What is at issue is simply whether the phenomena of disclosure and unconcealedness can, as Heidegger certainly does hold, play a basic explanatory role in accounting for the characteristic features of propositional truth, and in particular for the key feature of bivalence.

Though Wrathall does consider the possibility that Tugendhat's critique may not indeed turn simply on relatively superficial "verbal" issues, even in this discussion he does not mention the issue of bivalence even once by name in his own voice. Rather, he treats Tugendhat (for this portion of the discussion at least) as formulating the critique that Heidegger cannot adequately account for the "normativity" of truth, and objects that the advocates of (what Wrathall supposes to be) the "rights argument" have not given an adequate account of the kind of normativity that distinguishes truth from other phenomena.[57] However, as we have seen, for Tugendhat the key issue is not normativity in general but rather the much more straightforward one of the bivalence of propositional truth, a feature that characterizes propositional truth on any reasonable account and appears to go missing in any attempt to ground propositional truth in the disclosure of entities. Nothing that Wrathall says in response to Tugendhat even addresses (let alone resolves) this issue, and so it appears that Wrathall has nothing substantive to say in response to what I have construed as Tugendhat's line of critique. This failure appears to be rooted, like the ambiguities and weaknesses of Heidegger's own account, in a pervasive failure to see the relevance of the cardinal distinction between entities and state of affairs, which propositional conceptions such as Wittgenstein's and Tarski's effectively begin by insisting upon.[58]

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[57] *Heidegger and Unconcealment,* pp. 36-37.
[58] In responding to what he considers to be the "rights argument," Wrathall does suggest that the claim that the predicate "truth" is only "rightly" applied to propositionally structured items "flies … in the face

It is no surprise, then, that when Wrathall turns to discussing Heidegger's understanding of truth in connection with Davidson's project, these errors and ambiguities are compounded and, despite Wrathall's laudable intention to find points of connection between Heidegger and significant representatives of analytic philosophy, the interpretation he offers winds up producing a somewhat distorted picture of the projects and intentions of both philosophers.

Wrathall begins his discussion of Davidson by noting (reasonably enough, in this context) the latter's suspicion of all theories of truth that attempt to define it by grounding it in some substantial relationship. This doubt about even the possibility of a substantial definition of truth is, as we have seen, something that Davidson shares with Frege and indeed reflects the observation shared by all three philosophers that (propositional) truth is "beautifully transparent" and thus, very likely, primitive and incapable of further reduction or redefinition.[59] On the other hand, as Wrathall discusses and we have seen, Davidson combines this general suspicion of the possibility of substantial definitions of truth with his own very detailed project of reflection on the general structure of a "theory of meaning" for a natural language, a project which makes essential use of Tarski's recursive conception of the material adequacy of truth-definitions. Davidson's setting of this recursive, structural conception within the context of the radical interpretation scenario makes for, as Wrathall emphasizes, some ways in which Davidson's own theory must go beyond the structural constraints embodied simply in Tarski's original recursive structure. In particular, because the Tarskian theory itself only involves supplying factual truth-conditions for each

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of our ordinary linguistic practices." As evidence for this, he cites contexts in which we predicate "truth" of people (as in the phrase "true friends") objects ("true gold") and even Gods (the "living and true god"). (*Heidegger and Unconcealment,* p. 36). This is misleading in at least two respects. First, as we have seen, the actual claim of Tugendhat's analysis is not that *only* propositions are rightly called "true" or "false" but simply that this is the *primary* sense of "truth" (by means of which *other* ways of using the predicate "true" should be understood). Second, it is clear that the very "objectual" contexts that Wrathall cites are ones that demand analysis in terms of, precisely, a propositional notion of truth; thus, for instance, to call some stuff "true gold" is not (despite the superficial grammar) to attribute to the gold some additional property or feature (beyond its being gold), but rather to say that the statement "This stuff is (really) gold" is true. One should compare, in this context, Austin's classic analysis of the (related) functioning of the predicate "real," and the philosophical errors to which it has led, in Austin, J.L. (1964) *Sense and Sensibilia* (New York: Oxford U. Press), lecture 7.
[59] *Heidegger and Unconcealment,* p. 46.

sentence of the language, it cannot by itself adequately capture *everything* that is involved in arriving at a systematic conception of truth and meaning for the language as a whole; to arrive at this fully specified understanding, the interpreter must also make use of systematic, internal connections between a language's consitutent terms, as evinced in the essentially intersubjective and social behavior of its speakers.

Wrathall presents this additional demand on a Davidsonian theory of truth as demanding a further account (beyond the Tarskian structure itself) of (in Wrathall's words) "the conditions of truth – specifically, the condition that sentences and other propositional entities have content;" he goes on to suggest that this is similar to Heidegger's own strategy in demanding a practically based account of disclosure at the foundation of propositional truth.[60] But this description of the "extra" that is needed to embody an understanding of truth for Davidson is at best misleading, and the suggestion of a significant parallel to Heidegger here is (as we have seen) simply incorrect. In particular, what Davidson is requiring here in addition to the Tarskian T-sentences themselves is not something like an understanding of the *general* possibility of sentences and propositions having content *at all* (as opposed to being, say, mere uninterpreted sounds). Insofar as *this* is what is at issue, it is sufficient that these sounds are part of (what we can interpret as) a language at all, and it is by being part of an interpretable language with a relational structure comprehensible in terms of the T-schema that they gain "content" in the sense of being recognizably directed toward the world.

But because, as Davidson emphasizes in *Truth and Predication*, this is a *propositional* structure, there is no question of providing a theory of "how" sentences so understood first "get" content (Wrathall's repeated references to the interpretation of "propositional entities" are, in this connection, liable to mislead, as well); nor is there any significant question of objectual reference or correspondence, as Davidson has emphasized, that is not settled by the Tarskian propositional truth-theory itself. Rather, the

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[60] *Heidegger and Unconcealment,* p. 47.

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holistic interpretation of the language works from the outset with propositionally structured facts and truth-conditions under the additional significant constraint of the attempt to find a systematic, recursive and computational structure for the rational interconnection of sentences in the language overall.

This makes for deep and essential differences from anything that is suggested by Heidegger's own official account of the nature of propositions and their pre-conditions, differences that tend to be elided in Wrathall's own account, which emphasizes instead the "similarities" in that both philosophers see the attribution of truth as having an important practical and pragmatic component. In particular, whereas Wrathall sees Heidegger's project as akin to Davidson's in examining "how it is that beliefs or assertions are the sorts of things which can be true or false" and even purports to find in both Davidson and Heidegger largely parallel accounts of this in terms of intersubjective interaction and "our orientation toward things within a world," it is clear that the significance of this kind of account must be very different for the two philosophers, given their *fundamentally* different views of truth.[61] In particular, whereas Heidegger does indeed seek (and purports to find in the theory of basic truth as unconcealedness) a general answer to the question of how propositions have "content" at all, Davidson's primary orientation toward propositions means that this question has little sense outside the specification of content-determining relations between (what must be conceived as) primarily propositional structures.

This, in turn, suggests that if there is indeed any kinship to be found between Davidson and Heidegger on the level of their supposedly shared orientation toward practices and intersubjectivity, this kinship must be very general and probably does not extend, in Davidson's case, to anything like what Heidegger attempts to capture with his disclosive theory of truth. Given this, it is possible to raise the question which broad kind of theory indeed better captures the actual basis of the structure of intentionality and meaning that is broadly characteristic, not only of our dealings with objects, but also of our "meaningful" comportment toward each other and the world itself.

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[61] *Heidegger and Unconcealment,* p. 48.

IV

I have urged that Heidegger's conception of truth and meaning systematically and consistently fails to take into account some of the core insights of the propositional (but non-"correspondence") theories of truth that are broadly characteristic of the analytic tradition, and that this systematic blind spot effectively produces the weaknesses and shortcomings in Heidegger's own theory of the basis of propositional truth that Tugendhat identifies and criticizes. This is not to say, however, that many of these core insights could not be allied to something like Heidegger's project, and even that (despite Heidegger's own constant endorsement of the disclosive account of truth) such an allegiance could not significantly further Heidegger's own larger goal of ontologically characterizing the broad structures of our being-in-the-world in meaningful ways that do not presuppose a subjectivist or representationalist understanding of our own nature. Indeed, it is one of the major merits of the "analytic" conceptions of truth that I have discussed that, grounded as they are in the linguistic turn and avoiding, as I have suggested, the problematic requirements of correspondence theories, they can account for propositional truth in ways that have nothing to do with individual subjective attitudes or representational accounts of truth as correctness. For this reason, they accord with and can even strengthen Heidegger's own vehement rejection of Cartesian and representationalist pictures of subjectivity, and of the "theoretical" conception of the world in which they have their usual home.

What might such a (somewhat modified) Heideggerian conception of language, meaning, and being look like, in general? Although it is impossible to go into much detail here, I shall attempt, in closing, to sketch a broad outline. In light of Tugendhat's critique, it appears highly unlikely that it will indeed be possible to *explain* propositional truth wholly in terms of a logically or explanatorily prior level of purely disclosive truth. On the other hand, as Davidson has underscored, the extensional adequacy of the Tarskian, propositional conception makes it plausible that it captures *all* of the relevant features of the

concept of truth, including "the" relationship between simple signs and individual entities (actually, it is consistent with any number of accounts of this relationship). This does not exclude, however, the possibility that unconcealment and propositional truth might be importantly and even constitutively related. Even if we cannot explain propositional truth in terms of unconcealment, we might pursue an analysis that aims to evince the *complicated* and *multiple* kinds of relations that acts or events of (what we may call) the disclosure or revealing of entities (or of their "elevation into salience," their becoming obtrusive, and the like) bear to "propositional" claims, structures, and items of knowledge, whether explicitly formulated or only "implicit in practice." Indeed, it seems possible that we might thus recover much or even *almost all* (perhaps even *all* except what Heidegger *specifically* says about disclosure and truth) of Heidegger's analyses of Dasein and worldhood in Division I of *Being and Time*, along these lines, as analyses of what we might see as (in an extended sense) the "logical" structure of the world.

Within the ambit of this kind of analysis, the structures of Dasein, Being-in-the-world, Being-with, and Being-in as such might well be understood as complex "logical" or "grammatical" structures (in something like the late Wittgenstein's sense of "grammar"), shown or evidenced in the complicated interrelationships that bits of language bear to elements of practice and aspects of worldly engagement and comportment. For the analysis of these structures, the "logic of propositions" does not play the role *simply* of a logic of inference or theoretical deduction, but it retains, as Davidson indeed emphasizes, an essential and indispensible role in characterizing anything that we can understand as the "meaning" of objects and their involvement in intersubjective practices. It is significant in connection with this possibility that Heidegger, from the earliest stages of his career, repeatedly devoted lengthy and penetrating analyses to the "logical" problem of the unity of the proposition or judgment, a concern which tends to get short shrift in many contemporary pragmatist analyses; and it is also essential to bear in mind that after 1933 or so Heidegger will turn to a much more explicit analysis of what he comes to see as the fundamental "ontological" significance of language, even asserting in some of his late works an outright equiprimoridiality of language and Being itself in their common relation to what he later calls the

"clearing," the ultimate "place" of disclosure and revealing.[62] And it is not as if insisting upon the primacy of language (in a broad sense) here means that the analysis of what the early Heidegger characterizes as disclosure or unconcealedness would simply have to be dropped from this project; indeed, something very much like Heidegger's analysis of "world-disclosure" (which I have not treated in detail here) might play an essential role in clarifying the outermost horizon of our language and discourse, as it bears on the totality of (what we take to be) the world. One thing we might gain from this kind of analysis, at any rate, is a Heideggerianism that is much more closely in accord with the most important results of the analytic tradition (including Davidson's own project), which depend essentially, as I have argued, on the analysis of the broadly "logical" structure of propositions and their interrelationships.

What *would* probably have to be sacrificed, however, is the claim that Heidegger's analyses of engagement and comportment can reasonably support a conception of these phenomena as "*pre-linguistic*" or "*non-conceptual*" practical bases for our linguistic (e.g. propositional) activity as a whole. This conceit is widely (although perhaps not universally) shared among proponents of the currently popular "social pragmatist" interpretation of Heidegger.[63] It is common within this literature to emphasize the sense in which Heidegger may be construed as emphasizing the "grounding" or basis of the possibility of explicit conceptual judgment in "skillful" practices and ordinary ways of behaving toward objects, as well as to construe the latter as "non-conceptual" or "pre-logical"; thus, for instance, Wrathall

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[62] The problem of the unity of the judgment is already one of the central concerns of Heidegger's first dissertation, *Die Lehre vom Urteil im Psychologismus* (1913) (GA 1); for further detailed discussions, see, e.g., GA 19 (1924), GA 21(1925) and GA 24 (1927). For a very helpful discussion of the first dissertation and the general issue of judgment, see Martin, W. (2006) *Theories of Judgment: Psychology, Logic, Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press), chapter 4.

[63] The roots of this interpretation, at least in the English-speaking world, are to be found in Richard Rorty's "Heidegger, Contingency, and Pragmatism" (in *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, Cambridge U. Press, 1991); Dreyfus's *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's "Being and Time," Division I* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991) and R. Brandom's early article "Heidegger's Categories in Being and Time," (*Monist* 66, 1983). For further examples, see, e.g., Okrent, M., (1988) *Heidegger's Pragmatism: Understanding, Being, and the Critique of Metaphysics* (Ithaca: Cornell U. Press) and Haugeland, J. (1992) "Dasein's Disclosedness" in H. L. Dreyfus and H. Hall, ed., *Heidegger: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell). The "social pragmatist" reading has been trenchantly criticized by William Blattner: see Blattner, W. (1992), "Existential Temporality in Being and Time (Why Heidegger is Not a Pragmatist)" in: H. L. Dreyfus and H. Hall, ed., *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell).

holds that according to Heidegger: "in order to understand uncovering, the primary mode of comportment to focus on is that in which we have a practical mastery of things" and adds that "It should be obvious that this sort of uncovering does not require the mediation of language."[64] But actually (outside the truism that there are many human practices, the pursuit of which does not regularly or necessarily *involve* explicitly making or formulating claims or judgments) the idea of a "pre-linguistic" stratum of practice in which beings are "disclosed" has little warrant in Heidegger's text and is, indeed, implausible in its own right (I discuss the conceptual issues below, relegating the textual issues to a footnote).[65]

First, we may object that it is not obvious what constitutes a "practice" in the relevant sense. Heidegger's famous example of the disclosure of the hammer in the interruption of our non-reflective, absorbed use of it suggests, as social-pragmatist theorists have emphasized, that the background conditions for propositional givenness typically involve *skill*; if this is right, then our knowledge of the background conditions might then be understood, largely or wholly, as consisting in special or general kinds of "know-how." This would presumably include, for instance, skills such as the skill of building, or playing

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[64] *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, p. 23.

[65] According to the index to *Being and Time*, Heidegger uses the term *praxis* (or "practice") only twice in Division I, once in Greek (on p. 68) and once in German (on p. 193). The first of these uses is parenthetical and simply mentions the connection between this term and the Greek *pragmata* or "things." The second comes in the course of Heidegger's analysis of the structure of care and in connection with Heidegger's insistence that the phenomenon of care "by no means expresses a priority of the 'practical' attitude over the theoretical." (p. 193).

A related claim that is sometimes attributed to Heidegger (e.g. by Dreyfus) is that our access to contextual systems of reference depends on our initiation or upbringing within a specific *culture*; such initiation or upbringing might then define a specific cultural "world" within certain kinds of objects can appear and become visible, whereas certain other kinds cannot (though they might become visible in other, different cultural worlds). However, Heidegger seldom uses the term "culture" in the text, and the analyses of being-in-the-world as grounded in the structure of the grammatically singular "Dasein" tend to suggest that there is indeed only *one* such structure, and hence, ultimately, only *one* world (and not the multiplicity of cultural worlds that the culturalist view just sketched imagines). One telling instance where he does use this term, however, is the following: "In the first instance what is required is that the disclosedness of the 'they' – that is, the everyday kind of Being of discourse, sight, and interpretation – should be made visible in certain definite phenomena. In relation to these phenomena, it may not be superfluous to remark that our own Interpretation is purely ontological in its aims, and is far removed from any moralizing critique of everyday Dasein, and from the aspirations of a 'philosophy of culture'." (p. 167)

football, or socializing to one's advantage; but does it also include such "practices" as contemplating the

blueness of the sky, trying to maintain one's well-being, or wondering at the existence of the world?

Here, with these examples, it is not at all clear what specific kinds of skills or "know-how" are involved,

or even that there is anything (beyond the completely anodyne sense in which "practice" refers to

anything that we do) identifiable as a "practice" underlying our activity at all. In each of these cases,

however, *propositional* claims and beliefs are obviously at least relevant, and their formation and

consideration is an integral part of the way that the activity in question may be said to arrive at "truth" or

truths, if it does indeed do so.[66]

Second and more importantly, however, it is essential to keep open (at this stage, at least) the question of

the extent to which such practical activities as underlie the possibility of the disclosure and description of

entities are *themselves* (necessarily, as it may be) grounded in the structure of language or *logos* itself. For

instance, *many* (though probably not all) of the "skills" and "practices" routinely cited by proponents of a

"social practices" reading of Heidegger are ones that, fairly obviously, could not be performed by an

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[66] This is also not to say, conversely, that *all* skills or practices are such that their possession or occurrence involves such claims and beliefs. Clearly, there are a wide variety of human practices that do not essentially involve *as part of their practice* the speaking of language. And many of these practices embody much "tacit knowledge" in the form of know-how; skill at basketball or riding a bicycle, for instance, involves a huge body of competence and skill that is not regularly, and probably could not even possibly, be formulated in explicit propositions by their practitioners. Some commentators, for instance Dreyfus, have made much of the way that such non-formulable know-how and the practical forms of comportment it permits underlie our ordinary capacity to navigate through the world and relate to its objects. However, without disputing this point, it is important in the present context to consider more closely the relationship between this kind of "know-how" and (anything that can legitimately be called) "truth." The competence of a star basketball player, for instance, *might* indeed be considered a kind of "knowledge," at least in the extended sense of "know how" that is categorically different from, and irreducible to, "knowledge that." (Compare, however, Ryle's classic discussion of this distinction, which argues that these two senses of "knowledge" are deeply heterogeneous, in "Knowing How and Knowing That" (Ryle, G. (1971) "Knowing How and Knowing That" in: *Collected Papers, Volume 2*, pp. 212-225 (New York: Barnes and Noble). But it is clear, in any case, that it does not in any sense embody a distinctive knowledge of "truths." Such distinctive truths as there are to know about the practice of basketball are known already to the average player who understands the rules and strategies, or to the specialist who studies the physiology of athletes or the physics of the game. As important as it may be to the "pre-theoretical" possibility of our engaged behavior, therefore, it is clear that this kind of competence does not *yet* amount to knowledge of truths.

organism lacking (human) language, for instance by a non-human animal. This gives reason to suggest that the structure of language – whatever is involved in knowing and being able to speak a language – plays an essential role in preconditioning and making possible these practices (even those that do not directly involve speaking or writing), and thus that the ultimate conditions for the possibility of the disclosure and description of entities are not to be understood except through what we must see (in a sufficiently broad and extended sense) as an analysis of the structure (and hence the Being) of "language itself."

If anything like this is correct, then it may be that the investigation of the structure of language is not only a useful but in fact an *essential* pre-requisite for the continued pursuit of anything like Heidegger's own inquiry into the fundamental structures of our being. But to pursue this investigation would, on the other hand, simply be to continue, in a somewhat altered context, the inquiry already begun and exemplified by the best results of the analytic tradition, including those of Davidson and the later Wittgenstein. Coming from the other direction, as well, it seems likely that we *may* take elements of the analytic tradition, in its radical turn to language, as posing (although admittedly in an obscure way) something like what Heidegger poses (though, as I have suggested, without having the resources, in *Being and Time* at least, adequately to answer it) as the question of *logos*. Here, and recurrently throughout the historical itinerary of the analytic tradition, the question of the possibility of meaning is itself the question of the nature and structure of language, of what defines or articulates its large-scale unity, and of how this unity defines our lived relations to the world we inhabit as well as to ourselves. Working, then, to develop the best results of this longstanding reflection about the structure of language and logic, we might come to see these results as bearing directly upon the continued phenomenological investigation of what we can call (in a "Heideggerian" tone of voice) the "being of language" itself. Although, as I have argued, this hybrid investigation cannot succeed without a deep reconsideration of the motivation and reasoning behind Heidegger's own disclosive conception of truth, it may thus nevertheless represent the best possible

development, under today's circumstances, of the truly profound achievement involved in Heidegger's

wresting of the question of Being from its metaphysical and historical obscurity.[67]