

On the Manifold Meaning of *Aletheia*:
Brentano, Aristotle, Heidegger

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Of the four leading Aristotle scholars in nineteenth-century Germany three were intimately involved in the early history of phenomenology. In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* the author of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* celebrated Aristotle as “more comprehensive and speculative than anyone.”¹ Hegel’s contemporary, the Prague philosopher Bernhard Bolzano (1781–1848), promoted serious study of Aristotle while developing perhaps the first rigorous critique of psychologism. If Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg (1802–1872) bitterly criticized the Hegelians and in general had little to do with the origins of phenomenology, one of his most gifted students of Aristotle ably compensated. Franz Brentano (1838–1917) dedicated his doctoral dissertation *On the Manifold Meaning of Being according to Aristotle* (1862) to Trendelenburg before becoming perhaps the single most important influence on Carl Stumpf (1848–1936), Alexius Meinong (1853–1920), and Edmund Husserl (1859–1938). If we therefore find Husserl’s young assistant at the University of Freiburg teaching courses from 1919 to 1923 that seem a curious compound of phenomenology and Aristotle, the historical precedents—Hegel, Bolzano, and Brentano—make the *mélange* perhaps a bit less exotic.

Martin Heidegger presented a lecture course during the winter semester of 1919–20 on “Selected Problems of Recent Phenomenology” and that summer conducted a seminar for beginning students on Aristotle’s *De anima*. His seminar for the following winter semester consisted of “phe-

¹G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, II, Suhrkamp ed. (Frankfurt am Main, 1971), XIX, 132–33.

nomenological exercises” while for the advanced students he read “phenomenological interpretations” of Aristotle’s *Physics*. In the summer semester of 1922 he lectured on “Phenomenological Interpretations of Selected Aristotelian Treatises on Ontology and Logic,” leading a seminar for younger students on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. For the winter and summer semesters preceding his departure for Marburg Heidegger conducted phenomenological exercises based on two texts: Husserl’s *Ideas I* and Aristotle’s *Physics IV* and *V*. Although other topics involved Augustine, Descartes, Kant, and others, the interlacing of the titles “Aristotle” and “phenomenology” remains striking.²

While in his last year of gymnasial studies at Constance in 1907 Heidegger received from his rector and fellow Messkircher, Conrad Gröber, a copy of Brentano’s dissertation on “being” in Aristotle. It seems a strange gift for a rector to present to a young man who was on his way to the Jesuit seminary in Freiburg—Brentano had renounced the priesthood in 1873 as a result of struggles surrounding papal infallibility and the general anti-Modernist attitude of the Roman hierarchy, left the Church altogether in 1879, gained a wife and simultaneously lost a Vienna professorship in 1880—even though that young man had shown a penchant for taking long walks with difficult books. The *peripatos* with Brentano and Aristotle proved to be one of the longest for Heidegger. In 1963 he called Brentano’s book “the chief help and guide of my first awkward attempts to penetrate into philosophy,” adding,

The following question concerned me in quite a vague manner:
If being is predicated with manifold significance, then what is
its leading, fundamental signification? What does Being
mean?³

²For a list of these courses see W. J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1963), pp. 663–64. Cf. the plan of the *Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe* printed by V. Klostermann (Frankfurt am Main, September, 1974). One of the two volumes promised for September 1975, on *Aristotle’s Logic* (vol. 21, ed. Walter Biemel), a lecture course offered at Marburg during the winter semester of 1925–26, should cast light on the present topic.

³M. Heidegger, “My Way to Phenomenology,” in *On Time and Being*, a translation of *Zur Sache des Denkens* by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 74. Cf. M. Heidegger, “A Dialogue on Language,” in *On the Way to Language*, translated by Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 7. Cf. also Fergus Kerr, O.P., “Metaphysics after Heidegger: for his 85th Birthday,” in *New*

In 1964 Heidegger cited as the persistent task of his thought the meaning of *ἀλήθεια*—no longer to be translated as “truth” but to be pondered as *unconcealment* or “the clearing that first grants Being and thinking and their presencing to and for each other.”⁴ Now one of the four senses ascribed to “being” in Brentano’s dissertation on Aristotle is *ὄν ὡς ἀληθές*, “being in the sense of the true.” Does Brentano’s account of “being in the sense of the true” have significant bearing on Heidegger’s response to *the* matter of his thinking, i.e. *Aletheia* as the unconcealment of beings in presence?

This brief study tries to answer that question by offering (I) a general account of Brentano’s thesis, (II) a detailed resumé of its third chapter, concerning *ὄν ὡς ἀληθές*, (III) a condensed treatment of Heidegger’s aletheological notion of Being, and (IV) a summary of results and response to the question.

Beginnings are more consequential than they seem at first, Brentano warns at the outset of his inquiry, for they determine all that follows.⁵ “And so it happens that whoever in the beginning brushes aside even a bit

Blackfriars (August 1974), pp. 344–45, a reference kindly extended by Robert Lechner.

⁴ *On Time and Being*, p. 68.

⁵ Franz Brentano, *Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1960, a photographic reproduction of the first edition, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1862), pp. 1–2 for this and the following. We will not consider here Brentano’s later works on Aristotle, *Die Psychologie des Aristoteles, insbesondere seine Lehre vom NOUS POIETIKOS* (1867), *Aristoteles’ Lehre vom Ursprung des menschlichen Geistes* (1911), and most important, *Aristoteles und seine Weltanschauung* (1911). In addition to these books and the appropriate sections of Brentano’s *Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (cf. the posthumous Brentano Ausgabe, 1963), there is a good deal of unpublished material. See Franziska Mayer-Hillebrand, “Rückblick auf... F. Brentanos philosophischen Lehren, etc.” in *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, XVII (1963), 156–57, which offers a useful brief account of Brentano’s development and includes a bibliography of secondary literature. Walter Del-Negro, “Von Brentano über Husserl zu Heidegger,” in *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, VII (1953), 571–85, concentrates on Brentano’s later epistemology and says nothing about his early contribution to the question of Being in Heidegger.

of the truth [τῆς ἀληθείας] is led farther and farther along a path through errors a thousand times as large.” Thus Brentano paraphrases Aristotle (*De coelo* I, 5, 271b 8) and takes for the starting-point of his researches the various meanings of “being,” *das Seiende*, τὸ ὄν, in first philosophy. But if one science is to observe being as being then the sundry meanings of being are not only Brentano’s starting-point but Aristotle’s as well. Brentano argues that “first philosophy must take its departure from just this establishment of the meaning of the name ‘being’,” for this constitutes “the threshold of Aristotelian metaphysics.”

The motto for Brentano’s dissertation, τὸ ὄν λέγεται πολλαχῶς, appears at *Metaphysics* Zeta 1, 1028a 10 but may be found in only slightly altered form at Epsilon 2, 1026a 33 and Gamma 2, 1003a 33. “There are many senses in which a thing may be said to ‘be’,” Ross translates. Aristotle offers a list of such senses at each designated place, each list differing somewhat from the others. In Gamma 2 Aristotle elaborates the following meanings for “being”: (a) substances, οὐσίαι; (b) affections of substance, πάθη οὐσίας; (c) way toward substance, ὁδὸς εἰς οὐσίαν; (d) destructions or privations or qualities of substance, φθοραί, στερήσεις, ποιότητες; (e) that which is productive or generative of substance, ποιητικά, γεννητικὰ οὐσίας; (f) things related to substance, and (g) negation of such things and of substance as well, πρὸς τὴν οὐσίαν . . . ἢ τούτων τινὸς ἀπορρίψεις ἢ οὐσίας. Here Aristotle adds the thought-provoking remark that according to the last sense we can say—in spite of Parmenides’ stricture but in support of the Eleatic Stranger—that nonbeing is nonbeing, τὸ μὴ ὄν εἶναι μὴ ὄν. Brentano does not pause to comment on this last remark before reducing all these meanings to four: (1) being that has no existence outside the intellect—the being of privations and negations of substance; (2) Being of movement, generation and corruption—“For these are indeed outside the mind but have no finished and complete existence,” Brentano adds, referring to *Physics* III, 1, 201a 9 on the various senses of “movement” (which prove to be as manifold as the senses of “being”!); (3) being that has a finished but dependent existence—such as affections and qualities of substance; and (4) the Being of substances—*ousia*.

We notice that the reduction of the Gamma 2 list proceeds on the basis of the Leibnizo-Wolffian categories, themselves rooted in medieval Christian ontology, of dependent and independent existences outside or inside the mind. Such a reduction seems quite natural on the basis of a systematic Thomistic-Aristotelian philosophy that is so tightly constructed that no opening for genuine inquiry can appear. Brentano assures us that all the

other lists can be reduced in the same fashion, so that it is ultimately a matter of indifference which Aristotelian list of the meanings of being he selects.⁶

As the basis for the structure of his book Brentano chooses the list at Epsilon 2, 1026a 33 ff.⁷ The meanings of being there cited are: (a) being in the inessential sense, *ὄν κατὰ συμβεβηκός*, in Latin, *ens per accidens*; (b) being in the sense of the true, *ὄν ὡς ἀληθές*, in Latin, *ens tanquam verum*, as opposed to nonbeing as the false, *μὴ ὄν ὡς ψεῦδος*; (c) being in various senses deriving from the schema of categories such as the “what,” quality, quantity, place, time, etc.; and (d) being in potentiality and actuality, *τὸ δυνάμει καὶ ἐνεργεία*. Because Brentano wishes to stress the third of these meanings and because its treatment appears to require the most detailed elaboration, he reverses the places of (c) and (d), treating the problem of the categories last. Before taking up the meaning that most concerns us here, “being in the sense of the true,” we must add a word about Brentano’s treatment of the *Kategorienlehre*, which stands at the center of his own work.

Brentano expresses the main thesis of his dissertation in its fifth chapter, on “being according to the schema of categories.” He calls this the most difficult and important of all the meanings. This one chapter occupies two-thirds of the book’s length; here the secondary sources (Zeller, Prantl, Bonitz, Brandis) are brought into play. Especially important is the *Geschichte der Kategorienlehre* (1846) by his “most honored teacher,” Adolf Trendelenburg.⁸ Brentano’s purpose is to modify Trendelenburg’s view that the categories devolve from elements of grammar or parts of speech,⁹ by insisting that they are primarily significations of “real being.” As analogous significations of being the categories have

⁶ Perhaps this is too harsh: the lists from Theta 10 and Zeta 1, as well as that of Delta 7, to which Zeta 1 refers, are indeed variants of the list Brentano chooses. It is not so much a question of how the various lists may dovetail as of how the content of any given list is to be understood.

⁷ Brentano here is presumably following Adolf Trendelenburg, *Geschichte der Kategorienlehre* (Berlin: G. Bethge, 1846), p. 167. Cf. also pp. 187–89.

⁸ On Trendelenburg’s Aristotelian philosophy—and opposition to Hegelian dialectic—see P. Petersen, *Die Philosophie Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburgs: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Aristoteles im 19. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: C. Boysen, 1913), pp. v ff. On the history of Aristotle research in Germany from Melancthon through “Hegel the Dictator” (cf. p. 137!) to Trendelenburg, see pp. 122 ff. Cf. Trendelenburg’s own account, pp. 196 ff.

⁹ Cf. Trendelenburg, pp. 18 ff. and 179 ff.; cf. also Petersen, pp. 35 ff. and 51 ff.

their *terminus* in the first of their number, *ousia* or first substance. “Being” in the senses derived from the schema of the categories is therefore not merely an “accidental” homonym; for all the other categories are directed “toward one and the same *physis*,” the *one* Being of *ousia*. And *ousia* is what is most real.

II

Brentano’s third chapter treats the question of “being in the sense of the true.” It begins by asserting that for Aristotle truth and falsity are found only in judgments, which may be affirmative or negative. Brentano cites among other sources *De anima* III, 8, 432a 11, *συμπλοκή γὰρ νοημάτων ἐστὶ τὸ ἀληθές ἢ ψεῦδος*, which he translates, “The true or false is a binding of concepts of the intellect.” He adduces a passage from *Metaphysics* Gamma 8, 1012b 8, *ἢ φάναι ἢ ἀποφάναι τὸ ἀληθές ἢ ψεῦδος ἐστὶν . . .* “True or false is nothing other than affirmation or negation.”

But, Brentano now observes, “however much Aristotle in these and other places makes judgment the sole bearer of truth and falsity, however much he denies things outside the intellect and concepts outside of combination all participation in truth and falsity, he still seems in other places to assert just the opposite” (p. 23). In the “lexicon” of his *Metaphysics*, Delta 29, 1024b 17 ff. Aristotle notes that *πράγμα* or things “that do have being” can be called “false” when they appear otherwise than as they (truly) are, e.g. sketches or dreams. Brentano affirms that this passage, “at least as it is formulated,” contradicts those first cited. The issue is further complicated by Aristotle’s ascription of truth and falsity also to the senses (*αἰσθησις*) and the imagination (*φαντασία*) in *De anima* III, 3, 428b 18 and 428a 11. Later (430b 26) Aristotle ascribes *aletheia* to both the thought that thinks the “what” of a thing in accord with what that thing always has been (*κατὰ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι*) and to vision that perceives what is proper to it (e.g. colors). Finally, in *Metaphysics* Delta 29, 1024b 26, Aristotle ascribes truth and falsity to *logos* in the sense of definitions, or as Brentano translates, *Begriffe*.

Brentano hopes to resolve the apparent contradiction—that truth and falsity reside *only* in judgment or predication *but also* in things, in imagination and the senses, in the mind (*nous*) and in definitions (*logoi*)—by distinguishing several senses of “true” and “false.” *Not only τὸ ὄν but also ἀλήθεια has manifold meaning.* The second of the meanings of “being” hence reenacts the drama of the whole: it does not so much say

what being means as show how being *is*, which is to say, manifesting various senses.

One may speak of “true” and “false” with regard to the judging intellect, simple representations and definitions, things imagined, or the things themselves. This does not involve one and the same predication of truth but implies a kind of relation. It does not name in the same way but *analogously*. Truth and falsity are predicated “not καθ’ ἓν, but perhaps πρὸς ἓν καὶ μίαν φύσιν (*Met.* Gamma 2, 1003a 33), not κατὰ μίαν ἰδέαν, but rather κατ’ ἀναλογίαν (*Nic. Eth.* I, 4, 1096b 25).”

At this point (p. 25 n. 11) Brentano refers his readers to the problem of analogy in his fifth chapter, §3, the very section where we found the thesis of Brentano’s work most clearly expressed (cf. Part I above). Brentano argues that “being” in the various senses derived from the schema of categories is a homonym, not of an accidental type, but unified by analogy—and not merely by the analogy of proportionality but by analogy with respect to the same *terminus*.¹⁰ Like the Good and the One, Being is not a genus that can break up into species by the addition of a difference.¹¹ The unity of analogy extends farther than that of genus, however, for it embraces even homonyms. Brentano argues that the unity of being with respect to the categories is *stronger* than that of proportionality. He reviews again at length the famous opening words of *Metaphysics* Gamma 2, 1003a 33 ff.

We speak of being in many senses but always with a view to one [πρὸς ἓν] and to one nature [καὶ μίαν τινὰ φύσιν]. Not simply in the way we use identical expressions [οὐχ’ ὁμονύμως] but in the way everything healthy is related to health, inasmuch as it preserves or restores health, or is a sign of health . . . In precisely this way we speak of being in many senses, but always with a view to one principle [πρὸς μίαν ἀρχήν] . . . And just as there is *one* science of the healthy, so it is in all such cases. For not only that which is expressed under one [καθ’ ἓν λεγομένων] is to be studied by *one*

¹⁰ Brentano’s understanding of analogy differs significantly from that of Trendelenburg, which stresses the mathematical origins of analogy—as proportionality, *ἰσότης λόγων*. Cf. Trendelenburg, pp. 149 ff.

¹¹ Cf. Aristotle, *Met.* Beta 3, 998b 22 and Eta 6, 1045a 36; and *Nic. Eth.* I, 4, 1096a 23.

science but also that which is expressed in relation to one nature [ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν πρὸς μίαν λεγομένων φύσιν]. For this last-named also in a certain sense is expressed under one [καθ' ἓν] . . . Obviously therefore it is proper for *one* science to study being insofar as it is being [τοῦ ὄντος ἢ ὄν ὅσα εἶδη θεωρηῆσαι μίας ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμης].¹²

“Being” is not merely a homonym—a word whose sound accidentally suggests various things, like the “bear” who “bears” her cubs—and because it is not a synonym either it must be some curious third thing to be pursued toward the *terminus ousia*.¹³

But what does all that have to do with “the true”? What is its *terminus*? If it is spoken neither καθ' ἓν nor simply homonymously, what is that ἀρχή and φύσις toward which it tends? We return now to Brentano's third chapter (pp. 26 ff.).

Aristotle says¹⁴ that the true affirms where there is combination and negates where there is separation—in the things. “For him truth is accordance of knowledge and state of affairs [*Übereinstimmung der Erkenntnis mit der Sache*].” Brentano therefore considers the kind of truth or knowledge to depend upon the kinds of substance (for example, simple, noncomposite substance) and asserts the priority of the known in the relation between knowing and the known (referring to *Metaphysics* Iota 6, 1057a 9). Contrary to the fundamental direction of Idealism, so vigorously opposed by Trendelenburg,¹⁵ Brentano affirms that “our thought is dependent upon things” and in order to be true “must direct itself toward them” (p. 29). He cites *Categories* 5, 4b 8: “It is because the *Sache* [τὸ πρᾶγμα] is or is not that it may be said of speech [*die Rede*, ὁ λόγος] that it is true or false.” Nevertheless Brentano concedes that, while the goal of

¹² Adapted from the translation by Franz F. Schwarz (Stuttgart: P. Reclam, 1970).

¹³ Cf. Trendelenburg, pp. 33 ff.

¹⁴ *Met.* Epsilon 4, 1027b 20 and Theta 10, 1051b 3 ff. Brentano also refers to *Cat.* 5, 4a 37 and *De interp.* 9, qu. v.

¹⁵ Cf. his *Kategorienlehre*, pp. ix–xi. However, Trendelenburg is not so much anti-Hegel as he is polemical against Karl Rosenkranz and Karl Ludwig Michelet, the “Friends of the Immortalized.” Himself devoted to a philological-textual approach—his book is dedicated to Immanuel Bekker and Christian August Brandis of the Berlin Academy—Trendelenburg inveighs against the absolutization of three-stage dialectic which, he says, “quite often has its sole ground in the need for psychological comfort, because it promises the easiest path to a panoramic view of the whole.”

desire remains outside, the goal of knowledge “is found in the mind [*im Geiste, ἐν διανοίᾳ*] itself.” “But the mind knows the truth only when it judges” (p. 30). Hence judgment or predication remains for Brentano that *terminus* to which all the analogous senses of “the true”—in *aisthesis*, *phantasia*, or the *pragmata* themselves—tend. Just as health is predicated first of the body, and only by extension of diet and exercise, so is truth first ascribed to true judgments, and only by extension to those faculties or things judgment involves. There is a sense in which we may properly speak of false money or a false man, or of true coin and a true friend; but “the *Grundbegriff* or truth remains always that of *Übereinstimmung* of the cognizing mind with the *Sache* cognized” (p. 33).

Now if the primary sense of “being” is *ousia* or substance while that of “truth” is accordance of knowledge and thing, what does Aristotle mean by *ὄν ὡς ἀληθές*? Again citing *Metaphysics* Epsilon 4, 1027b 18, a passage whose clarity “leaves nothing to be desired,” Brentano argues that true and false are found only in *διανοία* or “judgment.” But this answers only the “where?” question, not the “what?” question Brentano is asking. He now makes a somewhat daring attempt based on *Metaphysics* Theta 10, 1052a 5 ff. He makes the judgment—the affirmation or negation of a combination or separation in the things—the subject (grammatical) of which being (*das Seiende*) is predicated. But this cannot be merely the copulative “is” of normal predication; the kind of Being (*das Sein*) Brentano now means refers to the truth = Being of the judgment as a whole. He offers an example.

Suppose someone wishes to prove to a friend that the sum of the angles of a triangle equals that of two right angles, and elicits from him agreement that the exterior angles of the intersecting line segments equal the opposite interior angles. The proof proceeds until a certain point in the demonstration is reached. The question then arises, “Is this, or is this not?” That means, “Is it true or is it false?”—“It is!” That is to say, it is *true*. This kind of Being is clearly of the highest importance—yet how can its “truth” be judged? The basic principles of all the sciences *cannot* be demonstrated. At the outset of the *Posterior Analytics*, 71a 11, Aristotle says that their *ὄτι ἔστι*, their “that they are,” must be known beforehand.

Thus the meaning of *ὄν ὡς ἀληθές* appears to be decided. The truth of predication is grounded in the ultimately nondemonstrable Being of beings. Yet this decision soon falters.

Brentano now (pp. 36–37) introduces the curious cases where the being true of a judgment has no real (*reele*) implications, e.g. in self-contradict-

tion (“Every statement is false”) and in affirmations involving what is purely imaginative (“Centaurus are fabulous creatures”). Another such curious case is that notion of nonbeing whereby nonbeing *is* (*on hos alethes!*). In order to account for these cases Brentano must concede that the copulative “is,” *even when the subject of the sentence is a “real” concept*, does not assure us of “the existent nature of being outside the mind” (p. 38). The *on hos alethes* “has its ground in the operations of the human intellect which combines and separates, affirms and negates, and not in the highest *Realprincipien* from which metaphysics strives to know its $\delta\nu \tilde{\eta} \delta\nu$ ” (p. 39). It has therefore to do solely with logic, which has nothing to say about Being outside the mind. For logic “there is nothing left but the $\delta\nu \omega\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma$; and for this reason too logic, as a merely formal science, is separated from the other parts of philosophy, which are real.”¹⁶

At this point Brentano’s observations on “being in the sense of the true” end. Meanwhile something astonishing has happened. In conformity with his reputation as a dogged realist—a reputation based largely on his late work, however, much of it posthumously published—Brentano has been trying to show the analogical unity of both “being” and “the true.” His major effort has been to show how “the true” expresses the accordance of judgment and thing (*dianoia* and *pragma*) and how the mind has to direct itself toward things and conform to them in order to judge truly. True judgment must rest in the manifest Being of the *Sache*: “It is true” can be abbreviated (but the abbreviation actually carries judgment toward its ground) in the expression, “It is.” *On hos alethes* would thus mean *the substantiality* (from *ousia*) of what is combined or separated in judgment. In other words $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ promises to reveal “being” in its highest categorical determination. But in the end, because of arguments raised in traditional ontology and theory of knowledge (Epimenidean contradiction, dependent existence of things merely imagined in the mind, the problem of nonbeing), the meaning of being as truth collapses into something very like solipsism. In the effort to aid his mentor in depriving Hegel of his metaphysical logic—Hegel, who says, “Aristotle thinks objects, and since they are as thoughts, they are in their truth; that is their *ousia*”—Brentano

¹⁶ These remarks are based on Brentano’s reading of *Met.* Epsilon 4, which follows the analysis in Trendelenburg’s *Kategorienlehre*, pp. 167 and 187–89. Much later in his career Brentano reduces “being in the sense of the true” to an “improper sense” of being = thing. See his own *Kategorienlehre*, edited from the *Nachlass*, by A. Kastil (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1933), p. 13.

deprives metaphysics of speech and leaves logic less than nothing to say.¹⁷

III

In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* Heidegger asks:

How is the question, "What is the meaning of Being?" to find its answer if the direction from which the answer can be expected remains obscure? Must we not first ask in what direction it is advisable to look, in order from this perspective to be able to determine Being as such and thus obtain a concept of Being with reference to which the possibility and necessity of its essential articulation will become comprehensible? So the question of "first philosophy," namely, "What is the being as such?" must force us back beyond the question "What is Being as such?" to the still more fundamental question: *Whence are we to comprehend something like Being, indeed with the great wealth of articulations and relations that are disclosed in it?*¹⁸

"Something like Being" has been the object of Heidegger's inquiry early and late. Whether focusing on the disclosedness of *Dasein*—which is something very like *Sein*—on the clearing of Being in which beings come to presence, endure for a time, and depart into absence, or on the event that appropriates mortals by giving Time and Being for thought, Heidegger's question of the meaning of Being remains on the search for something like Being.

Immediately after the above question in his *Kant* book Heidegger notes that the question of Being, "within the framework of the abstract ontology inspired by the metaphysics of Aristotle," remains a somewhat artificial and academic problem: the essential relation between the problem of Being and the *finitude of man* seems to be lacking in Aristotle. Heidegger therefore acknowledges his own search to be a departure from the tradition. Nevertheless this particular book ends by remembering Aristotle's words at *Metaphysics* Zeta 1, 1028b 2, on the question that was raised in earliest times, is raised today, and will always be a matter of perplexity: What is being?

¹⁷ Hegel, *Op. cit.*, XIX, 164.

¹⁸ Translated by James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), pp. 231–32, with minor changes.

Before achieving his own decisive response to that question in *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger had occasion to get involved once again with Franz Brentano's work. The brief third division of Heidegger's doctoral dissertation, *The Doctrine of Judgment in Psychologism* (1913),¹⁹ offers a critical reply to Brentano's *Psychology from the Empirical Standpoint* (1874). Yet in this work Heidegger himself remains absorbed in the problems of neo-Kantian and phenomenological epistemology—and that means in the tradition that caused Brentano to stress the importance of judgment and predication for the meaning of “the true.” Heidegger's criticism of Brentano here has virtually nothing to do with his later aletheology, and we take note of it only in order to estimate the distance of Heidegger's own way.

Brentano allows the distinction between existential and categorial predication to collapse: the “is” of the existential statement “A sick man is” corresponds to the copula of the categorial assertion “Some man is sick.” “Whether I say that an affirmative judgment is true or that its object is existing, whether I say that a negative judgment is true or that its object is not existing, in both cases I say one and the same thing.”²⁰ We recognize this argument as the one which appeared at the high-point of Brentano's consideration of “being in the sense of the true” in Aristotle, for which “it is true” means simply “it is.”

Unlike Brentano, Husserl in the sixth of his *Logical Investigations* had preserved the distinction between the Being of the copular “is” of categorial assertion and the “is” that expresses *totale Deckung* between meaning-intention and meaning-fulfillment or objective givenness.²¹ Heidegger follows Husserl by criticizing briefly the meaning of the existential “is” in Brentano's psychology. When I assert that A is, where A first means “tree” and then means the mathematical relation “ $a > b$,” the “is” has an equivocal sense. The mathematical relation especially must be seen “in its

¹⁹ Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Frühe Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1972), pp. 57 ff., esp. pp. 62 and 65–66, from which the following material derives.

²⁰ F. Brentano, *On the Origin of Ethical Knowledge* (1889), p. 76, cited by Heidegger, *Frühe Schriften*, p. 62.

²¹ Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1921) II / 2, 123–24. In a sense the ideal of *totale Deckung* corresponds to Brentano's 1889 position: in §§ 38–39 Husserl speaks of an identification of *Sein* and *Wahrheit*, where Being expresses both the being true of “acts” and the true being of their “objective correlates.” “Evidence” expresses the unity of Being and truth.—But all that is merely to introduce the problem of sensuous and categorial intuitions and “the possibility of complete adequation” (p. 147).

peculiar mode of actuality” as radically free from any psychic act that affirms or denies it. Heidegger thus raises the question “of the meaning of ‘Being’ ” in judgment.²² But he adopts the solution suggested in the *Logic* of Rudolf Hermann Lotze—itself based on an understanding of the Platonic *Ideenlehre*—that the peculiar mode of actuality for judgment is validity, *das Gelten*.

From the perspective of Heidegger’s later work it is not difficult to criticize Brentano for emphasizing the meaning of being according to the schema of the categories.²³ Yet Heidegger too in his youth, pursuing the problem of being in terms of judgment and validity, did obeisance to the *Kategorienlehre*. His Habilitation dissertation treated the problem of the categories in Scotist philosophy. But in his introduction and conclusion to this work Heidegger expressed growing dissatisfaction with any purely formal approach to the problem of the categories—that is to say, any approach that failed to take into account the general culture of the epoch in which the categories were discussed.²⁴ Neither objectivistic Realism nor subjectivistic Idealism solve the problem of the *kind* of validity the categories may have. The answer seems to lie “*in a group of problems that lies deeper, disclosed in the concept of the living Spirit . . .*” (p. 347). The latter does not have its metaphysically most important sense in the Subject of knowledge theory but rather in an essentially historical development. For the understanding of the categories in the Middle Ages, for example, study of medieval mysticism, moral theology, and ascetic tracts is indispensable.²⁵

Yet historical understanding cannot result from the mere collation of traditional views—a fault one may find in Brentano’s dissertation and perhaps in Heidegger’s doctoral work as well. But by 1921 Heidegger’s nascent philosophical project is bound to a “destruction of the history of

²² *Frühe Schriften*, pp. 35, 120, and 128.

²³ Jean Beaufret has done this in his *Dialogue avec Heidegger*, vol. I, *Philosophie grecque* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1973), pp. 117 ff.

²⁴ *Frühe Schriften*, pp. 135–48 and esp. 341–53.

²⁵ *Frühe Schriften*, pp. 351 and 147. See also the review of Heidegger’s early writings by John Caputo, “Language, Logic, and Time,” *Research in Phenomenology*, III (1973), 147–55. See also Caputo’s detailed treatment of the Habilitation dissertation in the *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, V, no. 2 (May, 1974), 101–117, as well as his and Reiner Schürmann’s work on Heidegger and Meister Eckhart in the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, XII–XIII (October 1974–January 1975).

ontology.”²⁶ We may surmise from Heidegger’s teaching activity at this time that his approach to Aristotle is tied to this destruction. His novel approach to that philosopher induced Paul Natorp to secure Heidegger’s appointment as *Extraordinarius* at Marburg in 1922. The contents of that manuscript on Aristotle that so impressed Natorp are unknown to us but we do know that two years later Heidegger introduced a course on Plato’s *Sophist*—where the problem of “being” is central—by discussion of the meaning of ἀληθεύειν in *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, 3. Whatever Heidegger’s approach to the question of Being may have been there, we may be sure that it had little to do with “clever games with categories and modalities” and a lot to do with *aletheia*.²⁷

In *Being and Time* Heidegger attempts to recover the question of the meaning of Being and to seek an answer that goes beyond manipulation of the traditional categories. That the notion of Being is the most “universal” concept, characterized by the unity of analogy, undefinable by reference to beings and yet “obvious” in its meaning and import,²⁸ Heidegger learned from many sources—Brentano not the least among these. But his essential insight that the meaning of Being was determined in advance for Greek ontology by a certain conception of Time, that *ousia* was not primarily the category of substance but the phenomenon of presence (*Gegen-wart, Anwesenheit*), is radically his own (*SuZ*, p. 26). It is also important to note how quickly and decisively the question of the meaning of Being in *Sein und Zeit* involves the question of truth. Section 7, “The phenomenological method of the investigation,” defines φαίνόμενον as what shows itself from itself and identifies this with “being”; it defines *logos* as ἀποφαίνεσθαι, letting what is talked about be seen in its own terms. At this point the problem of true and false *logos* arises—and Heidegger rejects the primacy of the notion of *Übereinstimmung* between knowledge and state of affairs that dominated Brentano’s account of

²⁶ Heidegger makes this decisive step in his review of Karl Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* (1919), written between 1919 and 1921. This important early writing appears in *Karl Jaspers in der Diskussion*, ed. Hans Saner (Munich: R. Piper, 1973), pp. 70–100. I have offered an analysis of the piece in the *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, VI, no. 3 (October, 1975).

²⁷ The quoted phrase is Hans-Georg Gadamer’s. See his “Marburger Erinnerungen,” in *Alma Mater Philippina* (Marburg am Lahn: Universitätsbund E.V., Winter Semester, 1973–74), p. 24.

²⁸ M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 12th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1972), pp. 3–4. Cited in the text as *SuZ*, with page reference, unless otherwise specified.

truth. “The ‘being true’ of λόγος as ἀληθεύειν, in λέγειν as ἀποφαίνεσθαι, suggests taking the being that is being talked about out of its concealment and letting it be seen as unconcealed (ἀληθές), *discovering it*” (SuZ, p. 33). Here as well as in section 44 Heidegger reverses the traditional priorities that dominate Brentano’s understanding of “the true.” The *aisthesis* and *noesis* Aristotle names in *De anima* III, 3, 428b 18 and 430b 26 are *more original* senses of the true, i.e. of discovery, than correctness of judgment (SuZ, pp. 33, 219, and esp. 226). Predication or assertion is a *derivative mode of interpretation*, which is itself grounded in the understanding of Being that Dasein always already possesses (SuZ, sections 32–33). Such understanding of Being is in turn rooted in the disclosedness of world, Dasein, and Being, which founds all discovery and hence constitutes the original sense of truth.

In section 44 Heidegger reproduces a whole series of quotations from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, culminating in the definition of philosophy as the science of truth, ἐπιστήμη τις τῆς ἀληθείας, and the science that studies τὸ ὄν ἢ ὄν. For Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein the confluence of Being and Truth is fundamental: *on hos alethes* is not one among many meanings of “being” but the central phenomenon of Being that requires “a new starting-point [einen neuen Ansatz]” (SuZ, p. 214).²⁹

Whether the new starting-point could remain within a fundamental ontology of Dasein conducted on the guideline of temporality is of course a much-disputed question. Here we only note that a “repetition” of section 44 in the second division of *Being and Time* does not occur—as though the reversal presaged as “Time and Being” and the transformation suggested in the titles *ZEITLICHKEIT des Daseins* but *TEMPORALITÄT des Seins* could not be carried out in Part One of *Being and Time*. Yet the decisive transition from the notion of truth as accordance or correspondence to that of uncovering is achieved in that work. Already in *Sein und Zeit*—and not after any sort of *Kehre* conceived as a “conversion” to Being—the double leitmotif of Heidegger’s thought is the question of Being

²⁹ At SuZ, 215, line 6, Heidegger refers to Brentano as having drawn attention to Kant’s acceptance of the traditional notion of truth as *Übereinstimmung*. He does not cite Brentano’s text, and I suspect it is one of the later works. See “On the Concept of Truth” (1889) in *Wahrheit und Evidenz*, edited from the *Nachlass* by O. Kraus (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1930), pp. 12 ff., a work Heidegger could not have seen in *this* collection but which may have been known to him. There are no further references to Brentano in *Sein und Zeit*.

and the question of Truth, or what we have called the aletheological notion of Being.³⁰

In our account of Brentano's treatment of being as the true we asked what *terminus* could serve as the focal point of the meanings of truth—in the manner that *ousia* served as the *terminus* for being. If we say “truth” always with a view to one, *pros hen*, whether it be one ‘principle’, *mian archen*, or one ‘nature’, *mian physin*, what is that fundamental meaning of truth? We say ‘principle’, but as Heidegger notes at the outset of *Vom Wesen des Grundes* the word *arche* also has “*mannigfache Bedeutungen*.”³¹ We say ‘nature’, but the inverted commas suggest that this is not the only translation of *physis*. Indeed Heidegger's way of advancing the question of truth after *Being and Time* is to ask, What is the *φύσις* of *ἀλήθεια*?

In his essay “On the Essence of Truth” Heidegger briefly refers to *physis*, which for early Greek thinking is not so much a demarcated region of beings as it is an upsurgence of *presence*.³² Presence is the meaning of *ousia*; upsurgence is the meaning of *physis*; unconcealment is the meaning of *aletheia*; and the gathering of these three into one is *logos*.³³ Upsurgence into unconcealment is the *Urphänomen* that lets the Being of beings show itself—however much it loves to hide. The *ἐν*, whether it be conceived as the one *φύσις* or the one *ἀρχή*, is Being as the movement (*κίνησις*) into unconcealment and return to concealment. Such is the transformed sense of the *ὄν ὡς ἀληθές*, which names the fundamental task perhaps even of Aristotle's ontology.³⁴

³⁰ Near the end of Section 44 Heidegger writes, “There is / It gives Being—not beings—only insofar as there is truth. And truth is only insofar and so long as Dasein is. Being and Truth ‘are’ equiprimordially.” On this “double leitmotif” see the excellent account of Walter Biemel, *Heidegger* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1973), p. 35. This work, now being translated by J. Mehta, is reviewed by Kenneth Maly later in this issue of *Research in Phenomenology*.

³¹ M. Heidegger, *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1967), p. 21.

³² Cf. *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, in *Wegmarken*, p. 85.

³³ See M. Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, translated by David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 23, 39, 62–63, and 113; also M. Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by Ralph Manheim (Garden City: Doubleday-Anchor, 1961), pp. 85–87, 96–97, 104 ff.

³⁴ See M. Heidegger, “Vom Wesen und Begriff der PHYSIS,” in *Wegmarken*, pp. 317, 329–30, 340, 353, and 370–71. Cf. “Aletheia,” in *Early Greek Thinking*, pp. 111–15. Jean Beaufret (Op. cit., p. 121) follows Heidegger by calling Aristotle's task *peri tas archas aletheuein* (*Nic. Eth.* VI, 3, 1141a 17), which Beaufret translates,

IV

If we truncate our inquiry at this point it is because the double leitmotif of Being and Truth dominates literally all of Heidegger's later work. To give an adequate account of it goes far beyond our purpose and capacities. But by now we can summarize the results of our inquiry and come to a conclusion.

Brentano offers an account of the manifold significance of being; Heidegger formulates the question of the meaning of Being. Brentano follows the tradition by emphasizing the importance of the categories, especially substance, in determining the primary sense of being; Heidegger puts these categories in question by reinterpreting the first of them as presence and by thematizing the problem of time. Brentano again follows the tradition by naming assertion or judgment the primary locus of truth, although he tries (unsuccessfully as it turns out) to prevent the gap between judgment and thing from expanding into the Subject-Object split and the solipsistic chasm; Heidegger's interpretation of truth as unconcealment rather than correctness of judgment offers Brentano's interpretation what it needs in order to prevent the collapse into solipsism that Brentano himself wishes to escape but cannot.

Heidegger's attempt to ponder *ousia* and *aletheia* as a unity concentric with *physis* and *logos* goes far beyond anything Brentano might have conceived under the title *on hos alethes*. Yet when Heidegger insists that Aristotle's categories cannot be reduced to elements of grammar³⁵ we recall Brentano's resistance to Trendelenburg's main thesis. Perhaps Brentano's most positive achievement, viewed from the perspective of Heidegger's project, is best expressed in the following way.³⁶ For traditional metaphysics "being" is fundamentally "one." It is what perdures and remains, embracing all in unity and identity. It is at the same time so broad in scope that it defies explanation and so obvious in meaning that it requires none. It is totality, Hegel says, and is therefore absolute indifference; and there is a sense in which it deserves to be met with absolute indifference. Pure Being is pure abstraction, destitution, really Nothing. It

"... entrer dans l'Oouvert jusqu'ou enfin devient visible ce dont tout le reste prend issue et qui ne cesse de régner sur lui," to enter into the open until we finally can see the place from which all the rest takes its departure and which rules unceasingly over everything.

³⁵ Cf. for example *Early Greek Thinking*, p. 38.

³⁶ I am indebted to Kenneth Maly for the following insight.

is the beginning, but, as the metaphysical definition of God, it is a beginning that can see to itself. For metaphysics Being is ultimately not a problem. For Brentano it becomes one. Brentano's problem is that the meaning of "being" is unclear in its historic beginnings in Aristotle. *But by exposing the manifold meaning of being according to Aristotle Brentano paves the way for putting an entire tradition into question.* That is not his express intention. His intentions are (1) to reach the threshold of Aristotelian ontology and (2) not to allow even a little of τῆς ἀληθείας in the beginning to be brushed aside. Although it seems clear in retrospect—and it may only be the dazzling clarity of what Sartre and Merleau-Ponty call *l'illusion rétrospective*—that Brentano leaves a large part of the true unconsidered, it is nevertheless true that the question of the *mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden* prompts the question of the *Sinn des Seins* and does so partly by drawing attention to the essential correlation of ὄν ὡς ἀληθές.

Earlier we asked: Does Brentano's account of "being in the sense of the true" have significant bearing on Heidegger's response to *the* matter of his thinking—*Aletheia* as the unconcealment of beings in presence? On the occasion of his nomination to the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences in 1957 Heidegger answered this query: "The question concerning the simple 'oneness' of what is manifold in Being—at that time [1907–08] churning helplessly, obscure and unstable—remained the single unrelenting impulse, through many upsets, false turns, and perplexities, for the treatise *Being and Time* which appeared two decades later."³⁷

Being as presence and truth as unconcealment do remain unthought in Brentano's treatment of "being in the sense of the true." But Brentano names the two together and tries to think them together. His attempt therefore makes all the difference. It is the gift of a question given by one young thinker to another.

³⁷ Cf. *Jahreshefte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1957–58), reprinted in Heidegger's *Frühe Schriften*, p. x.