

Week Two Short Outline

- Intro 1: Circumstances of composition of *Being and Time*.
- Begin this week with an account of the circumstances of composition of *Being and Time*.

Habilitationsschrift on Duns Scotus is solid scholarship, but pedestrian philosophy. It was clearly written for the credential. For the proper Professorship in Freiburg (which Husserl put him up for—later rewarded by Heidegger with loss of library privileges as Emeritus Professor, on grounds of his being Jewish) he submitted Division One. They said it was not enough. So he wrote Division Two, and offered his plan for the whole work [Put this in Handout for Week 2]:

[O]ur 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.

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.

Note: Part Two and the third division of Part One have never appeared.

[§8, 39-40, MR64]

BB: But *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* [1929] corresponds to Division One of Part Two, and the *Basic Problems of Philosophy* (the *Grundprobleme*) was based on a lecture course he delivered at the University of Marburg in the summer semester of 1927, but it was published posthumously in 1975 as Volume 24 of his *Gesamtausgabe*.

- 105 volumes, over 50 years.

Bach: “Who works as hard will get as far.” Not so, but its converse (not contrapositive), “Who does not work as hard will not get as far,” is at least a fair heuristic.

This kind of writing is the form of thinking. In Heidegger’s terms, it is authentic, not the lazy falling-in with *das Man* and resaying what they say.

- Remarks on the Dreyfus and Haugeland commentaries:

Dreyfus has the base reading—the one that started this whole tradition. It only goes one move deep, but it gets those right.

Haugeland builds on the Dreyfus reading, and is more penetrating. But he only gets so far through Division One—not to the best stuff, IMHO.

- Intro 2:

Q: How is Being/beings different from Tao/ten-thousand-things?

A: It is more determinate:

- i) Three kinds of Being, and an intricate story about their relations, and
- ii) Detailed reading of philosophical tradition in terms of “metaphysics of presence” (logocentrism), privileging *one* of those kinds.

I. Being and Dasein: *Implicit* Ontological Consciousness.

- Discuss **passages** from Sections 2-4.
- Intimate relations between Being and Dasein.

There are dependencies in both directions, which do not hold for any other kind of Being.

Dasein is the kind of Being for which Being (and its own Being) are an issue.

Being is only intelligible as something that *can* be something *for* Dasein.

Being depends on Dasein in a way that beings do not.

- Dasein is *implicitly* ontologically self-conscious. Heidegger’s ontology is *explicitly* ontologically self-conscious.
- What does it mean to be *implicitly* aware of the ontological distinction, and more specifically then, of one’s *own kind* of Being? I’ll address the first question first.
- Compare with relation of categories to ground-level OED concepts.

Q: **How to parse Kant’s claim of a *priority***? A:

- i) **Grasp of a *concept* is always mastery of the use of a *word*.**
- ii) One knows how to do everything one needs to know how to do to acquire the concept, needing only the addition of the word to get the concept. Example: conditionals, codifying inferences.

- So, what are those abilities? Conjecture: **ontological disclosure is in this sense *implicit in ontic discovery***. What one needs to know how to do is *use* ground-level concepts, or do what one does to access beings exhibiting the other kinds of Being. The use of those concepts, which make beings of various kinds accessible, is what the grasp of Being consists in. But of course, for kinds of Being other than *Vorhandensein*, it is not *concepts* that are being used. But *whatever* Dasein does to *discover* equipment and other cases of Dasein counts as implicitly *disclosing* their Being. Being able to *engage with* beings with those different kinds of Being *is* the capacity one needs in order to disclose their Being.

II. Heidegger's Challenge: *Explicit* Ontological Consciousness

- The diagnosis-criticism of the tradition from **Plato to Nietzsche** (why them? Being and Becoming. Nietzsche's *eternal recurrence* as the last possible defense of Being-as-presence against Becoming) as working out the 'metaphysics of presence' is privileging the *sayable*, the *rationaly articulable*, *logos*, as determining what it *means* to be. The view is that what is can be said of it, and that what cannot in principle be said *is* not. Cf. Clifford Geertz on "language as a symbol system in which everything can be said."
- MH's view, seeing further kinds of Being besides that defined by the *logos*, by the possibility of *saying* (so, in Heidegger's post-linguistic-turn view, thinking) is *not irrationalist*. It merely sets determinate bounds to what is sayable-thinkable, acknowledging (two) fundamental kinds of Being of beings that do *not* have the structure of sayability. That structure is the structure of *facts* (stated by declarative sentences), about the *properties* and *relations* of *particular objects* (expressed by predicates), and governed by *laws* (expressed by modally qualified, quantified conditionals). But the view is that **there is more to Being than what exhibits that structure**.
- *Explicit* ontology, ontology of the sort Heidegger is practicing and teaching us, consists of explicit *claims*, expressed by declarative *sentences*—in particular, the sentences of the text of *Being and Time*. Heidegger must use such sentences to *tell us* what the other kinds of Being are, in addition to that of 'presence', in the sense of *sayability*. That is, the task of an ontology that is *not* restricted to "the metaphysics of presence," is obliged to *say the unsayable*, to use declarative sentences to express what is not *in principle* expressible by such sentences, to do something other than *state facts*, but to express the *other* kinds of Being, the kinds that precisely *cannot* be expressed discursively or conceptually. These are *Zuhandensein* and *Dasein*.
So the question for Heidegger is: How does he propose to get around **the apparent impossibility in principle, of saying what cannot be said?**
- It seems that even though Heidegger's project is not *irrationalist*, it might be *obscurantist*: to conclude that there are some things we just cannot, in principle understand explicitly, and ontology is one of them.
Perhaps the only response is the kind of *mysticism* that Hegel described as "wanting to substitute for *thought* **a mist of warm incense and the distant jangling of bells.**"
Or perhaps one must revert—as the later Heidegger might well have concluded—to *poetic* uses of language, rather than *fact-stating* ones.
Or perhaps there are *other* uses of language, besides fact-stating, but not just literary ones, that can be called on here?

III. Some Comparisons, and a Sellarsian Idea for a Response

- *Tractatus*: what sayings and sayables, picturing facts and pictured facts, have in common (a “method of projection”) cannot itself be said or pictured. It can only be *shown*.

But *what* is shown, and how do we understand our uptake of it, our grasp on what is shown?

Ramsey: “If you can’t say it, you can’t whistle it, either.”

Vienna Circle breathed a sigh of relief when Tarski’s theory of truth (and later, model theory) seemed to show the *Tractatus* was wrong on this crucial point.

Later **Wittgenstein**:

“A nothing is as good as a something about which nothing can be said.”

And from the *Tractatus*: **“The limits of my language are the limits of my world.”**

All these are expressions of commitment to the metaphysics of presence.

But what alternatives are there that are *sayable*—not like Springsteen’s

“Poets down here don’t say nothing at all, they just stand back and let it all be.”

- Sellars: Uses of language can *convey* more than they *state*. In *saying that* things are thus-and-so, I also *convey* that I believe it. Example.
- Diagnosis: What is conveyed is a matter of what I am *doing* rather than what I am *saying*. It is a matter of *use* rather than *meaning*.
- We can make this definite by looking at two kinds of *inferences* we can make from someone making a claim: inferences from the *content* of their claim (semantic) and inferences from *their making* of the claim—what they *did*, rather than what they *said* (pragmatic). This is a matter of Fregean *force* rather than *content*.
- We can distinguish them by embedding claims as the antecedents of conditionals.
- On this account, the ontology consists in looking at what *Heidegger* is *doing* in saying what he says in *Being and Time*. This is a specific sense of what he *shows* by saying what he says, rather than the *conceptual content* expressed. We are to use a pragmatic metavocabulary to specify what *Heidegger* is *doing* in doing ontology.
- I think this line offers valuable clues, but is not right as it stands. It is not what *Heidegger* is doing that matters for ontology; it is what *Dasein* is doing in accessing or engaging with things that do not have *sayable* kinds of Being.

IV. A Better Response: A Pragmatic Metavocabulary (for specifying kinds of Being by means of Dasein’s practical mode of access to them: a version of the Platonic Principle).

- The distinction between specifying the *conceptual content* of a claim (in a *semantic* metavocabulary) and specifying *what one is doing* in making a claim (in a *pragmatic* metavocabulary) is indeed the key. But the prior suggestion—that we look at what

Heidegger is doing in making ontological claims—is not, I think, the best way to respond to the challenge of ontologists having to say what is unsayable.

- Rather, we can add **Huw Price’s distinction between *object* naturalism and *subject* naturalism.**

Here we look at a *particular* vocabulary and what can be said in *it*, rather than at vocabularies *in general* and what can be said in *them*. The challenge is that one cannot say in the language of natural science what *numbers* are (for instance). Where are they to be found in the spatiotemporal continuum? What forces do they exert? Are they massless? Naturalistic vocabulary does not seem to be able to find room for these entities, numbers, in what it can describe and explain. This is the *placement* problem (Frank Jackson) for a naturalistic metaphysics and semantics. Price points out that this is what he calls “*object* naturalism”: using naturalistic vocabulary to specify what one is *talking about* in using number talk.

But Wittgenstein points out that this predicament should not make us boggle at **number talk**, so long as we *can* specify in naturalistic terms what we need to *do* in order to talk *about* numbers, that is to engage in number talk. If it is not mysterious how children can learn how to count, that is, to use *numerals* (expressions) in that way, and then how they can learn to *add* and *multiply* and do arithmetic with those symbols, then *subject* naturalists should be OK with number talk. Subject naturalists offer accounts of these *discursive practices* that are *talking about numbers*, in a naturalistic *pragmatic* metavocabulary, rather than a representational *semantic-metaphysical* metavocabulary. And here it doesn’t matter that the constraint on vocabularies was to *naturalistic scientific* ones. We could put in *any* restriction on the privileged vocabulary we care about.

I think this move of Price’s (and his way of understanding Wittgenstein) gives us the clue to Heidegger’s strategy. We can find out about what is ready-to-hand or available (*zuhanden*) by looking at the practices that constitute our (Dasein’s) *mode of access* to beings with this sort of Being. We can look at what (cases of) Dasein must *do* in order to count thereby as *making use of* equipment ready-to-hand. **Even though we cannot say what is ready-to-hand (if we try, we just specify something present-at-hand in the vicinity), we can understand readiness-to-hand by understanding our access to it**, in the way we can understand number talk (and so numbers) by naturalistically describing how we learn to count, add, and do arithmetic *with* numbers. And what goes for the ready-to-hand goes also for Dasein’s Being, which is also not presence. This is ***subject logocentrism***: using fact-stating vocabulary to describe what we need to *do* to have access to things that are *not* accessible by fact-stating discourse, but only by skillful practical engagement with them. **It is VP-sufficiency.**

From this point of view, **Heidegger’s version of the Platonic Principle**, the *engagement-dependence* of fundamental ontological kinds, is the only available strategy for expanding fundamental ontology beyond the metaphysics of presence without having to say what cannot in principle be said (there are no *facts* about the ready-to-hand as such, or about *Dasein* as such). **He is going to describe and explain to us (using declarative sentences) how we engage with what is not present-at-hand, what cannot itself be stated**, whether that is the worldly totality

of *equipment* or *Dasein* itself. He will explain how beings with these other sorts of Being *show up for us as something*. That he can do (albeit with some difficulty) in the language of declarative sentences (so, fact-stating). Though *sentences* are ready-to-hand equipment, *sentential sign designs* are present-at-hand, and there are *facts* about how we *use* them. Though the *metaphysics* of the ready-to-hand cannot be specified with declarative sentences, and so the *semantics* that appeals to that metaphysics (Here think of how Fine's modal-mereological *metaphysics* and his *semantics* of propositions relate to one another) cannot either, it does *not* follow that the *pragmatics* of *using* equipment (including using sentential sign-designs to express sentences) cannot be described and explained as something present-at-hand. At least, it has such an aspect, for language use *is* describable and explicable as events in space and time.

- We should think of Heidegger as telling us, (saying) what it is that *Dasein* needs to do in order to access or engage with each of the three kinds of Being. If we understand *that*, then since we *are* *Dasein*, we can understand what is involved in getting access (remember this is in general not yet differentiated into the two “directions of fit” that distinguish cognitive from practical access or engagement) to all three kinds of Being. Heidegger can then appeal (he does not, I am reconstructing his methodology) to the Platonic Principle to explain how this gives us access to the different kinds of Being.
- Such an approach is a generalization of *BSD*'s notion of VP-sufficiency—in the context of the PV-sufficiency of the specified practices for, now in general, not deploying another *conceptual* vocabulary, but doing whatever it is that makes beings of that kind of Being accessible: manipulating them for *Zuhandensein*, and recognizing them (*Mitsein*) for *Dasein*.

V. Phenomenology

- There are two different methodological strategies for understanding the relations between appearance and reality: **prescriptive-foundational** and **phenomenological**.
 - i) Reality→Appearance.
 Prescriptive-foundational: Think of the project of analytic philosophy as I describe it in Chapter One of *Between Saying and Doing*. One has a *base* vocabulary, that one takes to be unproblematic, specifying what one accepts (as real), and a *target* vocabulary, that is somehow problematic (the appearances). And one's ontological job is to *reconstruct* the target vocabulary in the terms of the base vocabulary. Base might be epistemologically or ontologically privileged. For analytic philosophy, base vocabularies were phenomenal, secondary quality vocabulary, or observational, on the epistemological side, and fundamental physics, special sciences, or just OED.
 - ii) Appearance→Reality.

Phenomenological: **Start where one is**, with the problematic appearances, and work one's way out to what then shows up as the *reality* underlying that *appearance*.

Three principal versions of this:

- Hegel: begins with current commitments.
- Husserl: begins with ordinary perceptual experience, proceeds by bracketing commitments.
- Heidegger: begins with average, everyday Dasein.