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MPhil

**Heidegger's Destruction of Aristotle's
Ontology in *Being and Time***

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Abstract

The focus of my thesis is Heidegger's critical interpretation of Aristotle's ontology in *Being and Time*. I will juxtapose Heidegger's project of a fundamental ontology, that is to say, his attempt to work out the meaning of being as such, with Aristotle's attempt to ground a science of being *qua* being and, in so doing, I hope to shed some more light on the raising of the question of the meaning of being (*Seinsfrage*). I try to show that although Aristotle, in his account of being, did not explicitly raise this question, his ontology nonetheless prepared the ground for Heidegger to raise the *Seinsfrage*. In the first half of the thesis, I selectively present Heidegger's account of being in *Being and Time*. My exegesis of the existential analytic of Dasein in terms of temporality will provide the relevant and required background considerations for the argument I present in the latter half of the thesis. I argue that Heidegger's critical remarks in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* concerning Aristotle's interpretation of time are paramount to understanding his critique of Aristotle's interpretation of being in the primary sense as *ousia*. I place this argument in the wider context of Heidegger's reading of Aristotle in the Introduction, where I provide a narrative account of Heidegger's engagement with Aristotle through a parallel discussion of Heidegger's other key works on Aristotle and the relevant secondary literature. Although it will be impossible to give an exhaustive overview of Heidegger's account of being, or of the entirety of his philosophical consideration of Aristotle, my textual focus, limited by the constraints of an MPhil thesis, will concern those texts of Heidegger's that I deem most helpful for the attainment of my stated aim.

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Introduction

The focus of my thesis is Heidegger's critique of Aristotle's ontology as it manifests itself in *Being and Time* and the closing part of the lectures published as *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. I argue that Heidegger's critical remarks on Aristotle's concept of time in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* serve as a viaduct to understanding Heidegger's critique of Aristotle's presence-dominated ontology in *Being and Time*. The closing part of *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* delivers the task that Heidegger had initially set out to undertake in the missing Division III of *Being and Time*, namely the destruction of Aristotle's account of time. My focus, however, is limited insofar as it does not offer an exhaustive account of Heidegger's engagement with Aristotle, and deals with one particular aspect of Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle: his critique of Aristotelian time. Heidegger's discussion of Aristotle spans a number of lectures and other texts, e.g. *Aristotle's Metaphysics Theta 1-3*, *Plato's Sophist*, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, *Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation*, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*, and *What is a Thing?*, and is carried out with the aim of not only criticizing, but also retrieving, rethinking, and transforming Aristotelian thought. For this reason, I commence with a parallel consideration of the themes in those texts and the secondary literature pertaining thereto that are of most relevance to my particular concerns.

I begin with W.A. Brogan's discussion in *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being* of the ways in which Heidegger considers Aristotle's overarching concerns. Brogan criticizes the view commonly held by commentators of Heidegger's philosophy that Heidegger's reading of Aristotle amounts to a pure critique of Aristotelian ontology:

...the prevalent, longstanding belief that Heidegger reads Aristotle as *the metaphysician par excellence* is erroneous. Those who assume that Heidegger's philosophy involves an overcoming of the forgetting of being that starts with Aristotle's distortion of early Greek thinking will be surprised by what they read in this book.¹

This prevalent yet false impression of Heidegger's engagement with Aristotle, Brogan asserts, "stems in large part from the announced final division of *Sein und Zeit*, which never appeared"²

¹ Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being*, p. 4

² Indeed the final division of *Sein und Zeit* never appeared, but I argue in Chapter II of the thesis that the contents of the missing Division III – the detailed destruction of Aristotle's account of time – can be found in the closing part of *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*.

and was supposed to have contained a detailed destruction of Aristotle's account of time."³ Brogan explicitly refers to Werner Marx as a Heidegger scholar guilty of assuming "that Heidegger understands Aristotle in metaphysical terms" and of arguing "that he places his own thinking in opposition to Aristotle."⁴ Brogan quoting Marx:

Thus, Werner Marx writes, "we regard ourselves as justified in terming the thinking from Plato and Aristotle to Hegel simply as 'the tradition' and viewing, on the other hand, Heidegger's thinking as the attempt toward a 'turning-away' from this tradition."⁵

If we turn to the text that Brogan quotes, we find clear evidence for Brogan's claim that Marx plainly views Aristotle as belonging to traditional philosophy: "Though the main attack in *Being and Time* is directed against substance in its Cartesian formulation, it is also aimed against the Aristotelian *ousia*."⁶ Brogan, however, rejects the view that Heidegger simply regarded Aristotle as an esteemed member of 'the tradition' he sought to overcome (*ueberwinden*) in putting forth his own philosophy of being.

But in fact, as we will see, Heidegger's preoccupation in his readings of Aristotle is quite the reverse of this assumption. He is much more concerned to free Aristotle from Romanized and Christian interpretations and to retrieve the radical, originary, and nonmetaphysical dimension of Aristotle's philosophy.⁷

Brogan, moreover, claims in a footnote that in *Heidegger and the Tradition*, Marx consistently gives a late-Latinized interpretation of Aristotle's basic philosophical ideas. Marx writes, e.g., "The *ousia* of Aristotle remained the prototype; 'as that which underlies,' that is, as 'substance' or as 'subject,' *ousia* comprised the constitution of a being."⁸ Brogan emphasizes that Heidegger himself rejects the Roman interpretation of the more originary and 'primordial' Greek philosophical thought in *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*, where Heidegger remarks that this interpretation "is a pile of distortions, no longer recognizing itself."⁹ Additional support for Brogan's claim concerning the alteration of Greek philosophical thought can be found in Heidegger's discussion of the history of philosophy at the onset of *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*, in which he asserts that the philosophies spanning the seventh century B.C. to the present moment "have undergone various transformations and, at times, new formations" in the course of "the history of the Christian West (Middle Ages and modernity)."¹⁰

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.: 10

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Marx, *Heidegger and the Tradition*, p. 6

⁷ Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldedness of Being*, p. 10

⁸ Marx, *Heidegger and the Tradition*, p. 10

⁹ Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldedness of Being*, p. 193

¹⁰ Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*, 4.

Indeed Aristotle “has had a *underlying* influence on our ways of seeing and, above all, speaking, ‘articulations’: *logic*;” however, Heidegger notes, “the ensuing consideration of the history of philosophy relegated Aristotle to the position of a specifically uncritical philosopher: an exponent of naïve metaphysics.”¹¹ Heidegger claims that this relegation of “the first great and radically scientific man...to the series of presumed obscurantists” was based on Kant’s “critical” philosophy and then “mediated by a facile glance at the fact that, according to the general opinion, the old uncritical metaphysics had its perfect archetype in the Middle Ages, and there Aristotle was esteemed as “*the philosopher*.”¹² Thus for Heidegger, Aristotle was not the metaphysician *par excellence*, but rather demoted to this position by medieval and modern philosophers.

Brogan argues against the common supposition that Heidegger, in his philosophy of being, attempts to overcome “the oblivion of being that starts with Aristotle’s distortion of early Greek thinking”¹³ and claims that we find in Heidegger’s readings of Aristotle “ample evidence of Heidegger’s conviction that Aristotle’s philosophy is thoroughly Greek, and in fact the fulfillment of Greek thought.”¹⁴ Such evidence appears in Heidegger’s lectures on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics Theta*, – published as *Aristotle’s Metaphysics Theta 1-3* – where Heidegger discusses Aristotle’s ontology as a transformation of Parmenidean ontology. In the first part of the lectures, which concerns Aristotle’s *Metaphysics Theta 1*, Heidegger considers the task that Aristotle inherited from his predecessors – the problem of the one and the many: How could being be conceived as both a unity and a manifold – and moreover – as both simple and changing, both always there and yet always becoming? Aristotle tackles the problem not simply by contradicting the Parmenidean view that being is “the one, the simple,”¹⁵ but rather by transforming the entire question: “the question about *on* (being) as *hen* (one) comes into sharp focus here for the first time.”¹⁶ For this to have happened, Heidegger thinks, two decisive steps must have been taken: firstly, Plato undertook the “decisive step over and against Parmenides,” attaining “the insight that non-being, the false, the evil, the transitory – hence unbeing – also is” – “the sense of being had to shift because now the notness itself had to be included in the essence of being;”¹⁷ secondly, Aristotle undertook the “equally decisive step” of realizing that “this intrusion of notness into the unity

¹¹ Ibid.: 4-5

¹² Ibid.: 5

¹³ Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldedness of Being*, p. 112

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Heidegger, *Aristotle’s Metaphysics Theta 1-3*, p. 22

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

signifies its folding out into multiplicity,” that the *pollachos* (manifold) of being “is no longer simply shut out from the one, the simple; rather, both are recognized as belonging together.”¹⁸. Aristotle was the first “to discern that this manifoldness of being was multi-structured and that this structure had its own necessity.”¹⁹ Thus Aristotle retains the oneness of being whilst reconciling it with its manifoldness and, in so doing, transforms the question of being.

In *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, Heidegger considers the *fourfold* structure in which Aristotle conceives of this manifoldness of being:

1. *to on ton katejorion* [the categories’ being]
2. *to on dunamei-energeia* [the potentiality’s being-actuality’s being]
3. *to on kata sumbebekos* [the being of what is attendant to something else]
4. *to on hos alethes* [the being as true].²⁰

All four basic determinations of being, Heidegger concludes, “are drawn from the fact of the matter of *being in the world*.”²¹ Heidegger attempts to show how all four directions of the manifoldness of being in Greek philosophy are oriented towards *being in the world* and then sets up the question of its reversal: “how does it come to a *reversal* so radical that what is called ‘consciousness’ comes to be the theme of all philosophy”²² (even though “nothing about consciousness surfaces”)? In further explication of the above, I want to mention another commentator of Heidegger’s philosophy: Catriona Hanley. In *Being and God in Aristotle and Heidegger*, Hanley claims that Heidegger uses Aristotle’s fourfold notion of being in *Aristotle’s Metaphysics Theta 1-3* “to drive a wedge into the philosophy of presence, which sees *ousia* as the fixedness of an eternal stable ‘entity.’”²³ In so doing, Hanley claims that Heidegger distinguishes his own aim of accounting “for the individual nature of the search for meaning proper to each human being” from Aristotle’s aim of finding “a universalizing unity between the senses of being.”²⁴ Hence there emerges a divergence in the philosophy of being: Heidegger’s project of a fundamental ontology that accounts for *being as such* and the *Jemeinigkeit* (mineness) of *Dasein* (there-being) on the one hand and Aristotle’s science of *being in general* on the other hand.

Aristotle writes in *Metaphysics Zeta 1* that of the many ways in which being is conceived, *ousia* (traditionally translated as substance) is primary: “As variously as the being may be said here

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Heidegger, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, p. 38

²¹ Ibid.: 39

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

(thus it is not a matter of a confused and arbitrary manifoldness, but) it is apparent from this that first being is what being, which means *ousia*.”²⁵ Heidegger, on the other hand, finds this interpretation questionable. He revisits his translation of the *Metaphysics Zeta 1* passage:

We translated it at the time conservatively: “[We have dealt with] beings in the primary sense....” Now we can translate it in the following way: “We have dealt with the sustaining and leading fundamental meaning of being, to which all the other categories are carried back (*anapherontai*, we could equally well say: *analegontai*, are said back), that is, *ousia*.”²⁶

It was concluded already by medieval philosophers that “the first guiding fundamental meaning of being in general...was *ousia*, which is usually translated as ‘substance.’”²⁷ Heidegger finds this conclusion problematic because it gives the impression that “being possible and actual and true also had to be led back to being in the sense of substance.”²⁸ The tendency to interpret Aristotle’s doctrine of being in terms of substance only gets exacerbated throughout the history of philosophy:

They were even more inclined to conclude this in the nineteenth century (especially Brentano), since in the meantime, being, being possible, and being actual had come to be perceived as categories. Hence it is a generally accepted opinion that the Aristotelian doctrine of being is a “substance doctrine.” This is an error, in part resulting from the inadequate interpretation of the *pollachos*; more precisely, it was overlooked that only a question is here first of all being prepared.²⁹

Heidegger, however, claims that the way in which the other senses of being are related to *ousia* is not necessarily one of derivation. He concedes that *ousia* is the first category but he reminds us that “the categorical way of addressing being is only *one* of the many senses of revealing being”³⁰ and that *ousia* “as this *hen* (one) and *proton* (first) is not *koinon* in the sense of a genus which is named and said of the other categories as species. Being so constituted and being so much are not kinds of *ousia* but ways of being related to it.”³¹ Hanley writes of Heidegger’s view, “Though *ousia* is the fundamental category, it is not necessarily the focal point of relation of the four senses of being (being according to the categories, being possible and actual, being as accident, and being as being-true).”³²

Being (*on*) as potentiality (*dunamis*) and actuality (*energeia*), for instance, is indeed related to *ousia* and the other meanings of being, but Heidegger warns us against making presumptions

²⁵ Heidegger, *Aristotle’s Metaphysics Theta 1-3*, p. 13

²⁶ Heidegger, *Aristotle’s Metaphysics Theta 1-3*, p. 35

²⁷ *Ibid.*: 37

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being*, p. 114 – my emphasis

³¹ Heidegger, *Aristotle’s Metaphysics Theta 1-3*, p. 35

³² Hanley, *Being and God in Aristotle and Heidegger*, p. 49

about these relations: “So we also do not know how the *on* as *dunamis* and *energeia* stands in relation to the other meanings or how it stands together with them in the unity of being. And it is precisely here that we must guard against manipulating things artificially in order to concoct in the end a smooth ‘system’.”³³ He proposes instead “to leave everything open and questionable; only thus will we be capable of freeing and keeping alive Aristotle’s unresolved innermost questioning, and thereby the questioning of ancient philosophy and accordingly our own.”³⁴ Heidegger regards Aristotle’s discussion of *dunamis* and *energeia* as a questioning about beings that is distinct from the question of the categories: “For Aristotle the question of *dunamis* and *energeia*, possibility and actuality, is not a category question.”³⁵

Additional support for Brogan’s claim that Heidegger reads Aristotle with the aim of retrieving and transforming rather than simply criticizing Aristotelian thought can be found in the collection of Heidegger’s lectures published as *Plato’s Sophist*. Here Heidegger offers a rethinking of Aristotle’s work, which he argues is more original and radical than that of his teacher Plato.³⁶ Heidegger writes of Aristotle,

He can indeed say no more than Plato already said, namely that the Being of beings is itself a being; but the Being of beings is precisely something of a quite peculiar sort and cannot be characterized in turn by that which it itself categorially determines. I cannot grasp the Being of beings in turn as a being; I can grasp it only by acquiring immanent determinations for Being itself out of itself. Aristotle therefore saves himself when he says: Being and the manifold of the characters which pertain to Being like “something already present by means of itself.” He says *phusis* in order to emphasize that these characters of the Being of beings do not pertain to beings merely insofar as they are addressed, but are already there for the showing in *legein*.³⁷

Aristotle not only first exposes “the idea of ‘ontology,’ of *legein*, of the addressing of beings with respect to their Being...with complete acumen,”³⁸ but in characterizing being as “something already present by means of itself...already there for the showing in *legein*,”³⁹ his philosophy of being, Heidegger thinks, surpasses that of Plato’s.

The *leitmotif* of retrieval and transformation with respect to Heidegger’s confrontation with Aristotle also runs through Hanley’s work. Hanley’s general aim in *Being and God in Aristotle and Heidegger* is “to show how and why Heidegger’s ontology differs from Aristotle’s on the

³³ Ibid.: 39

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.: 6

³⁶ Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being*, p. 4

³⁷ Heidegger, *Plato’s Sophist*, p. 145

³⁸ Ibid.: 142

³⁹ Ibid.: 145

issue of God.”⁴⁰ In order to explain this difference, she undertakes the secondary aim of showing “how Heidegger, in conversation with the Greek master, retrieves and transforms some of Aristotle’s fundamental notions.”⁴¹ She maps out some of the basic conceptual shifts that mark the change: “a shift from the priority of theory to the priority of practice, from the priority of actuality to the priority of possibility.”⁴² According to Heidegger in the 1922 Natorp piece, *Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation*, the priority of *theorein* (theory) and *energeia* (actuality) in Aristotle’s ontology comes to the fore when we consider that for Aristotle, being in the “genuine sense” is “finished-being,” a movement (*kinesis*) which has “come to its end” and, as such, is an *energeia*.⁴³ Heidegger explains how this priority of *energeia* is linked up with the priority of *theorein*: Insofar as the movement of *praxis* is always a “being on the way” to the “not yet” of its intentional toward-which, that is to say, a possibility (*dunamis*) rather than an actuality (*energeia*), “the highest idea of pure movement is satisfied only by *noisis* as pure *theorein*.”⁴⁴ In Chapter IV of the thesis, I briefly allude to Aristotle’s discussion of divine forms (God’s thinking) as the paradigmatic and purest *energeia* in *Metaphysics Lambda*. This discussion sets the stage for understanding why Aristotle identifies theology as first philosophy and why he claims that the science of being *qua* being belongs to theology as first philosophy in *Metaphysics Eta*.⁴⁵

Yet another instance where a commentator lends support to the view that Heidegger’s engagement with Aristotle is not merely one of rejection can be found in William McNeill’s *The Glance of the Eye: Heidegger, Aristotle, and the Ends of Theory*. In this work, McNeill helpfully

⁴⁰ Hanley, *Being and God in Aristotle and Heidegger*, p. 144

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation*, p. 268

⁴⁴ Van Buren, *The Young Heidegger*, p. 225

⁴⁵ Cf. *Metaphysics*. VI. 1026^a10-33: “But if there is something which is eternal and immovable and separable, clearly the knowledge of it belongs to a theoretical science, - not, however, to natural science (for natural science deals with certain movable things) nor to mathematics, but to a science prior to both. For natural science deals with things which are inseparable from matter but not immovable, and some parts of mathematics deal with things which are immovable, but probably not separable, but embodied in matter; while the first science deals with things which are both separable and immovable. Now all causes must be eternal, but especially these; for they are the causes of so much of the divine as appears to us. There must, then, be three theoretical philosophies, mathematics, natural science, and theology, since it is obvious that if the divine is present anywhere, it is present in things of this sort. And the highest science must deal with the highest genus, so that the theoretical sciences are superior to the other sciences, and this to the other theoretical sciences...if there is no substance other than those which are formed by nature, natural science will be the first science; but if there is an immovable substance, the science of this must be prior and must be first philosophy, and universal in this way, because it is first. And it will belong to this to consider being *qua* being – both what it is and the attributes which belong to it *qua* being.”

points out how Heidegger, in his existential analysis of the authentic and inauthentic modes of Dasein in *Being and Time*, retrieves and transforms Aristotle's interpretation of human existence in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. McNeill reinforces this claim by drawing our attention to Heidegger's identification of *eudaimonia* as "the authenticity of the being of human existence" in his 1924/1925 *Sophist* lectures.⁴⁶

From this perspective, as we have just noted, *Being and Time* might well be read as an attempt to retrieve the Aristotelian privileging of the contemplative life, albeit while radicalizing the theoretical moment in the direction of a rigorous, phenomenological vision directed not toward the "eternal" being of the *kosmos*, but toward *praxis*.⁴⁷

Heidegger claims that Aristotle privileges the theoretical life (*theoria*) of *sophia* due to its orientation to pure presence: "Noein as *energeia theoretike* most fully satisfies the *energeia* of a living being its pure being present [*Anwesendsein*] as such."⁴⁸ For Aristotle "the analysis of human existence is oriented purely toward the meaning of being itself, toward the possibility of human Dasein 'always being,' that is, achieving permanence," whereas for Heidegger, the analysis of authentic being (in which Dasein understands itself as *praxis* – as radically finite and originary) consists in Dasein's "retrieval of its ownmost being, in its seeing, in the 'glance of the eye' or *Augenblick*, the singular and *momentary* character of its own presence as Dasein."⁴⁹ In other words, Heidegger's *Daseinsanalytik* swaps the privileging of permanence and constant presence in Aristotle's doctrine of being for the privileging of the radical finitude of *praxis*. Thus we see that Heidegger's shift from the priority of theory to one of practice is grounded in his shift from the priority of constant presence to one of finitude.

The emergence of Heidegger's *Daseinsanalytik* is undoubtedly to be attributed to his reading of Aristotle's philosophy of being, as evidenced by another primary text, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, in which Heidegger establishes how *logos*⁵⁰ is linked with being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*). Heidegger claims that the being-in-the-world of human beings is essentially fixed through *logos*, since speaking with, about, and of the world is the fundamental way in which human beings are in their world. Human beings, in turn, are fixed (*bestimmt*) through speech (*logos*). He concludes from this discussion that *logos* addresses the entity in its

⁴⁶ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* 19, p. 172 – McNeill's reference

⁴⁷ McNeill, *The Glance of the Eye. Heidegger, Aristotle and the Ends of Theory*, p.100

⁴⁸ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* 19, p. 179 – McNeill's reference

⁴⁹ McNeill, *The Glance of the Eye. Heidegger, Aristotle and the Ends of Theory*, p. 96 – my emphases

⁵⁰ Cf. *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, 38: "As for 1. (*to on ton katejorion* – the categories' being), it is conveyed by the view taken toward the *logos*. *Kategorein* [to prove] is a stronger form of *legein* [to say]: to demonstrate something with certitude to someone. The category works in constant orientation to that possibility of existing that is characterized as speech, a possibility in which the world existing around it is 'here' ['da']."

ousia, in its *Dasein*.⁵¹ Although brief mention is made here made of how Heidegger's *Daseinsanalytik* stems from his projected reading of Aristotle, it will not be possible within the limits of the thesis to show this relation in full. In the first chapter of the thesis, I offer an exegesis – albeit admittedly introductory and incomplete – of *Being and Time*'s *Daseinsanalytik*, which I argue is required background for understanding why Heidegger objects to Aristotle's interpretation of time and being.

I proceed by giving another example of a Heidegger commentator whose work I consider helpful for understanding further how Aristotle's distinction between theory and practice is inextricably linked up with two distinct kinds of temporal being: the ever-being (*aei on*) on the one hand and unfinished, historical being as it manifests itself in what Heidegger calls factual being on the other hand. In *The Young Heidegger*, Van Buren writes:

The "structural distinction between the two basic modes of perceiving" (*nous*), namely *sophia* ("observational understanding") and *phronesis*, is organized precisely around the distinction between two types of being, namely, between the "authentic being" of the heavenly ever-being (*aei on*) and finished-being (*on energeia*) of the divine (fixed presence), on the one hand, and, on the other, the sublunar *on hos pragma*, being as that which can be other (*endochomenon allos echein*), alterity, unfinished historical being, which Aristotle calls a certain *me on* (nonpresence). Heidegger called it "factual being..."⁵²

The distinction between the ever-being (*aei on*) and the finite as factual being is paramount not only because it is that around which the distinction between theoretical and practical understanding is structured, but also because it serves as the key to understanding the connection between being and time, which Heidegger claims can be understood both authentically and inauthentically. I shall discuss in more detail the inauthentic and authentic understanding of this connection and its relation to the two distinct kinds of temporal being in Chapter III.

In *Plato's Sophist*, Heidegger writes that for Aristotle, the object of knowledge (*episteme*) is *aidion* - beings that always are: "*Episteme* thus relates to beings which always are. Only what

⁵¹ „Was ist nur mit diesen *logos*? Er ist die fundamentale Bestimmung des Seins des Menschen als solchen...Leben besagt eine Weise des Seins, und zwar Sein-in-einer-Welt. Ein lebendes ist nicht einfach vorhanden, sondern ist in einer Welt, in der Weise, dass es seine Welt hat...Das In-der-Welt-sein des Menschen ist im Grunde bestimmt durch das Sprechen. Die Weise des fundamentalen Seins des Menschen in seiner Welt ist, mit ihr, ueber sie; von ihr zu sprechen. So ist die Mensch gerade durch den *logos* bestimmt, und so sehen sie, wo, wenn Definition ein *logos* ist, diese Sache der Definition ihren Boden hat, sofern *logos* die Grundbestimmung des Seins des Menschen ist. Der *logos*, also *horismos* spricht das Seiende in seiner *ousia*, in seinem *Dasein* an.“ (*Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, p. 17).

⁵² Van Buren, *The Young Heidegger*, p. 228

always is can be known.”⁵³ Heidegger tries to show that the everlasting (*aei on*) is determinative for being (*onta*) in Aristotelian ontology and, in so doing, establishes that being = presence:

Now that is remarkable: beings are determined with regard to their Being by a moment of *time*. The everlasting characterizes beings with regard to their Being. The *onta* are *aidia*. *Aei*, “always, everlasting,” is “that which coheres in itself, that which is never interrupted.” *Aion* means the same as lifetime, **understood as full presence**...Every living being has its *aion*, its determinate time of presence. *Aion* expresses the full measure of presence, of which a living being disposes...“what always is is, with regard to presence, earlier than what is perishable,” earlier than what once came into being and hence was once not present. Therefore...the *aidia* are what form the beginning for all other beings. They are therefore that which properly is. **For what the Greeks mean by Being is presence, being in the present.** Therefore that which always dwells in the now is most properly a being and is the *arche*, the origin, of the rest of beings. All determinations of beings can be led back, if necessary, to an everlasting being and are intelligible on that basis.⁵⁴

The meaning of being is presence, and this meaning, Heidegger asserts, “includes the whole problem of time and consequently the problem of the ontology of Dasein.”⁵⁵ This ontology of Dasein is developed in *Being and Time*. But in order to understand fully and engage fruitfully with Heidegger’s stark critique of Aristotle’s equation of being with presence in *Being and Time*, we must first examine Heidegger’s critical reading of Aristotle’s concept of time in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. It is for these reasons that I have focused my thesis on these two texts.

According to Heidegger in *Plato’s Sophist*, Aristotle stresses, “‘That which always is, insofar as it always is, is not in time...it suffers nothing from time,’ it is unchangeable.”⁵⁶ Thomas Sheehan’s discussion in *Das Gewesen* of Aristotle’s use of the term ‘*to ti en einai*’ helps to illuminate this point:

...*to ti en einai* does not designate any past at all, not even a past that still weighs upon the present and allows of a retrieval of its latent possibilities, the way one can retrieve a still hidden meaning from Kant, or revive a personal relationship, or work through a childhood trauma.⁵⁷

In short, Aristotle’s *to ti en einai* is not chronologically prior in any sense; it “has nothing to do with either past time or the present perfect tense”⁵⁸ but rather denotes “some original eternal *ontos on*” and hence is “the existentially apriori.”⁵⁹ Heidegger claims that Aristotle offers a precise

⁵³ Heidegger, *Plato’s Sophist*, p. 22

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: 23

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*: 323

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: 24

⁵⁷ Sheehan, T.J. SJ, “Das Gewesen” in *Existential: MELETAI SOFIAS*, p. 9 (See also Heidegger’s New Aspect: On In-Sein, Zeitlichkeit, and the Genesis of Being and Time in *Existential: MELETAI SOFIAS*, p. 28)

⁵⁸ Sheehan, T.J. SJ, “Das Gewesen” in *Existential: MELETAI SOFIAS*, p. 7

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*: 9

clarification of what he means by ‘in time:’ “To be in time means ‘to be measured by time with regard to Being.’”⁶⁰ The measuring of time just is the counting of the nows in succession. That which always is, on the other hand, is “what is constantly in the now – its nows are numberless, limitless, *apeiron*.”⁶¹ The nows of the eternal (*aidion*) are infinite and not measurable and hence the *aidion* is not in time. Heidegger adds: “But that does not make it ‘supratemporal’ in our sense. What is not in time is for Aristotle still temporal, i.e., it is determined on the basis of time – just as the *aidion*, which is not in time, is determined by the *apeiron* of the nows.”⁶² But Heidegger insists that we must “hold fast to what is distinctive here, namely, that beings are interpreted as to their Being on the basis of time.”⁶³

Sheehan discusses in another article Heidegger’s use in his *Daseinsanalytik* of the *en einai* as the “*das jeweils Fruehere*, ‘what is, in each instance, prior...that which in each case is always ontologically operative in Dasein: *das schon voraus Wesende*.”⁶⁴ Sheehan argues that in translating *das Gewesen* (*to ti en einai*) in this way instead of as “‘what-is-as-having-been,’ we reject the privileging of a linear view of time that sees some given process of development as having achieved its fulfillment, which fulfillment continues to have impact today.”⁶⁵ Moreover, he claims that in describing Dasein’s structure in terms of the “*apriorisches Perfekt*: ‘the perfect tense, apriori aspect,’” Heidegger innovatively takes the middle road “between the Scylla of the completed-and-present aspect of the Greek perfect (‘is-as-having-been’) and the Charybis of a ‘Platonizing’ aspect, according to which the *en* of *to ti en einai* would have been an objective-transcendent signification, denoting some original eternal *ontos on*.”⁶⁶ Sheehan’s argument highlights for us Heidegger’s move away from the Greek prioritizing of *energeia* and thus reinforces Hanley’s discussion about the basic conceptual shifts that mark Heidegger’s transformation of some of Aristotle’s fundamental notions.

Recall that according to the traditional interpretation of *Metaphysics Zeta* 1, the primary sense of being for Aristotle is *ousia*. *Ousia* is traditionally translated as substance but Heidegger seeks to recover “a much more natural and original sense of *ousia*,” in which it signifies “the presence of

⁶⁰ Heidegger, *Plato’s Sophist*, p. 24

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Sheehan, T.J. SJ, “Heidegger’s New Aspect” in *Existential: MELETAI SOFIAS*, p. 28

⁶⁵ Ibid.: 27

⁶⁶ Ibid.: 28

definite things in the circuit of everyday use and everyday sight.”⁶⁷ In this context, *ousia* means availability for everyday use and “being thus means to be produced.”⁶⁸ Heidegger claims that interpreting being as that which is produced and stands there as available corresponds to the original sense of *ousia*, since “*ousia* meant possessions, wealth, household chattels, that which is at one’s disposal in everyday existence, that which stands in availability.”⁶⁹ Heidegger links this sense of *ousia* with presence: “Producing in the sense of fabricating is a making available and thereby is a placing into availability, a placing into presence, and thus is a letting be seen.”⁷⁰ Being = presence has implicitly guided ancient ontology and this meaning of being is not just arbitrary,

...but rather it is the one borne by life itself, by factual Dasein, insofar as all human Dasein is interpretive, interprets itself as well as everything that is a being in whatever sense. In this interpretation there is operative an implicit sense of Being. And indeed the Greeks drew their implicit sense of Being out of the natural immediate interpretation of Being by factual Dasein, where Being means to be there already at the very outset as possession, household, property [*Anwesen*] – put more sharply: as presence [*Anwesenheit*].⁷¹

In the final chapter of the thesis, I shall revisit Heidegger’s interpretation of the common and nomenclatorial meanings of *ousia* in *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie* and consider the connection between these meanings and Heidegger’s translation of *ousia* as constant presence.

Thus far I have presented Brogan’s and Hanley’s portrayal of Heidegger’s reading of Aristotle, according to which Heidegger used Aristotle for the sake of retrieving, rethinking, and transforming Aristotle’s philosophy of being. However, it must be remembered that Heidegger certainly reads Aristotle in the context of ‘destroying’ the history of ontology that begins with Greek thought. In fact, both Brogan and Hanley recognize the role of the destruction of ancient ontology in Heidegger’s confrontation with Aristotle. Brogan writes that philosophy for Heidegger is “always a double movement of recovery and destruction” because “philosophy, as ontology, is fundamentally historical.”⁷² The genuine pursuit of the question of being, which Heidegger regards as the task of philosophy, just is the pursuit of the historical (*geschichtliche*) meaning of being. Let us return briefly to Heidegger’s 1922 Natorp piece, in which we find the beginnings of “the double-pronged program familiar to us in BT of 1) a fundamental ontology

⁶⁷ Ibid.: 186

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.: 273

⁷¹ Ibid.: 323

⁷² Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being*, p. 7

and 2) a destruction of the history of ontology.”⁷³ In his examination of the genesis of Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, Theodore Kisiel refers to the Natorp piece as ‘seminal’ because it is ground-breaking on a number of levels, the first of which is structural:

For here we find an initial resolution to the problem of WS 1921-1922, that of fusing the “historical” with the “systematic” approach in a phenomenological philosophy in accord with the essential relation between philosophizing and a life which is already historical and so “hermeneutical.”⁷⁴

The outcome, Kisiel claims, is “a concentrated methodological statement of the phenomenological hermeneutics of the research situation outlining for the very first time” Heidegger’s dual project of carrying out a fundamental ontology on the one hand and destroying the history of ontology on the other hand.⁷⁵

The theme (*Leitfaden*) of historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) plays a vital role in our understanding of Heidegger’s ontology as it is developed in the 1922 Natorp piece and *Being and Time*, and reoccurs in Heidegger’s later works, e.g., *What is a Thing?* In this text, Heidegger begins with a consideration of the different ways we can ask what a thing is. He then answers, “Ein Ding ist der Träger von Eigenschaften, und die dem entsprechende Wahrheit hat ihren Sitz in der Aussage, dem Satz, der eine Verbindung von Subjekt und Prädikat ist.”⁷⁶ A thing, as the bearer of properties, the subject of predication, and that which underlies (*hupokeimenon*) properties (*sumbebekos, accidens*) is *das Bleibende, eine Unterlage*, that which always already stands there with.⁷⁷ Heidegger thinks that this answer is so “natural” that it has governed not only theoretical and scientific thought, but also all of our encounters with things.⁷⁸ He questions whether this rule by a century-old interpretation of the thinghood (*Dingheit*) of things in our “natural world-view” (*natürliche Weltansicht*) has concealed a rather different essence of ‘thing’.⁷⁹ What Heidegger means by “natural,” then, is something historical (*Geschichtliches*). Heidegger claims that the question concerning the thing has become historical with the aim of showing, “dass eigentlich ein ursprünglicher Bezug zu den Dingen fehlt.”⁸⁰ Thus we encounter again in Heidegger’s philosophy the process of unfolding the historical layers of meanings of a concept – in this case the thinghood of things – for the sake of recovering the more originary meaning that lies beneath.

⁷³ Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time*, p. 249 – my emphasis

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Heidegger, *Die Frage nach dem Ding*, p. 29

⁷⁷ Ibid.: 26

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.: 30

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Heidegger, moreover, asserts that the question and answer regarding what a thing is is historical not because both are rooted in a 'past,' an earlier time that *was*, but rather because the historical meaning of thinghood still manifests itself (*noch geschieht*) in the present-day:

Wir fragen geschichtlich, wenn wir fragen, was noch geschieht, auch wenn es dem Anschein nach vergangen ist. Wir fragen, was noch geschieht und ob wir diesem Geschehen gewachsen bleiben, so dass es sich erst entfalten kann.⁸¹

Heidegger claims that the originary questioning of being has been covered over throughout the history of philosophy and attributes the covering over of this question and its resultant – *Seinsvergessenheit* – not only to the western tradition, but, more importantly, to the question of being itself. Hence Sheehan writes:

Today, according to Heidegger, the game is up, the whole world is out of joint – but not because being has been lost. Quite the contrary, Being has triumphed. The history that runs from classical Greece to today – from theology as the first technology to technology as the last theology – has reached its eschatological fulfillment in nihilism. Being (i.e. presence) has become everything. The absence that dispenses presence has become nothing.⁸²

Since the history of being is such that it conceals the kind of questioning that discloses being, namely the raising of *Seinsfrage*, Heidegger considers as his philosophical task the destruction of the tradition. Brogan concedes, “it is within Aristotle’s philosophy that we also find the origin of the forgottenness of being that determines the history of metaphysics, an oblivion that Heidegger’s philosophy aims to overcome.”⁸³ Nevertheless, he stresses that “it would be very misleading to conclude that Heidegger’s interpretation of Aristotle focuses primarily on this aspect of Aristotle’s philosophy.”⁸⁴ Ample evidence has been provided to show that Heidegger, in his engagement with Aristotle, does not merely aim to destroy Aristotle’s philosophy of being but also to retrieve, rethink, and transform Aristotelian ontology. It would, however, be impossible within the bounds of an MPhil thesis to give a complete account of Heidegger’s interpretation of Aristotle and thus it is Heidegger’s overcoming of the *Seinsvergessenheit* – which begins with Aristotle – through a destruction of Aristotle’s concept of time that I focus on in the thesis.

To conclude this preliminary overview of Heidegger’s engagement with Aristotle, I attempt to offer an answer to a question that naturally arises within the context of any philosophical undertaking: what is the significance of Heidegger’s work on Aristotle in our present

⁸¹ Ibid.: 33

⁸² Sheehan, T.J. SJ, *Das Gewesen in Existenzia: MELETAI SOFIAS*, p. 6

⁸³ Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being*, p. 9

⁸⁴ Ibid.

understanding of Heidegger? To put it differently: why does Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle matter? It matters because it is Heidegger's reading of Aristotle that makes possible his transformation of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology into hermeneutical phenomenology. This redefinition of the task of phenomenology and philosophical redirection is evidenced by the Natorp piece and supported by the contents of Brogan's and Kisiel's works. Brogan writes:

It is arguably the case that Heidegger's transformation of Husserlian phenomenology into his own, and especially his interest in the history of being and the importance of a "destruction" of that history as a way of raising the question of being, has its roots in his reading of Aristotle.⁸⁵

Heidegger's endeavor of retrieving and deconstructing the history of how philosophers of the tradition have understood being "was counter to Husserl's sense of phenomenological 'seeing,' which also 'demanded that one give up interjecting the authority of the great thinkers into the discussion.'"⁸⁶ Heidegger finds "a remarkable affinity between his own original phenomenological researches and Aristotle's texts, in method as well as content," most memorably marked by "the insight, in book 6 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, into *aletheuein* as a multifaceted process of revealment."⁸⁷ This insight into *aletheia* as unconcealment subsequently "prompted the recognition of the fundamental trait of *ousia*, the being of beings, as presence."⁸⁸ The development of Heidegger's philosophy of being thus owes an immeasurable debt to his confrontation with Aristotle. Moreover, Brogan notes that Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle was of key importance to Aristotle scholarship in Germany in the early twentieth century, "and the controversial and revolutionary implications of his interpretations of Aristotle, and ancient Greek philosophy in general, continue to help shape the resurgence of interest in ancient Greek philosophy among continental philosophers today."⁸⁹ In the final chapter of the thesis, I try to show that Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's first category of *ousia* as constant presence lights up for us the underlying meaning of Aristotle's philosophy of being.

⁸⁵ Ibid.: xiii

⁸⁶ Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, p. 229

⁸⁷ Ibid.: 228

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being*, p. 1

Chapter I: Heidegger's Philosophy of Being

While it is neither necessary nor possible for the intentions of this project to set out in full Heidegger's account of being, we must provide at least a snapshot of it before we can engage with Heidegger's critique in *Being and Time* of Aristotle's interpretation of being as presence. The following sections contain material that is not only relevant, but also serves as a prerequisite to understanding this critique. Indeed the bulk of my discussion of these themes will be exegetical; however, my selective presentation of Heidegger's views will not be completely uncritical, so as to give an informative as well as what I hope to be an interesting and engaging picture of Heidegger's account of being. In order to exposit a few things about Heidegger's account for the purpose of looking critically at some features of Heidegger's philosophy of being, I will refer to contemporary Anglo-American secondary literature⁹⁰.

The Question of Being

In his magnum opus, *Being and Time*, Martin Heidegger seeks to raise anew the question of the meaning of being. The raising anew of the question of the meaning of being not only requires that we get clear about that which we are inquiring into, but also that we ask the question in a way that captures concretely the meaning of being. These two tasks constitute the aims of Heidegger's investigation of being. In taking into consideration the aims of Heidegger's project in *Being and Time*, the following questions come to mind: Why is there a need to raise *anew* the question of the meaning of being? What sets Heidegger's inquiry into being apart from those of his predecessors?

According to Heidegger, "a dogma has been developed which not only declares the question about the meaning of Being to be superfluous, but sanctions its complete neglect."⁹¹ These presuppositions and prejudices constantly reimplant and foster "the belief that an inquiry into Being is unnecessary."⁹² But Heidegger thinks that these presuppositions produce precisely the reverse effect: they demonstrate that there is indeed a need "for restating the question about the meaning of Being."⁹³ These presuppositions are as follows: being is the most universal concept;

⁹⁰ e.g. Hermann Phillipse's *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being*, Hubert Dreyfus' *Being-In-The-World*, and Stephen Mulhall's *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger and Being and Time*

⁹¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1: 21 (cited as *BT* hereafter)

⁹² *Ibid.* 1: 22

⁹³ *Ibid.*

the concept of being is indefinable; being is a self-evident concept. Although being has been regarded as the most universal concept, Heidegger claims that this presupposition does not imply that being “is the one which is clearest or that it needs no further discussion;”⁹⁴ instead, it is precisely because its universality is presupposed that being remains the darkest concept of all. Likewise, the presupposition that the concept of being is indefinable as a result of its universality does not entail that there is no problem with respect to defining being; rather, it is precisely because of its resistance to definition that one should persist in working out the meaning of being. Lastly, that the concept of being is self-evident and hence has an average intelligibility, that is to say, is understood ubiquitously, only demonstrates that this concept has not been worked out comprehensively, since the common way in which being is used and defined results in our remaining complacent with the meaning of being that is already familiar to us. Thus for Heidegger “the very fact that we already live in an understanding of Being and that the meaning of Being is still veiled in darkness” requires us to renew the question of being in such a way that we reveal an understanding of being that lies beneath the covering of supposed universality, seeming self-evidence, and average intelligibility.⁹⁵ Heidegger wants to show that the question of being is still alive in philosophy and seeks to convince us that philosophy *needs* to raise the question of being because this question is *the* fundamental question in philosophy.

In order to revive the question of being, Heidegger thinks that “we must first work out an adequate way of *formulating* it.”⁹⁶ Heidegger thinks that there is a correct way of formulating the question of being so as to shed light on what exactly we mean by being. The correct formulation of the question of being (*Seinsfrage*) in *Being and Time* involves “asking about Being as such,” (*Sein als solches*) that is to say, being as considered apart from its universal, abstract, and empty sense.⁹⁷ Thus Heidegger is not interested in the concept of being that is devoid of content, being as expressed by the existential quantifier, but rather a concrete and particular kind of being: being as such as opposed to being in general. But so long as the philosophical tradition, which has its inception with Greek philosophy, asks the general question, “What *is* being?,” it lacks “any satisfactory formulation of the question itself” and thus the inquiry into being “remains itself naïve and opaque.”⁹⁸ Here we must distinguish between a substantial approach (asking what being is) and a methodological approach (asking about being) to ontology. Indeed Heidegger

⁹⁴ Ibid. 1: 23

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 1: 24

⁹⁷ Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 20

⁹⁸ *BT*, 3: 29, 31

wants us to get clear about what we are inquiring, but he thinks that to ask “What is being?” is to ask an ill-formed question with respect to being, since we understand being in terms of the copula ‘is’. In so doing, “we keep within an understanding of the ‘is’, though we are unable to fix conceptually what that ‘is’ signifies,” resulting in an “obscured or still unilluminated understanding of Being.”⁹⁹ For Heidegger, a correct understanding of being cannot be grasped as a predicate of a subject-predicate judgment. And although we might expect Heidegger to say that any attempt to say what being *is* fails on grounds of circularity, he does not put forth this argument. Instead, Heidegger objects to asking “what is being?” on the grounds that doing so entails a contraction of the concept of being, in which some thing can show up as being in the place of the predicate, e.g. being is presence, being is substance, etc.

Both Heidegger and Aristotle assign to ontology priority over all the other sciences. For Aristotle, since other sciences, e.g. mathematics and physics, only deal with some genus of being, that is to say, that they study a particular kind of being, they fail to capture being *qua* being. There is a general science that studies being as being and this science is prior to all other sciences in the sense that it studies that which is related to the subjects of inquiry of the other sciences, namely *ousia*¹⁰⁰. Heidegger’s project of fundamental ontology – his attempt to work out the meaning of being as such – is a retrieval and renewal of Aristotle’s attempt to ground a science of being *qua* being. Like Aristotle, Heidegger thinks that the inquiry into being as being is indeed more *primordial* or originary “as over against the ontical inquiry of the positive sciences.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Ibid. 2: 25

¹⁰⁰ Translators John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson point out in a footnote that *ousia* is usually translated in the Aristotelian tradition as *substance*. Etymologically, however, *ousia* is a derivative of the infinitive “to be” (*einai*). Heidegger takes *ousia* to be synonymous to *parousia* (presence). In Chapter IV, I will address extensively the translation of *ousia* as presence and assess its implications for Aristotle’s ontology.

The noun *ousia* is derived from one of the stems used in conjugating the irregular verb *einai* (‘to be’); in the Aristotelian tradition it is usually translated as ‘substance’, though translators of Plato are more likely to write ‘essence’, ‘existence’, or ‘being’. Heidegger suggests that *ousia* is to be thought of as synonymous with the derivative noun *parousia* (being-at, presence). As he points out, *parousia* has a close etymological correspondence with the German ‘Anwesenheit’, which is similarly derived from the stem of a verb meaning ‘to be’ (Cf. O.H.G. ‘wesan’) and has a prefix of the place or time at which (-an). We shall in general translate ‘Anwesenheit’ as ‘presence’, and the participle ‘anwesend’ as some form of the expression ‘have presence’.” (BT, 6: fn.1)

¹⁰¹ BT, 3: 31

Heidegger characterizes the inquiry into being as such as *ontological* inquiry and contrasts this kind of inquiry with what he calls *ontical* inquiry. An ontical inquiry asks about objects; an ontological inquiry asks about the structures of being. In claiming that ontological inquiry is more primordial “as over the ontical inquiry of the positive sciences,” Heidegger wants to say that ontological inquiry is more primary and basic than ontical inquiry.¹⁰² Ontological inquiry is more basic than ontical inquiry insofar as it seeks to “ascertain the *a priori* conditions...for the possibility of the sciences which examine entities as entities of such and such a type;” in other words, it seeks to lay bare the structures of being which make possible any undertaking of science.¹⁰³ Generally, ontical inquiry is only possible within the being of human beings. Science, for example, is only possible given the scientists¹⁰⁴ who undertake this activity. In order for there to be science, there must already be human subjects (*Dasein*) in a world to carry out scientific investigation. It is in this sense that science can be said to be grounded in *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world. Although science is not an exhaustive example of ontical inquiry, it is a prime paradigm of ontical inquiry. Ontological inquiry is prior to ontical inquiry insofar as the “sciences are ways of Being in which *Dasein* comports itself towards entities which it need not be itself.”¹⁰⁵ Ontical inquiry inevitably refers back to ontological inquiry because the ontical inquiries of the positive sciences concern entities, and thus operates already within an understanding of being. Our grasp of any kind of ontic truths dealing with objects, therefore, depends upon our already having worked out beforehand an understanding of the meaning of being as such. That Heidegger regards ontological truths to be in a certain way more basic than ontic truths does not mean, however, that Heidegger thinks that we must first engage in ontological inquiry in order to undertake ontical inquiry. Rather, it is the case that Heidegger thinks that we would not be in a position to make ontical inquiries without first grasping *implicitly* the structures of being that ontological inquiry brings to light. Heidegger refers to this implicit grasp of the structures of being as *Dasein*’s *pre-ontological* understanding of being. This understanding of being is prior to ontology insofar as it just is a part of *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world that *Dasein* already grasps the structures of being prior to any explicit ontological reflection.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid. 3: 31

¹⁰⁴ In his commentary, *Being-in-the-world*, Hubert Dreyfus makes this very claim when defending Heidegger against charges of internal idealism. He claims that Heidegger is a minimal hermeneutic realist, that is to say, that he holds that “a science’s background realism cannot be used to *justify* the claim that the objects of science exist independently of the activity of the scientists, nor can this understanding *dictate* what structure the science’s objects must have.” (Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, p. 254) Heidegger later goes on to make the stronger claim that it is only within our (*Dasein*’s) being that reality is possible; there is no concept of reality independent of our grasp of it. I will return to this issue and elaborate on the problem that arises as a result later in this chapter.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 4: 33

At the beginning of *Being and Time*, it is simply asserted that Dasein's being is such that it has a pre-ontological understanding of being; legitimate grounds are not yet given and so it remains a presupposition. To expect early answers, however, is to expect from Heidegger a traditional approach to philosophical problems. Contrary to traditional philosophers, e.g. Descartes, Heidegger can neither validate his project nor does he seek to justify the value of his views on being at the outset of his inquiry. Heidegger can only make promissory notes about the circular and presumptuous nature of his claims concerning being. Such presuppositions about being will begin to take hold and acquire meaning as Heidegger proceeds to elaborate on the structures of Dasein's being. Thus while it is not possible at this point to explain why Heidegger claims that it is essential to Dasein's being that Dasein understands being (and subsequently explain in full the meaning of being as such), we shall attempt to elucidate some of Heidegger's provisional characterizations of Dasein's being.

Heidegger thinks that thus far the basic problem of ontology – the question of the meaning of being as such – has not yet been worked out within the history of philosophy. Indeed a view of being has been formulated insofar as philosophers within this tradition have attempted to give an account of being in giving an account of entities. The problem, however, is that they have presumed that they have given an *exhaustive* account of being in accounting for entities only. But Heidegger thinks that there is more to the meaning of being than entities. He claims that being as such has been covered over in our failure to acknowledge what Heidegger calls the *ontological difference*, that is to say, the difference between the *being* of entities and the entities themselves: “It is one thing to give a report in which we tell about *entities*, but another to grasp entities in their *Being*.”¹⁰⁶ The *being* of entities, Heidegger thinks, “‘is’ not itself an entity.”¹⁰⁷ Forgetting to draw this distinction between being and beings, Heidegger thinks, leads us to stagger in the face of being and ultimately to forget being (*Seinsvergessenheit*). In raising anew the question of the meaning of being by bringing into view the ontological difference, therefore, Heidegger seeks to uncover what has been hidden from us throughout the course of the history of philosophy with respect to being. It is important to note, however, that Heidegger attributes the covering over of the meaning of being and hence *Seinsvergessenheit* not only to thinkers within the western philosophical tradition, but also to the question of being itself. Recall Sheehan's rejection in *Das*

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 7: 63

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 2: 26

Gewesen of the view that being has been lost throughout the history of philosophy. Sheehan writes, “according to Heidegger, the game is up...because...Being has *triumphed*.”¹⁰⁸

The Priority of Dasein

Heidegger criticizes the history of philosophy for failing to make the ontological distinction; however, he recognizes that “Being is always the Being of an *entity*.”¹⁰⁹ And so he takes as his point of entry for working out the problem of fundamental ontology the *existential analytic* of Dasein, that is to say, the analysis of the being of Dasein. Dasein is a particular entity to which Heidegger assigns priority. The being of Dasein is our being, that is to say, human existence. But while there is a certain sense in which Heidegger uses Dasein to stand for the human subject, defining Dasein simply as human being does not fully capture what Heidegger means by Dasein. In fact, it is extremely difficult at this early stage of Heidegger’s project to pinpoint precisely what he means by Dasein, since his approach to working out the meaning of being is such that he does not provide any clear-cut definitions. The meaning of Dasein will only become more explicit as we proceed further with the inquiry into the ontological structures, that is to say, the structures that constitute Dasein’s being.

Heidegger uses Dasein to refer to an entity whose being is distinctive; he does not intend for us to take Dasein as a common noun. What marks out Dasein as a kind of entity is not that it is a certain predicate but rather that entities of that kind *are* in a certain way. We must be mindful, however, of Heidegger’s deliberate ambiguity in his use of Dasein as both nominal and verbal. Dasein has to be taken as a noun whose being is under investigation, but not strictly, since Heidegger does not refer to Dasein as a *mere* entity, but also as a *way* of being. He uses Dasein to stand for being-in-the-world, which marks the *how* of the being in its being. It is being in the sense of the *how* (*wie*) of its being that interests Heidegger most. In its literal translation, Da-sein means *there-being*, an encountering and taking care of the ‘*da*,’ which indicates place (‘here’) rather than direction (‘over there’):

The ‘here’ and the ‘there’ and the ‘yonder’ are primarily not mere ways of designating the location of entities present-at-hand within-the-world at positions in space; they are rather characteristics of Dasein’s primordial spatiality. These supposedly locative adverbs are Dasein-designations; they have a signification which is primarily existential, not categorial. But they are not pronouns either; their signification is prior to the differentiation of locative adverbs and personal pronouns: these expressions have a Dasein-signification which is authentically spatial, and which serves as

¹⁰⁸ Sheehan, T.J. SJ, *Das Gewesen in Existentia: MELETAI SOFIAS*, p. 6 – my italics

¹⁰⁹ *BT*, 3: 29 – my italics

evidence that *when we interpret Dasein without any theoretical distortions we see it immediately as 'Being-alongside' the world with which it concerns itself, and as Being-alongside it spatially – that is to say, as deserving and giving directionality.*¹¹⁰

Heidegger's account of being, then, is not limited to a predicate noun, e.g. the subject, but is one in which being is conceived as a way of being, as here-being in the sense of existential spatiality: "...we have already intimated that this 'I-here' does not mean a certain privileged point – that of an I-thing – but is to be understood as Being-in in terms of the 'yonder' of the world that is ready-to-hand – the 'yonder' which is the dwelling-place of Dasein as *concern*".¹¹¹ But Heidegger recognizes that thinking verbally about being and understanding Dasein as being-in-the-world only illuminates initially what he means by being as such in order to orientate our thinking. He elaborates on what this kind of being involves as he delves deeper into the *Daseinsanalytik*.

Why does Heidegger choose this particular entity to inquire about the meaning of being as such and what makes Dasein a special kind of entity? Dasein is an entity which has a special relationship to being insofar as it is an entity for which being is an issue, that is to say, that it can inquire about its own being. The essence (*Wesen*) of Dasein lies in its way of being, its ek-sisting¹¹²: "*the 'essence' of Dasein lies in its existence.*"¹¹³ Dasein is insofar as it ek-sists, that is to say, insofar as it is always ahead of itself and it is in this sense that Dasein stands outside its being and thus has a peculiar relationship to being. In saying that Dasein *ek-sists* and is ahead of itself, Heidegger is highlighting a way of being that is particular to Dasein. In addition to being

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 26: 155-156 – my italics

¹¹¹ Ibid. 26: 155

¹¹² Heidegger does not use the term "existence" in the way that it is traditionally used. Heidegger refers to Dasein's mode of being in later writings, e.g. "Letter on Humanism" as *ek-sistence*, which he differentiates from *existentia*, the concept in medieval philosophy from which the traditional meaning of existence is derived:

What man is – or, as it is called in the traditional language of metaphysics, the "essence" of man – lies in his ek-sistence. But eksistence thought in this way is not identical with the traditional concept of *existentia*, which means actuality in contrast to the meaning of *essentia* as possibility. In *Being and Time* (p.42) this sentence is italicized: "The 'essence' of Dasein lies in its existence." However, here the opposition between *existential* and *essentia* is not under consideration, because neither of these metaphysical determinations of Being, let alone their relationship, is yet in question. (Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, p. 229)

Heidegger refers to existence as *ek-sistence* in order to emphasize "man's 'standing out' into the 'truth of Being,'" which he takes to be the 'there' [*das 'Da'*] or the clearing of being (Ibid.: 215). According to Heidegger, only human beings have this kind of relationship to being, in which they stand *outside* their being and understand their being in terms of possibilities rather than actualities, that is to say, that which is present. The importance of the distinction that Heidegger draws here between possibility (*ek-sistence*) and actuality (*existentia*) will become more apparent in the next chapter, in which I will discuss and defend Heidegger's critique of Aristotle's interpretation of being as *ousia* (constant presence).

¹¹³ *BT*, 9: 67

always ahead of itself, Dasein's being is such that it is already having-been. Both of these aspects of Dasein's being enable Dasein always already to have an understanding of being and to be in the world. For Heidegger, Dasein's implicit understanding of being – as a result of its being always ahead of itself and already having-been – holds the key for answering the question of the meaning of being as such. Thus Heidegger's project of fundamental ontology, of working out the meaning of being as such, "must be sought in the *existential analytic of Dasein*."¹¹⁴ Indeed these Heideggerian notions, along with other constitutive moments of Dasein's ontological structure, can not be taken as self-evident at this point and are in need of further clarification. I will explain these concepts in more detail as we proceed to the next chapter, which deals with the relationship between time and being. But before we can get an extensive grasp on the structures of Dasein's being, some initial orientation is necessary in order to get a preliminary grasp on Dasein's being. Heidegger provides this initial orientation in his discussion of "that basic state of Dasein by which every mode of its Being gets co-determined" – being-in-the-world.¹¹⁵

We might raise the objection against Heidegger that in taking an analysis of the being of Dasein as the point of departure for working out the problem of fundamental ontology, he is also guilty of inquiring into beings rather than being as such and hence also fails to account for the ontological difference in his account of being. Heidegger would reply an understanding of being is already implicated in our analysis of Dasein's being: "in the idea of such a constitutive state of Being, the idea of Being is already included."¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the existential analytic of Dasein has priority in working out the problem of fundamental ontology insofar as it is the primary *method* of interrogation; Heidegger does not equate the method for working out the meaning of being with the doctrine of being. Heidegger recognizes the objections, namely circular reasoning and presupposing "something which only the answer can bring," that arise from his working out the question of the meaning of being by means of the existential analytic of Dasein.¹¹⁷ But Heidegger replies that there is no vicious circularity in formulating the question of being because "one can determine the nature of entities in their Being without necessarily having the explicit concept of the meaning of Being at one's disposal."¹¹⁸ Without this pre-ontological understanding of being, "there could have been no ontological knowledge heretofore."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 4:34

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 26: 153

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 4: 33

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 2: 27

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Being-in-the-world

Being-in-the-world is Dasein's *primordial* mode of being in the sense that it is Dasein's "basic constitutive state by which every mode of its Being gets co-determined."¹²⁰ Thus we cannot grasp Dasein's ontological structures unless we grasp being-in-the-world. In spelling out how being-in-the-world is an essential, constitutive way in which Dasein *is*, Heidegger begins to give us a clearer grasp of what he means by the ontological structures of Dasein, which, subsequently, will lead us to grasp more clearly what he means by fundamental ontology.

Heidegger is explicit about what Dasein's being is *not*. The relationship between Dasein and world is not "the relationship of Being which two entities extended 'in' space have to each other with regard to their location in that space."¹²¹ The being-in of being-in-the-world is a state of being particular to Dasein, and, as such, is an *existential*. It is certainly not the 'in' of spatial containment, "a spatial 'in-one-another-ness' of things present-at-hand," that is to say, entities merely extended 'in' space.¹²² But while Heidegger can easily say what Dasein's being is not, he faces some difficulty with expressing explicitly what Dasein's being *is*. For Heidegger, the being of Dasein in its positive sense cannot be articulated using ordinary language or language in the way in which it is ordinarily used. Thus Heidegger introduces new vocabulary (e.g. being-in-the-world, being-ahead-of-itself, being-with-others, etc.) and relies on striking metaphors¹²³ in order to convey what it means for Dasein to *be*.

As in the case of being-in, Heidegger's claim that Dasein dwells "alongside" the world is not meant to be taken in a spatial sense: Heidegger does not want to say that Dasein dwells "alongside" the world in the sense of "the 'side-by-side-ness' of an entity called 'Dasein' with

¹²⁰ Ibid. 26: 153

¹²¹ Ibid. 12: 79

¹²² Ibid. 12: 80

¹²³ In his work, *The Question of Being*, Stanley Rosen contrasts two ways in which the ontological difference – the difference between being and beings – can be expressed, namely the traditional reference to *res* on the one hand and Heidegger's use of dramatic language on the other hand:

A distinction between Being and beings can be drawn in only two ways. Either we refer to that which is common to every being (=on, *res*, *Seiendes*), or we refer to some origination-process of beings. In the latter case, however, we arrive at what is unspeakable in any language that attributes thing-properties to things, since such a language could succeed only in reifying Being or transforming it, whether in metaphors or through an ostensibly literal description, into a being. This takes place, for example, in Heidegger's later philosophy, in which thing-words like "frame" and "round dance" are employed as metaphorical circumlocutions to evoke the sense of Being. (Rosen, *The Question of Being*, p. 39)

another entity called 'world'.¹²⁴ An entity whose mode of being is other than that of being-in-the-world can *never* be alongside another entity in the way that Dasein is alongside the world, namely by *encountering* it. Insofar as a chair does not have being-in-the-world as its mode of being, for example, it can never be said to *encounter* the wall, since encountering entities implies that entities have *already* been discovered in their *significance*. To dwell alongside the world is "to be familiar with..."¹²⁵ Familiarity with the world entails that the world has *already* been disclosed or revealed to Dasein so that Dasein implicitly understands the world prior to encountering it. Something can be familiar to Dasein only insofar as it is disclosed to Dasein within a context of meaningful relations. Heidegger's discussion of tools nicely illuminates the way in which this context works. A single tool, for example, can never be disclosed independently of its relation to other tools – or as Heidegger calls it, the *totality* of equipment – and the work-world in which it has significance. It would be impossible for Dasein to encounter a paintbrush, for example, without reference to canvases, paints, artists, painting techniques, etc. Moreover, that this matrix of significant relations always already has been disclosed to and hence understood by Dasein is essential to Dasein's encountering entities at all. How would it be possible, after all, for Dasein to encounter the paintbrush as a paintbrush if it were not already familiar with the context in which it is used, e.g. for painting? To pick up a paintbrush, dip it in paints and begin painting on the canvas (instead of using it, for example, to brush one's hair) is to have grasped already its significance in a world (in this case, the art world):

The context of equipment is lit up not as something never seen before, but as a totality constantly sighted beforehand in circumspection. With this totality however, the world announces itself.¹²⁶

Thus Heidegger does not intend for us to understand world in the sense of a physical entity external to and independent of Dasein. Dasein's relationship with the world is interdependent; there can be no Dasein without the world and no world without Dasein. Rather, world is to be understood as the background of everyday practices and absorbed coping in which Dasein engages. Heidegger claims that being-in-the-world is essential not only to Dasein, but also to entities other than Dasein which have presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*) and readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*) as their modes of being. Only insofar as Dasein is being-in-the-world, are present-at-hand and ready-to-hand entities able to be encountered, since already having a world is essential to encountering entities. It is in this sense that Heidegger thinks that being-in-the-world is more primordial than presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand. Entities whose mode of being is

¹²⁴ *BT*, 12: 81

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* 12: 80

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* 16: 106

not that of being-in-the-world are “worldless in themselves” insofar as these entities – unlike Dasein – do not have the capacity to take up relationships towards the world, that is to say, they do not have the kind of being that makes possible their involvement and absorption in dealings with the world.¹²⁷ Heidegger calls this capacity to take up relationships towards the world the multiplicity of definite ways of being-in and lists the following as examples: “having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining...”¹²⁸ This multiplicity of definite ways of being-in, he asserts, “have *concern* as their kind of Being.”¹²⁹ Given that Dasein’s mode of being just is this being-in, “its Being towards the world [*Sein zur Welt*] is essentially concern.”¹³⁰ Concern is only possible given “some familiarity with the world.”¹³¹ Dasein’s familiarity with the world just is its dwelling alongside the world, its being-in-the-world.

An understanding of the being of Dasein gives us access to an understanding of entities other than Dasein. Heidegger’s remarks here about Dasein’s being seem to succumb to charges of idealism, since Heidegger claims that all other entities exist insofar as Dasein exists. In other words, if there were no Dasein to encounter present-at-hand and ready-to-hand entities, then these entities would not exist insofar as they only exist for Dasein to encounter. In making this claim, however, Heidegger runs the risk of putting forth a view that bears an uncanny resemblance to Kant’s *transcendental idealism*, the view that the entities of our experience are constituted by our cognitive apparatus. Provisionally we can make the claim that Heidegger is not an idealist in the traditional sense. The charge of idealism will be important when we come to consider Heidegger’s criticisms of Aristotle. There will be scope to suspect that Heidegger objects to Aristotle in the way that the idealist objects to the realist. Indeed the present abstract will not suffice to engage fruitfully with the issue, as the wealth of discussion in the last ten years in Anglo-American scholarship on Heidegger has done.

Before we address this issue in more detail, let us first consider Heidegger’s discussion of the different modes of being that sets his brand of ontology apart from traditional approaches to ontology. Heidegger differentiates being-in-the-world from the modes of being that belong to

¹²⁷ Ibid. 12: 81

¹²⁸ Ibid. 12: 83

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 12: 84

¹³¹ Ibid. 16: 107

entities other than Dasein, namely presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand. Readiness-to-hand is the kind of being that equipment has, “those entities which we encounter in concern”, e.g. “equipment for writing, sewing, working, transportation, measurement.”¹³² Equipment is always understood in terms of its in-order-to character, that is to say, its serviceability and usability. The understanding of this in-order-to character “shows itself” in a way that does not involve reflecting or thinking – it shows itself in the work in which it is used.¹³³ One can never conceive a single piece of equipment independent of other equipment. Rather one can only conceive a single piece of equipment within a *totality* of equipment. It does not make sense, for example, to think of a nail without making reference to the hammer which fastens it, the board onto which it is fastened, etc.

Heidegger characterizes presence-at-hand as a deficient form of readiness-to-hand: “Being-just-present-at-hand comes to the fore” only when the “ready-to-hand becomes *deprived* of its worldhood,” that is to say, when the in-order-to character of what is ready-to-hand as equipment breaks down and hence the equipment becomes “unusable for some purpose.”¹³⁴ If, for instance, the handle of a hammer breaks off during hammering, the broken hammer no longer shows itself in the hammering as a tool that is used for the purpose of hammering nails into a board, but instead loses its in-order-to character. Consequently, it can no longer be used as a hammer and shows itself as a conspicuous present-at-hand thing:

When its unusability is thus discovered, equipment becomes conspicuous. This *conspicuousness* presents the ready-to-hand equipment as in a certain un-readiness-to-hand. But this implies that what cannot be used just lies there; it shows itself as an equipmental Thing which looks so and so, and which, in its readiness-to-hand as looking that way, has constantly been present-at-hand too. Pure presence-at-hand announces itself in such equipment, but only to withdraw to the readiness-to-hand of something with which one concerns itself – that is to say, of the sort of thing we find when we put it back into repair.¹³⁵

Thus Heidegger gives a negative definition of presence-at-hand: on the one hand, he characterizes presence-at-hand as a *deficient* form of readiness-to-hand; on the other hand, he characterizes presence-at-hand as being in contradistinction to Dasein’s mode of existence. Presence-at-hand, Heidegger claims, is tantamount to *existentia*, that is to say, “a kind of Being which is essentially inappropriate to entities of Dasein’s character,” and, as such, is *antithetical* to existence, a mode of being particular to Dasein.¹³⁶ We have already seen that Heidegger refers to Dasein’s mode of

¹³² Ibid. 15: 97

¹³³ Ibid. 15: 98

¹³⁴ Ibid. 16: 105,106 – my italics

¹³⁵ Ibid. 16: 103

¹³⁶ Ibid. 9: 67

existence as *ek-sistence* in later writings for the purpose of drawing attention to the distinction he draws between the traditional meaning of existence as *existentia*, which is used to refer to the way in which substances are said to be, and the meaning of existence (*ek-sistence*), which Heidegger employs to refer to the ways in which Dasein is said to be. Present-at-hand entities can neither be used for some purpose nor exist in the way that Dasein does; they simply lie there. But although Heidegger defines presence-at-hand negatively insofar as he contrasts its meaning with the practical meaning of ready-to-hand equipment and Dasein's meaning, the present-at-hand mode of being nevertheless has its own kind of meaning. This meaning can be best captured by an entity which has bare occurring as its way of being, that is to say, "a thing which occurs somewhere."¹³⁷

Heidegger is critical of ancient ontology for its limited orientation towards the question of being, since the ancient philosophers interpreted being as presence-at-hand. Heidegger claims that this understanding of being is obtained "in terms of 'time,'" that is to say, that the ontological sense of present as presence-at-hand is grounded in the temporal sense of the present, and "the outward evidence for this (though of course it is *merely* outward evidence) is the treatment of the meaning of Being as *parousia* or *ousia*, which signifies, in ontological-temporal terms, 'presence' ["Anwesenheit"]."¹³⁸ As a result, "entities are grasped in their Being as 'presence'; this means that they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time – the 'Present'¹³⁹."¹⁴⁰ The primacy that the ancient philosophers assigned to the ontological and temporal senses of 'present' in their account of being is that of which Heidegger is most critical. In the translators' footnote, Macquarrie and Robinson claim that Heidegger thinks that the ontological sense of 'present' as 'presence' (*Anwesenheit*) and the temporal sense of 'present' as 'the present' (*Gegenwart*) are fused. Whether this is the case or not will bear importantly on Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotelian *ousia* as "constant presence"¹⁴¹ (*ständige Anwesenheit*).

¹³⁷ Ibid. 16: 103

¹³⁸ Ibid. 6:47

¹³⁹ "die "Gegenwart"". While this noun may, like *parousia* or 'Anwesenheit' mean the *presence* of someone *at* some place or on some occasion, it more often means the *present*, as distinguished from the past and the future. In its etymological root-structure, however, it means a *waiting-towards*. While Heidegger seems to think of all these meanings as somehow fused, we shall generally translate this noun as 'the Present', reserving 'in the present' for the corresponding adjective 'gegenwärtig'" (BT, 6: ftn.2).

¹⁴⁰ BT, 6: 47

¹⁴¹ Constant presence can have two dimensions. One dimension of constant presence is *endurance*, in which an entity stays the same over time. Another dimension of constant presence is *phenomenal*, that is to say, subject-related, in which a subject experiences a phenomenon. Undoubtedly, when Heidegger talks about phenomena like being and time, this latter dimension of constant presence is paramount for his

Dasein's being is that within which there is presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand. Insofar as the ontical inquiries of the positive sciences focus simply on present-at-hand objects, e.g. the world as a system, Heidegger claims that such inquiries can only be undertaken within Dasein's being-in-the-world. However, Heidegger's claim that there is such a thing as "reality" only for Dasein, that is to say, only insofar as Dasein engages with it, is much harder to accept than the claim that there is no such thing as science outside of the ontological structures of Dasein. Commentators of Heidegger, i.e. Dreyfus¹⁴² and Mulhall, reject that Heidegger's view about reality amounts to internal idealism on the grounds that Heidegger holds this view about the *understanding* of reality rather than reality in-itself. Heidegger's assertion, "But the fact that Reality is ontologically grounded in the Being of Dasein, does not signify that only when Dasein exists and as long as Dasein exists, can the Real be as that which in itself it is" conveys this very distinction between the concept of reality and reality in-itself.¹⁴³ Thus insofar as Heidegger does not claim that an independent reality ceases to exist once Dasein ceases to exist, he is not a Berkeleyan idealist; it is not the case that reality in-itself appears only when Dasein exists and then disappears once Dasein ceases to exist. If there were never an understanding of reality or the real to begin with, then it could not be said¹⁴⁴ that reality and the real in itself exist or that they do not exist. It is only from the standpoint of Dasein (within Dasein's being) that the question of reality is a meaningful one; Dasein is the only being that could give an affirmative or negative answer to this question. How, after all, is *intelligibility* possible without Dasein – the only entity with the capacity to make sense of entities within-the-world and to make assertions about them?

When Dasein does not exist, 'independence' 'is' not either, nor 'is' the 'in-itself'. In such a case even entities within-the-world can neither be discovered nor lie hidden. *In such a case* it cannot be said that entities are, nor can it be said that they are not. But *now*, as long as there is an

discussion. In his interpretation of Aristotelian *ousia* as constant presence, I find it plausible to argue that, as in the case of the differing senses of presence as *Anwesenheit* and *Gegenwart*, Heidegger wants to pull together both dimensions of constant presence. Heidegger thinks that an entity has constant presence insofar as it is both present to mind and endures; one dimension is bound in with the other. Thus an entity that has constant presence both holds its identity and is present to a subject; it maintains itself to something.

¹⁴² In *Being-in-the-World*, Dreyfus rejects the interpretation of Heidegger as an internal idealist, "that he must hold that there is no 'in itself' – that 'independent reality' exists only relative to our definition of it." (Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, p. 252) Instead, Dreyfus defends a reading of Heidegger that holds that social practices are necessary for access to present-at-hand entities, but nevertheless does not conclude "that these entities must be *defined in terms of* our access practices." (Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, p. 253)

¹⁴³ *BT*, 43: 255

¹⁴⁴ In his commentary on *Being and Time*, Stephen Mulhall expands on this point: "...what would be true to say about entities in a world without Dasein must not be conflated with the question of whether that truth could conceivably be uttered in such a world." (Mulhall, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger*, p. 99)

understanding of presence-at-hand, it can indeed be said that *in this case* entities will still continue to be.¹⁴⁵

Heidegger himself recognizes that his view invites the question of idealism and hence differentiates between the *concepts* of ‘independence’ and the ‘in-itself’ from independence as such and the in-itself as such. While Dreyfus’ and Mulhall’s defenses of Heidegger safeguard Heidegger from the charge that he is an idealist in the Berkeleyan sense, it nevertheless remains questionable whether Heidegger is still an idealist in *some* sense, e.g. transcendental idealist. Upon reflection, no one would deny that nothing could *mean* “is real” except in the context of Dasein’s being; once there is meaning, there is already Dasein. But surely there can be independence and the in-itself irrespective of meaning anything, e.g. the kind of independence and in-itself that are what they are in virtue of their being independent of Dasein. Heidegger does not seem to allow for this kind of independence and in-itself in his account of reality, because there would be no such thing as independence and the in-itself if we were to remove Dasein’s being. Heidegger’s stand on the issue of idealism is complicated, since he does not fully embrace the idealist conclusion, yet does not accept the realist view that there is such a thing as reality outside of Dasein’s being. Although some attempt has been made in this section to elucidate Heidegger’s position, the task of pinning down what exactly his idealism amounts to will not be undertaken in the parameters of this thesis.

¹⁴⁵ *BT*, 43: 255 – my italics

Dasein, Authenticity, and Totality

In this section, I will focus on Heidegger's account of authenticity. In so doing, I hope to provide what I believe to be a key issue in understanding the motivations behind Heidegger's critical remarks about Aristotle's interpretation of time as an endless sequence of "nows." The outcome of this interpretation of time, Heidegger thinks, is Aristotle's misinterpretation of being as *ousia*, which functions as Heidegger's key critique of Aristotle in his attempt in *Being and Time* to destroy the history of ontology. Heidegger asserts that his project of a fundamental ontology must be carried out through an analysis of Dasein's existential structure. In Division I of *Being and Time*, Heidegger has established that Dasein's existence is such that it is always already in the world. Being-in-the-world makes possible the being of present-at-hand entities and ready-to-hand equipment and is therefore the most primordial mode of being. However in Division I, Heidegger has only given a *preliminary* account of being-in-the-world in terms of Dasein's average everyday mode of being. Heidegger's initial task in Division II is to give an account of what he calls the care structure. This structure of Dasein's being brings into view the *totality* of Dasein's being and thus incorporates Dasein's *authentic* mode of being and its temporality. To begin with, I will present the role of Heidegger's existential-ontological account of death – in which Dasein is conceived as a *finite* being confronted by authentic and inauthentic possible modes of being-towards-death – in constituting Dasein's being as a totality. I will then consider Herman Philipse's critical analysis of Heidegger's interpretation of death and show that his critique is an unsatisfying one insofar as it emerges from a gross misinterpretation of Heidegger's existential-ontological account of death. The finitude of Dasein's being especially plays an important role in Heidegger's discussion of authenticity, since it brings into view the *temporal* element of authenticity and thus gives us a preliminary picture of how and why Heidegger sees a connection between being and time. For Heidegger, both Dasein's being and time are essentially finite, and it is only when we interpret being and time with respect to their finitude that we can achieve an *authentic* understanding of both.

As far as Heidegger is concerned, we have not yet found the answer to the question about the meaning of being as such. In order to answer this "basic question of all ontology," Heidegger thinks that we have to work out first the "horizon" or demarcated open region within which any

understanding of being is possible.¹⁴⁶ Recall that Heidegger chooses the being of Dasein as his point of entry for inquiring into the meaning of being as such because Dasein's being is such that it always already has an understanding of being. This projection can either be authentic or inauthentic. As we shall see, what finally comes to play the crucial work in working out the question of being is Dasein's authentic understanding of being. Only once the authentic mode of Dasein's being has been analyzed, does the existential analysis finally become primordial.

Heidegger's next task at hand, then, is to bring to light "existentially the Being of Dasein in its possibilities of *authenticity* and *totality*."¹⁴⁷ The existential structure of death constitutes Dasein's potentiality-for-being-a-whole insofar as death, as the end of being-in-the-world, "limits and determines in every case whatever totality is possible for Dasein."¹⁴⁸ In introducing the existential-ontological concept of death, that is to say, with respect to the structures of Dasein's being, Heidegger aims to show that authenticity is a possible mode of being for Dasein. In bringing into view Dasein's *authentic-potentiality-for-being-a-whole*, Heidegger thinks that his existential analytic of Dasein will account for all modes and possibilities of Dasein's being. However, Heidegger thinks that there still remains a missing piece of the ontological puzzle, namely *temporality*. It is only when we explicate the temporal meaning of the ontological structure of Dasein that we achieve a primordial and comprehensive understanding of Dasein's being that enables us to work out the meaning of being as such. Temporality elucidates the structural totality of Dasein's being because when we understand Dasein in terms of the *ecstases*¹⁴⁹ of temporality, we understand Dasein not merely in terms of its present mode of time, but also in terms of its mode of having-been and futural mode of being (those possibilities that have not yet been), and thus we bring into view Dasein's being as a whole.

Dasein's Possibility of Being-A-Whole and Being-Towards-Death

At the beginning of Division II, Heidegger poses a dilemma: how is it possible to get into view Dasein's being as a whole, if it is the case that so long as Dasein *is*, Dasein "has never reached its 'wholeness'?"¹⁵⁰ There remains always something outstanding, something left to be settled: Dasein's demise. So long as we have not dealt with this outstanding potentiality-for-being, our

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 45: 274

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 45: 277

¹⁴⁹ Cf. p. 32

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. 46: 280

existential analytic of Dasein suffers from a constant lack of totality. But if Dasein reaches its “wholeness,” then its mode of being is no longer being-in-the-world; its being is annihilated and consequently, Dasein “can never again be experienced *as an entity*.”¹⁵¹ Is accounting for the ontological totality of being, then, not a hopeless task to undertake?

Heidegger concedes it is impossible to experience Dasein as an *ontic* whole, that is to say, in the sense that we would experience a present-at-hand object as a whole. However, Heidegger thinks that to claim that it is impossible to grasp Dasein as an *ontological* totality, that is to say, with respect to its structures of being, is to fail to give the task of bringing into view Dasein’s being-a-whole a genuinely *existential* treatment. In other words, Heidegger thinks that it is possible to conceive of Dasein as a whole, though not in the same sense that the metaphysician would conceive of Dasein as a whole, namely as an ontic whole. For in so doing, we regard Dasein as a present-at-hand entity and death as something that has not yet happened to Dasein. To conceive of death in this sense is simply to conceive of a Dasein whose being is no longer encounterable in the world as a corporeal thing and to interpret the “not yet” in terms of something still “outstanding,” something with which one needs to reckon. Heidegger, however, is after the *existential* conception of the phenomenon of death because only this kind of conception gives us access to an ontological understanding of Dasein’s being-a-whole. Heidegger wants to reformulate the phenomenon of death as an existential phenomenon, in which death is conceived in terms of possibilities: as the “possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein” and hence “as that *possibility which is one’s ownmost, which is non-relational, and which is not to be outstripped [unüberholbare]*.”¹⁵² We can already see that Heidegger’s existential-ontological account of death differs a great deal from biological and physiological accounts, in which death is conceived simply as perishing, or “the going-out-of-the-world of that which merely has life.”¹⁵³

It is crucial to Heidegger’s existential-ontological account of death that Dasein has the possibility of taking up an *authentic* mode of being with regard to its own death, namely being-towards-death. Heidegger thinks that Dasein authentically relates to death insofar as Dasein owns up to its own death. Owning up to our own death consists in owning up to the fact that death is Dasein’s *ownmost (eigenste)* possibility. Death is Dasein’s ownmost possibility since no one other than Dasein can take the place of Dasein’s dying. Death is an impending possibility that stands before

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid. 50: 294

¹⁵³ Ibid. 47: 284

Dasein, and Dasein takes an authentic stance towards this possibility insofar as it projects itself upon it or takes it up as that possibility which distinctly belongs to Dasein. Dasein's ownership of its death is distinctive and fundamental. It is only because death is fundamental to Dasein that Dasein can own anything at all and it is only because Dasein *must* die that Dasein can be its ownmost self, that is to say, be itself.

In claiming that Dasein's death cannot be outstripped, Heidegger does not simply want to say that Dasein dies in the end, and no doctor can save him¹⁵⁴. Heidegger would say that this interpretation reduces his existential-ontological account to one that is merely biological or physiological. In analyzing the phenomenon of death simply in terms of a medical fact that happens to each and every one of us, in which our lives come to an end insofar as our biological and physiological processes break down, we fail to uncover the underlying structures of Dasein's being. For Heidegger, an ontology of Dasein will always be "superordinate" to an ontology of life.

The existential account of death does not conceive death as an event; it conceives death such that it pertains to the structures of Dasein's existence as such. With regard to Dasein's existential structure, death is Dasein's basic possibility of the impossibility of all possibilities. Death for the biologist is something that *happens*, whereas for Heidegger, it never 'happens'. Dasein does not die; rather Dasein's relationship to death is such that it is being-towards-death, that is to say, being towards the end of its possibilities.

Heidegger does not want to show traditional concepts of death to be empty¹⁵⁵; he wants, instead, to deny their ontological adequacy in the context of showing that the usual interpretations of death fail. In giving an existential-ontological account of death, then, Heidegger seeks to deepen the ordinary concept of death. Moreover, Heidegger's reformulation of the concept of death stems from his interest in uncovering the underlying ontological structures of Dasein that make it possible for us to bring into view Dasein's being as a totality. Heidegger discusses totality in the

¹⁵⁴ In *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being*, Herman Philipse argues that Heidegger's grounds for proposing this claim, namely that no other being can die in place of Dasein (the character of death is such that it is non-substitutional), is trivial. It is trivial for Heidegger to say that "no one can take the Other's dying away from him" because this claim simply means "that we are all going to die in the end, and that no doctor can prevent this." Philipse thinks that there is nothing interesting or insightful about this claim; "it is an empirical platitude." (*Heidegger's Philosophy of Being*, p. 358).

¹⁵⁵ Philipse concludes from his critique that Heidegger has failed to refute traditional conceptions of death because Heidegger has simply redefined "the word 'dying' to mean knowing that one will die in the end and being concerned with one's death." (*Heidegger's Philosophy of Being*, p. 364).

context of authenticity and temporality. His existential-ontological account of death has a more important role than the text initially suggests insofar as death is essential to Dasein's authenticity. When he introduces death as a way of bringing into view Dasein's totality, we do not initially see the significance of death in constituting Dasein's authenticity. Indeed Heidegger's elaborate analysis of the concept of care in Division II does not merely seek to bring Dasein's being into a structural whole but, more importantly, seeks to show the fundamentality of temporality to Dasein's being (and ultimately to the meaning of being as such). He makes apparent this fundamentality in trying to establish temporality as the meaning of care. In the latter part of Division II, it will become clearer that it is only upon the horizon of *time* that the meaning of being can be projected.

Heidegger's existential-ontological concept of death links up with his explication of temporality not only because it concerns Dasein's being as *finite*, but also because in his existential-ontological account of death, Heidegger characterizes Dasein's authentic mode of being-towards-death as a futurally oriented coming towards itself. Dasein can only come towards itself insofar as Dasein is futural in the ground of its being. It is in this way that Heidegger establishes the unity between the temporal *ecstases*, of which he regards the future as primary.

Thus far Heidegger's existential-ontological account of death has brought to light Dasein's possibility of authenticity as the explicit recognition of its finitude. In spelling out Dasein's authentic mode of being, namely being-towards-death, Heidegger is certainly one step closer to bringing into view the totality of Dasein's being. Nonetheless, it is crucial that we keep Heidegger's project of *fundamental ontology* at the forefront of our minds, and, in so doing, regard his explication of Dasein's achievement of the possibility of authenticity as a *necessary* step in elaborating the question of the meaning of being as such. There remains, however, the consideration of the *temporal* meaning of the ontological structure of Dasein. In the following chapter, I will examine the temporal meaning of Dasein's being and discuss in detail the connection of being and time within Heidegger's ontology.

Chapter II: Time and Being

Dasein's being is such that it is temporal. Temporality as the meaning of care plays a fundamental role in Heidegger's existential analytic not only because it enables him to bring Dasein's being into a structural whole, but more importantly – as Heidegger will show – because it is on the basis of temporality that Dasein *is* at all. Time plays a paramount role in the being of Dasein insofar as “whenever Dasein tacitly understands and interprets something like Being, it does so with *time* as its standpoint.”¹⁵⁶ Thus “time must be brought to light – and genuinely conceived – as the horizon for all understanding of Being and for any way of interpreting it.”¹⁵⁷ In the first section of this chapter, I will begin by outlining Heidegger's aims in providing an exegesis of temporality. Then I will present Heidegger's account of the primordial modes of temporality in juxtaposition with what Heidegger calls the vulgar (*abkünftig*) conception of time. Finally, in the last section of this chapter, I will try to resolve some of the, as it were, “unfinished business” of *Being and Time* by considering Heidegger's comprehensive discussion of time with respect to the question of being in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. In so doing, I will bring into view Heidegger's presentation and critique of Aristotle's concept of time as a methodological starting point for delivering the crux of the thesis: Heidegger's critique of Aristotle's treatment of the meaning of being as *parousia* or *ousia* – presence (Anwesenheit). Indeed in considering Heidegger's views in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, we shall deepen our understanding of temporality and the problem of fundamental ontology; however, there is still some sense in which Heidegger's promise to resolve the problem of fundamental ontology remains outstanding.

Temporality: The Ontological Meaning of Care

It would be wrong to say that Dasein merely *has* temporality, that temporality is something merely added on to Dasein's being. Just as there can be no world without Dasein¹⁵⁸ and no Dasein without the world, so can there be no temporality without Dasein and no Dasein without temporality. Both temporality and being-in-the-world are essential ontological structures of Dasein. Just as there are various modes of being (namely being-in-the-world, readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand), so does temporality have “different possibilities and different ways of

¹⁵⁶ *BT*, 5: 39

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Indeed this claim raises again the issue of idealism with respect to reality, which I have already discussed in the previous chapter. As for idealism with respect to temporality, see pp. 29-31.

temporalizing itself.”¹⁵⁹ But, in true Heideggerian form, just as traditional conceptions of world, reality, and existence, fail to capture the primordial sense of being, so does the traditional concept of time as a sequence of past, present, and future events fail to capture the primordial sense of time. Time as a sequence of thing-like entities that occur one after another (moments) is the temporal counterpart to the conception of world as an aggregate of present-at-hand entities. Like the case of the ‘in’ of being-in-the-world, it is much easier for Heidegger to articulate explicitly what temporality is not rather than it is for him to articulate what it is. Heidegger invents a new terminology in order to account for the primordial phenomenon of temporality, which he thinks we already implicitly understand but have covered up with the vulgar conception of time. According to Heidegger, we have to make familiar the primordial phenomenon of temporality before we can understand why the derivative understanding of time has dominated our interpretation of time. Heidegger characterizes his existential analytic as “doing violence” (*Gewaltsamkeit*) to the everyday interpretations of being and time.

So far in Division II, Heidegger’s discussion of the care structure has taken into account Dasein’s authentic mode of being, namely being-towards-death. His task now is to show how the care structure as a *whole* has its foundation in temporality; in other words, Heidegger will show that temporality is prior and essential to the structure of care. In Dasein’s authentic Being-a-whole, Dasein is constantly ahead of itself (*sich vorweg*):

But ontologically, Being towards one’s ownmost potentiality-for-Being means that in each case Dasein is already *ahead* of itself [ihm selbst...*vorweg*] in its Being. Dasein is always ‘beyond itself’ [“über sich hinaus”], not in a way of behaving towards other entities which it is *not*, but as Being towards this potentiality-for-Being which it is itself. This structure of Being, which belongs to the essential ‘is an issue’, we shall denote as Dasein’s “*Being-ahead-of-itself*.”¹⁶⁰

The structure of being-ahead-of-itself is not to be taken as isolated from the other structures of Dasein’s being, but instead as synonymous with being-in-the-world: “‘Being-ahead-of-itself’ means, if we grasp it more fully, ‘*ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-in-a-world*’.”¹⁶¹ That Dasein can be said to be in the world “belongs to the fact that it has been delivered over to itself – that it has in each case already been thrown *into a world*.”¹⁶² Ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-a-world essentially includes the structures of falling and “*Being alongside* those things ready-to-hand within-the-world with which one concerns oneself.”¹⁶³ Thus Dasein’s being-ahead-of-itself

¹⁵⁹ *BT*, 61: 351
¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 41: 236
¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*
¹⁶² *Ibid.*
¹⁶³ *Ibid.* 41: 237

brings into view the totality of Dasein's ontological structure and Heidegger refers to this being as *care* (*Sorge*):

The formally existential totality of Dasein's ontological structural whole must therefore be grasped in the following structure: the Being of Dasein means ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world). This being fills in the signification of the term "*care*" [*Sorge*], which is used in a purely ontological-existential manner.¹⁶⁴

In its authentic being-a-whole, Dasein is being-towards its ownmost distinctive possibility, namely death. It is only on the grounds of Dasein's being-ahead-of-itself that it can *come towards itself* in its ownmost potentiality-for-being. In other words, it is only because being-towards-death is *already* a possibility for Dasein that Dasein can come towards this possibility in the first place. Heidegger characterizes this coming towards as *anticipatory resoluteness* and this mode of being is distinctively *futural*. It is only because Dasein is already *ahead* of itself that it can come back towards itself to an understanding of being; it is in virtue of Dasein's care structure, namely ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world), that Dasein already projects itself "upon definite possibilities of its existence."¹⁶⁵ Dasein's already projecting itself upon definite possibilities of being in turn enables Dasein to project "something like existence and Being."¹⁶⁶ In its anticipatory resoluteness, authentic Dasein is open to the truth about its ontological structures, e.g. temporality, being-towards-death, etc.

Heidegger defines temporality as the ontological meaning of care. For Heidegger, the meaning of care is the "upon-which" (*das Woraufhin*) of the primary projection which discloses Dasein's possibilities – the horizon or empty canvas, as it were, upon which a possibility like the understanding of being can be projected and hence disclosed to Dasein.¹⁶⁷ This primary projection, which *already* projects an understanding of something like being (and hence it can be said that Dasein has a *pre-ontological* understanding of being) "gives" the meaning of the being of an entity insofar as it discloses or gives Dasein access to the being of an entity: "Entities 'have' meaning only because, as Being which has been disclosed beforehand, they become intelligible in the projection of that Being – that is to say, in terms of the 'upon-which' of that projection."¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 63: 363

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. 65: 371

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. 65: 372

According to Heidegger, temporality is the meaning of the being of Dasein. But since Heidegger does not want to say that the meaning of the being of Dasein just is the meaning of being as such, his reinterpretation of the structures of Dasein with respect to temporality does not aim to answer the *Seinsfrage*. Instead, in reinterpreting the fundamental structures of Dasein's being (the care structure), e.g. existence, facticity, and falling, in terms of temporality, Heidegger seeks to make unitary and, more importantly, to deepen the provisional existential analytic that he has already carried out in Division I. Moreover, in so doing, Heidegger thinks that "the ground will have been prepared for obtaining an answer."¹⁶⁹ Dasein is the epistemic window, as it were, to being; it is a way to grasp being as such. In making explicit the being of Dasein, we can begin to understand the meaning of being as such. The ontological meaning of care sets the stage for Heidegger's discussion of temporality. Heidegger thinks that to lay bare temporality is not to take a tangential approach to carrying out his existential analytic of Dasein, but rather to get into view the "entire phenomenal content of Dasein's basic existential constitution in the ultimate foundations of its own ontological intelligibility."¹⁷⁰

For Heidegger, the primordial phenomenon of the future is not merely a "now" that has "not yet" become actualized and "will be" actual at some future point in time. The future (*das Zukunft*) is not occurrent in time but rather is "the coming [*Kunft*] in which Dasein, in its ownmost potentiality-for-Being, comes towards itself."¹⁷¹ It is the process of anticipation – rather than of actualization – that makes Dasein "*authentically* futural."¹⁷² For Heidegger, then, the future never – as it were – 'happens'. What it means for Dasein to be authentically futural is to have been *already*, so that a futurally oriented Dasein can come *back* towards itself as already "having been." Heidegger characterizes Dasein's anticipation as a coming back to itself "understandingly," that is to say, to make one familiar again with one's ownmost "having been" rather than anticipating something that has "not yet happened." It is in this way that the character of "having been" is grounded in the future.

Heidegger claims that in the Aristotelian tradition, the present is conceived as an occurrent "now," whereas in his own account of temporality, the present is conceived as a *making-present* or *enpresenting* (*gegenwärtigen*). The present (*praesens*) in Heidegger's account of temporality is nothing like an event that takes place at some point in time. The process of making-present or

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. 5: 38

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. 61:351

¹⁷¹ Ibid. 65: 373

¹⁷² Ibid.

enpresenting, enables Dasein to encounter “what *has presence* environmentally;” it is that in virtue of which Dasein can encounter a ready-at-hand entity as ready-at-hand.¹⁷³ Dasein, for instance, makes a hammer present by engaging with it in circumspective concern, by employing its “in-order-to” character, e.g. using a hammer in order to affix a nail to the wall.

In expectant-retentive enpresenting, the equipment comes into play, becomes present, enters into a present [Gegen-wart].¹⁷⁴

Making-present stands between already having-been and futurally coming-towards. Heidegger designates temporality as “the unity of a future which makes present in the process of having been.”¹⁷⁵ This unity can be demonstrated by the following example: on the one hand, Dasein makes a hammer present as a result of its environmental dealings with entities (e.g. hammer, nail, wall) that are already there, that is to say, that have already shown up on Dasein’s horizon of understanding and are thus familiar and accessible to Dasein; on the other hand, Dasein makes a hammer present because it can come towards the futurally-oriented project of hammering in order to affix a nail to the wall and thus use what is already part of the equipmental background to realize this futural possibility. Making-present plays a key role in Dasein’s authentic potentiality-for-being-a-whole because “only as the *Present* [Gegenwart] in the sense of making present, can resoluteness be what it is: namely, letting itself be encountered undisguisedly by that which it seizes upon in taking action.”¹⁷⁶

Dasein’s being is such that it must be grasped in terms of time; however, Heidegger does not want to say that Dasein’s being “[arises] and [passes] away ‘in the course of time’, with a bit of it past already.”¹⁷⁷ For to say this is to regard Dasein as a present-at-hand entity. Heidegger’s reference to terms like ‘before’, ‘already’ and ‘ahead’ should be differentiated from the way in which these terms are ordinarily used and understood:

With this ‘before’ we do not have in mind ‘in advance of something’ [das ‘Vorher’] in the sense of ‘not yet now – but later’; the ‘already’ is just as far from signifying ‘no longer now – but earlier’. If the expressions ‘before’ and ‘already’ were to have a time-oriented [zeithafte] signification such as *this* (and they can have this signification too), then to say that care has temporality would be to say that it is something which is ‘earlier’ and ‘later’, ‘not yet’ and ‘no longer’. Care would then be conceived as an entity which occurs and runs its course ‘in time’. The *Being* of an entity having the character of Dasein would become something *present-at-hand*.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ Ibid. 65: 375

¹⁷⁴ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 293

¹⁷⁵ *BT*, 65: 374

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. 65: 376

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. 65: 375

Heideggerian temporality – unlike the Aristotelian notion of time – does not compromise a sequence of events or “nows” that have “already” or “not yet” taken place. Time for Heidegger is constituted by the *ecstases* of temporality – the phenomena of having-been, making-present, and futurally coming towards. Temporality does not arise “through a *cumulative* sequence of the ecstases” in the same way that the past, present and future occur cumulatively in Aristotle’s conception of time; the temporal mode of making-present can not be said to be “after” the mode of having been or “before” the futural mode of coming towards. The essence of temporality lies in “the process of *temporalizing* in the *unity* of the ecstases.”¹⁷⁹ Heidegger concedes that the future occupies a place of priority in the ecstatical unity of temporality, but he nonetheless thinks that each of the three ecstases of temporality “temporalizes itself in their *equiprimordiality*.”¹⁸⁰ In other words, the having-been, making-present, and futural coming towards modes of temporality are all equally essential to the structure of temporality; the future is no more essential to the temporal structure in its temporalizing than the ecstases of having-been and making-present and vice versa. In doing violence to the ordinary conception of time, however, Heidegger does not seek to eradicate the everyday meanings of ‘future’, ‘past’, and ‘present’; instead, his task is to show how these meanings are derived from temporality. Indeed the ordinary understanding of time represents “a genuine phenomenon,” but insofar as this understanding of time “arises from inauthentic temporality,” it is said to be a *derivative* form of temporality.¹⁸¹ Thus temporality can be said to be more primordial than the ordinary conception of time. In the next chapter, I will provide an in-depth exegesis of the horizontal significance of the ecstases of temporality.

Now that Heidegger has laid bare the horizon upon which understanding projects itself and repeated his preparatory analysis of Dasein on a “higher and authentically ontological basis” by providing the so-called “missing piece” of the ontological puzzle – temporality – we expect that Heidegger finally is able to answer the *Seinsfrage* that he posits at the outset of *Being and Time*.¹⁸² Heidegger asserts that being must be understood in terms of time, and it is only once the ontological structures of Dasein have been reinterpreted with respect to temporality that Dasein’s being as a totality can be brought into view. I will give further consideration to the *equiprimordiality* of Dasein’s being and temporality and discuss more fully the mutual dependence of temporality on Dasein’s being and vice versa in the next chapter. At this point, however, Heidegger’s task at hand still remains incomplete:

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 65: 377 – my italics

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. 65: 378 – my italics

¹⁸¹ Ibid. 65: 374

¹⁸² *BT*, 17: 38

In thus interpreting Dasein as temporality, however, we shall not give the answer to our leading question as to the meaning of Being...But the ground will have been prepared for obtaining such an answer.”¹⁸³

While Heidegger has certainly laid the grounds for obtaining an answer to the question of the meaning of being as such, he has not yet completed his project of fundamental ontology. *Being and Time*, as it stands, is a *preparatory* work insofar as it equips its readers with the fundamental concepts and structures required to begin tackling the problem of working out the meaning of being as such but the text alone does not serve as the last word.

The Preparatory Existential Analytic of Dasein

In this section, I will begin by giving an appraisal of the extent to which Heidegger has answered the *Seinsfrage* by the end of Division II. I will then draw on *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, which Heidegger claims is “a new elaboration of division 2 of part 1 of *Being and Time*” in order to resolve some of the – as it were – ‘unfinished business’ of *Being and Time*.¹⁸⁴ In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger attempts “the explication of time and the transcendental horizon for the question of being” that he alludes to in *Being and Time*.¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, he regards *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* too as insufficient in itself for resolving the ontological problematic. But insofar as *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* sheds some more light on the *temporal approach* to ontology, it is vital for deepening our understanding not only of original temporality, but of the ontological problematic.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger’s existential analytic of Dasein is meant to function as a point of entry for answering the *Seinsfrage*. He emphasizes in the beginning and end sections of *Being and Time* that the existential analytic merely *prepares* its readers to answer the question of the meaning of being, since an analysis of Dasein equips us with the basic existential concepts required to carry out the analysis of the ontological problematic at a deeper and more fundamental level. Thus Heidegger thinks that in order to address this problem, we must first make transparent the being of Dasein.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 1

¹⁸⁵ *BT*, 8: 64

According to Heidegger, “if we are to obtain an ontologically clarified idea of Being,” then we must do so “by first working out that understanding-of-Being which belongs to Dasein.”¹⁸⁶ But since this understanding “is to be grasped primordially only on the basis of a primordial Interpretation of Dasein, in which we take the idea of existence as our clue,” Heidegger concedes that the idea of being has been presupposed and that “this problem of fundamental ontology which we have broached, is one which moves in a ‘circle’.”¹⁸⁷ But Heidegger thinks that insofar as working out the meaning of being as such involves interpretation, and “interpretation must in any case already operate in that which is understood,” such presupposition and circularity is inevitable.¹⁸⁸ Heidegger claims that this circle of understanding – the hermeneutic circle – “is not an orbit in which any random kind of knowledge may move; it is an expression of the existential *fore-structure* of Dasein itself.”¹⁸⁹ Heidegger thinks that the circularity that is manifest in first defining “an entity *in its Being*” and wanting “to formulate the question of Being only on this basis” is to be distinguished from the kind of circularity that arises from arguments that merely beg the question for the sake of begging the question;¹⁹⁰ the hermeneutic circle “is not to be reduced to the level of a vicious circle, or even of a circle which is merely tolerated.”¹⁹¹ Heidegger makes it explicit that he does not want to equate the being of Dasein with being as such. The being of Dasein “is still only the *point of departure* for the ontological problematic; it is nothing with which philosophy may tranquilize itself.”¹⁹²

In the introduction to *Being and Time*, Heidegger gives a design of the treatise as it was originally intended:

Accordingly our treatment of the question of Being branches out into two distinct tasks, and our treatise will thus have two parts:

Part One: the Interpretation of Dasein in terms of temporality, and the explication of time as the transcendental horizon for the question of Being.

Part Two: basic features of a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology, with the problematic of Temporality as our clue.

Part One has *three* divisions

1. the preparatory fundamental analysis of Dasein;
2. Dasein and temporality
3. time and Being.

¹⁸⁶Ibid. 63: 362

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. 32: 194

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. 32: 195

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. 2: 27

¹⁹¹ Ibid. 32: 195

¹⁹² Ibid. 83: 487

Part Two likewise has *three divisions*:

1. Kant's doctrine of schematism and time, as a preliminary stage in a problematic of Temporality;
2. the ontological foundation of Descartes' '*cogito sum*', and how the medieval ontology has been taken over into the problematic of the '*res cogitans*'
3. Aristotle's essay on time, as providing a way of discriminating the phenomenal basis and the limits of ancient ontology.¹⁹³

The published treatise, however, consisted only of Divisions I and II of Part One. From this outline, Heidegger makes it apparent that *Being and Time*, in the form in which it was published, leaves incomplete the proposed treatment of the *Seinsfrage*. According to the Translator's Introduction to *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, the treatise which Heidegger originally wished to publish as *Being and Time* would be completed "if we put together *Being and Time* as published, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, and our present volume, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*."¹⁹⁴ At the end of *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger concludes from his discussion of the ontological difference that "*time is the primary horizon of transcendental science, of ontology, or, in short, it is the transcendental horizon*."¹⁹⁵ This conclusion, however, is not supposed to provide the last word on the ontological problematic. But although Heidegger would regard both works as preliminary, they function nonetheless as required reading in preparing us for a resolution of the problem of being insofar as they bring into view a *temporal* approach to ontology.

According to Heidegger, in order for being to be understood as being, it must be projected upon a horizon, an open region or clearing¹⁹⁶ upon which it can show up and get grasped or understood. Being shows up in the sense that it is *illuminated (erleuchtet)* or "*cleared [gelichtet]* in itself, not through any other entity, but in such a way that it *is* itself the clearing."¹⁹⁷ It is in virtue of this horizon of understanding that "by its very nature, Dasein brings its 'there' along with it...*Dasein is its disclosedness*," that entities "become accessible in the light or hidden in the dark."¹⁹⁸ I will return to a more comprehensive discussion of Heidegger's concept of the horizon in conjunction with the ecstases of temporality in the next chapter. Temporality constitutes this horizon. Thus being can only be understood with respect to temporality. In the previous section, I contrasted the ordinary concept of time as a sequence of past, present, and future events with Heidegger's

¹⁹³ *BT*, 8: 63-64

¹⁹⁴ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. xvii

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*: 323

¹⁹⁶ "'Lichtung'. This word is customarily used to stand for a 'clearing' in the woods, not for a 'clarification'; the verb 'lichten' is similarly used..." (*BT*, 28: ftn..2)

¹⁹⁷ *BT*, 28: 170

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 28: 171

account of original temporality. In addition to understanding the ontological difference – the difference between being and beings – understanding the *temporal* difference – the difference between clock-time and original temporality – is vital to the ontological problematic. In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger expands on the temporal difference he introduces in *Being and Time* and seeks to give us a better understanding of what he means by temporality:

In my treatise on *Being and Time*, I set forth what the existential analytic encompasses in its essential results. The outcome of the existential analytic, the exposition of the ontological constitution of the Dasein in its ground, is this: *the constitution of the Dasein's being is grounded in temporality [Zeitlichkeit]*. If we presuppose this result, it does not mean that we may permit ourselves to be satisfied just to hear the word “temporality”. Without explicitly adducing here the proof that the Dasein's basic constitution is grounded in temporality, we must nevertheless attempt in some way to gain an understanding of what temporality means. To this end we choose the following path. We shall *take as our starting point the common concept of time* and learn to see how what is commonly known as time and was for a long time the only concept of time made into a problem in philosophy, *itself presupposes temporality*.¹⁹⁹

He also provides a critical interpretation of Aristotle's concept of time, in which he attempts to show that this concept of time is *derivative* from *originary temporality*. My aim in the next chapter is to show how this critical interpretation serves as the grounds for his criticism in *Being and Time* of Aristotle's *ousia*-dominated ontology. In addition, I will give an account of Aristotle's investigation into being *qua* being and assess Heidegger's criticism thereof.

¹⁹⁹ Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 228

Chapter III: Heidegger's and Aristotle's Philosophy of Time

For Heidegger, the question of being does not achieve its true concreteness until we have carried through the process of destroying misconceptions concerning both being and time in ancient ontology. In this chapter, I will show how Heidegger's criticism of the Aristotelian conception of time, namely time as an extant sequence of nows, serves as Heidegger's point of entry for criticizing Aristotle's interpretation of being as presence (*parousia* or *ousia*). To do this, I will explicate the ontological difference and the temporal difference and briefly discuss their roles in Heidegger's project of fundamental ontology. Finally, I will show why Heidegger thinks that deconstructing Aristotle's interpretation of time, as part of the process he calls the destruction of the history of ontology, brings us one step closer to answering the *Seinsfrage*.

Heidegger's Critique of Aristotle's Concept of Time

Heidegger's characterization of Aristotle's interpretation of time as derivative is vital to understanding why Heidegger regards Aristotle's treatment of being as derivative. In this section, I will present Aristotle's concept of time as it is elaborated by Heidegger. According to Heidegger, Aristotle's concept of time is constituted by the concept of the present, the now; time is "something counted in connection with motion as encountered in the horizon of earlier and later," that is to say, that which is measured between a now that has already passed (earlier, *proteron*) and a now that has not yet happened (later, *husteron*).²⁰⁰ If what is essentially measured is change or *kinesis*, then time is "something connected with motion and is measured by means of motion."²⁰¹ Heidegger notes that Aristotle does not necessarily want to say that time is simply motion (*kinesis*); rather, time is "*kineseos ti*, something close to, connected with motion."²⁰² This *kineseos ti* is the counting of motion between two instances; what gets counted is "a sequence of nows or of thens and at-the-times," where 'then' refers to "the not-yet-now or the now-not-yet" and 'at-the-time' refers to "the now-no-longer or the no-longer-now."²⁰³ Both then (past) and at-the-time (future) necessarily refer to the now (present). Thus, Aristotle's interpretation of time is determined by a "now-character, a now-reference."²⁰⁴ The now holds time together, since the continuity of time is contingent upon the now. Heidegger thinks that

²⁰⁰ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 235

²⁰¹ Ibid.: 237

²⁰² Ibid.: 238 – my italics

²⁰³ Ibid.: 246

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

Aristotle's concept of time fails to be explicitly preliminary and claims that it is in fact derivative of originary time or *temporality*. Heidegger establishes this claim first by showing how Aristotle's concept of time is grounded in what Heidegger refers to as *world-time*, and subsequently how world-time is in turn grounded in temporality. I will address the issue of how the originary concept of time as temporality produces common sense time in the next section. Heidegger connects Aristotle's concept of time or the common understanding of time with clock-time, since we generally understand time with respect to clocks, which are used to measure time, to count the succession of nows. But Heidegger thinks that when we use clocks, we are preoccupied with neither the clock nor time itself, but rather with the way in which we use our time, that is to say, *world-time*: "the time I am trying to determine is always 'time to', time *in order* to do this or that, time that I need *for*, time that I can permit myself *in order to* accomplish this or that, time that I must take *for* carrying through this or that."²⁰⁵ The motivation for checking the clock to see that it is 15:51, for instance, stems from my concern about arriving late for a 16:00 doctor's appointment. Thus clock-time is grounded in world-time and we count time not merely for the sake of counting, but instead for the sake of *reckoning* with time or using it. The clock in itself does not determine time, "we assign time to the clock" according to the way in which we need or use it.²⁰⁶ Clock-time, without reference to what Heidegger calls world-time is meaningless.

There is an important parallel to draw here between Heidegger's clock-time/world-time distinction and his ready-to-hand/present-at-hand distinction. Just as Heidegger thinks that ready-to-hand entities – pieces of equipment that are grasped with respect to their usability – are more originary than present-at-hand entities, so does he think that world-time – the time with which we reckon – is more originary than temporally occurrent clock-time. Likewise, just as he thinks that the general tendency to grasp entities only in their presence-at-hand is rooted in Dasein's everyday mode of being, so does he think that the common understanding of time – clock-time – springs from Dasein's everyday mode of reckoning with time that is Dasein's inauthenticity. In both cases, Dasein's default mode of falling is such that it covers up an originary understanding of phenomena: in the case of being, Dasein's fallenness (*Verfallenheit*) covers up the more primordial modes of readiness-to-hand and being-in-the-world, the origination of both presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand in Dasein's mode of being-in-the-world, and ultimately Dasein's being itself; in the case of time, Dasein's fallenness covers up "the specific structural moments of

²⁰⁵Ibid.: 258

²⁰⁶Ibid.: 261

world-time,” the origination of both clock-time and world-time in temporality, and ultimately temporality itself.²⁰⁷

Since Dasein in its everyday mode of being cannot but be fallen and inauthentic, its understanding of time and being must be inauthentic. Dasein understands time and being in their derivative senses, namely as clock-time and presence-at-hand, respectively. But Heidegger’s characterization of the common interpretation of time and being as inauthentic and derivative does not mean that he thinks that clock-time as such and presence-at-hand as such misrepresent and falsify time and being. Rather, Heidegger thinks that the misrepresentation and falsification of time and being lies in the passing off or pretension of these common concepts of time and being as the originary concepts of time and being.

Heidegger claims that Aristotle’s interpretation of being as presence-at-hand is grounded in Aristotle’s interpretation of time as “irreversible sequence of nows²⁰⁸”.²⁰⁹ Heidegger wants to say that neither being nor time in their originary senses are simply occurrent, present-at-hand entities. He rejects the idea that being *is* some thing, and he rejects the idea that time *is* some thing:

Aristotle says that time is *kineseos ti*, something *connected with* motion. But this means that time *is* in a certain way. If the common understanding of time is aware of being only in the sense of extant²¹⁰ being, being at hand, then time, being publicly accessible *along with* motion, must necessarily be something extant. As the Dasein encounters time, time gets interpreted also as something somehow extant, particularly if it reveals itself as being in a certain connection precisely with extant nature.²¹¹

Time in the Aristotelian sense is an *extant sequence* of nows that “come and go” in time, just as present-at-hand entities come and go (that is, are present and therefore exist and then are no longer present and therefore perish). Because Aristotle understands time as an extant entity, Aristotle also “understands being in the sense of extantness.”²¹² According to Heidegger, time *is* not, but rather it *temporalizes* itself (*Zeit zeitigt sich*). In the originary interpretation of time, time

²⁰⁷ Ibid.: 271

²⁰⁸ It is noteworthy that Heidegger does not recognize the ambiguity in describing Aristotle’s concept of the ‘now’. On the one hand, the word ‘now’ can be conceived such that it is always the same now that occurs in virtue of its having the same linguistic meaning. On the other hand, it can be conceived indexically, in which the content of any utterance concerning ‘now’ changes according to the context in which the ‘now’ is used. We can say that time as an infinite series of nows can be conceived both in terms of ‘nows’ that refer to different moments and in terms of nows that are always the same. Thus while a now is always the same now insofar as it retains its same linguistic meaning, the same ‘now’ can be used to refer to different moments in time, and hence the meaning of each moment is different.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.: 271

²¹⁰ I take Heidegger use of the term *extant* in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* to be interchangeable with his use of “present-at-hand” in *Being and Time*.

²¹¹ Ibid.: 272

²¹² Ibid.

is not treated as a present-at-hand entity, but rather is regarded as the condition which makes possible any understanding of being in the first place, since it is the “ecstatic-horizonal unity of future, past, and present” upon which something like being can be projected and understood.²¹³

While Heidegger rejects the dominance of presence-at-hand in giving an account of being in its originary sense and the dominance of the present in giving an account of time in its originary sense, it would be a mistake to equate presence-at-hand with the present without further ado. A present-at-hand entity is *spatially* occurrent, e.g. there is a doctor *in* the room, whereas the present is *temporally* occurrent, e.g. a doctor’s appointment at 16:00. Heidegger’s above analogy is not meant to establish an identity between the present and presence-at-hand, but rather to show that in giving an account of time with respect to the coming and going of nows, Aristotle treats time – as represented solely by the present – as a present-at-hand entity.

Heidegger, in contrast, does not regard the phenomenon of the present “as the now, the *nun*, towards which the common interpretation of time is oriented when it says that time is an irreversible sequence of nows.”²¹⁴ Heidegger distinguishes the present in the sense of a now from his characterization of the present as the horizon of *praesens*, that is to say, that upon which the temporalizing act of *enpresenting*, or making present of entities, is projected. The present in the sense of a now not only covers up the originary interpretation of time, but also the originary interpretation of being, and thus we are led astray to interpret the being of beings solely in terms of the present mode of time. The being of beings, like the nows which simply come and go infinitely in time, is also “in time.” Thus both being and time are taken in their ontic rather than ontological senses; they are treated as present-at-hand entities. In differentiating between the common understanding of time, in which time is treated as a present-at-hand thing, and temporality (the unity of the horizons of having-been, *praesens*, and future), Heidegger gives an account of the *temporal difference*.

Aristotle’s Inauthentic Interpretation of Time and Being

For Heidegger, being and time must be necessarily connected, since Dasein understands being only with regard to time; time is the horizon upon which an understanding of being can be projected. He thinks that a primordial conception of time, that is to say, time as finite

²¹³ Ibid.: 274

²¹⁴ Ibid.: 305

temporality, is crucial to unlocking the ontological problematic insofar as it leads us to interpret being with respect to the ecstatic-horizonal unity of past, present and future and hence not merely with respect to the present, as Aristotle does. In this section, I will discuss in further detail what Heidegger means by the *horizon of the ecstases of temporality*. I will show that having the common sense concept of time as our horizon for understanding being leads us to interpret being as *constant* and *present*, whereas having originary temporality as our horizon for understanding being leads us to interpret being in its primordial sense, that is to say, as *temporal* and *finite*. This contrast is somewhat opaque but I will make the distinction between these two conceptions of being clearer in the course of my discussion. I will then show that since Aristotle characterizes time as an endless sequence of nows he disregards the *finitude* of time and hence interprets time in an *inauthentic* manner. Aristotle's interpretation of being as *ousia* or constant presence (Heidegger's translation) is rooted in the inauthentic interpretation of time as infinite and falls victim to what Heidegger calls *Seinsvergessenheit*, the forgetting of being. In order to raise the *Seinsfrage* and uncover what has been forgotten about being, Heidegger claims that ancient ontology must be destroyed.

Originary time temporalizes itself insofar as it is *ecstatic*, that is to say, outside itself. Dasein is temporal not because it is simply "in time," but rather because it is "carried away" as its having-been (past), coming-towards-itself (future) and making-present (present): "As future, the Dasein *is carried away to its past/has-been/capacity-to-be*; as past[having-been], it *is carried away to its having-been-ness*; and as enpresenting, it *is carried away to some other being or beings*."²¹⁵ Temporality carries Dasein away within itself, within its ecstases of past, present, and future; the movement of time carries Dasein away or gets it to the horizon, the clearing of being. This carrying-away is not merely an occasional or accidental character of originary time, but rather an *essential* one. In other words, originary time *just is* this carrying-away of Dasein towards (future), back to (past), or to (present) something and thus originary time is said to be not *static* but *ecstatic*; "it is itself the *original outside-itself*, the ekstatikon."²¹⁶ The ecstatic quality of time, Dasein's being, refers to the character of the outside-itself (*außer sich*). Recall that Heidegger characterizes the being of Dasein as *ek-sistenz*²¹⁷: Dasein is the "original unity of *being-outside-self* that comes-toward-self, comes-back-to-self, and enpresents."²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 266

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Cf. "Letter on Humanism" (*Basic Writings*, 230): "Ek-sistence, thought in terms of *ecstasis*, does not coincide with *existentia* in either form or content. In terms of content ek-sistence means standing out into

The ecstases of past, present, and future carry Dasein away towards *something*, namely a “peculiar *openness*, which is given within the outside-itself.”²¹⁹ Heidegger calls this openness the *horizon of the ecstasis*. Temporality is the horizon upon which an understanding of being is projected; it is the openness or *clearing* (*Lichtung*) to which Dasein is carried-away so that it grasps the projected understanding of being.

The ecstatical unity of temporality – that is, the unity of the ‘outside-of-itself’ in the raptures of the future, of what has been, and of the Present – is the condition for the possibility that there can be any entity which exists as its ‘there’. The entity which bears the title ‘Being-there’ is one that has been ‘cleared’...That by which this entity is essentially cleared – in other words, that which makes it both ‘open’ for itself and ‘bright’ for itself – is what we have defined as ‘care’, in advance of any ‘temporal’ Interpretation. In care is grounded the full disclosedness of the ‘there’. Only by this clearedness is any illuminating or illumining, any awareness, ‘seeing’, or having of something, made possible...*Ecstatical temporality clears the ‘there’ primordially*. It is what primarily regulates the possible unity of all Dasein’s existential structures.²²⁰

The carrying-off “*opens up this horizon and keeps it open*” for Dasein, that is to say, it gives Dasein continuous awareness of the openness.²²¹ It is in this way that the ecstatic character of temporality, as this carrying-away of Dasein towards the horizon, makes possible the understanding of being, which, Heidegger thinks, is essential to Dasein’s being. Moreover, since temporality is the horizon upon which an understanding of anything is projected, temporality provides sufficient reason for the common sense understanding of time as a sequence of nows. Without the ecstatic-horizonal character of temporality, nothing would be intelligible, including the concept of common-sense time. Common-sense time, then, is only possible in virtue of originary time. In the discussion that follows, I will give an account of why Heidegger thinks that the unity of the ecstases produces common-sense time and show how he makes his case for this claim.

We have already seen that in Heidegger’s account of Aristotle’s concept of time, the thens (not-yet-now) and at-the-times (no-longer-now) can be conceived only with respect to the nows.²²² This is the common sense of time which Heidegger contrasts with originary time as the unity of enpresenting, expecting, and retaining. He asserts that the former is grounded in the latter insofar as the now, then, and at-the-time are *self-expositions*, that is to say, ways in which enpresenting,

the truth of Being. *Existencia* (existence) means in contrast *actualitas*, actuality as opposed to mere possibility as *Idea*. Ek-sistence identifies the determination of what man is in the destiny of truth.”

²¹⁸ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 266 – my italics

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ *BT*, 68: 401-402

²²¹ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 266

²²² Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 246

expecting, and retaining manifest themselves to inauthentic understanding.²²³ Heidegger claims that common sense time “by its own phenomenological content” points towards original temporality and hence that Aristotle’s definition only tells a partial story about time.²²⁴

Inasmuch as each then is a not-yet-now and each at-the-time a no-longer now, there is an enpresenting implicit in every expecting and retaining. If I am expecting something, I always see it into a present. Similarly, if I am retaining something, I retain it for a present, so that all expecting and retaining are enpresenting. This shows the *inner coherence* not only of time as expressed but also of these *comportments* in which time expresses itself. If time utters itself with these determinations – now, at-the-time, then – and if further these determinations themselves express an expecting, retaining, and enpresenting, then obviously what is brought out here is *time in a more original sense*.²²⁵

And again:

In the at-the-time a retaining pronounces itself, and in the then an expecting. Since each at-the-time is a ‘no-longer-now’ and each then a ‘not-yet-now’, there is always an enpresenting, a concomitant understanding of the now, incorporated in the uttering of a then that arises from an expecting. Each one of these time-determinations – now, then, and at-the-time – is spoken from out of the *unity* of an enpresenting-expecting-retaining (or forgetting).²²⁶

Temporality, as the unity of enpresenting-expecting-retaining, in turn, “provides the horizon for the understanding of being.”²²⁷ This claim provides the basis for Heidegger’s assertion that Dasein understands being only in terms of time. If Heidegger is right in both cases, then it follows that Aristotle’s concept of time, as the dominant horizon for the understanding of being, covers up the primordial understanding of being such that we come to regard being too as intratemporal and present-at-hand. Time in the common sense “becomes the intrinsically free-floating runoff of a sequence of nows,” that is to say, gets understood in such a way that it is an endless sequence of nows.²²⁸ Time is understood in this way because “each now is by its essential nature not-yet and no-longer. In whatever now I may wish to stop, I stand in a not-yet or a no-longer.”²²⁹ The now is *always present* in Aristotle’s concept of time; the now never comes to an end insofar as the earlier (*proteron*) is a no-longer-now and the later (*husteron*) is a not-yet-now. There is a primacy of the present in Aristotle’s concept of time; the past and future are secondary insofar as they are derived from the now. Aristotle interprets the past in such a way that the nows that have gone are forgotten and he interprets the future in such a way that the nows to come are merely awaited. Since we grasp time only in terms of nows that are either no-

²²³ Ibid.: 257

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.: 260

²²⁶ Ibid.: 261

²²⁷ Ibid.: 260

²²⁸ Ibid.: 272

²²⁹ Ibid.: 273

longer or not-yet, we have an unlimited number of nows at our disposal. We come to regard time as *infinite* and thus are led away from a *primordial* interpretation of time as finite temporality:

Starting from this view, it arrives at the opinion that time is infinite, endless, whereas by its very nature temporality is finite. Since the common vision of time is directed solely toward the extant and the non-extant in the sense of the not-yet-extant and the no-longer-extant, the nows in their succession remain the sole thing that is relevant for it. Implicit in Dasein's own mode of being is that it knows the sequential juxtaposition.²³⁰

Aristotle cannot but grasp time as infinite because in his interpretation of time, there is no limit in either direction of the sequence of nows. The finitude of time only comes to the fore once we grasp time authentically, that is to say, in the way in which Heidegger invites us to grasp it: as temporality. Heidegger thinks that understanding time in terms of finite temporality is authentic, since it recognizes that existence is limited by death. In contrast, Aristotle's conception of time as infinite is an inauthentic understanding of time.

Dasein's being is such that it covers up and hides from Dasein the originary understanding of time as finite. This covering up of finite temporality and the pretension that time is instead extant and infinite in turn leads Dasein to interpret being too as extant and infinite. Dasein has a common understanding of time as endless because its default mode of being fallen is such that it *forgets* its own essential finitude and hence the finitude of time. The forgetting of the finitude of time and being as a result of Dasein's inauthenticity, Heidegger thinks, inevitably results in *Seinsvergessenheit*, the forgetting of the meaning of being as such.

Not only does inauthentic Dasein misunderstand being and time themselves, it also misunderstands the relation between the two. Heidegger writes, "in a *certain* way, the Dasein understands that the interpretation of being is connected in some form or other with time;" Dasein, however, does not *authentically* understand the connection between being and time.²³¹ Heidegger concedes that both pre-philosophical knowledge and philosophical knowledge generally distinguish beings in terms of their mode of being with respect to time, but he points out that they do so in an *inauthentic* way. This inauthenticity, according to Heidegger, results in the common-sense understanding of the relation between being and time as one of *intratemporality*: being is to time in the manner of containment inside or within it, that is to say, being is *in* time.

²³⁰ Ibid.: 272

²³¹ Ibid. – my italics

Aei On and Ousia in Ancient Ontology

Ancient philosophers distinguished the ever-being (*aei on*) – “the being that *is* in the most primary and truest sense” – from the changeable being, “which only sometimes is, sometimes is not.”²³² Just as Aristotle’s interpretation of time as an endless sequence of nows gets passed off as time in its primary and truest sense, so does the ancient interpretation of being as the *aei on* get passed off as being in its primary and truest sense. Since Heidegger thinks that being must be interpreted with respect to time, he thinks that ancient interpretation of being is rooted in the ancient interpretation of time, in which the now is *always present*.

Heidegger claims that the everlasting character of time impinges on our understanding of being so that we interpret being as constant presence (*ousia*) and that which always is (*aei on*): “*Ousia* means Being in the sense of constant presence, presence at hand. Consequently, what really is is what always is, *aei on*.”²³³ Insofar as being is interpreted with respect to inauthentic infinite time, Heidegger thinks that ancient ontology has failed to thematize adequately the *Seinsfrage*. In order to proceed to answer the *Seinsfrage*, we must first “destroy” ancient ontology by bringing to light the common sense interpretation of time in which it is rooted:

If the question of Being is to have its own history made transparent, then this hardened tradition must be loosened up, and the concealments which it has brought about must be dissolved. We understand this task as one in which by taking *the question of Being as our clue*, we are to *destroy* the traditional content of ancient ontology until we arrive at those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being – the ways which have guided us ever since...in our process of destruction we find ourselves faced with the task of Interpreting the basis of the ancient ontology in the light of the problematic of Temporality. When this is done, it will be manifest that the ancient way of interpreting the Being of entities is oriented towards the ‘world’ or ‘Nature’ in the widest sense, and that it is indeed in terms of ‘time’ that its understanding of Being is obtained.²³⁴

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 206

²³⁴ *BT*, 6: 43, 47

Chapter IV: Heidegger's Destruction of Aristotle's Ontology in *Being and Time*

My main task in this final chapter is to discuss and defend Heidegger's critique in *Being and Time* of Aristotle's interpretation of being as *ousia*. To begin with, I will give an account of Aristotle's science of being *qua* being and consider Ted Sadler's characterization of Aristotle's ontology as "ousiological reduction." I will then present and assess Heidegger's interpretation of *ousia* as constant presence by giving an exegesis of Heidegger's interpretation of the common and nomenclatorial meanings of *ousia* in *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, bringing into view Heidegger's discussion of *hupokeimenon*. I will consider the reasons Sadler gives for why Heidegger thinks that *ousia* and *hupokeimenon* are connected and will subsequently reject these reasons in light of Aristotle's claims concerning the ontological, epistemological, and temporal priority of *ousia* in *Metaphysics*. I will propose instead that while Heidegger's interpretation of *ousia* as constant presence in the sense of Aristotelian *hupokeimenon* is improbable, it does not misinterpret Aristotle but rather seeks to illuminate the underlying meaning of Aristotle's philosophy of being. To conclude, I will present the *meta-Aristotelian* element of Heidegger's critical claims, that is to say, the way in which Heidegger's ontology not only exhausts that of Aristotle's but also goes *beyond* Aristotle's ontology in order to capture and make concrete what Aristotle has missed about being and consider the way in which Aristotle's misinterpretation has left its mark on the history of ontology. In so doing, I will show that there is value in Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's thought and the criticisms that he presents; however, appreciating such value requires not only that we recognize the limitations that accompany historical interpretations of being, but also more importantly that we reorientate our philosophical attitudes.

Aristotle's Science of Being Qua Being and the Ousiological Reduction

Heidegger's *Seinsfrage* is a renewal of the question as to the being of a being (*ti to on*) first raised by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*. In Book IV (Gamma) of *Metaphysics*, Aristotle differentiates between a science "which investigates being as being and the attributes which belong to this in virtue of its own nature."²³⁵ Whereas the "so-called special sciences," e.g. mathematics, and physics, fail to consider being in general, the science which investigates being as being "treats

²³⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* IV.1003^a21-22

universally of being as being.”²³⁶ Aristotle calls the science of being *qua* being *first philosophy* and argues that in grasping being as being, we are also grasping the first causes, since the elements of being belong to “the first principles and the highest causes.”²³⁷ According to Aristotle, the many senses of being are all related and refer to one central meaning, namely *ousia*:

Some things are said to be because they are *ousia*, others because they are affections of *ousia*, others because they are a process towards *ousia*, or destructions or privations or qualities of *ousia*, or productive or generative of *ousia*, or of things which are relative to *ousia*, or negations of some of these things or of *ousia* itself.²³⁸

The science of being *qua* being is a science that deals with being in its *primary* sense, that is to say, what it primarily means for something to be. Aristotle regards *ousia* as “that which is primary, and on which the other things depend, and in virtue of which they get their names.”²³⁹ Since all other things *are* in virtue of *ousia*, “that which is primarily...must be *ousia*.”²⁴⁰ Aristotle asserts that *ousia* is first in every sense in which a thing may be said to be primary: in definition; in order of knowledge; in time. *Ousia* is first in definition, that is to say, it has logical priority, because everything, even non-substance, is defined in terms of *ousia* and in giving the *ousia* of a thing, we are essentially giving the answer to the ‘what’ of the thing. *Ousia* is first in order of knowledge because we tend to think that we know each thing most fully when we know *what* it is, e.g. that the thing is a man or a plant, rather than when we know any particular quality or quantity of the thing. *Ousia* is first in time because as regards to categories, there must be *ousia* to begin with in order that a thing can have, for example quality and quantity. For Aristotle, the question ‘what is being?’ “is just the question, what is *ousia*?”²⁴¹ Thus for Aristotle, the science which studies “all things that are, *qua* being” is just the science which studies *ousia*.²⁴² In order to grasp being *qua* being, “it is of *ousia* that the philosopher must grasp the principles and the causes.”²⁴³

Aristotle argues that *ousia* in its primary sense is form. If we take Aristotle’s assimilation of *ousia* to form in conjunction with his account of becoming, we note that there is, for Aristotle, a *primary* sense in which something is a form. Primary forms are forms apart from matter, e.g. eternal and divine forms, and they are primary insofar as they are pure actuality, finished-being

²³⁶ Ibid. IV.1003^a23, 1003^a24

²³⁷ Ibid. IV. 1003^a27

²³⁸ Ibid. IV. 1003^b6-10

²³⁹ Ibid. IV.1003^b16-17

²⁴⁰ Ibid. VII.1028^a29-30

²⁴¹ Ibid. VI.1028^b3-4

²⁴² Ibid. IV.1003^b15

²⁴³ Ibid. IV.1003^b18

(*energeia*). God's thinking is *fully* actual: God's essence (*ousia*) is actuality, and because he does not possess matter, there cannot be anything potential about him or his activity.²⁴⁴ Moreover, God is *continuously* actual: God is always thinking.²⁴⁵ Forms that exist in matter, e.g. souls, on the other hand, are potentialities (*dunamis*), and Aristotle regards these as secondary. These forms depend on matter for their instantiation and thus are said to be sensible. For Aristotle, that which is present is that which is actual to some degree. In light of this claim, we might conclude that God's thinking commands *constant presence* both in the sense that it endures continuously (never perishes) and has perpetual identity (never undergoes change).

Now that I have provided some preliminary explication of Aristotle's doctrine of being, I turn to Heidegger's critical consideration thereof. According to Heidegger, Aristotle reduces the meaning of being to *ousia*. In his work, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Question of Being*, Ted Sadler refers to Aristotle's identification of the science of being with the science of *ousia* as the *ousiological reduction*. Heidegger thinks that in equating being with *ousia*, Aristotle only focuses on the kind of being (presence-at-hand) that emerges *for* Dasein, and thereby overlooks Dasein's being, which is essential for working out the meaning of being as such.

Heidegger finds the ousiological reduction problematic because it results in the misinterpretation of the meaning of being as *parousia* or *ousia* (presence, *Anwesenheit*). While Heidegger concedes that *ousia* is indeed one mode of being, namely presence-at-hand, he rejects it as the sole or even the primary meaning of being. In fact, of the three modes of being, Heidegger regards presence-at-hand as the least primordial. We grasp presence-at-hand only with respect to the other two modes of being, whether as a deficient mode of readiness-to-hand or in contradistinction to being-in-the-world. Heidegger's project of fundamental ontology seeks to destroy ancient ontology because ancient philosophers interpreted *ousia* to be the primary and universal meaning of being, and, in so doing, covered over the more primordial modes of being, which subsequently resulted in *Seinsvergessenheit*. Now that we have considered Heidegger's chief criticism of Aristotle, finally formulated in terms of *Seinsvergessenheit*, we can ask the question that brings us to the heart of our Aristotle-Heidegger dialectic: how much can the metaphysics of *ousia* explain about being as compared with Heidegger's fundamental ontology? In short, the answer will be that Heidegger's philosophy of being surpasses that of Aristotle's in its explanatory force. In the final section, I will try to legitimize Heidegger's claim that his

²⁴⁴ Ibid. XII.1071^b18-22

²⁴⁵ Ibid. XII.1072^b16-31

philosophy of being not only accounts for Aristotle's interpretation of being as *ousia*, but also accounts for that which is lacking in Aristotle's doctrine.

Sadler thinks that Heidegger is justified in equating the ousiological reduction with *Seinsvergessenheit*, "but only if 'ousia' is itself understood in the terms indicated by Heidegger, which are quite different to the standard connotations of 'substance'."²⁴⁶ For Heidegger, *Seinsvergessenheit* is intrinsic to the structure of Dasein's being. In its everyday mode of being, Dasein understands being in terms of derivative (*abkünftig*) or common-sense time, namely as *presence*. As a result of this limited understanding of both time and being, Dasein *forgets* the more primordial meaning of being: "We thus have the equation *Seinsvergessenheit* = everydayness = vulgar temporality = presence = an attunement (stance) of a certain kind."²⁴⁷ I want to argue, however, that Sadler is wrong simply to identify *Seinsvergessenheit* with the ousiological reduction. To be sure, forgetting the meaning of being is *rooted* in the ousiological reduction, but they are not one and the same thing. Heidegger's account of *Seinsvergessenheit* is more complicated than Sadler makes it out to be, since it necessarily refers to structures and concepts related but not restricted to the ousiological reduction, e.g. inauthenticity, temporality, everydayness, etc. Moreover, as Sadler himself points out, Heidegger generally takes *Seinsvergessenheit* to mean the forgetting of the ontological difference, that is to say, the difference between being and beings:

When Heidegger charges the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies with *Seinsvergessenheit*, it is a more primordial forgetfulness he is alluding to, the Parmenidian forgetfulness of the difference between Being and beings. The Parmenidean formula was *to on = to einai, das Seiende = das Sein*, that-which-is (the being) = Being.²⁴⁸

Heidegger translates *ousia* as *constant presence*, avoiding "the usual and familiar 'translations' (i.e. interpretations) of *ousia* as 'substance' and 'essence'."²⁴⁹ He thinks that the translation of *ousia* as *substantia* (substance) is a result of the medieval reinterpretation of Greek philosophy, which has remained determinative from the Middle Ages, throughout modernity and up to the present-day. This reinterpretation, according to Heidegger, is *retroactive*, that is to say, it falsifies Greek philosophy "from the bottom up – on the basis of the dominant concept of substance."²⁵⁰ There remains, however, the question of whether Heidegger himself is justified in

²⁴⁶ Sadler, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Question of Being*, p. 48

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*: 46

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: 42

²⁴⁹ Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, p. 199

²⁵⁰ Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 207

translating *ousia* as “constant presence.” Is his translation of *ousia* as constant presence also a misinterpretation of Aristotle? In the next section, I will assess whether Heidegger’s equation of *ousia* with constant presence is a legitimate one.

Heidegger’s Interpretation of *Ousia* as Constant Presence

Sadler’s reference to Owens’ etymological grounds for avoiding translating *ousia* as substance seems to warrant Heidegger’s worries of the retroactive reinterpretation of Greek philosophy:

Although there may be some doubt as to whether the question ‘what is *ousia*?’ can without difficulty be substituted for ‘what is being?’, the connection between the two questions is unlikely to be lost in the Greek language, where ‘*ousia*’ and ‘*on*’ both derive from the infinitive ‘*einai*’ (to be). But as Owen points out, this connection can easily be overlooked when ‘*ousia*’ is translated as ‘*substantia*’ or ‘substance’, words which have no etymological connection whatsoever with ‘being’. In this case, the general question ‘what is being?’ may be entirely forgotten in the preoccupation with ‘*ousia*’. According to Heidegger, this is exactly what has happened in the history of metaphysics: the problems in carrying through the ‘ousiological reduction’ are simply ignored, and it is taken as an accomplished fact.²⁵¹

Both Owen and Heidegger claim that the translation of *ousia* as substance leads us away from the question concerning being. However, whereas Owen is content to say that there *is* a conceptual connection between *ousia* and being manifested in the *etymological* connection, for Heidegger this etymological connection itself misleads us into thinking that the concept of *ousia* exhausts the meaning of being. Hence, I would slightly modify Sadler’s claim here so as to bring out more explicitly the distinction between Owen’s claim concerning the etymological connection between *ousia* and *einai* and Heidegger’s claim concerning the overlooking of the question “What is being?” in western metaphysics through the identification of being with *ousia*. Even in the case where the etymological connection is not overlooked, the question of the meaning of being, once being is taken simply to mean *ousia*, has been forgotten.

Rather than *substantia*, Heidegger proposes that we translate *ousia* as “constant presence” (*ständige Anwesenheit*): “*Ousia* means Being in the sense of constant presence²⁵², presence at hand...Endurance, perpetual identity, presence at hand, lying at hand – all at bottom say the same: *constant presence, on as ousia.*”²⁵³ Heidegger develops his argument for this translation in *Die Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*. He thinks that for Aristotle, *ousia*, beingness

²⁵¹ Sadler, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Question of Being*, p. 48

²⁵² See also fn. 41

²⁵³ Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 206, 216

(*Seinsheit*), or the entity in the how of its being, has many different meanings: “But *ousia* as ‘the entity in the how of its being’ is in Aristotle himself ambiguous, has many meanings...”²⁵⁴ To begin with, Heidegger provides the common or familiar meaning (*geläufige Bedeutung*) of *ousia*, that is to say, the meaning which it carried in the natural everyday speaking (*natürliches Sprechen*) of the Greeks. Recalling his discussion of inauthenticity in *Being and Time*, Heidegger claims that this meaning operates within an *average understanding* (*durchschnittliches Verständnis*), that is to say, an understanding in which one understands nothing further than that which is familiar: “‘One’ understands without further ado the expression which has the character of being commonly used. It is there in the common possession of language, into which every new person grows...”²⁵⁵ According to the common meaning, *ousia* refers to things having to do with *ownership*: estate (*Vermögen*), asset (*Besitzstand*), belongings (*Hab und Gut*), and property (*Anwesen*). Heidegger thinks that this common meaning of *ousia* always singles out a certain entity (*ein bestimmtes Seiendes*). This common meaning corresponds to Aristotle’s characterization of *ousia* in *Metaphysics* VII.1 as a *tode ti*, a *this* something: “what a thing is or a ‘this’” indicates the *ousia* of the thing.²⁵⁶ Heidegger thinks that this common meaning of *ousia* can help towards an understanding of the overall sense of what the Greeks meant by being.

According to Heidegger, *ousia* in its terminological sense means the entity in the *how* of its being. The *how* of an entity is not emphasized in the common meaning. But insofar as the way in which something is there for *me* is emphasized in the meaning of *ousia* as asset, estate, and belongings (that is to say, in such a way that *I* can use it in its availability to *me*, with which *I* can have to do on a daily basis), the *how* of the being of an entity in the common meaning of *ousia* is *there-being in the sense of availability* (*Dasein in der Weise des Verfügbarseins*). This sense of the *how* of the being of an entity, Heidegger thinks, “gives us a hint/pointer that for the Greeks being was from the beginning called *Da-sein*, there-being.”²⁵⁷ In this way, we can see how the terminological and common meanings of *ousia* are fused: the *how* of the being of an entity is taken to mean the there-being of something for *me*; a belonging or asset, for example, is there insofar as it is there for *me*, for *my* sake.

²⁵⁴ „*Ousia* aber als das ‘Seiende im Wie seines Seins’ ist nun bei Aristoteles selbst mehrdeutig, hat verschiedene Bedeutungen...” (Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, p. 22 – my translation)

²⁵⁵ „Man’ versteht ohne weiteres einen Ausdruck, der den Charakter des Geläufigen hat, er ist im gemeinsamen Besitz der Sprache da, in die jeder neue Mensch hineinwächst.” (Ibid.: 24 – my translation)

²⁵⁶ *Metaphysics* VII.1028^a12 – my italics

²⁵⁷ „gibt uns einen Fingerzeig dahin, daß Sein für die Griechen von vornherein heißt *Da-sein*.” (Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe des Aristotelischen Philosophie*, p. 25 – my translation)

However, it still remains to be shown why Heidegger translates *ousia* as constant presence. According to Heidegger, Aristotle designates *hupokeimenon*, usually translated as substratum, as the first characteristic of being. He writes, “beings such as animals, plants, people, mountains, suns, are in such a way that they are *hupo*, already lying there in advance.”²⁵⁸ These entities are present-at-hand (*vorhanden*) because they already lie there underneath, present *for me*. Heidegger defines *hupokeimenon* as that “of which I speak, the spoken of, what I have there in the speaking, present-at-hand, from the outset already lying there in advance.”²⁵⁹ Entities which are *hupokeimenon*, then, have presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenseins*) as their mode of being. Heidegger goes on to say that the *hupokeimenon eschaton* is one of two fundamental meanings which Aristotle attributes to *ousia*: “1. the *hupokeimenon eschaton*, which is already there for every dealing, 2. the entity in the character of *tode ti on*, of which I say, ‘that there’, *choriston*, standing ‘in its own place’, being ‘independently’ present-at-hand.”²⁶⁰ But how exactly does Heidegger envisage the relationship between *hupokeimenon* and *ousia*? Sadler offers the following explanation of Heidegger’s interpretation of the connection between *hupokeimenon* and *ousia* in Aristotle’s ontology:

If *ousia* is that which somehow (taking our clue from the words themselves) underlies both *paraousia* and *apousia*, what justification is there for equating it specifically with *parousia*? **Heidegger’s answer is that the *parousia/apousia* opposition as explicitly posited by Aristotle depends on the more primordial experience of the substratum itself. In other words, Heidegger considers that the everyday meaning of ‘*ousia*’ is adequately reflected as ‘*parousia*’ in its opposition to ‘*apousia*’, but that its ontological meaning must be sought in the kind of presence which Aristotle implicitly attributes to the substratum. While contraries change into one another, and while (sublunary) *ousiai* in the sense of composite things come into being and pass away, the substratum is what persists and is present throughout all change.**²⁶¹

Sadler claims that according to Heidegger, Aristotle thinks that *hupokeimenon* is the fundamental sense in which something is said to be *ousia*. But for Sadler to be right in this claim, Heidegger would have had to be blatantly wrong in his interpretation of Aristotle. For, in *Metaphysics* VII.3, Aristotle explicitly contradicts this view:

²⁵⁸ „Solche Seiende wie Tiere, Pflanzen, Menschen, Berge, Sonne sind derart, daß sie *hupo*, ‘im vorhinein’ schon ‘da liegen’.“ (Ibid.: 30 – my translation)

²⁵⁹ „worüber ich spreche, das Besprochene, was ich im Sprechen da habe, *vorhanden*, im vorhinein schon daliegend.“ (Ibid. – my italics and translation)

²⁶⁰ „So unterscheidet nun Aristoteles zwei *tropoi*, ‘Grundweisen’, in denen *ousia* gebraucht wird: 1. das *hupokeimenon eschaton*, das für jeden Umgang damit schon da ist, 2. das Seiende im Charakter des *tode ti on*, von dem ich sage ‚das da‘, *choriston*, ‚am eigenen Platze‘ stehend, ‚eigenständig‘ vorhanden sein.“ (Ibid.: 33 – my translation)

²⁶¹ Sadler, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Question of Being*, pp. 77-78 – my emphases

But this [the view that *hupokeimenon* as matter is *ousia*] is impossible; for both separability and individuality are thought to belong chiefly to *ousia*. And so form and the compound of form and [*hupokeimenon* as] matter would be thought to be *ousia* rather than [*hupokeimenon* as] matter.²⁶²

But while I reject Sadler's view and hence dismiss the notion that Heidegger was blatantly wrong about Aristotle, I want to argue that if we take a closer look at what Heidegger says about *hupokeimenon*, we can see that in characterizing *hupokeimenon* as that "of which I speak, the spoken of, what I have there in the speaking, present-at-hand, from the outset already lying there in advance," Heidegger is drawing upon philosophical categories peculiar to his own existential analysis of Dasein's being.²⁶³ What Heidegger says about *ousia* as constant presence is *analogous* to what Aristotle says about *hupokeimenon* as matter. But the sense that Heidegger here assigns to constant presence is not what Aristotle means when he talks about *hupokeimenon* "lying at the floor of the universe." For Heidegger, *hupokeimenon* as matter has constant presence in the sense that it is that of which *I* speak, present-at-hand, and from the beginning already lying there for *me*. *Hupokeimenon* as matter has constant presence in the way that objects in a room are already there and available in advance *for me* to attend to, engage with, and use. This kind of already-there background is ready to be grasped and comes to the fore. For Aristotle, however, although *hupokeimenon* as matter is constantly present and always there in advance, nevertheless we cannot single it out or speak about it in the way that Heidegger presumes. *Hupokeimenon* as matter is not *actually* any thing, since it is only *potentially ousia*, that is to say, that within which *ousia* potentially is instantiated: "By matter I mean that which in itself is neither a particular thing nor of a certain quantity nor assigned to any of the other categories by which being is determined."²⁶⁴ *Hupokeimenon* as matter can only be described with reference to something that makes it more than matter, e.g. *ousia*; it never comes to the fore of its own accord. As soon as *hupokeimenon* as matter comes to the fore, it becomes – metaphysically speaking – substantiated and becomes a definite, distinctive 'this' (*tode ti*), which Aristotle takes to be *ousia* in the primary sense. Thus for Aristotle, the ultimate substratum – *hupokeimenon* – as matter does not have ontic instantiation, that is to say, it cannot be instantiated into a present-at-hand entity because it cannot come to the fore in a real sense.

Since Aristotle does not think that *hupokeimenon* as matter by itself can be uncovered, Heidegger cannot claim that Aristotle explicitly meant that *hupokeimenon* has constant presence in the sense of an already-there background that is there for me; once *hupokeimenon* as matter is uncovered, it

²⁶² Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII.1029^a27-30

²⁶³ Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe des Aristotelischen Philosophie*, p. 30 – my italics

²⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII.1028^a20-22

has already been instantiated as *ousia*. But Heidegger can still suggest that although Aristotle does not explicitly mean constant presence to be understood in this way, namely as there for me, there is nonetheless *some* sense in which Aristotle implicitly grasped constant presence in this way and that by drawing our attention to this sense, he brings to light the meaning underlying Aristotle's text. As we have already shown, Sadler is wrong to claim on behalf of Heidegger that Aristotle thinks that the ontological meaning of *ousia* must be sought in *hupokeimenon*. Instead, Heidegger's claim is rather more delicate: he gives an account of *ousia* in terms of the being of Dasein with the aim of shedding light on Aristotle's ontology, pulling it closer to his own.

If Heidegger is right in interpreting *ousia* as constant presence, then he succeeds in fulfilling this aim. While I do not think that Heidegger grossly misinterprets Aristotle, I want to argue that Heidegger jeopardizes his interpretation by going far beyond the Aristotelian text. In effect Heidegger exploits an ambiguity in the meaning of 'presence', equivocating between "already lying there underneath" and already-lying-there *for me*. This has the further effect of leading him to interpret *hupokeimenon* as a particular, actualized this (*tode ti*), where this already-there background comes to the fore and becomes substantiated. Thus Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle is interesting, but the degree to which he goes beyond the text, imputing a view to Aristotle that he is not patently justified in reading him as upholding, makes it improbable.

Meta-Aristotelianism and *Seinsvergessenheit*

Both "giants over being" assign priority to the question as to the *being* of a being: Heidegger characterizes his project of working out the meaning of being as such as *fundamental ontology*; Aristotle characterizes the science of being *qua* being as *first philosophy*. Although Heidegger aims to destroy the history of ontology, which has its inception with Greek philosophical thought, in *Being and Time*, he nonetheless thinks that Aristotle comes closest to raising the *Seinsfrage*.

Heidegger believes that the existential analytic of Dasein accounts for all modes of being phenomenally given to us. It accounts not only for the being of Aristotelian *ousia*, but it also accounts for the modes of being of entities whose being is not that of *ousia*, namely readiness-to-hand and being-in-the-world. Thus Heidegger's ontology incorporates and goes beyond Aristotle's ontology. Aristotle simply focuses on one kind of being. But this kind of being can only be grasped within and hence depends upon the horizon of Dasein's understanding of being. In critically engaging with Aristotle, then, Heidegger does not simply point out that which is

lacking in Aristotle's account of being; he rather wants to show that that which is lacking in Aristotle is *fundamental* to grasping both *ousia* and being *qua* being, namely Dasein's being. Moreover, the three modes of being of the existential analytic have different temporal characteristics, are determined in different ways by having-been (past), coming-towards-itself (future) and making-present (present). But these modes of being cannot be fully accounted for by Aristotle's concept of *ousia*, since this is only understood with respect to the present.

The three basic sorts of being (*Seinsarten*) discussed in *Being and Time* are existence (the being of Dasein), being-available (the being of equipment), and being-occurrent (the being of independent objects). For each of these three sorts of being, moreover, there is a corresponding mode of time: originary temporality, world-time, and ordinary time...Part of Heidegger's goal was to explain the fundamental unity of being in general. What binds Dasein's existence, the availability of equipment, and the occurrence of things together, so that they all count as modes of *being*? We may divide this question in two: what binds the three modes together, and in virtue of what does the whole complex count as being? ...the three modes of being are all fundamentally structured by modes of time and temporality.²⁶⁵

Heidegger claims that the present-day inauthentic, derivative understanding of being and its resultant, *Seinsvergessenheit*, "recalls the Greek conception of the essence of Being – a definiteness, then, which has not come to us from just anywhere but which has long ruled our historical Dasein."²⁶⁶ The concealed history of being has its origins in the Greek interpretation of being, in which the "sense of 'Being' stays within the sphere of presentness and presence (*Gegenwärtigkeit und Anwesenheit*), subsistence and substance (*Bestehen und Bestand*), staying and coming forth."²⁶⁷ Greek philosophy, as it were, "stamped" being so that it gets interpreted strictly in terms of presence-at-hand and with respect to the present.

Conclusion: Restoration, Renewal, and Reorientation

In his dual project of working out a fundamental ontology and destroying the history of ontology in *Being and Time*, Heidegger criticizes western philosophical thought, beginning with ancient ontology, for its incapacity to raise the *Seinsfrage*. The source of this incapacity, Heidegger thinks, is the obliteration of the ontological difference, which ultimately results in *Seinsvergessenheit*. Beings serve as the "unshaken departure for all the traditional metaphysical questioning about 'Being'" and hence ontological inquiry "does *not* begin with *Being* in the

²⁶⁵ *A Companion to Heidegger*, p. 323

²⁶⁶ Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 96

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

question worthiness of *its* openness.”²⁶⁸ Metaphysics concludes from the universality of being that being is an empty concept and as a result, “the emptiness of the concept of Being is filled, namely by beings.”²⁶⁹ Indeed being is the most universal concept, but “the ‘universality’ of ‘Being’ in regard to all beings does not imply that we should turn away to the particular; instead, it implies the opposite, that we should remain there, and raise the uniqueness of this name and its naming to the level of knowledge.”²⁷⁰

Heidegger anticipates the following reply:

But this talk of the ‘oblivion of Being’ is just as ambiguous as the expression ‘question of Being.’ One protests quite rightfully that metaphysics does indeed ask about the Being of beings, and that therefore it is manifest foolishness to charge metaphysics with an oblivion of Being.²⁷¹

Heidegger counters that although metaphysics asks about *beings* as such, it covers up the question of the meaning of being as such, since it fails to consider Dasein’s being, the only being in terms of which being can be investigated. To replace being with beings, to assert the slogan, “away from this empty word ‘Being’, towards the particular being!” is to skew the ontological problematic. In order that particular beings can be disclosed at all, *being as such* must have already been *pre-ontologically* understood: “For the much-invoked particular beings can *open themselves up as such* to us only if and when we already understand Being in advance in *its* essence.”²⁷²

Whilst Heidegger claims that the tendency pervasive throughout philosophy to define “entities as entities by tracing them back in their origin to some other entities, as if Being had the character of some possible entity,” is rooted in Greek philosophy, it is not immediately clear what ultimately drives this tendency and makes it so historically prevalent.²⁷³ In his article “The Appearance of Metaphysics” in *A Companion to Heidegger’s Introduction to Metaphysics*, Charles E. Scott offers a helpful explanation as to why there has been a tendency throughout the history of philosophy to characterize being as an entity of enduring presence:

And when no particular being prevails among the phenomena, traditional metaphysics is basically disturbed, since it composes ways of thinking in which people expect to find a grounding way of being that gives an enduring presence to originate, sustain, and connect all ways of life.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.: 90

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.: 85

²⁷¹ Ibid.: 20

²⁷² Ibid.: 90

²⁷³ *BT*, 2: 26

Traditional candidates for this kind of grounding include God, gods, nature, reason, universal order, and transcendental subjectivity.²⁷⁴

These “traditional theories and opinions about being” have “infiltrated” our understanding of being to the extent that they “remain hidden as sources of the way in which [being] is prevalently understood.”²⁷⁵ Thus, we are oblivious not only to an originary interpretation of being, but also to the fact that an originary interpretation of being has been *covered over* by historical meanings of being.

The question of how it stands with Being also proves to be the question of how it stands with our Dasein in history, of whether we *stand* in history or merely stagger. Seen metaphysically, *we are staggering*. Everywhere we are underway amid beings, and yet we no longer know how it stands with Being. We do not even know that we no longer know it. We are staggering even when we mutually assure ourselves that we are not staggering, even when, as in recent times, people go so far as to try to show that this asking about Being brings only confusion, that it has a destructive effect, that it is nihilism.²⁷⁶

What does Heidegger propose that we do in order to rectify our staggering in western history? For Heidegger, remedying *Seinsvergessenheit* amounts to “asking the question of Being in an originary way, in a way that grasps the task of unfolding the truth of the essence of *Being*,” that is to say, uncovering what metaphysics has concealed about being, and, in so doing, revealing the *truth of being*.²⁷⁷

*We ask the question – How does it stand with Being? What is the meaning of Being? – not in order to compose an ontology in the traditional style, much less to reckon up critically the mistakes of earlier attempts at ontology. We are concerned with something completely different. The point is to restore the historical Dasein of human beings– and this also always means our ownmost future Dasein, in the whole of the history that is allotted to us – back to the power of Being that is to be opened up originally; all this, to be sure, only within the limits of philosophy’s capability.*²⁷⁸

Heidegger’s aim in reformulating the question of being, shifting the focus from beings to being, is to *restore* Dasein’s ownmost potentiality-for-being: authenticity. In order for Dasein to be capable of anticipatory resoluteness and have an authentic relation to being, it must first uncover (*entdecken*) the originary ontological meaning of being that has been covered over by “traditional theories and opinions about being,” which Heidegger characterizes as derivative (*abkünftig*), average (*durchschnittlich*), and common-place (*geläufig*). Authentic, anticipatory, and resolute

²⁷⁴ Scott, *A Companion to Heidegger’s Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 21

²⁷⁵ *BT*, 2: 25

²⁷⁶ Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 217

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*: 73

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*: 44 – my italics

Dasein, then, must have a *disclosive* relationship to being. “Disclosedness means: the openedness of what the oblivion of Being closes off and conceals.”²⁷⁹

Heidegger characterizes the asking of the question of being as “the fate of the spiritual history of the West.”²⁸⁰ He claims that the understanding of being is necessary to humanity: “That we understand Being is not just actual; it is also necessary. Without such an opening up of Being, we could not be ‘human’ in the first place.”²⁸¹ Thus it matters for metaphysics, “as the name for the center and core that determines all philosophy,” to ask the question of being in an originary way.²⁸² The corrective cure lies in renewal:

Being must therefore be experienced anew, from the bottom up and in the full breadth of its possible essence, if we want to set our historical Dasein to work as historical. For those powers that stand against Being, the intricately interwoven divisions themselves, have long determined, dominated, and pervaded our Dasein and keep it in confusion regarding “Being”.²⁸³

How is the awakening of this new experience possible? Heidegger answers: “Yet here we should not talk about a start, but instead should *re-accomplish* it; for it *has* been accomplished in the necessity of the inception under which we stand.”²⁸⁴ Yet, it is precisely because “the entire Western tradition and conception of Being, and accordingly the fundamental relation to Being that is still dominant today, is summed up in title *Being and thinking*” that philosophy can not *think* this distinction between being and beings.²⁸⁵ But if this distinction can not be thought, then what is Heidegger’s alternative?

Heidegger is leading us into a question that is not primarily theoretical and that when he proposes to lead us into metaphysics – to introduce us to it – by means of a way of thinking that is not traditionally metaphysical, he is proposing a considerable transformation in the ways we connect in our prereflective alertness to the lives that we confront, as well as proposing a transformation of the ways in which we think philosophically...Such occurrences, in which beings come to light, that is, come to appear, are ones that people undergo but do not do, and Heidegger will give much attention to descriptions of language and thinking that are not grounded by the images and values of subjective formation. In this effort he would like to for metaphysical thinking to appear in its own movements and words but also to appear as much as possible in an eventful alertness that does not happen the way metaphysical thought happens. He wants to introduce us to metaphysics by way of its self-showing in thought that is not quite metaphysical. *And hence he wants to introduce us to attempt at nontraditional thinking.*²⁸⁶

²⁷⁹ Ibid.: 21

²⁸⁰ Ibid.: 91

²⁸¹ Ibid.: 88

²⁸² Ibid.: 19

²⁸³ Ibid.: 218

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.: 220

²⁸⁶ Scott, *A Companion to Heidegger’s Introduction to Metaphysics*, pp. 18-19

Thus for Heidegger, the overcoming of *Seinsvergessenheit* requires not only the *renewal* of the *Seinsfrage*, but also that the question is approached through a *reorientation* of our thinking and philosophical attitudes.

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