Chapter 4: Heidegger's Failure

So far, we have done our best to explicate Heidegger's attempts at formulating the question of Being. Even though at times we have ventured beyond Heidegger's explicit claims about the question, what we have said has emerged out of those explicit remarks, as a reading of what is implicit within them. However, it was claimed in the introduction that, despite his (mostly) rigorous approach to the question, Heidegger failed to ever give a satisfactory *formulation* of it, let alone a satisfactory *answer* to it. In order to show this we must demonstrate that Heidegger identifies important *methodological constraints* upon the formulation of the question that his own attempts to formulate it fail to meet. However, this task is complicated by the shift in focus in Heidegger's work that we identified at the end of the last chapter. As we showed there, there are significant changes in both Heidegger's account of what the question aims at (his differentiation of the *guiding* and *grounding* questions) and in his account of the way in which it is to be approached (his de-prioritisation of the existential analytic). What is most problematic about this is that, although he abandons most of the methodological insights of his early work, he does not replace them with anything comparable. It is thus very difficult to determine precisely what standards his later account of the question should be assessed in accordance with.

To account for this difficulty, we will approach things in a slightly unusual order. We will begin by providing a summary of the historical themes motivating Heidegger's original attempt to formulate the question and the methodological constraints governing it. We will then address the ways in which his later formulation of the question abandons or modifies these, and identify the problems this causes for his project. We will then turn back to Heidegger's original formulation, and assess it in accordance with the criteria we've identified. We will present this in the form of a series of problems for the original formulation, each of which will reveal an additional constraint upon any adequate formulation of the question.

1. The Original Formulation

Over the course of the first two chapters, we located three distinct historical themes that Heidegger unites in his original formulation of the question:-

1) The Kantian Theme: This is the project of describing the conditions of intelligibility. This is something that he inherits from Kant by way of Husserl, who articulates the project as describing the structure of givenness, rather than the conditions of the possibility of

experience.[1] The confluence of this theme and the inquiry into Being is signalled by Heidegger's identification of phenomenology and ontology at the beginning of *Being and Time.* However, as we showed at the end of the second chapter, this claim is only really justified by the complete formulation of the question, which does not appear within the book itself.

2) The Husserlian Theme: This is found in the project of grounding the *regional ontology* of the various discourses about beings (including both the natural sciences and the *Geisteswissenschaften*) in a *fundamental ontology*, by unifying the various *modes* of Being (e.g., occurrence, availability, existence, subsistence, life, etc.) in a concept of Being as such. The concern with providing a unifying ground for the various domains of knowledge is inherited from Heidegger's neo-Kantian fore bearers (such as Rickert and Lask) and Dilthey, but the reformulation of this concern as an ontological problem is due to Husserl, from whom Heidegger took the concept of regional ontology.
3) The Aristotelian Theme: This is the project of unifying the different senses in which Being is said (for Aristotle: potential and actual Being, the Being of the categories, accidental Being, and Being-true). The notion of a 'sense' of Being can be extended to include *modes* of Being (connecting the Aristotelian and Husserlian themes), but must at minimum include what we have called *aspects* of Being (e.g., what-being, that-being, being-so, being-true, etc.). Unifying these senses is explicitly not a matter of reducing them all to one primary sense, or of finding a single genus of which they are species, but rather of uncovering the underlying structure through which they are unified. It is this theme that unites the others. As we saw at the end of the second chapter, it is the fact that this theme secures the sense of 'ontology' that allows Heidegger's identification of phenomenology and ontology to be genuinely informative, rather than mere definition.

We also uncovered three important facts about the question of Being, which place methodological constraints upon its formulation:-

1) The Priority of Questioning: This is the fact that the question cannot be properly formulated without a proper understanding of questioning itself, or without first asking the question of the structure of questioning. Although Heidegger made some preliminary remarks about the structure of questioning, his proper inquiry into questioning is coextensive with the

1 This distinction is important insofar as, as we showed in chapter 1, Heidegger's account of givenness in terms of *understanding* has more in common with Husserl's account of *intuition* than it does with Kant's account of experience as *judgment*.

existential analytic of Dasein as the inquiry into the Being of the inquirer.

2) The Necessity of Pre-Ontological Understanding: This is the fact, derived from Heidegger's preliminary account of questioning, that, as with any question, there must be some prior understanding of the object of the question of Being, in order to ask the question. This is to say that we must possess some *pre-ontological understanding* of Being in order to ask the question. It is the fact that Dasein has such pre-ontological understanding which makes the existential analytic of its particular kind of Being the beginning of the inquiry into Being as such.
3) The Significance of Meaning: This is the fact that the question of Being must be the question of the *meaning* of Being, in virtue of the *hermeneutically circular* structure of the inquiry into Being. This fact determines the inquiry into Being as a hermeneutic process of *developing* our pre-ontological understanding of Being into an explicit concept of Being itself. The implication of this is that the inquiry into Being proceeds in two stages: the explication of the structure of our pre-ontological understanding, as carried out by the existential analytic, followed by the hermeneutic elaboration of this understanding into a genuine concept of Being, projected to be carried out in the unpublished Division III of Part One of *Being and Time*. However, as we demonstrated at the end of the second chapter, Heidegger ultimately argues for a continuity between these two stages. The first stage reveals that time is the horizon on the basis of which the second stage can be carried out, and this gives way to a deeper explication of the structure of our pre-ontological understanding insofar as this consists in our projection of a temporally structured horizon within which entities appear (primordial time).[2]

In addition to these constraints there is a fourth that we have not yet discussed: *ontological neutrality*. This will require some explaining.

As we noted in the first chapter, Heidegger holds that every question always involves *that which is to be found out* in asking it. This is to say that every question leaves something indeterminate about its object, which is to be determined by the answer. However, he also holds that we must have some *prior understanding* of the object in order to ask the question. This is to say that we must not leave the object of the question entirely indeterminate, lest the question be about nothing in particular at all. Now, of course, this is not to say that in asking a question our prior

2 As noted in chapter 2 (fn. 68), this is does not lead to contradiction. There is nothing that prevents the hermeneutic process of elaborating our pre-ontological understanding from being entirely a matter of explication, as long as this fact is demonstrated in the initial explication itself. Indeed, the move to a further level of explication is indicative of the hermeneutic circle structuring the inquiry.

understanding remains *fixed*, or that it cannot be forced to change in the process of questioning itself. As we showed in the second chapter, the significance of Heidegger's hermeneutic conception of understanding is that it allows questioning to be more than simply an *additive* matter, but to involve a genuine progressive *revision* of our understanding of what is questioned. Nonetheless, it is important to note that, even in inquiries that have such a hermeneutic structure, there must be something left indeterminate, the inquiry into which motivates this process of progressive revision.

As we showed in the second chapter, the question of Being is just such a hermeneutic inquiry. There are three distinct hermeneutic circles involved in it. We will present these in terms of their priority:-

1) The Primary Circle: This is the circle indicated by the discussion of *the significance of meaning* above. It names the fact that inquiring into 'what Being is' must proceed within some understanding of the 'is' that may be revised in the course of the inquiry itself, in virtue of the fact that the sense of the 'is' is precisely what is to be determined by the inquiry. This is the most fundamental of the circles, in that it arises from the very basic structure of the question itself.
2) The Secondary Circle: This is the circle between the existential analytic of Dasein and the inquiry into Being itself. It names the fact that the inquiry into Being *as such* must proceed via an inquiry into a particular *mode* of Being, and that the understanding of that mode of Being may be revised in relation to the understanding of Being as such that develops out of it. This is less fundamental than the last circle, insofar as it arises from Heidegger's claim that the inquiry into Being must proceed via an existential analytic of Dasein.
3) The Tertiary Circle: This is the circle within the existential analytic itself. It consists in the unitary character of Dasein as Being-in-the-world, and the fact that the understanding of any given existential structure within the unitary whole may be revised in relation to those existential structures that are understood on its basis. This is the least fundamental circle insofar as it does not extend outside of the existential analytic at all.

Because of its restricted character, we will not concern ourselves with the tertiary circle, but only with the primary and secondary circles.

As noted above, the question of Being is to be approached in two stages, first by explicating our pre-ontological understanding of Being, and then by developing it into a genuine concept of Being. The primary and secondary circles respectively indicate that, on the one hand, our very understanding of what the question aims at (*that which is to be found out*) is subject to revision in

the course of the inquiry itself, and that, on the other hand, the explication of our pre-ontological understanding from which we proceed (the *prior understanding* of the object) is also subject to revision on the basis of what is uncovered in the inquiry. Neither of these facts are problematic in themselves. However, the question that concerns us is whether Heidegger has made any illegitimate *ontological assumptions*, i.e., assumptions about *that which is to be found out* in asking the question, namely, Being. At the beginning of *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger states: "It is therefore precluded from the start that phenomenology [the proper method of ontology] should pronounce any theses about [B]eing which have specific content, thus adopting a so-called standpoint."[3] Heidegger thus agrees that any approach which started with such assumptions would be insufficiently rigorous.

Now, it might be possible to maintain that it is necessary to make some ontological assumptions in order to begin the inquiry at all, such as part of a preliminary explication of our pre-ontological understanding, because these assumptions can be subsequently revised in the process of the inquiry. However, if these assumptions play a role in setting up the very structure of this projected inquiry, then they cannot thereby be subject to such revision. Such assumptions could not be treated as provisional, but would instead be constitutive for Heidegger's whole approach, in virtue of establishing its very hermeneutic structure. If Heidegger has made such ontological assumptions in setting up the structure of the inquiry, then we can state categorically that his formulation of the question is not ontologically neutral. Later on we will endeavour to show that Heidegger has indeed made such ontological assumptions, and thus that his formulation is insufficiently rigorous.

2. The Later Formulation and its Problems

Now that we've summarised the historical themes and methodological constraints that structure Heidegger's original formulation of the question of Being, we're in a position to articulate the ways in which his later formulation of the question modifies these, and the problems this generates. However, before we discuss specific modifications it is helpful to frame our discussion by briefly considering the motivation underlying the shift between formulations. There are of course numerous philosophical and biographical factors that we could address here, but there is one that is worth special mention. This is the fact that Heidegger's original project failed to deliver what it promised. This is not a claim about flaws within the framework of the project, but a claim about Heidegger's ability to produce something resembling the results he aimed for within that

3 *BPP*, p. 20.

framework. For all his discussions of the ontological problems that his project was aimed at solving (e.g., the better part of *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*), he failed to produce many enlightening solutions. He failed to draw any novel conclusions from his preliminary analyses of the aspects of Being corresponding to the senses of the copula, and he never managed to extend his analysis of modes of Being and their relations beyond the categories of existence, availability, and occurrence in a way that isn't noticeably *ad hoc*.[4] This lack of progress, of which the failure to complete *Being and Time* is emblematic, undoubtedly played an important role in Heidegger's reformulation of the question in the 1930's. The important question is whether it plays an implicit role in *justifying* it. If this is the case, then it is a serious problem for the viability of Heidegger's later project.

It is thus legitimate to ask what grounds Heidegger has for claiming that metaphysics is impossible other than the failure of his own (reoriented) metaphysical project. Obviously, his original objections (e.g, ignorance of the ontological difference) against the metaphysical tradition still hold, but his own metaphysical project was constructed to avoid these criticisms, and there could be others similarly constructed. He thus needs a stronger argument against the possibility of such metaphysical projects. Heidegger does not *explicitly* present us with any such argument, but it is possible to reconstruct something like an argument for the impossibility of metaphysics *implicit* within his work. It goes as follows:-

1) According to Heidegger's account of truth, reality *in itself* (earth) will always exceed our *understanding* of it (world), such that we can always be forced to revise this understanding. The only features of our understanding not subject to such revision are *invariant* features of the process through which we establish and revise it (truth). If a feature of our understanding of the world has been subject to revision at some time, then it is not invariant.
2) According to Heidegger's account of the history of metaphysics, the different accounts of *beingness* presented by the metaphysical tradition have supplied numerous different ways of dividing up and then unifying the aspects and modes of Being. Our understanding of beingness and our understanding of Being have thus been revised throughout the history of the tradition.
3) Consequently, there cannot be a historically invariant account of beingness (the essence of beings), nor a historically invariant account of Being (the unifying structure of aspects and

4 The most famous such attempt is the analysis of life and its different forms in *FCM* (Part II, ch. 1-5), mentioned briefly in chapter 3. The claim that this analysis is *ad hoc* amounts to the claim that Heidegger fails to derive it from the (temporal) structure of the world as it is projected by Dasein. This is controversial, and there is no space to debate the issue here. However, we can point to a related problem that Heidegger sets for himself that he clearly makes no progress on: understanding the status of *subsistent* entities (e.g., mathematical objects and other 'supra-temporal' entities) in terms of his account of primordial time (*B&T*, pp. 39-40).

modes) more generally. This makes both the traditional metaphysical project (which attempts to think Being *as* beingness) and Heidegger's reoriented metaphysical project (which attempts to think Being *without* beingness) impossible.

We can see that it is this implicit argument which underlies Heidegger's later identification of Being (*Sein*) and beingness (*Seiendheit*), as the single topic of the guiding question. Where once he saw a difference between the two concepts great enough to support a new direction for metaphysics, now he sees none.

There are a number of serious problems with this argument. First, it fails to take account of the difference between revisions in our account of beingness that simply *happen* and those that reality *forces* upon us. The constitutive excess invoked in the first premise implies that there will always be points at which we *should* revise our picture of the world, not merely that there will always be points at which we *may* do so.[5] Second, it fails to take account of the possibility that our *explicit* accounts of beingness/Being might contradict the *implicit* structure of our understanding of the world. For instance, that there is a logical structure *constraining* our use of the copula 'is' (e.g., predication, identity, existential commitment, etc.) does not imply that we cannot *misunderstand* this structure.[6] Taken together, these show that the simple *fact* of historical variation in our understanding of something is not enough to demonstrate that it does not correspond to some historical invariant. This means that even if Heidegger's history of the actual historical progression of the metaphysical tradition is correct (which is questionable[7]), it is not enough to support the inference from the first premise to the conclusion.

Furthermore, not only is the argument based on his account of truth (and thus upon some modified version of the results of the existential analytic), but the idea that only historically invariant features of truth (the process through which the world is projected and revised) could provide answers to the questions of metaphysics is based upon the argument for the identity of Being and intelligibility that forms the centrepiece of his original interpretation (which is itself dependent upon the results of the existential analytic). What this indicates is that Heidegger's abandonment of metaphysics is based upon a conjunction of his earlier theoretical results and an

5 Some might object to the choice of the *deontic* formulation of this claim, as opposed to the *alethic* formulation: 'there will always be points at which we *must* (or *will*) revise our picture of the world, not merely that there will always be points at which we *can* (or *might*)'. I think this is justified given the way that Heidegger's later account of truth grows out of his concern with undertaking *responsibility* to speak the truth of beings as the condition of the possibility of truth.

6 This is because the constraint is *normative* rather than *causal*. This connects up with the point made in fn 6, insofar as these correspond to *deontic* and *alethic* modals, respectively.

7 Cf. Bernd Magnus, 'Heidegger's Metahistory of Philosophy Revisited', in *Heidegger Reexamined Vol 2: Truth, Realism, and the History of Being*, ed. Dreyfus and Wrathall, (2002), pp. 139-160.

implicit *inductive* inference from the failure of his original project. It is thus not possible to motivate his later project of grounding metaphysics in the structure of Ereignis by appeal to an analysis of metaphysics that is independent of the theoretical framework in which he articulates the notion of Ereignis.

Heidegger's later work is notorious for being self-contained. It is often very difficult to translate either its substantive concerns or its positive theses into terms that can be independently assessed. The above analysis demonstrates that this reputation for self-containment is warranted to some extent, and it is in this respect that it does a good job of framing our discussion of the ways the later work modifies the motivating themes and methodological constraints of the original project. This should become clear if we examine the most significant modification: the division of the historical themes united in Heidegger's original project between the guiding and the grounding questions. On the one hand, the Aristotelian and Husserlian themes, concerned as they are with developing a unified and *ahistorical* account of the various aspects and modes of Being, are taken over by the guiding question. On the other hand, as we saw at the end of the last chapter, the Kantian theme is retained and *radicalised* under the guise of the grounding question. This has the effect of disconnecting Heidegger's project from the dialog it maintained with the metaphysical tradition in its earlier form. This is not to say that Heidegger ceases to be concerned with the tradition, as this is manifestly not the case. His later work is, if anything, even more steeped in analyses of the historical development of the metaphysical tradition. Rather, what this means is that Heidegger abandons the attempt to formulate his project in terms that the metaphysical tradition would find either familiar or acceptable. He is no longer *arguing* with metaphysics from within its own framework, in order to *reorient* it, but *commenting* upon it from within his own framework, so as to *overcome* it. The problem that this creates is that the framework within which he comments upon metaphysics must be *justified* in some other way. We will now see that this problem is exacerbated by the ways in which the later work modifies the methodological constraints of the original project.

Beginning with *the priority of questioning*, Heidegger does not abandon the requirement that the question of Being must be formulated before it can be asked. This is clear given the sheer amount of writing Heidegger devotes to thinking through the conditions under which anything like a proper thinking of Ereignis could take place (e.g., inceptual thinking, Being-historical-thinking, mindfulness, thinking *simpliciter*, waiting, etc.).[8] However, as we pointed out at the end of the last chapter, the way in which Heidegger approaches the task of formulation changes quite drastically. The initial account of questioning provided at the beginning of *Being and Time* is abandoned (or at

8 Cf. *BQP*, ch. 5; *CP*, Parts I, IV and V; *M*, Parts II, III, XXVII, XXVIII; *WCT*; *DT.*

least no longer appealed to). A consequence of this is that, insofar as the question of Being is still understood as a special case of questioning, it is now understood in terms of the way it invokes a fundamental mood that is a special case of the moods involved in questioning.[9] Moreover, the question is also understood in terms of the relation between Dasein and Ereignis, as a special case of this relation.[10] This means that the formulation of the question is doubly dependent upon the results of the existential analytic of Dasein, insofar as it requires both a *complete* account of mood and questioning and a *preliminary* account of Ereignis, each of which is derived from its results (or some modified version thereof).[11]

Another consequence of this is that *the necessity of pre-ontological understanding* is abandoned. This is not to say that Heidegger gets rid of the basic structural feature of Dasein that constitutes its pre-ontological understanding (i.e., its projection of a world), but rather that this is no longer treated as something which is to be developed (or explicated) into a concept of Ereignis. What this means is that the prior understanding of the object that fixes what the question is about isn't provided by a *pre-theoretical* structural feature of Dasein, but by the *theoretical*, if preliminary, account of the nature of Ereignis alluded to above. As was also pointed out in the last chapter, this account of Ereignis is dependent upon Heidegger's revised account of truth and thus is also dependent upon the results of the existential analytic (as suitably modified).

The move from the *meaning* to the *truth* of Being also modifies *the significance of meaning*. The fact that the question is no longer concerned with the unity of the senses of 'Being', but rather with that which underlies the various ways they are articulated in the history of Being, means that the question is no longer reflexive in the same way as 'What *is* Being?'. However, this does not eliminate the hermeneutic circle that the significance of meaning signals, because this historical variability of the sense of the copula poses a problem for how it is to be understood in the question

9 As we showed in chapter 3 (part 3), this is precisely how the analysis of the question of Being works in *OET*, where it is viewed as a limit-case of letting-be. Letting-be provides the condition under which Dasein can undertake a responsibility to speak the truth about something, and thus the condition under which it can genuinely take up a question.

10 We saw an example of this in chapter 3 (part 3) – the turning into the mystery out of errancy – wherein the question was delineated as a special possibility of the relation Dasein stands in to the mystery (earth), which later develops into Dasein's involvement in (or *appropriation* by) Ereignis. This was also described in relation to the notion of the forgetting of the mystery (the concealing of concealing), which corresponds to what Heidegger later calls the *withdrawal* of Being (read as Beyng or Ereignis), it's *self-concealing*, or *hesitant refusal* (cf., *BQP*, pp. 177-179; *CP*, Part V, section *e*). The relation between inquiring into Ereignis and the withdrawal of Ereignis is a theme that repeats itself in different ways in the later work, insofar as Heidegger takes it that the very fact of its withdrawal is what makes inquiry into it possible. This is why its self-concealing is described as *vacillating*, and its self-refusal is described as *hesitant* (BQP, pp 178-179) – it gives itself in refusing itself. Another formulation of this theme, articulated in the opposite direction, is Heidegger's claim that "*Most thought-provoking is that we are not yet thinking*" (*WCT*, p. 4).

11 The modifications to the account of mood in *B&T* necessary to make this analysis of the question work were explained chapter 3 (part 3), along with the modifications to the account of truth required to derive the preliminary account of Ereignis (presented in part 4).

'What is Ereignis?' and claims of the form 'Ereignis is...'. In *Contributions*, Heidegger employs a number of linguistic devices in order to indicate this problem, most famously using various forms of the words '*Wesen*' and '*Wesung*' (e.g., '*das Seyn west*', '*Wesung des Seyns*', etc.) to talk about Ereignis.[12] These devices are related to the 'It gives...' ('*Es gibt*...') constructions through which Heidegger makes sense of the fact that Being is not itself *a* being and time is not itself *in* time. The phrase 'It gives Being' bypasses the reflexivity of constructions like 'Being *is*...', but only insofar as it shifts the problem onto the interpretation of Ereignis as that which corresponds to the 'It'. The linguistic devices discussed above are ways of indicating the problem with attempting constructions such as 'It gives Ereignis', namely, that we have to understand how 'It' could *give itself*. The question of the truth of Being is thus equally reflexive, and the corresponding inquiry equally hermeneutically circular.

However, there is a good sense in which this circularity is not *progressive* but *degenerate*.[13] This is because the goal that the inquiry is directed at, which provides it with its circular structure, comes to be seen not as the production of a theoretical account of Ereignis (hermeneutically developed out of the preliminary account), but as a more fundamental kind of transformation. It becomes less a matter of *understanding* how Ereignis gives itself than it is of *engendering* the conditions under which it gives itself. This amounts to establishing a new relation between Dasein and Ereignis, which Heidegger describes as *crossing* out of the history of metaphysics (begun by the first beginning) and over into a new history (the other beginning).[14] All of this seems to indicate a new self-consciousness of the way in which we are perpetually constructing the horizon of intelligibility, through which things appear to us, in a struggle with reality itself. However, it is hard to piece together what precisely Heidegger thinks the consequences of this would be.[15] Instead, Heidegger focuses on the question itself, which he increasingly describes as a special kind of *practical stance* that must be undertaken (be it in more active terms as a kind of fundamental

12 There are many issues regarding the proper translation of these words and the phrases they're found in (*CP*, pp. xxiv-xxvii). I have chosen to avoid translating them at all, as I take it their essential point is simply to contrast with ordinary ways of talking about entities and thereby to indicate the problem at issue.

13 This degeneracy is not equivalent to *viciousness*, because it is still not a matter of circular *justification*. Rather, as we'll see, its degeneracy largely consists in the fact that the aim of producing a theoretical account of the topic that is subject to justification seems to have been abandoned.

14 Cf. *BQP*, ch. 5; *CP*, §85-94; *M*, §24, §133. This theme is developed further in Heidegger's accounts of nihilism (Cf. *OQB*) and the essence of technology (Cf. *ECT*), which analyse our current place within the history of the first beginning and the dangers it poses. These essentially articulate Heidegger's case for the necessity of engaging with the truth of Being (Ereignis) and crossing over into a new history.

15 This may of course simply be the point at which the self-containment of Heidegger's work discussed above gets the better of me, in which case it is a problem of understanding on my part (enabled by a problem of expression on Heidegger's). However, it is worth saying that I have yet to encounter anything resembling a concrete reconstruction of this aspect of Heidegger's thought that is anything other than disguised negative theology, eschatology, or both. This means that, while there is more to Heidegger's later work than accusations of mysticism suggest, they nonetheless harbour a substantial kernel of truth.

decision, or more passive terms as a kind of *waiting*)[16]. This goes hand in hand with the increasing importance of mood, as the modulation or cultivation of the appropriate moods are the conditions under which this stance can be adopted.[17]

The problem with this whole approach to the question is that it strips it of any of the features that might identify it *as a question*. If it does not seek an *answer*, then any features this practical stance shares with a genuine *inquiry* are simply *means* toward an *end*. This is simply disguised by the fact that the end in question is not completely specified at the beginning of the activity, but is progressively determined by means of the practice itself. It is this progressive determination of the goal of the practical stance in which the real hermeneutic circularity of the grounding question consists. So, the stance begins as a questioning, insofar as it is an activity whose goal is an *complete* account of Ereignis, initially understood in terms of Heidegger's *preliminary* account of Ereignis. However, it is not only this preliminary account of Ereignis that is open to revision, but the initial understanding of the very aim of the activity itself. This is a genuine hermeneutic circle, because even though it involves a form of *practical reasoning* (an inquiry regarding the aim of the practice) it does not involve circular justification, and thus isn't vicious. However, the grounding question is nonetheless hermeneutically *degenerate* because its aim need not *ultimately* be an answer. Indeed, Heidegger can maintain that it is strictly *impossible* to answer the question[18], and still retain its essential hermeneutic structure *qua* practical stance. In doing this, he allows that we can take up the question without really *seeking* an answer, and in doing so he undermines its status as a question.[19] In essence, the grounding question is hermeneutically degenerate because *it is no longer really a question*, but some form of *foundational praxis*.

All of this serves to bolster the charge of self-containment, insofar as it indicates that Heidegger is beckoning us to follow him down the rabbit hole, so to speak. However, it does not preclude Heidegger from providing good reasons for us to follow him down there. Heidegger might be entirely justified in calling us to undertake this transformational task. The fundamental problem is that, as we've taken pains to show, all aspects of his formulation of this question/task are thoroughly dependent upon the results of his early work. If he is to justify his later project, he needs to be able to justify the existential analytic of Dasein or some successor thereof. This is where the methodological laxity we indicated in the last chapter proves fatal. It is not simply that Heidegger *does not* provide an adequate justification of the existential analytic within his revised methodological framework, but that he *cannot* do so. It is not just that he provides *no account* of the

16 The former way of describing the question is most prevalent in *CP* (cf. §43-39), but gradually gives way to the latter in the subsequent work, of which *WCT* and *DT* are emblematic.

17 Cf. *M*, Part III.

18 There are a number of place where Heidegger does explicitly endorse this idea (*CP*, §28, §37, §38, §42, §265; *DT*).

19 In this respect Heidegger has completely parted ways with his preliminary analysis of questioning in *B&T*.

methodological status of the existential analytic within his later work, but that no such status is *available* within the context of this work. This is because it can no longer be a regional ontology of Dasein's mode of Being, insofar as the preliminary account of Ereignis Heidegger derives from it is supposed to rule out the possibility of regional ontology. On this account, there simply cannot be ahistorically articulated modes of Being from which we could draw consequences about the structure of reality. However, neither can he characterise it as an inquiry into the role man plays within Ereignis, or the relation he bares to it, because this would require assuming the account of Ereignis upon which it is based. Heidegger is torn between the Scylla of inconsistency and the Charbidis of vicious circularity. This leaves his position, at best, internally consistent but hopelessly self-contained.

The only way out of this dilemma is to find a viable alternative methodological status implicit within Heidegger's theoretical framework. There are two possible candidates: *phenomenological* inquiry, and *ontic* inquiry. The former option amounts to retreating into something resembling Husserlian phenomenology ordinarily understood. This seems most appropriate given Heidegger's retention of the Kantian theme, articulated in its phenomenological form as the inquiry into the conditions of the possibility of *givenness*. However, Heidegger's own criticism of Husserl's phenomenological method was precisely that it wasn't intelligible independently of an interpretation of the mode of Being of consciousness.[20] This criticism provided the fundamental motivation for *Being and Time*, the project of which was to make intelligible *both* this specific mode of Being (the existential analytic) *and* to make intelligible the very notion of modes of Being by providing a concept of Being in general (fundamental ontology). The real force of this criticism is that insofar as we are inquiring into the conditions of the possibility of intelligibility – the *transcendental* – we must have some way of distinguishing between them and ordinary *empirical* constraints. Heidegger did this through drawing his distinction between the *ontological* (transcendental) and the *ontic* (empirical). His abandonment of the ontological thereby leaves him only with the second option discussed above. The problem with this is twofold. First, there is nothing resembling an empirical methodology in Heidegger's work that would allow us to assess the empirical adequacy of his account of the human, and even if we can import such a methodology, it is likely that many of his results will be refuted.[21] Second, even if there were, it is hard to see how such an account would license the kind of general claims about the structure of

20 *HCT*, p. ??.

21 Of course, this kind of methodological transplant has been performed on Heidegger's work by some (Cf. Martin Gessman, '*Being and Time* and the Future. Phenomenology meets Neuroscience', in *Heidegger in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Tziovanis Georgakis and Paul Ennis). However, even those engaged in this project must admit that although some very interesting insights can be drawn from Heidegger's analyses (e.g., into the psychology of mood, practical engagement, and social interaction), this is far from a validation of the whole of the existential analytic.

reality that Heidegger's later work attempts to make (albeit elliptically). Thus, neither of the two options are viable, and the dilemma is intractable.

We have thus seen *how* Heidegger's later formulation of the question of Being grows out of his earlier project. This explains *why* Heidegger comes to the position he does, and why many contemporary Heideggerians follow the same trajectory of thought. It is easy to find the account of Dasein in *Being and Time* so intuitive that one slides into the position of the later work without resistance. However, this is a matter of *explanation* rather than *justification*. There simply is no good way to independently motivate Heidegger's later project. We cannot follow Heidegger down the rabbit hole.

3. The Problems of the Original Formulation

We can now see that if we are to renew the question of Being, it must be by engaging with the constraints Heidegger originally placed upon its formulation, rather than the way in which he modified these constraints in his later work. Our task is now to show that Heidegger's original formulation failed to meet these constraints, and thereby to derive additional constraints which any proper formulation must meet. We will do this by identifying three specific problems with Heidegger's original approach: one concerning his account of *modes of Being*, one concerning his account of *questioning*, and one concerning his account of *aspects of Being*.

i) Modes of Being

The first problem we will identify addresses the Husserlian theme we identified in Heidegger's work and the idea of modes of Being it deploys. In order to properly pose it we first need to understand what motivates Heidegger's appeal to the idea of regional ontology, and how the notion responds to this motivation. Heidegger addresses this in the first part of the introduction to *Being and Time.*[22] It is rooted in his conception of what he calls positive science, which is broader than our ordinary notion of science, including disciplines like history and mathematics as well as the empirical sciences. His initial idea is that the totality of beings can be divided up into different domains of beings, which specific sciences concern themselves with. These domains of beings constitute the subject-matter of the relevant sciences (e.g., living beings constitute the domain of biology). However, although we have certain pre-scientific ways of demarcating these domains, this demarcation must be refined, and indeed is refined by the actual process of scientific research itself.

22 *B&T*, p. 29-30, italics added.

This takes the form of a concern with the *basic concepts* of that science. Moreover, Heidegger takes it that "the real 'movement' of the sciences takes place when their basic concepts undergo a more or less radical revision which is transparent to itself."[23] In essence, Heidegger presents a two levelled account of progress in the sciences: on the one hand, each science is constituted by the ordinary process of inquiry into the beings within its domain, made possible by certain fundamental concepts which structure that inquiry, and, on the other, by the process through which these foundational conceptual structures are themselves revised. This model is not particularly controversial, and displays a certain basic similarity to the two-levelled models of empirical science put forward much later by Thomas Kuhn and those influenced by him.[24]

There are two pertinent features of this account. First, Heidegger distinguishes between the demarcation of domains that both belongs to our pre-scientific understanding, and to some extent to ordinary scientific research, and that demarcation that is 'transparent to itself'. We might think of this as the distinction between an *implicit* working out of basic concepts which is not properly separated from the positive scientific inquiry itself, and an *explicit* discourse on regional ontology which can potentially take place apart from, or even before, positive science. The fact that this explicit regional ontology is often carried out by the sciences themselves is of no matter[25], as the regional ontology of each science's domain can in principle be separated out from it. Now, it seems obvious that if this working out of basic concepts *can* be made explicit then it *should* be made explicit. However, this raises the issue of precisely what it is to engage in regional ontology *properly*. It is this issue which motivates the project of grounding regional ontology in fundamental ontology. This connects up with the second pertinent feature of the account: Heidegger cashes out regional ontology's concern with basic concepts as a concern with the Being of the entities in that domain. We went over what this means to some extent in the first chapter. Essentially, he takes it that each domain is characterised by a specific *mode* of Being particular to the beings that belong to it. Fundamental ontology thus grounds regional ontology by providing a concept of Being *in general*, in terms of which each *particular* mode of Being is to be understood. Moreover, this concept of Being in general is not only meant to provide us with an understanding of modes *qua* modes, but also with an understanding of the very fact of their multiplicity, and the way they are related to one another.

Now that we have better understood the role played by the notion of regional ontology, we can proceed to uncover the problem that stems from it. The salient fact here is that the division of

23 Ibid., p. 29.

24 This links up with the comparison we made between Heidegger's more mature account of truth and the Kuhnian approach given in chapter 3 (fn. 67 and 87).

25 However, it should be noted that Heidegger takes up this point about the incorporation of regional ontology into the sciences in a different context in 'The End of Philosophy and the Task for Thinking' (p., 434-436).

Being into a variety of modes plays a very important role in *Being and Time*, and in the initial formulation of the question it lays out. This is in virtue of the importance of the distinction between the mode of Being of Dasein – *existence* – and the modes of Being of other beings (paradigmatically *occurrence*). As has been noted, the regional ontology of Dasein's mode of Being – the existential analytic – plays two distinct fundamental roles. On the one hand, it is the inquiry into the structure of questioning, through which the question is to receive its adequate formulation, and on the other, it is the first step in asking the question, insofar as it explicates our pre-ontological understanding of Being. Regardless of what other modes of Being Heidegger posits, this distinction between existence and other modes is fundamental for setting up the structure of the inquiry itself. The secondary circle posited above is dependent upon this distinction. It is the fact that regional ontology in general is to be grounded by an inquiry (fundamental ontology) that is itself dependent upon a particular regional ontology (the existential analytic) which sets up the circle. In short, that Being is divided into the Being of Dasein and the Being of other beings is constitutive for the explication of our pre-ontological understanding on Heidegger's account, and thus not something which is open to revision within it, or the inquiry into Being that proceeds from it.

If this difference between the mode of Being of Dasein and the modes of Being of other beings is not to be counted as the kind of illegitimate ontological assumption we discussed in the previous section, then Heidegger must provide some thorough justification of it. Given that Heidegger takes this to be one of his major advances over the philosophical tradition, he does endeavour to justify it in some depth. We have already outlined Heidegger's initial argument for positing the distinction in the first chapter, but he has further arguments aimed at vindicating the distinction retrospectively. The most important of these are made in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, where he carries out at least part of the deconstruction of the history of ontology which was to make up Part Two of *Being and Time*. Here Heidegger analyses four different fundamental ontological theses from the philosophical tradition in an attempt to uncover their flaws, but also to reawaken the problems to which they are addressed, so as to point towards the possibility of a genuine solution to each of them. Three of these – the Kantian thesis that Being is not a real predicate, the scholastic thesis that Being is articulated into *essencia* and *existentia*, and the logical thesis that all beings are understood through the copula – are analysed in great detail, such that in each case the root of the problem is found to lie within the existential structures of Dasein as laid out in *Being and Time* (in the intentional structure of perception, the intentional structure of production, and the existential structure of truth as disclosedness, respectively). These arguments provide some vindication for Heidegger's distinction through demonstrating its ontological efficacy, both for interpreting the classical problems of ontology and for potentially

solving them.

However, the remaining thesis (which is in fact third in order) is most interesting, insofar as it deals explicitly with the question of the multiplicity of the modes of Being. This is the modern thesis that "the basic ways of [B]eing are the [B]eing of nature (*res extensa*) and the [B]eing of mind (*res cogitans*)."[26] It is enlightening here to look at Heidegger's summary of the problem that this thesis raises:-

> "Every being has a way-of-being. The question is whether this way-of-being has the same character in every being – as ancient ontology believed and subsequent periods have basically had to maintain even down to the present – or whether individual ways-of-being are mutually distinct. Which are the basic ways of being? Is there a multiplicity? How is the variety of ways-of-being possible and how is it at all intelligible, given the meaning of [B]eing? How can we speak at all of a unitary concept of [B]eing despite the variety of ways-of-being? These questions can be consolidated into *the problem of the possible modifications of [B]eing and the unity of [B]eing's variety*."[27]

What is interesting here is the gap between what this paragraph promises and what Heidegger actually does. Over the course of the book Heidegger argues that all previous ways of conceiving the Being of the subject, understood as that being which thinks and questions, are inadequate, and that the only way to overcome their inadequacies is to understand this being as *existing* in his peculiar sense of the term. He criticises ancient and medieval philosophy insofar as it does not draw any distinction between the Being of the subject and that of the object, but treats both as merely extant (as equally *ens creatum,* in opposition to God as *ens increatum*), and he criticises modern philosophy for failing to draw the distinction correctly, insofar as it treats both mental substance and extended substance as extant, despite making some distinction between them. However, Heidegger never directly addresses the question 'Is there a multiplicity?' which he seems to raise in the above paragraph. This isn't to say he provides no answer, he obviously takes there to be such a multiplicity of modes. However, he provides us with no reason for thinking that there is such a multiplicity, other than his critiques of the specific ways that the tradition has conceived specific modes of Being.

We can now see the problem with Heidegger's appropriation of the Husserlian theme in full: it assumes that there is a multiplicity of modes of Being in order to provide its conception of

26 *BPP*, p. 24.
27 Ibid., p. 18.

positive science, and this assumption underlies the fundamental claim that there is a mode of Being unique to Dasein. Any claims about how this mode of Being must be or must not be understood are dependent upon this assumption, and thus also any of the analyses of traditional ontological problems in terms of Dasein's Being. In essence, Heidegger takes it that the inquiry into Being will account for the *fact* of this multiplicity, by letting us understand how such a variety of modes can nonetheless be unified without appeal to a merely 'average' concept of Being. However, he does not leave open the possibility that *there is no such multiplicity*, as the very structure of the inquiry is built upon the assumption of this fact. We have thus identified a properly illegitimate ontological assumption on Heidegger's part. Moreover, it is important to note that this criticism does not depend upon the dogmatic assumption of the contrary thesis (that there is no multiplicity of modes of Being), but only upon the claim that any inquiry into Being should not determine this issue in advance, or, at the very least, should not assume it in a way that precludes its revision.

This criticism is closely related to the main criticism of Heidegger's later work given earlier: that it cannot account for the methodological status of the existential analytic, and that this makes it impossible to justify in any adequate manner. This consisted of two parts: that the later position precludes Heidegger from understanding the existential analytic as a form of regional ontology, and that he has no alternative way of articulating its methodological status. We have now shown that however one approaches the inquiry into the structure of questioning (and the corresponding explication of our pre-ontological understanding) it *cannot* be as a form of regional ontology. This creates the same problem for us that it does for the later Heidegger: if not regional ontology then what? Whatever terms the inquiry is initially understood in, they may subsequently be *reinterpreted* in ontological terms, but they must at the very least be *independently intelligible*, such that the resulting analysis would remain good in the absence of an ontological interpretation. We can thus rule out phenomenology as a methodological framework within which to formulate the question of Being. This completely undermines the possibility of rehabilitating the existential analytic using the remaining resources within Heidegger's work.

However, as we saw at the end of the second chapter, it is theoretically possible to formulate the question within a *non*-phenomenological framework. What is required is a way of articulating an account of the nature of meaning, understanding, and interpretation that is intelligible independently of ontology without thereby collapsing into empirical investigation. To do this is to provide an account of the conditions of the possibility of intelligibility that does not reduce them to mere empirical constraints. This is just to give a proper account of the status of the *transcendental*. In essence, what is required is a new form of *transcendental philosophy*, but precisely how this is to be articulated is not yet clear. Regardless, it is important to remember that whatever this new

framework is, it is not prohibited from rehabilitating specific insights of the existential analytic. It has simply been shown that we cannot accept the existential analytic as it stands.

ii) Questioning and Truth

The second problem we will identify addresses the *priority of questioning* constraint, and its relation to Heidegger's account of truth. Heidegger was concerned with the topics of questioning and truth throughout his whole career, beginning with the material he presented at Rickert's seminars and extending all the way to his latest publications. However, as we've seen, his positions on both of these crucial notions changed considerably over time. By the end of his work, both notions were warped to the point at which they were incomparable with their *ordinary* forms. In the case of Heidegger's notion of truth, he ultimately admitted this, and ceased to call *aletheia* (or Ereignis) – the *condition of the possibility* of the ordinary notion of truth – by the name of truth.[28] However, in the case of his account of questioning, he continued to identify the question of Being (the grounding question) as a special case of questioning ordinarily understood, despite stripping it of the features that make ordinary questions recognisable *as* questions. There is an important connection here, because the feature that Heidegger stripped from the grounding question was precisely its connection to truth as ordinarily understood, namely, truth as the *correctness* of assertions. This is because he denies that the seeking of an *answer*, which is understood precisely as a *true assertion*, is a defining feature of the practical stance the grounding question instantiates. The grounding question is instead defined in terms of its relationship to the more fundamental form of truth (the name of which he will ultimately abandon), namely, *aletheia*, or Ereignis. We can thus see a twofold link between the ordinary notions of questioning and truth on the one hand, and their fundamental reinterpretations on the other. We can also see that the problems with Heidegger's notion of questioning emerge out of problems with the way in which he understands truth. The aim of the present section is to show that, although the account of questioning presented in *Being and Time* is less problematic than this later account, it nonetheless shares an essential deficit with it, in virtue of an inadequacy present in Heidegger's account of truth as correctness.

We will begin by examining the constraints upon an adequate account of questioning that Heidegger lays down in his presentation for Rickert's seminar. These will provide a frame of reference for our discussion of the relation between Heidegger's accounts of questioning and truth as correctness. First of all, it is important to note that Heidegger's concerns in this presentation are framed from within the perspective of Rickert's value-philosophy, tinged with his reading of

28 See chapter 1, fn. 110.

Husserl's theory of intentionality. As such, he discusses his topic – the relation between *questions* and *judgments* – in terms of the relation between their character as *acts* and their relations to their *contents*.[29] This allows him to articulate a *pragmatic* methodology for inquiring into the structure of questioning, insofar as he claims that whereas the character of a judgment as an act is to be understood principally in terms of its relation to its content, a questioning's relation to its content is to be understood in terms of its character as an act.[30] It will be helpful here to divide this act of questioning into the act of *asking* a question and the activity of *inquiry* which seeks an answer to the question. We may then say that the question which is asked or pursued in these activities is the content they are related to. Now, in contrast to the later position just discussed, Heidegger here posits a very strong link between questions and judgments. He holds that "the ideal essence "question in general" can only be understood by way of the ideal essence "answer in general", and vice versa"[31], and that the latter is to be understood as a true (or valid) judgment. This is because questioning *aims* at at an answer as that which it *intends*.[32] However, he also holds that this intending must be distinguished from any kind of *willing*, *wanting*, or *wishing* for an answer. Put in different terms, questions are not to be understood as *intentions*, *desires*, or derivative attitudes. One can be in all of these states with respect to an answer without thereby *asking* or *inquiring*. This is an essential insight that all accounts of questioning must abide by.[33]

However, this insight is *negative*. It is necessary but not sufficient for an adequate account of questioning. Heidegger does not provide a complete account of questioning in the presentation, but he does put forward a tentative *positive* thesis, which extends the pragmatic methodological claim sketched above. His claim is that not only must the content of questions *in general* be understood in terms of the structure of acts of questioning in general (the methodological thesis), but that the contents of *particular* questions must be understood in terms of the structure of the particular acts of questioning they correspond to (the substantive thesis).[34] Not only does the question involve a "creative moment" in which the content of a possible answer is prepared, but it also involves a progressive determination of the *criteria* on the basis of which this possible answer is prepared. This does not mean that some of these criteria cannot be more or less fixed (e.g., those which constitute the *prior understanding* of the object of the question or *that which is asked about* it), but it does characterise questioning as a properly *hermeneutic* process with an open-ended *teleological*

29 'Question and Judgment', p. 53.
30 Ibid., p. 56.
31 Ibid., p. 53.
32 Ibid.
33 There is evidence that Heidegger abandons this insight later on (*IM*, pp. 22-23), which is consistent with the general way in which his account of questioning in general, and the question of Being in particular, regresses.
34 'Question and Judgment', p. 58.

structure.[35] As Heidegger also puts it, the question is "a reflexive construction instigated by the subjectivity."[36] This idea that "the question in its inherent essence is rooted in subjectivity"[37], is ultimately what vitiates Heidegger's account of questioning in all of its forms.

The problem takes a different form depending upon the precise way in which Heidegger articulates his account of truth and questioning. In order to formulate it properly, we need to make explicit what these criteria governing the production of an answer are: they are *success conditions* – they determine whether or not an attempt to produce the end the activity aims at (in this case, the production of a correct answer) is successful. There are different types of success conditions, including those provided by intentions, desires, and wishes (or other derivative attitudes), but Heidegger has ruled these out as candidates. Success conditions that are not of these kinds are properly called *norms*.[38] This lets us pose the problem, as it emerges for this early account of questioning, in the following way: if an *individual* subject is the one that sets the *norms* governing its process of inquiry, how can these criteria have any *binding force* for it? This is a specific case of the *paradox of autonomy*, the general form of which is: if an individual subject is the one that determines which norms it is bound by in *every* case, then how can *any* norm have binding force for it? Of course, one needn't accept the antecedent implicit in the last question: one can deny the *principal of autonomy* that we are only bound by those norms we bind ourselves to.[39] However, Heidegger's account of questioning is based upon a restricted form of the principle, and thus the paradox holds in that specific case. Brandom's account of the solution to the general form of the paradox is very enlightening here.[40] His point is that any account of autonomy (restricted or not) needs to distinguish between the *force* of a norm and its *content*. The principle (or its restricted form) is then taken to hold that subjects have a special form of authority over *which* norms have force for them, but no corresponding authority over the *what* the content of these norms is. This means that subjects have authority over which responsibilities they undertake, but not over whether they have fulfilled them: there can be no retrospective redefining of the success conditions defining one's responsibilities.

This general solution is not straightforwardly available in Heidegger's early position, because he makes the content of the question, which would supply this kind of *external* normative

35 Ibid. This shows how short a step it is from Heidegger's early account of questioning to his account of the grounding question as a practical stance. All one must do is drop the requirement that this process aim at a true judgment of *some* form, and one ends up with the grounding question.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Brandom provides an innovative account of the relations between intentions, desires and norms in chapter 4 of *MIE*, which explains the sense in which they are all species of a single genus.

39 We did suggest that Heidegger does accept some form of the principle authority in chapter 3 (fn. 56), but as we noted there, it is not developed enough for us to draw any relevant conclusions for the matter at hand.

40 *RIP*, ch. 2-3.

constraint, dependent upon the act of an *individual* subject. However, an analogous solution does appear within *Being and Time*. As we saw in the second chapter, Heidegger there provides an account of the individual as essential *social*, which grounds his account of understanding as based upon functional norms governing practical activity. Specifically, we saw how his account of the One allows him to maintain a distinction between the way in which given individuals behave and the way "one behaves", or between *regularities* of behaviour and *norms* of practice. This allows for the possibility of norms governing inquiry that no one individual has any special form of authority over, insofar as they are governed by the impersonal authority of the One. As we then saw in the third chapter, Heidegger's account of *apophantic discourse* allows for the possibility of non-circumspective interpretation, of which questioning is a form. This allows us to understand inquiry as a *collective* rather than individual endeavour, governed by norms whose content need not be determined by those engaged in the activity. However, we also demonstrated that, in accordance with a reconstructed version of Tugendhat's objection, this account was insufficient to underwrite the ordinary notion of truth as correctness. The crucial point was that Heidegger's account of the status of truth in terms of the role assertions play within such collective activities (truth as Being-uncovering) can't make sense of the idea that we are bound to talk about things as they are *in themselves*, insofar as this status is relativised to the current state of the activity (or the attitudes of those involved in it). What this means is that although Heidegger has managed to account for how individuals (and groups) can be bound by *norms of questioning*, his account of these norms is insufficient to underwrite a *norm of truth*. Consequently, given that questioning is supposed to aim at truth, they cannot be *genuine* norms of questioning. The account of questioning given in *Being and Time* is thus inadequate.

Now, Heidegger's account of truth as correctness changes around the time of *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. This change overcomes the Tugendhat objection by explicitly defining the responsibility we undertake in making assertions about an entity as a responsibility to talk about the entity as it is *in itself*. In effect, he *stipulates* the norm of truth. This marks the abandonment of his earlier strategy of explaining the *status* of truth in terms the *role* assertions play within discourse. It also marks a distinct break with the account of questioning in *Being and Time*, insofar as ordinary questions must now be understood directly in terms of a particular relation to the entities they are *about*, namely, *binding*. From this point on, Heidegger's account of truth takes the form of an account of the conditions of the possibility of this binding, and his account of questioning is thus to be located within these conditions.

Before examining these conditions further, it is important to point out that this picture gives us an idea of *why* Heidegger's account of the question of Being starts to diverge from our ordinary

understanding of questions. This is because Being is not an entity, and thus the way in which we describe the responsibility we undertake in asking questions about Being cannot be defined in the terms that ordinary questions are. Given that Heidegger comes to account for the binding involved in ordinary questions in terms of an elaborate account of moods, it is thus understandable that, insofar as he sees the question of Being as a limit-case of binding, he would also see it as a limit-case of mood. This is precisely what we see from 'On the Essence of Truth' onward. As we showed in the previous chapter, the question takes the form of the limit-case of letting beings be, wherein we *completel*y suspend the impersonal authority of the One. This has the effect of completely *disengagin*g us from beings[41], insofar as it suspends the norms in terms of which they have significance for us, and of completely *bracketin*g all of our ordinary assumptions[42], insofar as it suspends the norms of discourse that make all ordinary discussions idle to some degree. This means that if we view the grounding question as a matter of engendering this limit-mood, it becomes precisely a matter of suspending the conditions which make ordinary discourse possible. The grounding question is a limit-case of questioning only in the sense that it stands on the border beyond which ordinary questioning (as a form of discourse) becomes impossible.

Returning to the nascent account of questioning in *Fundamental Concepts*, the crucial claim Heidegger makes is that it is a condition of the possibility of binding oneself to an entity (specifically in making *assertions* about it, but equally in asking *questions* about it) that it be possible to *assess* the extent to which one's talk about the entity accords with it. The fundamental idea here is that if it is impossible to assess whether an action accords with the norm motivating it, then the content of the norm cannot be *determinate*. This is another essential insight that all accounts of questioning must abide by. The problem emerges when Heidegger identifies the condition of the possibility of assessment as the *manifestness* of the entity in question, and more generally the manifestness of entities *as such* (openness). This is because manifestness, as it is explained in *Being and Time,* is not *sufficient* to establish the possibility of this kind of assessment.[43] This remains true even when it is supplemented by the other dimensions of the account of freedom found in Fundamental Concepts and 'On the Essence of Truth'. To understand this it's necessary to

41 It is from this that Heidegger's idea that philosophy (understood at this point as that which inquires into Being) is the most useless of all activities (*BQP*, ch 1).

42 Of course, this is entirely consonant with Husserl's idea of the phenomenological *epoche*, in which we suspend the natural attitude (*Ideas I*, §32), but it also motivates Heidegger's increasing hostility to philosophy as an academic discipline, and his remarks upon how the inquiry into Being is to relate to it (Cf. *M*, Part III).

43 Following Brandom (*MIE*, ch. 4), it is also possible to argue that Wilfrid Sellars' attack on 'the myth of the given' shows that it is not *necessary* either. However, there is a certain amount of controversy here, insofar as the position McDowell defends against Brandom ('No Experience Necessary: Empiricism, Noninferential Knowledge, and Secondary Qualities', http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/philo/courses/representation/papers/BrandomNEN.pdf) would defend something like manifestness (his idea of conceptually articulated yet unendorsed experiential contents) as a necessary condition of having conceptual content (and thus of assertion and questioning). As it is unimportant for the objection against Heidegger, I will remain neutral on this point.

revisit the arguments of the latter works, focusing upon the account of *withdrawal* we reconstructed in the previous chapter.

As was explained in the previous chapter, binding oneself to an entity is a matter of undertaking a certain kind of *responsibility.* This involves granting the entity a correlative *authority* over whether one has fulfilled that responsibility.[44] The entity as it is in itself is somehow allowed to determine whether one's talk about is is *correct*.[45] The additional crucial insight that we reconstructed from Heidegger's account is that in order to grant this authority to the entity it is necessary to withdraw both our own authority and the One's authority over how it is correct to talk about it. To this we must add a distinction between withdrawing our own authority and the authority of *specific Others*, which are both forms of *personal* authority, in contrast to the *impersonal* authority of *generic Others*, or the One. The correctness of our talk about an entity is only determined by the way it is *in itself* if this is not dependent upon anyone's *attitudes* about it, be they understood specifically (our own and Others') or generically (the One).[46] This is the essence of the opposition between the entity as it is *in itself* and the entity as it is *for us* (where 'us' means *anyone*). The former is *attitude-independent*, and the latter is *attitude-dependent*. The problem with Heidegger's account of withdrawal is that it is not sufficient to account for the *relative* independence underlying the general notion of *truth*, let alone the *absolute* independence characteristic of the specific notion of *objective truth*.[47] The former problem concerns his account of withdrawing our own authority, and the latter concerns his account of withdrawing the authority of Other's and the One.

Given that inability to secure relative attitude-independence precludes the possibility of securing absolute attitude-independence, we'll ignore the problem with relative independence for the moment, in order to focus on the problem with absolute independence. This has already been

44 This interplay of authority and responsibility involved in *intentional representation* is a major theme of Brandom's work (Cf. *BSD*, ch. 6; *RIP*, ch. 1-3).

45 This could be described as letting the entity determine whether the *truth conditions* of an asserted sentence are *satisfied*, but it could also be described as letting the entity determine the *success conditions* of the assertion (or questioning) viewed as an action.

46 This idea of *attitude-transcendence* is a crucial feature of the account of *objectivity* Brandom provides in *MIE* (ch. 3 and 8). The subsequent discussion is very influenced by this account, although it does not coincide with it exactly. Importantly, the notion of objectivity deployed here will be stronger Brandom's, insofar as it will underly a notion of *objective truth* distinct from *truth as such*.

47 The division of truth into species is a controversial prospect. This is principally because such a division might be interpreted to imply that truth is a genuine *property* of assertions/sentences/propositions, which is denied by most deflationary and minimalist approaches to the truth predicate. However, I don't believe that the division of truth into species implies anything of the kind. Huw Price's idea ('Metaphysics After Carnap: The Ghost Who Walks?', in *Metametaphysics*, pp. 332-333) that the truth predicate could be a "single logico-syntactic device" that can play different functions within different forms of discourse is a promising way of working out this idea, although I would prefer that it be viewed as an anaphoric pro-sentence forming operator in the manner of Brandom's account (*MIE*, ch. 5), rather than a disquotational device. Regardless, this discussion of species of truth needn't depend upon any worked out theory of truth. The importance of the *prima facie* distinction between objective and non-objective truth will be explained in the subsequent discussion.

illustrated by our earlier discussion of the grounding question: the only point at which Heidegger's model allows for a complete suspension of the authority of the One is the point at which discourse becomes impossible. On Heidegger's model, every discourse upon a topic involves only a relative withdrawal of impersonal authority, meaning that there is no principled distinction between talk about *specific* matters whose truth is supposedly *independent* of our attitudes (e.g., the subject matter of empirical science) and those whose truth is properly *dependent* upon them (e.g., the subject matter of prescriptive discourse). There might be room to distinguish between these and matters whose truth is dependent on the attitudes of authoritative Others (e.g., the subject matter of literary interpretation[48]), but this is small consolation. So, Heidegger's model can't make a principled distinction between the way in which we bind ourselves to *black holes* in trying to give an adequate scientific explanation of their nature, and the way in which we bind ourselves to *social norms* in trying to provide an adequate interpretation of their contents, but it may be able to distinguish these from the way in which we bind ourselves to *fictional characters* in trying to interpret their personalities and histories. As such, there can be no robust distinction between entities that are *genuinely* in themselves and those that are *merely* for us.

There are two possible responses to this problem: first, that any role this distinction plays can be filled by a distinction between the *modes* of Being of the relevant kinds of entities, and second, that Being is not an entity implies that it is not subject to the distinction. The first response overlooks the fact that appealing to modes of Being to handle this distinction is not only *ad hoc*, but violates the ontological neutrality constraint discussed earlier. This distinction must be accounted for within the account of questioning itself. The second response overlooks the fact that even if one takes the inquiry into Being to simply be a matter of *explicating* our pre-ontological understanding of Being (as the early Heidegger does), one must still demonstrate that this is the form that the inquiry into Being *in itself* must take (as the original formulation of the question attempts to do). This means that one must be able to make sense of the notion of Being in itself as an *object* of inquiry, even if it is not strictly a *being*.[49] Heidegger's original formulation succeeds in making sense of Being as the object of a question (delimited by prior understanding), but fails to make sense of it as something in itself (*absolutely* attitude independent), whereas his later formulation succeeds in making sense of it as something in itself (by withdrawing authority *completely*), at the

48 This is to assume a fairly simplified picture of literary interpretation, in which the author is given strict *stipulative authority* over the truth of claims within the context of their fictional 'worlds'. There are of course much more complex ways in which the relevant authority can be configured in such discourses, such as would be the case in interpreting the history of Thor within norse myth, given both its fragmented and inconsistent presentation, and the difficulties of interpreting the attitudes of the 'norse people' as such. It is also entirely possible to accommodate Barthian concerns about the 'death of the author' within this rough framework, as these simply indicate the possibility of engaging in interpretative discourses where the author's authority *is* withdrawn.

49 This divergence between the notion of an object of inquiry and a being was noted in chapter 1 (part 2, section *ii*).

cost of failing to make sense of it as the object of a question (by suspending the norms that make it a genuine question). Heidegger's inability to account for *objectivity* places him in a double bind.

We can now return to the problem of relative attitude independence. As noted already, this stems from a failure in Heidegger's account of the withdrawal of our own authority. This connects back to the claim that the notion of manifestness is insufficient to ground the possibility of truth, insofar as it is Heidegger's dependence upon manifestness that prevents him for accounting for the withdrawal of our authority over the correctness of our claims. To demonstrate this it is necessary to introduce the notion of *perspective*.[50] To *take* an assertion to be true of something is to view it from a certain perspective, and to assess someone else's assertion in accordance with the entity (or object) it is about is to assess it in accordance with *one's own* perspective on that entity (or object). Perspectives can be both *individual* and *collective*, insofar as multiple individuals can share a common point of view on something. Moreover, differences in perspective can be *intrapersonal* as well as *interpersonal*, insofar as one may *change* which assertions one takes to be true. One can then assess one's previous commitments from the perspective of one's current ones.[51] This notion of perspective maps perfectly well onto Heidegger's account of manifestation in terms of *understanding* and *interpretation*. First, he takes manifestation to be *corrigible* (as evidenced by the fact that *seeming* is a species of manifestation), which subjects the corresponding understanding to assessment from other perspectives. Second, he takes it that we can engage in processes of collective interpretation (discourse) that explicitly articulate *shared* understanding, thereby *eliciting* collective manifestation. Finally, he takes it that our understanding can be *revised* (through interpretation and otherwise), allowing things to manifest to us differently at different times.

On this basis, we can re-articulate the problem with the account of discourse in *Being and Time* as a problem of *co-ordinating* different perspectives on the same thing. The problem was that, even assuming different *social* perspectives could be co-ordinated by means of involvement in a single discourse[52], this was not true of the different *temporal* perspectives that each discourse constitutes across time. The reason for this was that Heidegger couldn't differentiate between the correctness of an interpretation of some initial understanding (e.g., perceptually acquired understanding) and the *perspective-transcendent* truth of the results of that interpretation (i.e., assertions). This is effectively an inability to distinguish between the normative statuses of

50 This discussion owes a lot to the account of deontic scorekeeping perspectives Brandom presents in chapter 8 of *MIE*.

51 Although Brandom's account in *MIE* does not make explicit the possibility of temporal difference in perspective, he does make this possibility explicit in his reply to Gibbard's criticism of his account (*Reading Brandom*, pp. 297-300).

52 As we will show, this assumption can itself be challenged once we articulate the problem of co-ordination in general terms.

justification and *truth*, the latter being essentially defined as justification *within* the current discourse, or justification *given* the initial understanding. This amounts to a problem of co-ordination insofar as it undermines the sense in which the different perspectives are perspectives on the *same entity*, as opposed to perspectives on *distinct manifestations* of that entity. Given that manifestations are essentially relative to (or dependent upon) the perspective to which they manifest, this effectively undermines the distinction between *reality* and *appearance*, which is a more radical collapse of the distinction between the *in itself* and the *for us* than the collapse of the distinction between the *objective* and the *non-objective* discussed above. Here, truth is not merely relativised to *some* perspective (the authority of some Other), or to perspectives *in general* (the authority of the One), but to the perspective from which it is assessed (our own authority). This *perspective-relative* definition of truth essentially precludes the possibility of withdrawing authority *from* perspectives entirely.

Looking at it in these terms, we can trace the real root of the problem with the account of truth in *Being and Time* to Heidegger's account of discourse. The problem is to be located in the distinction we've drawn between the initial understanding taken up by a discourse and the process of (collective) interpretation in which it is developed. This is because it is differences in this pre-discursive understanding that prevent the co-ordination of different perspectives. Where two distinct discourses start with the same initial understanding and end up developing it in incompatible ways, it makes sense to say that at least one of them must have followed the norms of interpretation incorrectly, and thus that at least one of them is *wrong*. However, when the initial understanding differs between perspectives this inference does not hold – it is possible for both of them to be *right* – and this prevents them from being perspectives on the same thing. If these perspectives are to be co-ordinated, there needs to be some way of assessing the correctness of this initial understanding. Heidegger's account from *Fundamental Concepts* onward handles this by insisting that all understanding is assessed in accordance with the thing itself, effectively *stipulating* a difference between justification and truth. However, he neither provides any substantive revision of his account of discourse (i.e., the elicitation of manifestation) nor gives us an account of how the assessment of pre-discursive understanding (i.e., ordinary manifestation) works. He simply claims that manifestation as such is a *necessary* condition for this kind of assessment. The problem is that it is not clear that it is a *sufficient* condition for the assessment of pre-discursive understanding, or its paradigm case: perceptually acquired understanding.

To explain, although it is certainly the case that different perspectives can assess the correctness of one another's perceptual judgments on the basis of their own perceptual judgments, the question is whether this actually underwrites co-ordination of these perspectives. Putting this in

more concrete terms: what is it about my current perspective on something (e.g., my observation that a tree is an elm), that grants it the *authority* to assess my previous perspective upon it (e.g., my observation that it was an elder) as incorrect, other than the fact that it is my *current* perspective? If there is nothing that *grounds* this authority, i.e., nothing that provides a *reason* for it, then truth remains perspective-relative.

This crucial insight has two consequences. First, it demands that we must draw a distinction between *stipulative* authority and *defeasible* authority. It is the withdrawal of the former kind of authority that is the condition of the possibility of truth-aptness.[53] The latter kind of authority need not be withdrawn *outright*, because there is the possibility of bringing it into question, or assessing the reasons underlying it. In essence, whereas defeasible authority is *sometimes* withdrawn – when it's grounds are successfully challenged – stipulative authority is *always* withdrawn – precisely because it is essentially ungrounded.[54] So, it is the fact that I can *justify* taking my current perspective on something to be correct over a previous one that enables them to be co-ordinated as perspectives on the same thing (e.g., by explaining *why* I originally mistook the tree for an elder). Second, this suggests that the flaw in Heidegger's account of discourse is his refusal to recognise the necessity of *inference*, insofar as one cannot make sense of this kind of defeasible authority without it.[55] So, in endorsing my perceptually acquired understanding, I am implicitly endorsing an inference from my status as an authoritative observer to the truth of my observations, and in picking some of my observations over others I am withdrawing endorsement of some of these inferences, on the basis of additional facts (e.g., that I was further away from the tree when I took it to be an elm, and distance negatively effects the reliability of my perceptual responses).[56]

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53 The withdrawal of stipulative authority from oneself is a necessary condition of truth-aptness *in general*, and it is what corresponds to the relative attitude-independence underlying the *genus* of truth. The different *species* of truth can then be understood in terms of the different ways that this withdrawal is extended, thereby corresponding to different forms of attitude-independence.

54 The description of stipulative authority as 'ungrounded' is liable to be misunderstood. For instance, there is a good sense in which the elected politicians that pass the laws in a democratic society have authority to stipulate these laws, while their authority is derivative upon, or *grounded* in, the authority of the populace. There is thus a sense in which one can give reasons *why* they are authoritative. Nonetheless, there is another sense in which this authority is still ungrounded, insofar as the authority of the populace is not itself grounded in this way. Challenges to stipulative authority always bottom out in claims about attitudes, whereas challenges to defeasible authority don't. This is one way of articulating the distinction between absolute and relative attitude-independence, and the correlative distinction between objective and non-objective truth discussed earlier.

55 Specifically, one requires an account of *non-monotonic* inference in order to make sense of this notion of defeasibility (Cf. *MIE*, ch. 3 and 4).

56 This is the essential aspect of Sellars' account of perception in *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, as reconstructed by Brandom in *MIE* (ch. 4). The status of being an authoritative observer is fundamentally a matter of possessing reliable dispositions to respond differentially to certain circumstances by producing the appropriate assertions. The disagreement between McDowell and Brandom alluded to earlier (fn. 42) is essentially a disagreement about how Sellars' account is to be interpreted and extended, specifically, over whether there must be an intermediary state between causal stimulus and the endorsement of observational judgments. This intermediary state is analogous to Husserial *evidence*, and thus this debate can be seen as a debate over whether something like *manifestation* is in fact a necessary condition of perceptual understanding.

This analysis lets us cash out the earlier claim that Heidegger's approach to questioning is vitiated by a persistent commitment to the importance of subjectivity. In essence, although Heidegger makes the ability to engage in discourse (discourse *qua* existentiale) a condition of the possibility of intelligibility, and despite the fact that he attempts to ground intelligibility in collectively articulated practices for dealing with things in the world, he nonetheless retains too much of Husserl's *internalist* epistemology. At best, he retains a Husserlian distinction between two kinds of justification: *evidence* (i.e., manifestation) and *inference*. At worst, he eradicates inference entirely by treating it as a species of the former (i.e., as *elicited* manifestation). That his position stands in the murky middle ground between these two cases is indicated by the fact that his account of discourse underwrites something like a notion of correct interpretation, while nonetheless refusing to identify this with correct inference. Precisely what the non-inferential norm governed practices of collective interpretation necessary to underwrite this notion could be is never made clear. Putting further (and even more speculative) reconstruction of Heidegger's position to one side, we can nonetheless categorically state that Heidegger's account of discourse, and the accounts of truth and questioning based upon it, is fundamentally inadequate.[57] All of this concurs with Karl-Otto Apel's claim that Heidegger (along with who follow him) falls into an 'oblivion of the *logos*' (*Logosvergessenheit*) parallel to his own notion of the oblivion of Being (*Seinsvergessenheit*).[58]

Whatever the alternative to the existential analytic is, if it is to meet the priority of questioning constraint, then it must provide an account of discourse sufficient to ground the notion of truth as correctness. Moreover, if it is to be able to formulate the question of Being as a questioning regarding Being as it is in itself, then this account of discourse must be sufficient to ground a notion of objective truth. Meeting these two constraints amounts to articulating a distinction between the *in itself* (attitude-independent) and the *for us* (attitude-dependent) capable of accounting for both the distinction between *reality* and *appearance*,[59] and that between the *objective* and the *non-objective*, respectively. What we have shown here is that any account of discourse that

57 Returning to the difference between my own reconstruction of Heidegger and Brandom's reconstruction discussed in chapter 3 (fn. 13), it is clear that we are mostly in agreement about what Heidegger *should* think. We simply differ on the matter of what Heidegger *did in fact* think. Brandom's reading is more charitable, but because of this does a very good job of picking out the useful insights from Heidegger that can be integrated into an adequate account of discourse. Mine is less charitable, but because of this it enables us to identify a certain lingering Cartesianism that Heidegger retains from Husserl, which will prove to be very important.

58 Apel, 'Meaning constitution and justification of validity: has Heidegger overcome transcendental philosophy by history of being?', in *Heidegger Reexamined Vol. 4: Language and the Critique of Subjectivity*, ed. Dreyfus and Wrathall, (2002), p. 267. In this paper Apel is more specifically concerned with the way that Heidegger's inability to underwrite a notion of truth or validity reflexively undermines the seeming universality of his own philosophical claims, both early and late. I am very sympathetic to this line of criticism, though I have not pursued it myself. This is because it is a *global* problem with Heidegger's work, whereas I am more concerned with what we can learn from its *local* problems.

59 Brandom has suggested a tentative but poignant analysis of the appearance/reality distinction (*RIP*, p. 107, fn. 11) which hinges upon precisely the kind of differences between temporal (or historical) perspectives discussed earlier.

is adequate to these constraints must treat the notion of inference as central. In essence, we have shown that any adequate successor to the existential analytic must give an account of discourse as a practice of giving and asking for reasons.

iii) Aspects of Being

The final problem we will raise addresses the Aristotelian theme, the notion of aspects of Being it deploys, and its relation to *the necessity of pre-ontological understanding*. The importance of the Aristotelian theme is paramount for Heidegger's early project, and for any attempt to renew the question of Being along similar lines. This is because, as we've shown, it is the theme that defines the question of Being *as* the question of Being, and Heidegger's later abandonment of it marks a transition to a substantially different question. The criticisms of Heidegger's early formulation of the question already presented have only made the Aristotelian theme more important, because they have undermined the importance of the Husserlian and Kantian themes. The Husserlian theme has been undermined insofar as it has been shown that the inquiry into Being must not assume that there are different modes of Being, and the Kantian theme has been undermined insofar as it has been shown that the existential analytic, and thus the argument for the identity of Being and intelligibility that Heidegger bases upon it, isn't viable as it stands. The Aristotelian problem of the underlying unity of the different aspects of Being is all that remains to define the question. We will now show that there is a problem with Heidegger's appropriation of this Aristotelian theme, and the problem this poses for the project of renewing the question of Being.

In order to do this it will first be necessary to raise a problem with the original Aristotelian interpretation of the question that Heidegger's formulation successfully overcomes. We'll call this *the problem of diversity*, and it consists in the fact that the Aristotelian formulation of the question is articulated in terms of a fixed manifold of senses of 'Being', or a given distribution of aspects (i.e., potential and actual being, being as being-true, accidental being, and the being of the categories (substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, action, affection, possession, and position)). This makes the formulation of the question relative to some prior account of the aspects of Being, which violates the ontological neutrality constraint outlined above. Although it seems legitimate to assume that there *are* different aspects of Being, we cannot simply take over an account of *which* aspects there are (e.g., Heidegger's various lists, or Kant's categories) without providing some methodologically sound reason to think it is the *correct* account. Moreover, there are at least two dimensions to its correctness: each of the aspects it posits must be *genuine*, and taken together they must be *exhaustive.* There are distinct questions about into the relations between different subsets of

the set of genuine aspects (e.g., the relation between what-being and that-being, or the relation being-true, being-so and nothingness, etc.), but only the inquiry into the unity of all of them can properly be called the question of Being. There thus needs to be a way of formulating the question so that it divides Being into its various aspects correctly.

Heidegger is able to overcome the problem of diversity by introducing the notion of pre-ontological understanding, which by definition includes our pre-theoretical understanding of *whichever* aspects Being is correctly divided into. By formulating the question as a matter of hermeneutically developing our pre-ontological understanding of Being into a genuine concept of Being, he thereby avoids the need to define the question in terms of some fixed distribution of aspects. This explains why Heidegger doesn't define the question by means of any one of the manifolds of senses he proposes, which in turn explains why the connection between Heidegger's early formulation of the question and Aristotle's is not always apparent. On top of freeing the formulation of the question from the need for a fixed distribution of aspects, the notion of pre-ontological understanding also provides a methodological basis for inquiring into this distribution. On this model, we uncover the correct distribution of aspects by *explicating* our pre-ontological understanding. For Heidegger, this was a matter of uncovering the conditions of the possibility of intelligibility, which was ultimately identical with the inquiry into their underlying unity, insofar as this unity is supposed to consist in their interconnection within the existential structure of understanding. Although we have put the latter aspect of Heidegger's formulation into question, the idea that any proper formulation of the question involves an explication of our pre-ontological understanding is still sound. It simply remains open whether pursing the question involves *more* than this process of explication (and thus whether there is a crisp boundary between the *formulation* of the question and the *inquiry* into Being).

Now, although Heidegger's formulation of the question deals with the problem of diversity, there is a related problem that it can't overcome, which we will call *the problem of unity*. This can be phrased in the form of a challenge: why must we treat the various senses of the word 'Being' as corresponding to aspects of some underlying unitary structure? It seems possible that 'Being' could simply be a homonym, the various senses of which are only contingently related to one another. For instance, it's entirely coherent to claim that the linguistic devices corresponding to the various forms of the copula (e.g., existential commitment, identification, predication, etc.) might only be linked by the minimal formal relations between their symbolic logical equivalents (assuming that there even are unique equivalents, and not a plurality of incompatible logical formalisms). Quine's claim that "to be is to be the value of a bound variable"[60] is perhaps the most famous example of

60 'On What There Is', in *From a Logical Point of View*, p. ??

this kind of position. Moreover, not only are there languages in which some of these devices are effectively separated out[61], but it's possible to argue that unifying them under a single word only serves to engender confusion. This latter position was famously espoused by Alfred Korzybski, and was subsequently used to motivate the construction of a variant of English (known as e-prime) in which the verb 'to be' is entirely absent.[62] In essence, all the various forms of this challenge boil down to one thing: it is questionable whether there is anything like Being in Heidegger's (early) sense of the word, and thus whether the question of Being makes any sense.

For the question to make sense, Heidegger must provide some initial definition of 'Being', or what our pre-ontological understanding is an understanding *of*, but to avoid challenges to the coherence of this description it must be minimal enough not to beg the question. His problem is that his original description of Being – as that which defines entities *as* entities – is inadequate to this task. The reason for this is that, while the *negative* part of his definition – the opposition between Being and beingness – excludes our ordinary understanding of what it would be to define something as something, the only *positive* part we have managed to reconstruct – the unity of aspects of Being in their application to entities – is undermined by the problem of unity. Heidegger's own solution to the problem of diversity thus makes him vulnerable to the problem of unity, because by formulating the question in terms of our pre-ontological understanding of Being, he implicitly assumes that his initial definition of 'Being' is adequate, and that it picks something out that we can then have a grasp of. The question is, how do we provide a positive definition of 'Being' that allows us to retain the proper Aristotelian sense of the question without begging the question by stipulating that it is a unitary structure composed of a variety of aspects. If we can't, then the whole attempt to renew the question of Being falters.

4. Heidegger's Lessons

We must now ask what lessons we can learn from Heidegger's mistakes. This is particularly pressing in light of the last problem we identified above, as this puts into question the whole project of renewing the question of Being. Before drawing conclusions, it will be helpful to briefly examine the relationship between the problems we've discussed.

We've found three serious flaws in Heidegger's early formulation of the question. The relation between them can best be explained in relation to the two roles that the existential analytic plays in this formulation: explicating the structure of questioning in *general*, and explicating our

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pre-ontological understanding of Being. These two aspects of the analytic come together in the formulation of the question of Being, insofar as the latter is what enables us to derive the *specific* structure of the question of Being from the former. On this basis, we can see that we've uncovered a general problem with the existential analytic as a whole, and a specific problem with each of its aspects. The overarching problem is that although a *transcendental inquiry* into the conditions of the possibility of intelligibility should be able to fulfil both roles required of the existential analytic, the methodological framework (*phenomenology*) within which Heidegger approaches this inquiry is vitiated by its inability to articulate its own status in ontologically neutral terms. The issue with the analysis of questioning is that, in virtue the derivative status it gives to reasoning, it fails to validate the crucial insight that questions aim at *truth*, or the more specific insight that some questions aim at *objective truth.* This precludes understanding the question of Being as aiming at the *truth* of Being as it is *in itself*. The issue with the explication of our pre-ontological understanding of Being is then that precisely what this is an understanding of is not adequately defined. This opens the whole project of formulating the question of Being to the objection that it is essentially meaningless, or at the very least dependent upon assumptions that can be easily rejected.

We've also seen how these three problems are exacerbated in Heidegger's later formulation of the question. First, he retreats from the stricter methodological framework of the early work without formulating an adequate alternative. While his approach remains phenomenological to some degree, it is no longer phenomenological *ontology*, and this deficit is only compensated for with affective and pragmatic descriptions of how to approach the question. Second, his understanding of the structure of questions degenerates further, to the point at which he abandons the notion that they seek an *answer*, let alone a *true* one. His earlier insistence that inferential discourse (*reason*) is derivative upon more a more fundamental *structure* of expression (discourse *qua* existentiale) evolves into an insistence that there are genuine *types* of expression (*poetry*) that enable us to think what is foreclosed to mere reasoning.[63] Finally, he overcomes the problem with the Aristotelian formulation of the question by abandoning the Aristotelian approach entirely. This is why he has no longer emphasises the pre-ontological understanding of Being, insofar as it no longer plays the role in formulating the question it did in the early work. However, as we've shown, this only serves to make him more vulnerable to the objection that his project is either meaningless or overly presumptive. In essence, the small cracks we have uncovered in the early work grow into the deep fissures that run throughout the later work.

All of this reinforces the earlier claim that if we are to provide an alternative formulation of the question of Being, we must begin with Heidegger's early approach to the question. Moreover, it

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supplies us with some concrete insights regarding how we must modify this approach. Most importantly, the idea that any formulation of the question must be begun by a transcendental inquiry into the conditions of the possibility of intelligibility that makes explicit both the structure of questioning and the structure of our pre-ontological understanding remains sound. We have simply established that phenomenology is not an adequate transcendental methodology for this purpose (and one would suspect, *simpliciter*). We have also shown that the identification of Being and intelligibility, and thus also that of the question of Being and transcendental philosophy, is far from guaranteed. There is still the promise of an inquiry into Being as it is *in itself*.

In addition to this, we have shown that whatever form the transcendental inquiry takes, it must be able to account for the role of truth in questioning and discourse, and thereby also account for discourse as a practice of giving and asking for reasons. *Prima facie*, there are two ways of going about this: explaining the notion of inference in terms of truth, or explaining the notion of truth in terms of inference.[64] This loosely corresponds to the difference between *model-theoretic* and *proof-theoretic* semantics, respectively.[65] The latter choice is preferable for a number of reasons. First, it enables us to retain more of Heidegger's insights regarding the practical basis of understanding and discourse. This connection between inferential semantics and this sort of methodological pragmatism has been argued for most extensively by Robert Brandom.[66] Second, it is one thing to take truth as primitive, and another to draw a primitive distinction between types of truth. If we are to deploy the distinction between objective and non-objective *truth* motivated above, then we are better off explaining this in terms of a difference between objective and non-objective *discourse*.[67] The aim of such an approach would be to explain intelligibility in terms of the inferential articulation of meaning, and to then explain the conditions of the possibility of this intelligibility in terms of the practical abilities necessary to track the relations between words, sentences, and things that constitute this. Not only does this follow the Heideggerian strategy of explaining *theoretical* understanding in terms of *practical* understanding, but it follows the Wittgensteinian strategy of explaining *meaning* in terms of *use*. However, this does not yet constitute a complete transcendental methodology.

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64 A very clear summary of this choice is to be found in *RIP*, ch. 6.

65 The most perspicuous and thorough account of this difference I have found is presented by Jaroslav Peregrin in his book *Inferentialism* (forthcoming).

66 *MIE*, especially ch. 1-3, and 5. There is also an debate between Brandom and John MacFarlane which does a very good job of outlining the contentious parts of Brandom's argument (*Reading Brandom*, pp. 81-95 and pp. 313-314).

67 It isn't impossible to make something like this distinction on the basis of a single primitive notion of truth, but it generally involves taking intuitively objective truths to be true *simpliciter*, and denying that instances of intuitively non-objective truth are in fact truths. For instance, denying that claims about fictional objects, or ethical and aesthetic values are truth-apt. Simon Blackburn's projectivism is a good example of this approach (Cf. ??). John McDowell has provided good arguments against this position (??), but he falls down insofar as he has no alternative way of accounting for the distinction (nor does it seem that he would want to).

These insights are very promising, but they are for naught if we cannot solve the problems of unity and diversity. What we require is some positive definition of 'Being' as a unitary structure composed of different aspects that neither presupposes any given division of aspects, nor violates the ontological difference. Our pre-ontological understanding of this structure will *ipso facto* be an understanding of this diversity of aspects and their relations, which may then be explicated in a transcendental manner, but we cannot delimit the requisite transcendental methodology without this definition. However, if we recognise that in seeking such a definition we are essentially trying to make explicit the structure of Aristotle's question regarding the unity of the manifold senses of 'Being', then the logical place to go is to return to Aristotle and the tradition that he founds, namely, *metaphysics*. Particularly, this brings into focus a certain tension in Heidegger's claims about Aristotle's legacy. This is the tension between his claim that the metaphysical tradition is essentially *concerned* with Being, and his claim that it nonetheless *forgets* Being. This indicates that the fact that Aristotle was both the one who defined the essence of metaphysics (as first philosophy) and the first to raise the question of Being is not a coincidence. We thus stand to gain a deeper understanding of the question of Being if we examine Heidegger's account of metaphysics in more detail. In light of this, this final chapter will be concerned with the nature of metaphysics and transcendental methodology.