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The return to the world: précis of a defense of Heideggerian realism

Graham Charles Bounds

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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THE RETURN TO THE WORLD:
PRÉCIS OF A DEFENSE OF
HEIDEGGERIAN REALISM

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

By
Graham Charles Bounds
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TO

My parents, for instilling in me both curiosity and wonder.

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ABSTRACT

I defend Martin Heidegger's philosophy from Lee Braver's contention that it espouses or entails anti-realism, and instead contend that it strongly supports a robust realism. Realism is, in essence, the metaphysical position which states that human beings are aware—or are capable of being aware—of entities that exist independently of us. The counter-position, anti-realism, sometimes equated with idealism, holds that this is not the case. Braver breaks down these simplistic definitions into several more technical propositions, or “matrices,” and attempts to show how Heidegger rejects the realism matrices in favor of their anti-realist counterparts. I will likewise examine the matrices, arguing that Heidegger rejects all but one of them, but that, contrary to the tradition, none of these are essential components of a realist position. Furthermore, I argue that in rejecting these matrices, Heidegger is able to construct a philosophical theory that embraces the most important matrix, and therefore the essence of realism itself, in a novel way.

INTRODUCTION

The question of the realism/idealism problematic in Martin Heidegger's philosophy has reached its apex in recent years. Hubert Dreyfus, in his appropriation of Heideggerian thought into the province of philosophy of mind, set the stage for a field of generally realist interpretations of Heidegger's magnum opus, *Being and Time*. Following Heidegger's so-called "ontological difference"—the distinction between questions about the *ontic*, or the furniture of the universe, and deeper issues of the *ontological*, the *Being* of those beings—a number of interpreters, most notably Taylor Carman and Mark Wrathall, have recently disseminated a "middle way" reading of Heidegger as an "ontic realist" but an "ontological idealist." That is, entities *are* independently of Dasein—Heidegger's anti-Cartesian characterization of the human being—but the *way* that they are, or rather *what* they are is, in a non-trivial sense, dependent on us, our ideas, conceptions, etc.

In opposition to this somewhat standard view, a number of commentators, including William Blattner, Cristina Lafont, and Herman Philipse, have argued Heidegger's philosophy betrays far stronger idealist components than Carman and his fellow travelers would admit. Whether this idealist tendency manifests itself most pronouncedly in Heidegger's analyses of language or time, these philosophers argue that *Being and Time* in particular, but Heidegger's work in general, points back to a more thoroughly idealist position, one in which the very things we encounter are, from the ground up, constituted by Dasein and its mode of life.

Lee Braver's recent book, *A Thing of this World: A History of Continental Anti-Realism*, has taken up this position in full force. In tracing anti-realism through the Continental tradition's major figures, Braver argues that a rejection of many realist propositions is not merely present in, but characteristic of Continental thought. His treatment of Heidegger in particular attempts to evince a *conscious* rejection of realism as part of an underlying agenda. In Braver's own words, "*Being and Time* as we have it [...] is largely an analysis of realism—its origins, limitations, dangers, and cure. Realism has inflicted philosophical trauma upon humanity for millennia, and it must be dismantled before we can reconnect with our selves to achieve authenticity."¹

Braver's approach is systematic. He introduces six "realism matrices," each of which is presented in the exacting terminology of some of philosophy's greatest minds, and then presents counterpart matrices that represent anti-realism and which find, as he argues, expression in the history of Continental thought. These matrices, collectively, give voice to a thorough array of hypotheses addressing different aspects of realism, as well as theories that seek to reformulate the realism/idealism problematic in novel ways altogether.

This thesis will attempt to push back against Braver's reading of Heidegger as a thoroughgoing anti-realist, and will instead attempt to make the case that robustly realist tendencies run deeply through Heidegger's philosophy circa the *Being and Time* era. I will do this primarily by dissecting four of Braver's matrices, R2 Correspondence, R3 Uniqueness, R4 Bivalence, and R5 Passive Knower, and tangentially addressing R1 Independence. Ultimately, I conclude that Heidegger rejects R2, R3, and R4, but the way he does so informs an acceptance of R5. In the case of each rejection, I will argue first that these positions are not necessary conditions for realism, and further that the way in which Heidegger rejects them does not imply anything anti-realist.

¹ Braver, L. *A Thing of This World*, p. 164.

Chapter 1 will focus on R2 Correspondence, defending Heidegger's non-traditional theory of truth as fully realist in implication. Chapter 2 will continue by addressing the related matrices of R3 Uniqueness and R4 Bivalence. I will make the case that Heidegger's rejection of these two leads to a novel way of viewing the thing-in-itself and our access to reality. The final chapter will examine R5 Passive Knower, arguing that Heidegger sees phenomenology as holding out the possibility of passive knowledge in opposition to the anti-realist Kantian paradigm of human beings as A5 Active Knowers. In some sense, philosophy since Kant has been a way of wrestling with the Kantian insight of the Active Knower, the implications of and reactions to such a revolutionary thought. By arguing that R2, R3, and R4 are not essential components of a thoroughgoing realism, I will therefore obliquely contend that R5 Passive Knower is the only matrix of these that is essential for a realist to uphold, because it addresses head-on the paradigm Kant formulated—that paradigm which has informed, perhaps even determined, both Analytic and Continental thought ever since. This assessment of the essential character of realism is along the same lines as Graham Harman's, when he declares, "By 'realist' I mean [those philosophies that] reject the central teaching of Kant's Copernican Revolution, which turns philosophy into a meditation on human finitude and forbids it from discussing reality in itself."² As I will argue, Heidegger's philosophy attempts to lay out the conditions for understanding just how Dasein has access to "reality itself."

Finally, it should be stressed that this thesis will not constitute an argument for Heidegger's realism, but an argument for a brand of *Heideggerian* realism. I will not be claiming that Heidegger considered himself a realist, saw his phenomenological ontology as a realist philosophy, or would even have considered it appropriate to take such a reading away from his work. Sheehan, in plotting a general cartography of Heidegger studies, divides the field into four main positions, an ultra-orthodox and a "rejectionist wing," between which stands a much more diverse region of scholars, ranging from those in the generally orthodox camp to the "liberal-assimilationists." While the former seek to closely read and properly interpret Heidegger's thought, the latter, "beyond getting Heidegger right, [...] seek to put his work into dialogue with other contemporary philosophers and perhaps to amend or correct him in the process."³ Though this thesis will primarily seek to clarify Heidegger's philosophical thought to defend it from anti-realist construal, at the same time its spirit falls squarely into this latter camp. As contemporary interpreters of Heidegger, I believe we should ultimately be less interested in what Heidegger believed he believed, and more interested in what his philosophy affords us, what the depth of his thought supports or implies. Instead of attempting to restrict ourselves merely to what Heidegger claimed about his own work, I believe that, as students of that work, we should look to those of his insights that are plausible and profound, and carry on along those lines. In this thesis, I argue that such plausible and profound insights in Heidegger's work point to a robust form of realism.

² Harman, G. Preface. *Towards Speculative Realism*, p. 2.

³ Sheehan, T. "A Paradigm Shift In Heidegger Research," p. 3

CHAPTER 1: TRUTH AS UNCOVERING

In this chapter, I lay out Heidegger's theory of truth and explore aspects of its implications for the realism/idealism problematic. I begin in section 1.1 by providing a brief overview of Heidegger's theory of truth and how it differs from the traditional account, correspondence. The next section, 1.2, continues by analyzing Tugendhat's well-known critique of Heidegger's theory, arguing that Tugendhat has simply misunderstood Heidegger by ignoring crucial passages of *Being and Time*. Finally, section 1.3 briefly examines a "problem passage" in *Being and Time*, typically seen as committing Heidegger to an anti-realist position regarding truth. I argue that not only does this passage *not* entail anything anti-realist in nature, but that its archetypical critics cannot escape their own objections.

1.1 Preliminary: Heidegger's Account of Truth

1.1.1

From the time of Aristotle, the so-called "correspondence theory" has, in one form or another, been the predominant account of truth. Though the theory has appeared in different forms, these are merely variations on the same basic theme; the Thomist characterization of truth as "*adaequation rei et intellectus*" (the correspondence of the thing with the intellect) is, in essence, the same as the prevailing contemporary description of truth as the correspondence of a proposition to matters of fact. As Hilary Putnam expresses it, "Truth involves some sort of correspondence relation between words or thought-signs and external things and sets of things."¹ Lee Braver codifies this as his R2 realism matrix.

Heidegger's account of truth, on the other hand, rejects the idea that truth lies in the correspondence of one thing—whether the intellect or a proposition—with the world, and as a result denies that an assertion or judgment is the proper locus of truth. Instead, Heidegger identifies truth as *aletheia*, a Greek word meaning "un-hiddenness," sometimes translated as uncovering or unconcealment. Truth as *aletheia*, then, is much more fundamental than propositional truth, a part of Dasein's (human being's) basic Being-in-the-world. As a rejection of R2 Correspondence, Heidegger's theory thus qualifies under Braver's thesis as an instance of an anti-realist position, which he dubs A2.

However, it is important to note that this is not exactly a simple rejection of the correspondence account of truth, nor does it deny that propositions can be properly said to be true or false. Braver admits that seeing this theory as a flat-out dismissal of correspondence is somewhat erroneous: "We can see that Heidegger does accept R2 Correspondence Truth, but redefines and limits it. It is only true of present-at-hand objects, and it necessarily presupposes the more primordial truth of uncovering or disclosure (A2), which he calls *aletheia*."² The point that Heidegger is making is that there is a much more fundamental occurrence that can be properly called truth, and on which the truth of propositions is already reliant. We can crudely characterize Heidegger's relocation of truth from its traditional home in propositions to, for lack of a better word, *perception* itself. Understanding why Heidegger makes this move from

¹ Putnam, H. *Reason, Truth, and History*, p. 49.

² Braver, L. *A Thing of This World*, p. 204.

propositional truth to alethic truth involves understanding how the former is dependent on the latter.

1.1.2

Dahlstrom refers to the correspondence theory of truth as hinging on a particular assumption, what he calls the “logical prejudice.” This is not an attack on logic itself or its veracity, but rather on the veracity of the age-old model that says truth is something that occurs in logic, that it is first and foremost, or even solely, *something about propositions*:

The specific logical prejudice in question is a certain way of speaking and thinking about truth or, equivalently, a theory of suitable uses of ‘truth’ and its cognates that is traditionally construed as a cornerstone of logic. Logic typically begins with analysis of assertions (propositions, statements, judgments, or the like) and their possible combinations as the elements of any scientific theory that is open to verification or falsification. In other words, logic assumes that assertions and their kin are the site of truth, indeed in the sense that they must be in place for there to be anything that might be termed the ‘truth.’³

But for Heidegger this “logical prejudice” misses that on which it is, in the first place, dependent. Classically, in order for a proposition P to be true, some fact F must pertain and P must refer to F. But Heidegger’s point is that in order to refer to F at all, P must already be letting F be disclosed. When I say, “The coin is round,” my assertion points out an entity, the coin, as being a certain way (in this example, round). But more basic than the assertion corresponding to the coin adequately is that the coin is being revealed in the assertion. Suppose that the coin is in fact not round, but square. Then my assertion that it is round may, in a rather minimal sense, bring attention to the entity, but it does not reveal—or, more technically, *uncover*—the entity, because the how of its being, the way it is, remains passed over by the assertion. Instead, anyone who hears my assertion and also sees the coin would be perplexed. In this way, assertion, as a means of communication, of discourse (*Rede*), is not being fulfilled, and the coin is covered over, remains hidden within the discourse.⁴

But suppose the coin is, in fact, round. Then my assertion has *uncovered* the coin, showing it as that which it is. In order for there to be talk of any “correspondence” between the statement and the coin, one must already presuppose the coin’s being revealed. The truth of the assertion, therefore, is parasitic on what we might call the “communication” of the pertaining of F to the one who would make the assertion. Statements uncover, but this uncovering that statements perform rests on the uncovering that happens in Dasein’s Being-in-the-world, and this means on, among other, richer things, “perception,” very broadly construed. Heidegger says in his essay “On the Essence of Truth”:

A statement is invested with its correctness by the openness of comportment; for only through the latter can what is opened up really become the standard for presentative correspondence. [...] But if the correctness (truth) of statements becomes possible only through this openness of comportment, then what first

³ Dahlstrom, D. *Heidegger’s Concept of Truth*, xiv-xvii.

⁴ It is important to note here that someone can still *see* the coin, and therefore uncover it as round by way of sight, but the *discourse* has failed to do this.

makes correctness possible must with more original right be taken as the essence of truth.⁵

‘Uncovering’ thus becomes for Heidegger the primordial essence of truth, and ‘openness’ the theme for the possibility of truth. Entities are available for discovery and Dasein is receptive to their availability. Heidegger later expanded on this idea of openness from just the open comportment of Dasein to a “fourfold unitary openness”: the openness between thing and Dasein, of Dasein to the thing, of the region between the two, and of Dasein to other Dasein such that an entity’s uncoveredness can be discursively conveyed, as in assertion.⁶ We will return in the next chapter to the implications of this idea of the basic accessibility of entities.

As Krell summarizes, “The upshot is that a discovery of beings that lets them be seen is always presupposed in all correspondence or adequation of judgment and states of affairs.”⁷ It is this relocation of truth, from its traditional site in assertion, to “uncovering,” that Ernst Tugendhat saw as problematic, and critiqued. In order to guard against an anti-realist interpretation of Heidegger’s theory of truth as uncovering, let us analyze Tugendhat’s critique and determine where it goes wrong.

1.2 On Tugendhat’s Critique of Heidegger: Phenomenon and Semblance

1.2.1

Heidegger’s magnum opus, *Being and Time*, is both deep and difficult. It also has great breadth: the topics that the text addresses range from fundamental ontology to psychological anthropology. Due to the depth and breadth of its subject matter, *Being and Time* displays a rigorous, cumulative methodology. For this reason, any reading of the text must itself be rigorous and cumulative. But with its many famous, influential, and controversial passages, it is easy to simply dive into *Being and Time* without the compass that is its lengthy Introduction. When it comes to analysis of Heidegger’s phenomenology, such a move proves to be a great error. This is because the Introduction itself includes many passages that are not merely illuminating, but indispensably necessary for understanding what is to come in the book proper. Many fundamental terminological distinctions are laid out that, if ignored, will lead to disastrous misinterpretations in far-flung sections.

There is perhaps no better example of just such an exegetical catastrophe in the oft-read secondary literature than Ernst Tugendhat’s highly influential essay “Heidegger’s Idea of Truth.” In it, Tugendhat attempts to show that, as Richard Wolin succinctly puts it, “the central problem with Heidegger’s concept of truth stems from its ‘overgeneralization.’”⁸ In extending, as Tugendhat says, “the concept of truth to *all* uncovering and *every* disclosedness,”⁹ Heidegger allegedly leaves no room in his conception for real falsity. Wolin, a translator and defender of Tugendhat, claims that instead “the difference between a ‘true’ uncovering or disclosedness of entities—that is, one that would capture the entity *as it is in itself*—from uncovering or

⁵ Heidegger, M. “On the Essence of Truth.” *Basic Writings of Martin Heidegger*, p. 122.

⁶ Heidegger, M. *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, p. 18-19.

⁷ Krell, D. Introduction. “On the Essence of Truth.” *Basic Writings of Martin Heidegger*, p. 113.

⁸ Wolin, R. Introduction. “Heidegger’s Idea of Truth.” *The Heidegger Controversy*, p. 245.

⁹ Tugendhat, E. “Heidegger’s Idea of Truth.” *The Heidegger Controversy*, p. 249.

disclosedness *as such* is effaced.”¹⁰ That Wolin uses such language—“*as it is in itself*”—to talk about what uncovering fails to distinguish will prove ironic. This is because what ‘uncovering’ is for Heidegger *just means* that an entity has been shown “in itself,” and the counter-concept to uncovering, ‘covering over,’ wherein lies falsity, occurs when an entity is shown, but precisely *not* “in itself.”

Nevertheless, this is Tugendhat’s allegation, that Heidegger cannot account—or adequately account—for falsity. Let us examine it more closely.

1.2.2

To begin with, let us note that Tugendhat admits at the outset he is *only* focusing on §44 of *Being and Time*: “In order to keep the interpretation within a manageable frame, I will limit myself to a specific passage, section 44 in *Being and Time*. Here, Heidegger develops his concept of truth for the first time.”¹¹ This admission, as I will show, is both pertinent and telling, and casts great doubt on Tugendhat’s thesis. The assertion that this is the first place Heidegger develops his concept of truth is, incidentally, simply *incorrect*, and this is precisely why limiting the discussion to §44 alone proves such a critical error.

However, before the severity of this oversight can be demonstrated, let us look at the heart of Tugendhat’s reading of §44. His main thesis is that Heidegger surreptitiously modifies Husserl’s own account of truth, and in the process loses that which, as has been recognized since time immemorial, makes truth distinctive—that it has a character of preserving *bona fides*, so to speak. That is, a theory of truth that cannot account for falsity is no real theory of truth at all. So, how does Heidegger thusly modify Husserl’s account of truth? According to Tugendhat, he does so by successively reducing it until it says something far different from what Husserl intended. This is accomplished in two steps, he argues: first, by demonstrating that what makes an assertion true is that it ‘uncovers’ beings as they are in themselves, and then by covertly subtracting from this thesis until ‘uncovering’ of all sorts, whether of the entities “in themselves” or otherwise, is conflated with truth.

The way in which Heidegger’s theory differs from Husserl’s can only be discerned from the different yet equivalent variants that he places alongside the first definition. The first definition reads: the assertion is true if it points out and uncovers the entity ‘just as it is in itself.’ Here, this ‘just as’ [*So-Wie*] is emphasized by Heidegger. Clearly, this ‘just as’ is essential for the truth relation, for it denotes the agreement between the entity *just as* it is uncovered in the assertion with the same entity ‘*as it is in itself*.’¹²

The definition Tugendhat appears to be pointing to is as follows from *Being and Time*: “The entity itself which one has in mind shows itself *just as* it is in itself; that is to say, it shows that it, in its selfsameness, is just as *it* gets pointed out in the assertion as being—just as *it* gets uncovered as being.”¹³ But Tugendhat says that Heidegger drops this ‘*as it is*’ in the second formulation:

¹⁰ Wolin, R. Introduction. “Heidegger’s Idea of Truth.” *The Heidegger Controversy*, p. 245.

¹¹ Tugendhat, E. “Heidegger’s Idea of Truth.” *The Heidegger Controversy*, p. 249.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 251-252.

¹³ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 261.

It is all the more surprising that Heidegger, without rational justification, now advances a formulation in which the ‘just as’ is absent. He says, ‘To say that an assertion is true means: it uncovers the entity in itself.’ The reformulation is however completely legitimate; it corresponds, moreover, entirely to Husserl’s theory. For since the agreement, if it is correct, is an identity, if the assertion points out the entity as it is in itself, one can simply say: it points out the entity in itself. The ‘just as’ is implicit in the ‘in itself.’¹⁴

Perhaps notably, MacQuarrie and Robinson chose not to translate this definition as Tugendhat states it; their translation gives the Heidegger citation above as “To say that an assertion ‘is true’ signifies that it uncovers the entity *as it is in itself*.”¹⁵ It is possible that they, like Tugendhat, saw the two formulations as fully equivalent, and the “reduction” therefore as entirely justified. In any case, the real turn comes when Heidegger states the definition a third time:

However, in the third formulation Heidegger now carries the simplification one step further: he also expunges—once more without rational justification—the ‘in itself.’ That an assertion is true now merely means: it uncovers the entity.

Thereby, the following thesis is reached: “The Being-true (truth) of the assertion must be understood as Being-uncovering.” With the use of this latter expression, Heidegger has clearly distanced himself from Husserl and attained his own concept of truth—which he henceforth maintains only in this formulation.¹⁶

Tugendhat recognizes the legitimacy of the first reduction, but not the second reduction. However, he only does this by ignoring pertinent passages of the Introduction to *Being and Time*, and has therefore not achieved an understanding of exactly what Heidegger means by this term of art, ‘uncovering.’ Just as with the first reduction, the second and third definitions are entirely equivalent, because ‘uncovered’ *just means* ‘being shown as it is in itself.’ I submit that the reduction from the second definition to the third is simply a rhetorical move on Heidegger’s part, just as the reduction from the first to the second clearly is; it is meant to bring to bear the full force of Heidegger’s concept of ‘uncovering,’ to highlight all that is entailed by the term, in the same way that the first reduction draws attention to the fact that the ‘just as’ is implicit in the ‘in itself.’ The first, second, and third formulations are all in fact equivalent as stated. The textual evidence for this equivalence in *Being and Time* will be given presently, and involves understanding Heidegger’s phenomenological distinction between ‘phenomenon’ and ‘semblance’ in a crucial passage of the Introduction.

1.2.3

Heidegger provides his definitions of ‘phenomenon’ and ‘semblance’ at the end of the Introduction to *Being and Time* in the segment “The Concept of Phenomenon,” and gives them a wider framework within his phenomenology in the following segments, “The Concept of the Logos” and “The Preliminary Conception of Phenomenology.” And, as I will attempt to show, appreciating these sections is hardly a luxury if one is to understand Heidegger’s theory of truth, or even his phenomenology at large.

¹⁴ Tugendhat, E. “Heidegger’s Idea of Truth.” *The Heidegger Controversy*, p. 252.

¹⁵ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 261. Final emphasis added.

¹⁶ Tugendhat, E. “Heidegger’s Idea of Truth.” *The Heidegger Controversy*, p. 252.

The first section, tracing the etymology of the word ‘phenomenon’ through the original Greek, arrives at a clear definition: “Thus we must *keep in mind* that the expression ‘phenomenon’ signifies *that which shows itself in itself* [*Sich-an-ihm-selbst-zeigende*], the manifest.”¹⁷ He goes on to state that an entity can be shown in itself in myriad ways, “depending in each case on the kind of access we have to it.”¹⁸ He uses this fact to more generally state that entities can even be shown *not in themselves* in different ways: “Indeed, it is even possible for an entity to show itself as something which in itself it is *not*. When it shows itself in this way, it ‘looks like something or other.’ This kind of showing-itself is what we call ‘*seeming*.’”¹⁹ Thus, he defines ‘semblance’ as a derivative of ‘phenomenon,’ its “privative modification.” The segment “The Concept of Phenomenon” goes on to define a third category, ‘appearance,’ which I will not focus on. Suffice it to say that, in ‘appearance,’ an entity is neither shown in itself nor shown *not* in itself—the entity is not shown at all, but rather announced by way of an entity which *does* show itself.

To illustrate clearly the structural distinctions between ‘phenomenon,’ ‘semblance,’ and ‘appearance,’ and for purposes of easy reference, we can construct a simple table:

Phenomenon	Semblance	Appearance
Shows itself		Does not show itself
In itself	Not in itself	

What, then is the relationship between ‘phenomenon’ and ‘uncovering?’ Heidegger gives it in “The Preliminary Concept of Phenomenology”: “Covered-up-ness is the counter-concept to ‘phenomenon.’”²⁰ He goes on to explicitly describe semblance as a state of being-covered up.²¹

¹⁷ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 51. There is likely to be some blowback against the contention that Heidegger defines ‘phenomenon’ in terms of a showing of something ‘in itself.’ Such a term immediately conjures well-known and storied metaphysical distinctions, primarily from the philosophies of Kant and the German Idealists that followed. That a phenomenologist would unabashedly use such a phrase in order to define the ‘phenomenon’ of ‘phenomenology’ itself seems odd. Yet this definition in “The Concept of Phenomenon” is no mere accident, an isolated case, as it were; indeed, Heidegger uses ‘in itself’ [*an Sich*] or a contextual derivative in reference to the essence of ‘phenomenon’ *over and over again* in this section and elsewhere:

‘Phenomenon’, the showing-itself-in-itself, signifies a distinctive way in which something can be encountered. ‘Appearance,’ on the other hand, means a reference relationship which is in an entity itself, and which is such that what *does the referring* (or the announcing) can fulfill its possible function only if it shows itself in itself and thus is a ‘phenomenon.’ [...] The bewildering multiplicity of ‘phenomena’ designated by the words ‘phenomenon,’ ‘semblance,’ ‘appearance,’ ‘mere appearance,’ cannot be disentangled unless the concept of the phenomenon is understood from the beginning as that which shows itself in itself. (Martin, M. *Being and Time*, p. 54)

The relation between the ‘in itself’ as Heidegger uses it here and the classic ‘*Ding an Sich*’ (‘Thing-in-itself’) of the Kantian paradigm will be addressed in Chapter 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

That is, an entity is uncovered when it is a ‘phenomenon,’ when it *shows itself in itself*, and is covered over or covered up when it is a ‘semblance,’ when it *does not show itself in itself*.

It seems obvious then that for Heidegger ‘phenomenon’ and ‘uncovering’ are inextricably mutually defined. That which is uncovered in an uncovering qualifies, in virtue of its being-uncovered, as a ‘phenomenon.’ We can thus amend our table:

Phenomenon	Semblance	Appearance
Shows itself		Does not show itself
In itself	Not in itself	
Uncovering	Covering over	
Truth	Falsity	

The task of phenomenology is to sift through the semblances, “to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself.”²² Phenomena—things as they are—can be, and indeed, usually are, hidden from view. For this reason, Heidegger stresses that phenomenology is a worthwhile field of inquiry: “just because the phenomena are proximally and for the most part *not* given, there is need for phenomenology.”²³ If uncovering were as broadly defined as Tugendhat argues it is, and as a term of art simply designated ‘showing’ or givenness of any kind, then as Heidegger sees it there would be no need for phenomenology, for there would be no covering over at all. But this is patently *not* his position. As he says, “‘Being false’ amounts to deceiving in the sense of *covering up*: putting something in front of something (in such a way as to let it be seen) and thereby passing it off *as* something which it is *not*.”²⁴ If this is the characterization of covering over, or falsity, then uncovering, its opposite, must be when something is *not* “passed off as something which it is not,” but instead is “shown as it is in itself.” If there was no distinction, then it would hardly make sense for Heidegger to, on several occasions in *Being and Time*, liken uncovering to “robbery,” characterizing truth is something to be “wrested” from encounters with entities. As he says, “It is therefore essential that Dasein should explicitly appropriate what has already been uncovered, defend it *against* semblance and disguise, and assure itself of its uncoveredness again and again.”²⁵

It seems clear, then, that when Heidegger reduces the formulation “uncovered just as it is in itself” to simply “uncovered,” he has not changed his conception of what is going on in the being-true of an assertion at all; the first formulation was simply redundant, likely for the sake of illumination. When Tugendhat says, then, that “what constitutes the truth of the assertion appears not to be the fact that the entity is uncovered by the assertion, but rather how it is uncovered by

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 60. “There are various ways in which a phenomenon can be covered up. [...] A phenomenon can be *buried over*. This means that it has at some time been discovered but has deteriorated to the point of getting covered up again. This covering-up can be complete; or rather—and as a rule—what has been discovered earlier may still be visible, though only as a semblance. [...] This covering-up as a ‘disguising’ is both the most frequent and the most dangerous, for here the possibilities of deceiving and misleading are especially stubborn.”

²² *Ibid.*, p. 58.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

it—namely, ‘as it is in itself’²⁶ and on this basis concludes that Heidegger dispenses with that qualification in the final formulation, thus changing the meaning of what it means to be a true assertion, he has entirely misunderstood from the outset what ‘uncovering’ is. *There is no “how” to an entity being uncovered*, at least not for the purposes of the topic of truth versus falsity. Instead, uncovering itself is a particular way in which a showing can occur. Uncovering is a truth showing of an entity. When Heidegger says, “What is to be demonstrated is solely the Being-uncovered of the entity in itself—that entity in the ‘how’ of its uncoveredness,”²⁷ this signifies that uncoveredness *is* a how—the entity is *shown* in an uncovering way, a way that uncovers it.

But Tugendhat continues along the same line by saying that “Only because, for Heidegger, even the truth of the assertion does not lie in how it uncovers but in the fact that it uncovers in general, can he now and without further justification transpose truth to all disclosedness as such.”²⁸ ‘Disclosure’ is another term of art for Heidegger, essentially identical in function with ‘uncovering.’ In any case, the error here is the same as above, and by this point it should be clear that ‘showing’ and ‘uncovering/disclosure’ are by no means the same thing in Heidegger’s phenomenology, that Tugendhat missed this, that he did so in virtue of ignoring other important sections of *Being and Time*, and that his entire argument turns on the fruit of such neglect.

1.2.4

But the full breadth of Tugendhat’s oversight of crucial aspects of Heidegger’s theory does not end there. He acknowledges the possibility of this equivalence between the first and third formulations as a defense Heidegger could provide²⁹ (though only as a *possible* defense, rather than one which the text *does in fact* support). His counter-argument to this defense involves claiming that it turns on an ambiguity in the text between ‘uncovering’ and ‘pointing out’:

In the first instance, uncovering stands for pointing out (*apophainesthai*) in general. In this sense every assertion—the false as well as the true can be said to uncover. Nevertheless, Heidegger employs the word in a narrow and pregnant sense according to which a false assertion would be a covering up rather than an uncovering. In this case it goes without saying that the truth lies in being-uncovered; however, what does uncovering now mean if it no longer signifies pointing out in general? How is *aletheia* to be differentiated from *apophansis*? Heidegger gives no answer to this question.³⁰

But, again, if one turns to the Introduction, there is no ambiguity. Uncovering never stands for pointing out in general; on the contrary, ‘pointing out’ stands for a specific way in which a “letting-something-be-seen” can occur. Pointing out (*apophansis*) is a mode of showing pertaining specifically to discourse (*legein*). Beings can be uncovered apart from discourse, but in discourse, assertions can, in their own right, either let beings be seen in themselves or not. In

²⁶ Tugendhat, E. “Heidegger’s Idea of Truth.” *The Heidegger Controversy*, p. 252.

²⁷ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 261.

²⁸ Tugendhat, E. “Heidegger’s Idea of Truth.” *The Heidegger Controversy*, p. 258.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 253: “Thus uncovering as such, if it is really an uncovering, must already be true.

Heidegger certainly would have argued this way if he had made the attempt to justify why the ‘as it is in itself’ became superfluous for him.”

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

the case of the former, the beings are uncovered in this derivative sense, in the latter they are covered over.

As Heidegger says, *Logos* is a mode of letting something be seen³¹—differentiated from other modes such as perception. Because it lets things be seen, *logos* can be true or false, but it is not the “primary ‘locus’ of truth,”³² and therefore, *apophansis* is not uncovering itself, but a specific mode in which uncovering might or might not occur. This is the nature of the distinction Heidegger draws, and at which we hinted in 1.1.2, between *aletheia* and *apophansis*; the latter is way of letting entities be seen, and can be true or false, but only within the milieu of discourse. If I walk into a room in which there is a four-legged stool and I make the assertion, “The chair has three legs,” the assertion points out the entity, but fails to uncover it. In failing to be pointed out as it is, the entity remains concealed, not uncovered, undisclosed. If I instead asserted, “The chair has four legs,” such an utterance would point out the entity in the room as it is, and, in doing so, would uncover it in the context of the discourse. The entity in the room is more fundamentally uncovered in perception, but in talking about the entity, it receives an “as-structure” (i.e. as being “a chair”) and in this context is made available for further discourse either by myself or by anyone else to whom the assertion is presented.³³

Oddly enough, Tugendhat acknowledges exactly this later in the essay: “in *Being and Time* the word ‘uncover’ terminologically stands for every disclosedness of worldly entities: and thus not only the disclosedness of the assertion which ‘points out,’ but also for the circumspect disclosedness of concern.”³⁴ How, then can Tugendhat say that Heidegger “fails to expressly differentiate between these concepts: that is, between the broad and the narrow meaning of uncovering”? As stated before, Heidegger uses ‘uncover’ in the “broad meaning” only once as a rhetorical device, with the understanding being that ‘uncover just as it is in itself’ is redundant and *just means* “uncover.” Since Tugendhat himself recognizes the distinction in *Being and Time* between ‘pointing out’ (the so-called “broad meaning” of uncovering) and “uncovering” proper (the so-called “narrow meaning”), then he cannot sensibly maintain Heidegger meant what he is taking him to mean.

The problem here seems to be, again, that Tugendhat misunderstands ‘disclosure’ to be identical with ‘showing.’ If we take ‘disclosure’ and ‘showing’ to be equivalent, then Tugendhat’s claim that Heidegger cannot account for the distinction between ‘uncovering’ and ‘pointing out’ seems fair. But as shown in 1.1.3, ‘showing’ is itself something of a term of art for Heidegger, and refers to any givenness, true or false. But Heidegger consistently uses ‘disclosure’ interchangeably with ‘uncovering,’ and, as we have seen, uncovering is a special kind of showing.

Tugendhat continues: “If the truth of the assertion lies according to paragraph (a) in uncovering, then it follows, he concludes, that all encounters with worldly entities are actually ‘true.’”³⁵ He locates this claim on H. p. 220, but no passage making this exact statement exists there. Instead, he *seems* to be referring to Heidegger’s remark that “Circumspective concern, or even that concern in which we tarry and look at something, uncovers entities-within-the-

³¹ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 56.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 56, 57.

³⁴ Tugendhat, E. “Heidegger’s Idea of Truth.” *The Heidegger Controversy*, p. 257-258.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

world.”³⁶ While it may look like in the latter case, that when we “tarry and look at something,” we uncover entities, is justifying Tugendhat’s claim, in fact it is not. “Tarrying” [‘*Verweilen*’] is, *again*, another term of art for Heidegger, and, *again*, Tugendhat does not bother to appreciate it as such. When Heidegger talks about ‘tarrying,’ he does not mean to signify the common idle glance, and therefore does not mean to say that *just any* encounter uncovers. Note that in this remark Heidegger uses “concern” as a way of describing both modes of encounter, “circumspective concern,” and “tarrying.” Contrast this with concern’s antagonist, mere curiosity; Heidegger says, “That which has been uncovered and disclosed stands in a mode in which it has been disguised and closed off by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity.”³⁷ That is, in curiosity, unlike in concerned encounters, semblance reigns.

Now, on the section on curiosity, Heidegger *explicitly* distinguishes it with tarrying: Therefore, curiosity is characterized by a specific way of *not tarrying* alongside what is closest. Consequently, it does not seek the leisure of tarrying observantly, but rather seeks restlessness and the excitement of continual novelty and changing encounters. In not tarrying, curiosity is concerned with the constant possibility of *distraction*. [...] Rather it concerns itself with a kind of knowing, but just in order to have known. Both this *not tarrying* in the environment with which one concerns oneself, and this *distraction* by new possibilities, are constitutive items for curiosity.³⁸

In this passage, we are obviously meant to understand that curiosity is something of a fallen state of the modes of concernfulness, including tarrying, in which the concern does not attend to entities or the Being of entities, but rather just with “the constant possibility of distraction.” In these contexts, then, we can see that tarrying certainly bears no resemblance to what we might call idle glancing, and is not meant to stand in for *just any* showing, or *just any* common givenness. To say, then, that “tarrying” uncovers does not mean, nor does it entail, what Tugendhat says it does. Contrary to his claim, it is *not* the case for Heidegger that all encounters with worldly entities are true.³⁹

This, as we have seen, manifests itself as the central error of Tugendhat’s essay, which leads him to conclusions like, “This difference intrinsic to self-manifestation between an immediately apparent givenness and the thing itself is not taken into consideration by Heidegger” and “the difference between givenness in general and self-givenness escapes him.”⁴⁰ But, as we have shown, these and equivalent statements are patently false. Heidegger indeed recognizes that there is a distinction between “givenness as such and the possibility of a superior mode of givenness”; further, he specifically defines truth, uncovering, as a superior mode of givenness—the occurrence of something *showing itself in itself* (phenomena), as differentiated from the occurrence of something *showing itself not in itself* (semblance).

³⁶ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 263.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 216-217.

³⁹ As we shall see next chapter, for Heidegger all encounters with worldly entities are *partially* true, but also partially false. This is distinct from claiming that all encounters are true *simpliciter*, and therefore cannot be taken to imply, as Tugendhat does, that Heidegger has no account of falsity.

⁴⁰ Tugendhat, E. “Heidegger’s Idea of Truth.” *The Heidegger Controversy*, p. 255-256.

1.3 The “Problem Passage”: Truth and Dasein

1.3.1

We have examined Tugendhat’s critique primarily as a way of elucidating Heidegger’s theory of truth. However, we have done so in a “naïve” way. That is, we have not at all examined the implications of this theory of truth as uncovering, nor the wider context of the philosophy in which it occurs. We have merely sought to defend the theory against misunderstandings about what it is stating.

We have not addressed, for example, Tugendhat’s criticism of how Heidegger locates truth relative to Dasein. If, as Tugendhat rightly reads, “All uncovering of worldly entities is grounded [...] in the disclosedness of the world,” then, as he likewise rightly understands, “Heidegger can now conclude, the disclosedness of Dasein itself as Being-in-the-world—as the disclosedness of its world—is ‘the most primordial phenomenon of truth’”⁴¹ For Tugendhat, as for many others, this proves problematic. If the proper and primordial locus of truth rests in the disclosedness of Dasein’s Being-in-the-world, then there is no truth without Dasein. This leads us to our “problem passage,” one oft-quoted as evidence that Heidegger promotes a sort of anti-realism about truth, a form of relativism, even. It reads:

Disclosedness is a kind of Being which is essential to Dasein. ‘*There is*’ truth only in so far as Dasein is and so long as Dasein is. Entities are uncovered only when Dasein is; and only as long as Dasein is, are they disclosed. Newton’s laws, the principle of contradiction, any truth whatsoever—these are true only so long as Dasein is. Before there was any Dasein, there was no truth; nor will there be any after Dasein is no more. For in such a case truth as disclosedness, uncovering, and uncoveredness, *cannot* be.⁴²

On the face of it, this certainly *seems* radical and anti-realist. As I will attempt to argue, however, it is in fact *not*.

In order to see this, it is necessary that we take a critical view as to *why* one would see this as radical, anti-realist, or relativistic in the first place. Instead of taking this reaction at face value as worthwhile, we should ask the question as to what causes it. There are two likely candidates, and both are probably at play: (i) if there can be no *truth* when there is no Dasein, then there can be no *fact* when there is no Dasein, and (ii) it should be possible to evaluate the truth or falsity of a given proposition even when Dasein does not exist. But neither of these objections holds much water, as will be shown in the next section.

1.3.2

Firstly, let us note that Heidegger roundly rejects the idea that because truth only exists so long as there is Dasein, there are no facts when Dasein does not exist. In the same section as the above quotation, he attempts to guard against such misunderstandings by stating, “To say that before Newton his laws were neither true nor false, cannot signify that before him there were no such entities as have been uncovered and pointed out by those laws. [...] Once entities have been

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

⁴² Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 269. Emphasis original.

uncovered, they show themselves precisely as entities *which beforehand already were*.⁴³ That is, the factual existence of such entities as posited by, for example, scientific theories is in no way affected by Dasein's existence or positing about them. Quarks existed before the theories that point them out, and therefore states of affairs having to do with quarks pertained before those theories. So there is a strong distinction here on Heidegger's part between 'truth' on the one hand and 'fact' on the other, and in distinguishing them Heidegger maintains the spirit of the realism matrix Braver calls R1 Independence: "The world consists of some fixed totality of mind-independent objects."⁴⁴

But isn't this counter to the orthodox understanding of truth, as essentially equivalent to fact? And doesn't distinguishing them trivialize the concept of truth? Not at all; the distinction between truth and fact is well established, even in the classical notion. How, for example, could one even make sense of the correspondence theory of truth if we did not make such a distinction? Correspondence theory, whether the Aristotelian, Thomist, Kantian, or even the prevailing contemporary notion in Analytic philosophy, claims that the intellect or the proposition *corresponds* with the world, with reality, states of affairs, facts of the matter, etc. In the *Tractatus*, for example, Wittgenstein clearly distinguishes between a fact and a proposition, and therefore, obviously, between a fact and a *true* proposition:

- 2 What is the case—a fact—is the existence of states of affairs.
- 2.1 We picture facts to ourselves.
- 2.222 The agreement or disagreement of [a picture's] sense with reality constitutes its truth or falsity.
- 2.223 In order to tell whether a picture is true or false we must compare it with reality.
- 3 A logical picture of facts is a thought.
- 4 A thought is a proposition with a sense.⁴⁵

The definition of correspondence truth that Putnam gives, and which Braver quotes as the paradigm expression of the theory, likewise distinguishes between fact and truth. To restate the definition: "Truth involves some sort of correspondence relation between words or thought-signs and external things and sets of things."⁴⁶ Here Wittgenstein and Putnam are just moving alongside the representational scheme that correspondence theory has sketched in one form or another since Aristotle. In accordance with this scheme, when there is no correspondence, or the correspondence is inadequate—that is, the proposition is false—there remain facts, and the nature of the facts themselves are unchanged, while truth is nowhere to be found. By all accounts, then, one can have fact without truth, and indeed the correspondence theory of truth itself only gets off the ground in the first place precisely by understanding the difference. What, then, is so strange about saying that fact and truth are distinct? If Heidegger is indeed trivializing truth by doing so, then he is in good company.

Let's now turn to the second of the previously mentioned reasons why one would dismiss, out of hand, Heidegger's contention that there is truth only so long as there is Dasein. This objection rests on the idea that a proposition should be in principle truth-evaluable regardless of whether Dasein is around to *actually* evaluate it. There is, on the face of it, no real disagreement here between Heidegger and the critic. That is, if Dasein disappeared from the face

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 269. Emphasis added.

⁴⁴ Putnam, H. *Reason, Truth, and History*, p. 49.

⁴⁵ Wittgenstein, L. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, p. 7-35.

⁴⁶ Putnam, H. *Reason, Truth, and History*, p. 49.

of the earth tomorrow, on the day after tomorrow such propositions as Dasein makes use of today could be evaluated even then.

But the important thing to note here is that propositions are not just free-floating things, cosmic abstractions that Dasein picks from the sky like low-hanging fruit. They are embedded in concrete existence by virtue of the fact that they are constructed out of concepts, which are themselves defined and delimited by cultural, social and historical situatedness—what Heidegger calls Dasein's facticity. A concept is a *human* concept. What it means for a thing to *be* a chair is defined by, and stands in relation to, all the things Dasein can, should, or would do with a thing of such character. The point here is that propositions are, of course, concept-laden, and thus part of a practice. Evaluating them, then, means, to a certain extent, being sensitive to the nature of that practice. This is not merely a Heideggerian position, but one that is, or should be, condoned by Analytic philosophers of language who take seriously Wittgenstein's private language argument, or semantic externalism since Kripke and Putnam. In these philosophies of language, the meaning of a word or group of words is not determined—at least not wholly—by the internal state or beliefs of the speaker, but by external things, such as a practice shared by competent users of the language. As Robert Brandom says of this pragmatist account, "The background against which the conceptual activity of making things explicit is intelligible is taken to be implicitly normative essentially *social* practice."⁴⁷ So in the case of a statement like "The cat is on the mat," when there is no practice, because there is no Dasein, *there can be no concepts at play*. As a result, there is no proposition at all, just a string of symbols. There is no way to evaluate the string "the cat is on the mat," because no proposition is actually being presented.

We are not merely saying that in such cases "the cat is on the mat" has no sense because there is no one to utter the sentence that expresses the proposition, that there is no one there to make the *flatus voci*—the sound. This would be a trivial argument. Rather, our point here is that there is no one to make the *proposition* itself. In keeping with the differentiation between a sentence and a proposition, or words and their meanings, we are here making the argument that without Dasein there can be no meaning ascribed to a group of words. That is, there can be no interpretation assigned to a symbol, or group of symbols, without an interpreter. Thus, to ask the question, "Is the proposition expressed by the sentence 'the cat is on the mat' true or false when Dasein does not exist?" is to speak nonsense. Without Dasein assigning an interpretation to the words "cat," or "mat," or "on," or even "is," we would be asking one to evaluate the bare symbols as true or false, which is obviously absurd. The *meaning* of the symbols is what must be evaluated.

In a sense, propositions, as loci of meaning, mirror Dasein's understanding, its concepts and its interpretations. Without Dasein, then, nothing can appear in the mirror. How are we to even get off the ground to evaluate "The cat is on the mat" as true or false if Dasein and its social normative practices are not first available to give meaning to the symbols? Imagine instead if I asked you whether "hgygt slighy o imea" is true or false when Dasein is not around. To be befuddled by the question is no different than being befuddled when it relates to any other string of symbols. It is an absurdity to think that because "the cat is on the mat" has a standard interpretation that therefore if no one was around to provide that interpretation in the first place—to give the words meaning—the string of symbols itself would be truth-bearing. Only Dasein can *make a proposition*—that is, assign a string of symbols a semantic interpretation. The statement is just a composition of symbols; a robot could utter them, or a computer be

⁴⁷ Brandom, R. *Articulating Reasons*, p. 34.

programmed to display them on a monitor. The bare words do not contain the meanings. But a *proposition* is composed of concepts, each being what it is within a context of cultural, historical, social facticity—Dasein’s facticity. Without Dasein in *this* sense, these words are just *flatus vocis*.

One could say: “But ‘p’ *does* have an interpretation assigned to it, and that interpretation, once assigned, is not dependent on Dasein’s existence. Tomorrow, Dasein could cease to exist, yet ‘p’ would continue to mean what it means. The fact that an interpretation was assigned would not be ‘retroactively’ redacted.” But such an objection would miss the point. The assignment of an interpretation *in the first place* is dependent on the existence of Dasein, and therefore any future interpretation the sentence has, whether Dasein exists in that future or not, remains dependent on the fact that *at one point Dasein existed and assigned that interpretation to that string of symbols*. This is a necessary condition for one to make use of such an interpretation in a Dasein-less future. The truth-evaluability of the proposition, then, is fully dependent on Dasein.

1.3.3

To say that when there is no Dasein there is no truth is in no way, shape, or form equivalent to—or even remotely like—saying that when there is no Dasein there are no facts, no states of affairs. Heidegger does not maintain this, as he clearly states in his passage on Newton's equations. Nor can his critics maintain that this falls out of his philosophy despite his cautions—at least, not without subjecting their own theory of truth to the same objections. Truth is generally recognized, by even correspondence theory, as a far more exotic specimen than just ‘fact.’

So we have demonstrated firstly that fact and truth are distinct and that this distinction is not an arbitrary one we have made ourselves without cause, but rather is a prominent one, essential to the very cohesiveness of the traditional correspondence theory of truth. Secondly, though, we have demonstrated that Heidegger’s claim “truth exists only so long as Dasein exists” is not one that philosophies of language endorsing externalism or deflationary (primarily anti-Platonist) metaphysics—such as those in Analytic philosophy after Wittgenstein—are in a position to move against. All this serves to show that if this “problem passage” seems, at first glance, relativistic or anti-realist, in fact nothing could be further from the truth. Nothing is lost for a realist by making Heidegger’s move from the correspondence theory of truth to the aletheic conception.

1.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have laid out Heidegger’s theory of truth as uncovering, and, hopefully, demonstrated that one can make sense of even its most seemingly radical implications under a realist paradigm. The contention of Putnam, of which Braver approves and cites as definitive, that R2, the correspondence theory of truth, in some form or another, is an essential component of a thoroughgoing realism, seems far less obviously the case. Understanding the basics of Heidegger’s views on truth will now allow us to examine his ontological pluralism, itself crucial to understanding his fundamental reworking of the realist paradigm of Dasein’s access to the world.

CHAPTER 2: THE MANIFOLD THING-IN-ITSELF

In this chapter, I examine Braver's claims about Heidegger's rejection of realism matrices R3, Uniqueness, and R4, Bivalence. As a preliminary to these discussions, section 2.1 will outline Heidegger's concept of the hermeneutic structure of Dasein's Being-in-the-world as it differs from the classical account of representational perception of objects by a subject. With this understanding, along with the discussions already presented in the first chapter, section 2.2 will argue that Heidegger rethinks the Kantian *Ding an Sich*, the 'thing-in-itself,' in a distinctive way, by rejecting R3 Uniqueness and embracing ontological pluralism. Section 2.3 will conclude by investigating the complex implications of this view for Heidegger's stance on the principle of bivalence.

2.1 Anti-Representationalism and the Conditional Access of Being-in-the-World

2.1.1

Heidegger's account of truth and his rebuff of correspondence theory must be viewed within the context of his more general critique of representationalism. As we have discussed, truth for Heidegger does not lie most fundamentally in the correctness of a representational proposition, but in the self-showing act of an entity upon which any evaluation of propositional correctness must be founded. Thus, the concept of representational images, upon which most theories of perception since at least Augustine have rested, is replaced with *presentation*. The *presentation* of the entity that is to be represented in an assertion is a necessary prerequisite for such representation in the first place, and Heidegger thus provides a theory of what is now often called *direct realism*. It is important to note here that a thorough defense of "direct realism" in all its aspects as a philosophy of perception is somewhat outside the scope of this project.¹ Instead, the following discussion will focus on the way in which Heidegger's thought, particularly his anti-representationalism, informs and supports a direct realist view of perception.

In his *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, Heidegger traces the history of representationalism, highlighting how epistemological concerns inevitably led to "doubt as to whether our representations reached the being itself in itself at all and did not rather remain enclosed within the circuit of their own activity, hence in the realm of the 'soul.'"² This skeptical outlook, he maintains, redefines the prevalence of representations, so that not only judgments and assertions are thought of as mental images, but perceptions themselves. Since, then, all that we see are just representations, "thinking" about what we perceive—judging, believing, cognizing in general—become conceptualized as representational operations performed on other representations: "Consequently knowledge and assertions consist in the representation of representations and hence in a combination of representations. This combining is an activity and a process taking place merely 'in our consciousness.'"³ Heidegger distinguishes idealism and what he generically calls "realism" as philosophical attitudes that are not really at odds, but, on the contrary, are based on the same representational schema:

¹ Such a comprehensive defense, via an enactive model, has recently been mounted by Alva Noë in his book *Action In Perception*.

² Heidegger, M. *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, p. 16.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

The doctrine that our representations relate only to the represented, the *perceptum*, the *idea*, is called idealism. The counterclaim, according to which our representations reach the thing themselves (*res*) and what belongs to them (*realia*), has been called, ever since the advance of idealism, realism. Thus these hostile brothers, each of whom likes to think himself superior to the other, are unwittingly in complete accord with regard to the essence, i.e., with regard to what provides the presupposition and the very possibility of their controversy: that the relation to beings is a representing of them and that the truth of the representation consists in its correctness.⁴

Idealism and representational realism, then, both make the same mistake by starting from a common point. But he goes on to say that not only do the two theories rest on the common soil of representationalism, but that, in fact, this sort of “realism” is *actually just idealism*:

Realism, for its part, is captive to a great error when it claims that even Kant, the most profound “idealist,” is witness for the defense of realism. On the contrary, the consequence of Kant’s adherence to the traditional determination of truth as correctness is simply the opposite, namely that realism, in its determination of truth as correctness of a representation, stands on the same ground as idealism, and is even itself idealism, according to a more rigorous and more original concept of “idealism.” For even according to the doctrine of realism—the critical and the naïve—the *res*, beings, are attained by means of the representation, the *idea*.⁵

But Heidegger wants to completely dismantle this paradigm. For him, an entity is not accessed by means of a representation, if we mean by that term an ‘idea’ or ‘image,’ some *tertium quid* that stands between ourselves and the never-glimpsed world behind the curtain. An entity, rather, is out in the open for direct view. Even in memory, projection, and assertion, that which Dasein comports itself toward is not a picture of an entity, but the entity itself. The latter case is particularly important, and we have laid the groundwork for understanding it already in 1.2 when we discussed how assertions uncover the entities to which they refer. As Mark Wrathall says, “By reflecting on our experience in hearing an assertion, we recognize that we are never directed toward or by means of a representational content, but rather directly to the being indicated by the assertion. Assertions and beliefs do not *represent* beings in the world, they *present* them; they are a way of being oriented within the world so that a state of affairs can show up.”⁶

Heidegger stresses this point in the example he gives in §44 of *Being and Time*. There he argues that, even in assertions, what one is phenomenologically directed toward is that which the assertion *asserts about*, not the assertion itself or a picture it conjures. To take it that what the assertion is about is an image it brings to mind, that image being itself a representation of something else, is, as he sees it, a grave error, and the prime instance of representationalism run amok:

Let us suppose that someone with his back turned to the wall makes the true assertion that ‘the picture on the wall is hanging askew.’ [...] If he who makes the assertion judges without perceiving the picture, but ‘merely represents’ it to

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁶ Wrathall, M. “Truth and the Essence of Truth in Heidegger’s Thought.” *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, 2nd ed., p. 244

himself, to what is he related? To ‘representations,’ shall we say? Certainly not, if ‘representation’ here is supposed to signify representing as a psychical process. Nor is he related to ‘representations in the sense of what is thus ‘represented,’ if what we have in mind here is a ‘picture’ of that Real Thing which is on the wall. The asserting which ‘merely represents’ is related, rather, in that sense which is most its own, to the Real picture on the wall. What one has in mind is the Real picture, and nothing else. Any Interpretation in which something else is here slipped in as what one supposedly has in mind in an assertion that merely represents, belies the phenomenal facts of the case as to that about which the assertion gets made.⁷

The idea that the subject in this example is comporting himself toward a representation reflects, for Heidegger, an increasing encroachment of representationalism, which only obfuscates the matters at issue. After all, if we dogmatically assert from the beginning that only representations are accessed, and that in representing what we are comported toward are representations, we have not only belied the phenomenological facts of the case, but also, in a sense, *cheated*. If one’s definition of *re*-presentation is so broad and far-reaching that no coherent definition of *presentation* can be constructed alongside it, then the “game has been rigged,” so to speak, from the beginning. That is to say, a “theory” of representation that cannot countenance a theory of *presentation* is no theory at all, but a dogma. Heidegger sees this dogma as reaching its apex in the neo-Kantianism of his time. In *History of the Concept of Time*, he takes his former teacher, Rickert, to task for this:

[Rickert] is prevented from seeing the primary cognitive character of representation because he presupposes a mythical concept of representing from the philosophy of natural science and so comes to the formulation that in representing the representations get represented. But in the case of a representation on the level of simple perception a representation is not represented; I simply see the chair. This is implied in the very sense of representing. When I look, I am not intent upon seeing a representation of something, but the chair. Take for example mere envisaging or bringing to mind, which is also characterized as a representation of something which is not on hand, as when I now envisage my writing table. Even in such a case of merely thinking of something, what is represented is not a representation, not a content of consciousness, but the matter itself. The same applies to the recollective representation of, for example, a sailboat trip. I do not remember representations but the boat and the trip itself. The most primitive matters of fact which are in the structures themselves are overlooked simply for the sake of a theory.⁸

Heidegger’s point is not that we never truly represent, but rather that representational theories have misunderstood the character of representation, such that in representing we comport ourselves toward representations. But the insights of phenomenology (particularly intentionality) show, for Heidegger, that in representational acts we are not in fact comporting ourselves toward a representation, but toward what is represented in the act. Phenomenology provides the tools to see that in what are traditionally considered “representational acts,” what is laid out for view is what the representation indicates, not some reified product of the act. Thus, in Heidegger’s

⁷ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 260.

⁸ Heidegger, M. *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 35.

phenomenological ontology, *presentation* becomes the theme of access to entities, rather than the imagistic scheme of “representation” that dominates neo-Kantian epistemology. The skepticism which necessarily falls out of the latter, where consciousness always remains trapped in a realm of its own “mere representations,” is thus overcome. As Heidegger sees it, Husserl’s insights have demonstrated that this skepticism was, from the beginning, based on a dogmatically confused phenomenology.

Now that we have clarified the nature of Heidegger’s objection to representationalism, we can briefly counter a possible argument to Heidegger’s account of truth. One might ask: “But doesn’t viewing an entity as it is ‘not in itself’ indicate an inadequacy, a failure of correspondence? Does Heidegger’s theory of truth not then collapse into correspondence theory?” The answer is not at all, because there is no *thing* that would correspond to *another thing*. To insist that there is would be to again reify the semblance into something other than that very thing which is shown, to turn it into an image or representation. Phenomenon and semblance, uncovering and covering over, are rather *ways* of seeing that which is shown, not other things altogether, by means of which an underlying thing is glimpsed: “‘*Phenomenon*,’ the showing itself-in-itself, signifies a distinctive way in which something can be encountered.”⁹

2.1.2

We have shown that for Heidegger we are not acquainted with entities through another entity, an interlocutor. That is, we do not view a representation that is adequate or inadequate to the entity and on that basis have acquaintance, indirectly, with the entity. In an act of representation, we view the entity itself. However, while access is all the time direct, it is also all the time *conditional*. That is, simply because entities are out in the open for viewing does not mean that we are never in error. This was already a major theme in chapter 1, where the difference between seeing a thing as it is in itself (uncovering) and as it is not in itself (covering over) was emphasized.

Error, of course, is the default argument that has historically been offered to motivate representational philosophies of perception. The fact that we can be deceived must therefore mean we do not have direct access to the “*things-in-themselves*.”¹⁰ This half-argument, generally and without further ado, is taken to necessitate the idea that we view images on something like a mental movie screen. Whether it is the late 19th century neo-Kantian paradigm, the logical positivism it influenced, with its sense-data theory, or any other latter-day representationalism, the story is a mere variation on the same theme: “These entities [sense perceptions] [...] are brought in with the implication that whenever we ‘perceive’ there is an *intermediate* entity *always* present and *informing* us about something *else*—the question is, can we or can’t we trust what it says? Is it ‘veridical’?”¹¹ But as J.L. Austin realizes, this is just a set-up, a way of making it necessarily follow that therefore we never access the things themselves. Pierre Le Morvan also points to this reification of ‘appearances,’ and the assumptive fallacy on which it is based:

⁹ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 54.

¹⁰ Perhaps the primary 20th century example of this is given in Bertrand Russell’s *The Problems of Philosophy*, which introduced the terminology of “sense-data” as those things of which we are immediately aware, and whereby we are indirectly informed of the real thing.

¹¹ Austin, J.L. *Sense and Sensibilia*, p. 11.

Since the penny is circular (or of a certain size or color), the proponent of the argument assumes that, since something *appears* elliptical (or of another size or color) to us, that of which we are immediately aware *is* elliptical (or of that size or color). The underlying assumption here is that if something *appears* F to subject S, then S must be immediately aware of something that *is* F.¹²

But Austin himself, and more recently and rigorously, philosophers of perception like Alva Noë¹³ have proven fully able to explain error without positing intermediate entities. As Le Morvan says, all we need to point to in such cases are the *conditions* of the viewing: “a round penny may look elliptical (or of another size) from a certain angle because of perspectival distortion; a brown penny of a certain hue may look to be of a different hue from another angle for a whole host of possible reasons (lighting effects, contrast effects, etc.).”¹⁴ That is, as we have said, access is all the time direct, but all the time conditional. Everything is dependent upon the conditions under which the entity is accessed. And since conditional access can account for erroneous perception, why posit these interlocutor entities?

In asking such a question, we have merely given a heuristic argument along the lines of the principle of parsimony. But simultaneously, Heidegger provides us with a more positive argument: any model of correspondence between representation and world already depends upon the world’s prior disclosure, which “alone lends to propositional correctness the appearance of fulfilling the essence of truth at all.”¹⁵

2.2 Ontological Pluralism and the Thing-in-Itself

2.2.1

We are now prepared to discuss Heidegger’s radical reinterpretation of the ‘thing-in-itself.’ We have already noted in chapter 1 that Heidegger uses such language as *Sich-an-ihm-selbst-zeigende*, ‘that which shows itself in itself.’ The question we now ask is what relation this designation has to the Kantian *Ding an Sich*, the ‘thing-in-itself.’ While for Kant the thing-in-itself is by its very nature hidden away behind the ‘phenomena,’ or the merely apparent, and therefore intrinsically impossible to access, for Heidegger essentially *any* encounter pierces beyond the veil of “mere appearances” and reaches the “real thing.” Crucially, the “real thing,” the thing-in-itself, can be reached in a variety of different ways and under a variety of different conditions.

This reinterpretation of the “in-themselves” of entities is made possible by rejecting Braver’s R3 Uniqueness, the tenet that “There is exactly one true and complete description of the way the world is.”¹⁶ Unlike with R2 Correspondence (and, as we shall see, R4 Bivalence), Heidegger does not “pseudo-reject” Uniqueness, but, as I will argue, dismisses it fully, without any qualification. And rather than entailing any sort of anti-realism, this abolition of Uniqueness opens the way for a novel view of things-in-themselves and what takes place when Dasein encounters them.

¹² Le Morvan, P. “Arguments Against Direct Realism and How To Counter Them,” p. 11.

¹³ Noë, A. *Action In Perception*.

¹⁴ Le Morvan, P. “Arguments Against Direct Realism and How To Counter Them,” p. 12.

¹⁵ Heidegger, M. “On the Essence of Truth.” *Basic Writings of Martin Heidegger*, p. 122-123.

¹⁶ Putnam, H. *Reason, Truth, and History*. p. 49.

The first thing to stress is that, for Heidegger, what makes an entity “in itself” has nothing to do with its isolation from a subject, but rather its being true, in the sense we have defined (of being-uncovered, being a phenomenon). One would only be inclined to conflate something being-in-itself with its being in isolation—that is, as it is apart from Dasein—if one were already acting under the prejudice that the isolated thing has some priority in terms of truth, relative to the non-isolated thing. But this is perhaps the least established claim in the history of metaphysics that is at the same time so widely believed. Whether in seeing I interpret the entities seen (or even represent them), why should we believe the unseen entity is the “real deal” while the interpreted entity is somehow fake, false, a fiction? Instead, in navigating the world we are constantly and consistently grasping onto fact-elements of the entities we encounter and bringing them to the fore, bearing them out in full relief, such that the thing as it is in non-isolation, despite being accessed conditionally, is nonetheless allowed to be as it is in itself.

If, by arbitrary convention, and without further ado, we identify the term “thing-in-itself” with the thing independent of us, then there is no argument; for who can argue against convention which sets itself as its only measure? But the convention only gets off the ground by way of a hidden premise: that the way entities “really are” is as they are when humans aren’t around. This premise is perhaps as old as Plato’s allegory of the cave, where the shadows on the wall are designated false, completely false, mere impressions. In setting “mere impressions” against the “hidden world” (for Plato, the Forms), and dictating, *prima facie*, that falsity is the width and breadth of our lot, we establish a privileging of the “God’s eye view.”

Heidegger turns this paradigm on its head. Firstly, we cannot say that the isolated thing is truer than the encountered thing, since, for Heidegger, as discussed in chapter 1, there is no truth, no uncovering, without Dasein. But also, and somewhat more to the point, for Heidegger the waters of truth and falsity are always mixed; all seeing puts some factual elements of the seen entity in the foreground at the expense of others. This is all just to say that we don’t have access to the Truth, the pure, unadulterated thing, *for no such thing exists* insofar as “access” is concerned. Thus, there cannot be *just one* “true and complete description of the way the world is.” No description is complete, and many contradictory descriptions can be true. This is, as Braver calls it, A3, Ontological Pluralism.

2.2.2

As we discussed very briefly in 2.1.2, error is typically seen as a problem for non-representationalist accounts of perception. But Heidegger says that Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, is fundamentally *in the truth*, and only on this basis is error possible. Or, to put the insight another way, as Austin reminds us, “it is important to remember that talk of deception only *makes sense* against a background of general non-deception.”¹⁷ To use an example Wrathall favors, suppose I am walking along a road and see a deer some distance in front of me. As I continue walking, I come to realize I was deceived—the “deer” in fact is only a bush. But can it not be that in seeing the bush as a deer I have nevertheless grasped onto some element of fact about the bush? After all, it *is* true that from my perspective and in these lighting conditions, etc. the bush is readily taken to be a deer. That is, in fact, *something about the bush*. And while certainly the judgment that there was a deer before me was erroneous, the falsity of this perception is only possible because of an already disclosive (i.e. true) access to my environment,

¹⁷ Austin, J.L. *Sense and Sensibilia*, p. 11.

on some level. That is, it is true of the bush, in such and such lighting, or from this perspective—that is, given some specification of conditions—that, as a matter of fact, *it really does look like a deer*. One can only talk about being deceived into thinking the bush is a deer because there is some access to the bush, to something true about the bush. Thus, if we think of ourselves as “reading off” the world, then, in order to “misread,” we have to already suppose that in general we are actually “looking at the text,” so to speak.

But it is important to note that if (and indeed, *because*) Dasein is intrinsically “in the truth,” so too is Dasein intrinsically “in falsity”:

In its full existential-ontological meaning, the proposition that ‘Dasein is in the truth’ states equiprimordially that ‘Dasein is in untruth.’ But only in so far as Dasein has been disclosed has it also been closed off; and only in so far as entities within-the-world have been uncovered along with Dasein, have such entities, as possibly encounterable within-the-world, been covered up (hidden) or disguised.¹⁸

Take again the case of the bush that seems like a deer. Something about the bush is uncovered in such a scenario—that under conditions C it looks like a deer. But so too is it the case that the being of the bush *qua* itself is covered over. That is, it is *not* shown as it is in itself. This should not be taken as statement of a contradiction, but rather as a statement of the fundamentally perspectival, non-exhaustive nature of access to entities. As Graham Harman has noticed,¹⁹ it is a fundamental fact for Heidegger that encounter with entities is at all times such that elements of the entity come into focus while others retreat; something is brought to the fore, but necessarily at the expense of something else. That is, entities are always uncovered in some respects while simultaneously covered over in others. As Dahlstrom says:

‘Uncovering’ (*Entdecken*) and ‘covering up’ (*Verdecken*) are only meaningful in reference to one another, and talk of a mere or complete uncovering or covering up is meaningless. If asserting is a type of uncovering, then it also covers up more or less. An entity only presents itself in this or that respect, shading, and so on, as Husserl emphasizes is the case for the perception of material objects.²⁰

None of this should be taken to mean that encounters with an entity are fundamentally self-contradictory; rather, *complete* truth and *complete* falsity are impossibilities, and therefore, it is incorrect to construe Heidegger as believing that all encounters with entities are at the same time *fully* true and *fully* false. Truth and falsity are, instead, far more exotic specimens. Uncovering only occurs in some respect or another, and, as a consequent, other respects fall out of view. Thus, encounters with entities are *phenomenologically mutually exclusive*. Seeing the bush as a deer precludes also seeing it as a bush, but both modes of encounter uncover *and* cover over the entity in question in different respects. This “seeing as” was also an insight of Wittgenstein’s, as in the *Philosophical Investigations*’ famous discussion of a ‘duck-rabbit,’ and both he and Austin cautioned against the idea that this entails an imagistic (or sense-data) view of perception. Instead, as Harman says, “Dasein lives in the as-structure and is able to see beings as beings.”²¹

¹⁸ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 265.

¹⁹ Harman, G. *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects*.

²⁰ Dahlstrom, D. *Heidegger’s Concept of Truth*, p. 399 footnote 15.

²¹ Harman, G. *Heidegger Explained: From Phenomenon to Thing*, p. 90.

2.2.3

As this discussion has hopefully elucidated, phenomenon and semblance, uncovering and covering over, are not cleanly divided; by their very natures, they bleed into one another. We can see, then, that Heidegger, *in a sense*, rejects the ‘*Ding an Sich*’—if by the term we mean, as Kant did, that which one could only witness from a “God’s eye view” in a unique, singular, all-encompassing perspective. For Heidegger, though, there are—there *can be*—no such perspectives. As such, there is no single, unique way in which an entity can be in-itself, and which qualifies as what we could call “objective reality.” Rather, a thing can be in-itself in *myriad* ways, each of which is objective reality, and each of which can be viewed perspectively, yet truthfully. Because these ways are mutually exclusive, there is no monolithic Truth.

Consider the example Heidegger offers of viewing a city: “A city offers a grand vista. The view that a being has in itself, and so first can offer from itself, lets itself then be apprehended at this or that time, from this or that viewpoint. The vista that offers itself alters with each new viewpoint.”²² That is, each of these viewpoints lets the city be seen, uncovers it, but simultaneously covers over other aspects. If, for example, one only sees an affluent area of uptown New York, one is not deceived in the sense that the city remains unseen. But simultaneously such uncovering is that by which covering over can occur; one *would* be deceived if on account of such seeing one takes it to be that this perspective exhausts the city, that the city as a whole is so affluent: “Along some pathways or other, and on some grounds or other, we arrive at a view about the thing. We construct an opinion for ourselves about it. Thus it can happen that the view that we adopt has no support in the thing itself. It is then a mere view, an assumption. We assume a thing to be thus or thus. Then we are only opining.”²³ Therefore, precisely *in uncovering* is covering over able to breed. “Wherever there is unconcealment of beings, there is the possibility of seeming.”²⁴ That is, uncovering is not the simple opposite of seeming, nor vice versa, but instead the two are inclusive to one another. As we have said, Dasein is in the truth, and by the same token, in untruth.

Seeming, then, only takes place in the midst of phenomena—falsity and truth are inextricably intertwined, and to speak of Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth, is pure fiction. There can be no “total account,” just different accounts, though some hold out the possibility of perhaps being better than others. Guignon points out that this has historically left Heidegger open to charges of his being “an antirealist and a pernicious relativist.”²⁵ But, as point of fact, none of this should be taken to imply some sort of subjectivism or relativism, wherein truth is dependent merely on one’s attitudes. Just as Heidegger took pains to guard against the misunderstanding that would have him say there are no entities, no facts, when there is no Dasein, so too did he take pains against the interpretation that this aspect of his thought promotes relativism:

Because the kind of Being that is essential to truth is of the character of Dasein, all truth is relative to Dasein’s Being. Does this relativity signify that all truth is ‘subjective’? If one interprets ‘subjective’ as ‘left to the subject’s discretion,’ then

²² Heidegger, M. *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 109.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

²⁴ Heidegger, M. *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 110.

²⁵ Guignon, C. “Being as Appearing: Retrieving the Greek Experience of *Phusis*.” *A Companion To Heidegger’s Introduction To Metaphysics*, p. 54.

it certainly does not. For uncovering, in the sense which is most its own, takes asserting out of the province of 'subjective' discretion, and brings the uncovering Dasein face to face with the entities themselves. [...] If truth has been correctly understood, is it in the least impaired by the fact that it is ontically possible only in the 'subject' and that it stands and falls with the Being of that 'subject'?²⁶

Truth is not measured against Dasein, though Dasein is the necessary precondition for the existence of truth. And, really, is this perspectival paradigm such a radical notion of truth, error, and reality? As Austin words it, "[different ways of seeing what is seen] may be due to the fact that what is seen is seen differently, seen in a different way, seen as this rather than that. And there will sometimes be no *one right* way of saying what is seen, for the additional reason that there may be no one right way of seeing it."²⁷ In such a light, this view seems rather commonsensical. As Guignon says:

These various views of the city all reveal different aspects [...]. Are the aspects commensurable in the sense that they can be added together to get one comprehensive, consistent viewpoint? Perhaps not. [...] The fact that we can only get at incommensurable aspects or perspectives of the city might suggest that we never really see the city itself. [...] But surely this suggestion is absurd. When we see different aspects of New York, we are not seeing something *other* than New York, and we are certainly not seeing something that exists only in our heads. We are seeing *the city*.²⁸

And this is *exactly* Le Morvan's point when he says, echoing Chisholm's argument in *Perceiving*, that, "there is no more reason to think that perceiving a physical object entails perceiving all of its parts at once than to think that eating a dinner entails swallowing all of its parts at once, or visiting London entails visiting all of its parts at once."²⁹ The privileging of the "God's eye view," from which Uniqueness receives its nourishment, is based merely on an assumptive abstraction. Taylor Carman sums up how preposterous it is that the term "realism" has become hijacked by such a dogma:

If realism is understood so as to entail commitment to some such absolute and authoritative perspective, a God's eye point of view, a view from nowhere, then I believe Heidegger is no more a realist than Kant. But then, no one ought to be a realist in that strong sense, if not because, as Nietzsche famously declared, God is dead, then at least because the expression 'view from nowhere' is a contradiction in terms. We can reject the notion of a unique, ideal, exhaustive view of the real as incoherent, that is, without rejecting the notion that occurrent entities exist and have a determinate structure in the absence of any and all views, period. This more austere ontic realism I want to suggest, is coherent and plausible quite apart from any commitment to reductionism or the correspondence theory of truth.³⁰

Guignon reiterates this same outlook on a "more austere" realism when he says that, as he sees it, "Heidegger was never an antirealist and that the 'relativism' he embraces is the fairly harmless

²⁶ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 270. Emphasis original.

²⁷ Austin, J.L. *Sense and Sensibilia*, p. 101.

²⁸ Guignon, C. "Being as Appearing: Retrieving the Greek Experience of *Phusis*." *A Companion To Heidegger's Introduction To Metaphysics*, p. 54.

²⁹ Le Morvan, P. "Arguments Against Direct Realism and How To Counter Them," p. 9-10

³⁰ Carman, T. *Heidegger's Analytic*, p. 167.

sort that anyone who is not in the thrall of some dogma would accept.”³¹ Heidegger seemed, in fact, to have grown quite weary of, and even hostile toward, the construal of his philosophy as relativistic. In the *Introduction to Metaphysics* he says, rather polemically: “Only all the effete latecomers, with their overly clever wit, believe they can be done with the historical power of seeming by explaining it as ‘subjective,’ where the essence of this ‘subjectivity’ is something extremely dubious.”³² While we can avoid reiterating the antagonistic tone of this passage, the substance is worth repeating: we do not “subjectivize” our access to the world by viewing phenomenon and semblance, uncovering and covering over, as two sides of the same coin.

It is hopefully clear at this point that the dogma to which Guignon and Carman referred is in fact R3 Uniqueness, and further clear that the extent to which it is seen as an essential component of any thoroughgoing realism is merely a pretension of some realists. The counter-concept to Uniqueness, what Braver calls Ontological Pluralism, is not by necessity an anti-realist position, nor does it collapse into relativism.

2.3 Bivalence Failure: The “Regulative Ideal”

2.3.1

If R3 Uniqueness is a dogma, then so too is the idea on which it rests, the idea that says our access to the world comes in only two flavors—true or false, and nothing else. In the rejection of “complete truth” and “complete falsity,” we already see Heidegger’s shift away from this tenet, called the principle of bivalence, which is a semantic relative of the law of excluded middle. Whereas the latter posits that for any proposition P , $P \vee \sim P$, bivalence posits that for any proposition P , P is true or not- P is true ($TP \vee T\sim P$). The distinction between the two is a subtle point in the philosophy of logic, and is not crucial here. As such, we will use them both, as Braver does, when discussing R4 Bivalence.

Michael Dummett first proposed that bivalence is an essential feature of realism as a way to circumvent unproductive metaphysical debates and instead reframe the issue in purely semantic terms. Thus, *what*, metaphysically, is true is not as important as the underlying theory of truth itself that is accepted:

The primary tenet of realism, as applied to some given class of statements, is that each statement in the class is determined as true or not true, independently of our knowledge, by some objective reality whose existence and constitution is, again, independent of our knowledge.³³

Braver picks up on this model and incorporates it as one of his realism matrices, R4 Bivalence, proceeding to argue that Heidegger rejects it.³⁴ While the contention that Heidegger rejects bivalence is not inaccurate, there is a preliminary issue that must be raised about the way Braver sets R4 and A4, the rejection of bivalence, against one another. That is, rejecting R4 does not entail what Braver’s example of A4 would have us believe. He sets up a false dichotomy, where rejection of bivalence, $\sim(TP \vee T\sim P)$, is equated to a rejection of the law of non-contradiction, $P \wedge$

³¹ Guignon, C. “Being as Appearing: Retrieving the Greek Experience of *Phusis*.” *A Companion To Heidegger’s Introduction To Metaphysics*, p. 54.

³² Heidegger, M. *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 110-111.

³³ Dummett, M. *The Interpretation of Frege’s Philosophy*, p. 434.

³⁴ Braver, L. *A Thing of This World*, p. 200-201.

~P. Braver makes this equivalence when he cites the following passage from *Hegel's Logic* as the paradigm of A4:

If the Object, the product of this transition, be brought into relation with the notion, which, so far as its special form is concerned, has vanished in it, we may give a correct expression to the result, by saying that notion (or, if it be preferred, subjectivity) and object are *implicitly* the same. But it is equally correct to say that they are different. In short, the two modes of expression are equally correct and incorrect. The true state of the case can be presented in no expression of this kind.³⁵

The key to seeing that this passage amounts to a rejection of the law of non-contradiction, and *not* bivalence, is the word “equally.” With the use of this word, Hegel is expressing an acceptance of the somewhat more radical thesis of dialetheism,³⁶ a logical semantics that claims both P and ~P can be true at the same time. But there are logics which do not accept dialetheism while also denying bivalence—any consistent many-valued logic does this. So one can be committed to a rejection of bivalence without being committed to the claims of dialetheism, the latter being much more dubious as a realist position.

My contention is that Heidegger's paradigm is along these lines: he is only rejecting the law of the excluded middle (or bivalence), and *not* the law of non-contradiction, and therefore giving us a “fuzzy” paradigm (as is formalized in fuzzy logic).³⁷ If Heidegger's rejection of R4 works in this way, then Braver's example is clearly not applicable to what Heidegger is doing. It certainly remains a way of rebuffing bivalence, but does not necessitate rejection of the law of non-contradiction, as Hegel's passage does.

At the same time, Heidegger's is not quite a “full-blown” rejection of the excluded middle; indeed, it remains an important, if naïve, ideal of logic. Instead we are afforded a “pseudo-rejection,”³⁸ much as was the case with R2 Correspondence. This pseudo-rejection is twofold in its scope. Firstly, as was stated in 2.1, conditional access to entities means that truth and falsity go hand in hand. Any perspective on an entity which uncovers it in some respects will simultaneously cover it over in others. Thus, there is no “complete truth” or “complete falsity” in

³⁵ Hegel, G.W.F. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 257-258.

³⁶ Dialetheism has been argued for most famously by Graham Priest in his book *In Contradiction*.

³⁷ It is also possible that Heidegger's view conforms to intuitionistic logic, which likewise accepts the law of non-contradiction and rejects the rule of double negation ($\sim\sim P \Leftrightarrow P$). However, I believe that, while intuitionism and a formalization of Heidegger's account of truth run somewhat parallel in terms of which axioms they do and do not uphold, their motivations diverge. Heidegger's “semantics” seem less induced by constructivist propensities than by pragmatist concerns.

³⁸ Notably, supervaluationism accepts LEM but rejects bivalence, and therefore it is tempting to examine Heidegger's rejection of bivalence along the lines of supervaluationism and not fuzzy logic (since LEM's being a “regulative ideal” may yet be analogous to its being “supertrue” under supervaluationism). But his pragmatist leanings seem to preclude it; if all our concepts, or even a great majority of them, are inherently vague, then, under supervaluationism, all or most of our assertions are without a truth value. This seems like an undesirable conclusion, not only on its own (dis-)merits, but also because Heidegger's theory of truth, fuzzy though it is, seems to entirely preclude it.

Dasein's Being-in-the-world. And secondly, our concepts, as approximations toward the world, are inherently vague; there is always gray area on the boundaries of defining a concept or category. A Heideggerian view, combining both of these positions, suggests then that a given assertion has to be evaluated on a *scale* between truth and falsity, not as simply fully true or fully false. This is along the same lines as the model that a typical fuzzy logic follows. Though we will address the issue of vagueness presently, the idea that our categories are "approximations" toward the world will be fleshed out in greater detail in the following chapter.

2.3.2

Braver summarizes Dummett's rationale for bivalence as *the* central tenet of realism as follows: "Instead of the relatively meaningless and endless metaphysical discussion, we should examine the much more tangible implications of realism of bivalence: if reality is determinate independently of us, then propositions will have determinate truth values regardless of whether we can verify them or not."³⁹ The problem with the rationale is that there is no reason whatsoever for agreeing with this conditional, because someone who accepts the antecedent is in no way obliged to accept the consequent. And critiquing any rejection of the consequent by simply characterizing the move it as anti-realist just begs the question by accepting the Dummettian conditional in the first place.

The pragmatist (and Heideggerian) view previously mentioned in 1.3, that the concepts we use are defined by and involved with collective human practices, generally leads to a rejection of the consequent in the above conditional. As Braver himself says, the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations* critiques naïve propositional bivalence by way of an argument against the idea that when we use language we are following rules.⁴⁰ Instead, given the pragmatic situation, we are playing one kind of language game or another, and these language games are part of a normative social practice. As Lance and Hawthorne summarize Wittgenstein on rule-following, "The whole point of the skeptical argument on rule-following in the *Philosophical Investigations* is that no account of linguistic competence can be given in terms of explicit rules, since rules only guide behavior under an interpretation and interpretations are subject to normative assessment just as much as rules are."⁴¹ Thus, propositions do not have "determinate truth values regardless of whether we can verify them or not," because talk of determinate truth values ignores the deeply social and organic (not rule-based) nature of linguistic competence formation. Speaking English well does not involve memorizing a set of rules, nor does interpreting or translating it. The meaning, then, of an English sentence is not a strictly determinate thing, nor can be its truth value. This kind of argument has proven incredibly influential in the philosophy of language. At the same time, fuzzy logic has developed in order to evaluate propositions that make use of vague concepts like 'heap,' 'large,' 'bright,' etc. For pragmatists, these concepts are far and away the rule rather than the exception.

To clarify: Frege's statement, which Braver cites, that "the law of the excluded middle is really just another form of the requirement that the concept should have a sharp boundary,"⁴² is not disputed on this view. But the point of pragmatists, and those who take fuzzy logic to be

³⁹ Braver, L. *A Thing of This World*, p. 20-21.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴¹ Lance, M. and O'Leary-Hawthorne, J. *The Grammar of Meaning*, p. 130.

⁴² Frege, G. *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, p. 160.

more than just a peculiar academic deviation from classical logic, is *not* that it is impossible to sharpen our concepts. That is, it is not impossible, when I say “the lamp is bright” to whittle down the categories at play such that one can assign an absolute truth value to the sentence along the lines bivalence would dictate. The point is rather that sharpening ‘bright’—or, for that matter, ‘lamp’—in this way is purely *artificial*. To do so would be, in a sense, to create a new concept altogether from the skeleton of the fuzzy, natural concept ‘bright’ that we use in everyday language.

If I were to ask you to go into the other room and tell me if the lamp is bright, that which will absolutely determine your answer is, say, conventions about décor, or practical concerns about the legibility of a book under the light. By way of these evaluative standards, the answer to my question may be clear, but that doesn’t mean there’s an easy place to *draw the line*. When Frege claims that “a concept that is not sharply defined is wrongly termed a concept,”⁴³ he has simply failed to notice that this is just not how concepts work in everyday language. To hone the concept ‘bright’ so that *in all cases* it is absolutely, unambiguously clear whether the proposition “the lamp is bright” is true or not, is to engage in an ideal linguistic practice. While such an enterprise may be illuminating and worthwhile for other reasons, it remains a fact that it is not the way natural languages actually work.

Instead, we should see bivalence, and the law of the excluded middle, as principles of logic that are, in a sense, *subjunctive*—that *would* pertain under what we might call “ideal circumstances.” Richard Tieszen describes Husserl’s view of knowledge as one where “a conception of ideal or maximal truth serves as a regulative ideal, as an ideal or norm toward which knowledge aims if it is to be more fully determined and perfected.”⁴⁴ Thus, as a “regulative ideal,” bivalence splits the world into absolute truth and absolute falsity. But this regulative ideal cannot be met by human knowledge. Instead, as in Kant, it acts as a guidepost:

One might look at a platonistic view of truth as *postulating* truth as fully determinate, complete, perfected. But Kant would say that ‘reason’ (as distinct from understanding) inevitably leads to such postulation, and that it thereby provides a standard against which our knowledge is measured at any given time.⁴⁵

The regulative ideal is just that, an ideal against which example cases can be measured, rather than something to which they conform, and therefore is not applicable to perspectival encounters with entities. Likewise, when engaging in discourse, we mold and carve what is seen into categories that act as linguistic approximations, and here bivalence also fails. So, just like with Heidegger’s position on R2 Correspondence, this is not so much a rejection of bivalence as an acknowledgment of its limits.

2.3.3

We have stated that bivalence, for both Husserl and Heidegger, is a “regulative ideal,” and this is the case on two fronts: firstly, access to entities is always conditional, and secondly, our concepts are inherently vague. But neither of these, nor the two together, entail that there is no determinate

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁴⁴ Tieszen, R. *Mathematical Intuition: Phenomenology and Mathematical Knowledge*, p. 181.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 181-182.

reality, no “fixed totality of mind-independent objects” (Braver’s R1 Independence).⁴⁶ For, as we have seen, Heidegger accepts that there are definite, determinate facts.

Braver, however, seems to take Heidegger’s views to have such implications. He quotes Heidegger as saying, as he indeed does in *Being and Time*, that “any truth whatsoever,” including those of logic, cannot be true when there is no Dasein. While this is indeed correct of Heidegger’s philosophy, it is misleading, as chapter 1 made clear. Nothing anti-realist falls out of Heidegger’s claim that there is no truth when there is no Dasein, since this does not entail that in the pre-Dasein world there were no *facts*. Not only is this not entailed by his account of truth, but Heidegger himself guarded against it, so *we cannot construe him as even believing it was a part of his philosophy*. Truth is an event for Heidegger, the unveiling of facts, and such unveiling can only be done by—or, as perhaps we should say—to Dasein. But facts and entities are not something that disappear when Dasein does not exist.

Thus, while truth is not a thing that we can simply apply to groups of symbols unless Dasein exists, fact remains untouched by Dasein’s existence or non-existence. When Dummet claims then that statements are determined “as true or not true, independently of our knowledge, by some objective reality whose existence and constitution is, again, independent of our knowledge,” we can reject this on the grounds that statements are simply *not* made true independently of our knowledge. Dasein Being-in-the-world, from which knowledge or understanding springs, is *exactly* the prerequisite for truth to occur. But we cannot take from the idea that *descriptions* of reality are made true or false dependent on our knowledge (or existence) that therefore *reality* is non-existent or has a different constitution dependent on us. The way in which Heidegger rejects Dummet’s summation of bivalence, the so-called “primary tenet of realism,” does not imply a rejection of R1 Independence. Nor, by the same token, does it deny that the world—to be distinguished from language, or descriptions of the world—conforms to the excluded middle in the sense that it is determinate.⁴⁷ The excluded middle, and bivalence, fails when we encounter entities—because our access is necessarily conditional and perspectival, and therefore steeped in both truth and falsity—and also when we *speak* about them—because our concepts are approximations of reality that are inherently vague.

One could, however, continue to press the point of the Dummetian conditional: *shouldn’t* the determinateness of reality imply there is in fact a true and complete description of it? That is, if Heidegger acknowledges a determinate reality, how can he reject Uniqueness? The key is to realize that in R3 (and the articulation of R4 Bivalence that Heidegger denies) we have moved from talking about a determinate reality to a complete, determinate, unique *description* of reality. And it is precisely in description—even the hermeneutic description that occurs pre-discursively in perspectival perception—that bivalence fails. It is in “reading off” reality, even when we read it off *well*, that we interpret and vagueness takes hold. One can hold, then, that reality is not vague, but determinate, yet also maintain that our access is always conditioned, and therefore non-exhaustive, “blunt,” in a way. Accordingly, the concepts we use, and thus the descriptions of reality from which they are built, are vague.

⁴⁶ As a reminder, Braver’s R1 Independence matrix states that, “The world consists of some fixed totality of mind-independent objects.” (Putnam, H. *Reason, Truth, and History*, p. 49).

⁴⁷ However, as Peter Unger introduced in his now-classic paper “The Problem of the Many,” there may indeed be actual *metaphysical* vagueness. The intersection of the eponymous Problem of the Many with the phenomenological “doctrine” of the categorial forms seems like a promising area for further study, but is outside the scope of this thesis.

The point to be stressed here is that R1 Independence should not be taken to already entail R3 Uniqueness. Nothing about a determinate reality means that mutually exclusive interpretations cannot simultaneously truthfully bear out that which they describe. Just because we have inherently perspectival access—simultaneously truthful (uncovering), yet mutually exclusive perspectival access—doesn't necessitate a non-determinate reality. And that that reality is determinate doesn't mean we have to reify conditional access to it and turn such perspectival interpretations into "representations." The thing before me can be interpreted without falsity as a book; I open it and begin reading the words on the page. Its being a book is something true about it. But it is also true of the thing that it can be used as a paper weight. These are two ways of "seeing" the thing, of accessing it as it is in itself. As "paper weight," it is no less what it is in itself than as "book." Nor has anything about the entity changed. That is, nothing about this modality of multiple "as-structures" implies an indeterminacy of the entity.

2.4 Conclusion

We have discussed in this chapter how Heidegger's anti-representationalism and rejection of bivalence in our access to, and articulation of, reality has led to a new view of the thing-in-itself: entities can be in many different ways, with these modes allowing for the thing to be *variously* "as it is in-itself." The origin of the "as-structure," in the unmediated understanding of the categorial, and its relation to the ultimate realism matrix we will consider, R5 Passive Knower, will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: REALISM WITHIN THE CORRELATION

This chapter will scrutinize the question of whether or not Heidegger's philosophy supports R5 Passive Knower or A5 Active Knower. Section 3.1 will begin by questioning the reading of Heidegger as a so-called "ontological idealist," arguing that the nature of Being simply cannot be put in such terms, and that the relationship between Dasein and Being is more complex than simple dependence. Section 3.2 will then attempt to show how Husserl's insight of the categorial intuition inspired Heidegger to re-evaluate Kant's "Copernican Revolution" from an unexpected direction, yielding a novel view of Dasein as a Passive Knower.

3.1 The "Destiny of Being"

3.1.1

As Braver mentions, many recent Heidegger scholars have argued that Heidegger should be read as an "ontic realist" but an "ontological idealist." That is, beings are not dependent on Dasein, but their Being is. This position has been argued for most emphatically by Taylor Carman¹ and constitutes what is, at this point, likely the standard reading of Heidegger amongst the philosophical descendents of Hubert Dreyfus or anyone else that takes seriously the idea of Heidegger as a realist. While Braver argues against this view, denying that Heidegger accepts R1 Independence (ontic realism), I will not focus on debunking that position here. Instead, I will make the argument that Being should not be read as something that is in any exaggerated sense dependent on Dasein. That is, while Heidegger does unequivocally state that Being *is* dependent on Dasein,² I believe we should not rush to the easiest, most apparent conclusion about what this means.

There is, of course, no shortage of passages in *Being and Time* that express the basic idea from which Carman's interpretation is derived. Heidegger says that "Being (not entities) is something which 'there is' [*es gibt*'] only in so far as truth is. And truth *is* only because and as long as Dasein is. Being and truth 'are' equiprimordially."³ Since truth and Being are so intimately connected for Heidegger, and truth exists only insofar as Dasein exists, then so too "is there" Being only insofar as there is Dasein. Heidegger expresses this thought in a bit more detail elsewhere:

If idealism emphasizes that being and Reality are only 'in the consciousness,' this expresses an understanding of the fact that Being cannot be explained through entities. [...] Only because Being is 'in the consciousness'—that is to say, only because it is understandable in Dasein—can Dasein only understand and conceptualize such characteristics of Being as independence, the 'in-itself,' and Reality in general.⁴

So, Dasein is necessary for Being in the sense that Being is only "in the consciousness." On the face of it, this certainly *looks* like idealism. But consider the passage more closely. Heidegger is

¹ Carman, T. *Heidegger's Analytic*.

² Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 255: "Being (not entities) is dependent upon the understanding of Being; that is to say, Reality (not the Real) is dependent upon care."

³ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 251-252.

not expressing anything like the Kantian schema where Being is a category of the understanding. Instead, he is pointing out that the statement “Being ‘is in the consciousness’” means only that Being is *understandable* solely by Dasein. But this is a far cry from saying Dasein “creates” Being or imposes it upon the world. To reduce the “dependence of Being” on Dasein to merely its reliance on being *understood* by Dasein is to take the bite out of idealism, so to speak. Rather than the idea that Being “isn’t” when there is no Dasein, Being retreats into obscurity for all other entities, and is only opened up for understanding by Dasein. If one reads the above passage, and the phrase “in the consciousness,” as meaning that Being is, in a sense, a fiction, a form of consciousness and nothing more, then the entire point of the clarification Heidegger provides has been lost.

And that counter-attitude, that Being is dependent on Dasein’s Being for its own “Being,” is to commit a cardinal sin, not only for Heidegger, but for the entirety of the long history of ontology, from Parmenides to the Medievals. For to speak of Being’s “being” in anything but a metaphorical way is absolute nonsense. Being is *not* an entity which could be said to “be” or “not be.” Any such expression for Heidegger is always false and misleading, though sometimes linguistically unavoidable. This is not just a matter of formality, but a serious problem, that if ignored will unsurprisingly lead to the sorts of absurdities like the idea that Being literally *is* only so long as Dasein is.

Notably, the German that Heidegger consistently uses reads “‘es gibt’ Sein.”—literally “‘it gives’ being.” This leads to a possible interpretation here of the ‘there is’ not as a metaphysical statement about Being “being” or “not being,” but rather an annunciation of Being—as if to say, “Hark! Being.” Thus, only so long as Dasein is, does Being *give itself*—or, only so long as Dasein is, does Being announce itself. While ‘*es gibt*’ is in colloquial German a common expression for saying that something exists, we know that taking such a metaphorical interpretation in reference to Being is nonsense and verboten for Heidegger. However, if we take the phrase as it *literally* stands, it says nothing of the sort. Heidegger expressly speaks of the literal use of the phrase “‘es gibt’ Sein” several times in the “Letter on Humanism”:

In *Being and Time* (p. 212) we purposely and cautiously say, *il y a l’Etre*: “there is/it gives” [“es gibt”] Being. *Il y a* translates “it gives” imprecisely. For the “it” that here “gives” is Being itself. The “gives” names the essence of being that is giving, granting its truth. The self-giving into the open, along with the open region itself, is Being itself.

At the same time “it gives” is used preliminarily to avoid the locution “Being is”; for “is” is commonly said of some thing that is, We call such a thing a being. But Being precisely “is” not “a being.” If “is” is spoken without a closer interpretation of Being, then Being is all too easily represented as a “being” after the fashion of the familiar sorts of beings that act as causes and are actualized as effects.⁵

But does not *Being and Time* say on p. 212, where the “there is/it gives” comes to language, “Only so long as Dasein is, is there [gibt es] Being”? To be sure. It means that only so long as the clearing of Being appropriates does Being convey itself to man. But the fact that the Da, the clearing as the truth of Being itself, appropriates is the dispensation of Being itself. This is the destiny of the clearing.

⁵ Heidegger, M. “Letter On Humanism.” *Basic Writings of Martin Heidegger*, p. 238.

But the sentence does not mean that the Dasein of man in the traditional sense of *existentia*, and thought in modern philosophy as the actuality of the *ego cogito*, is that being through which Being is first fashioned. The sentence does not say that being is the product of man.⁶

Being is illumined for man in the ecstatic projection [Entwurf]. But this projection does not create Being.⁷

These passages speak for themselves. Despite the fact, though, that the “Letter on Humanism” was published 18 years after *Being and Time*, it would be inaccurate to say this was something of a latter-day contrition by Heidegger. As we saw above, he stresses the same point in *History of the Concept of Time*, and even makes it in *Being and Time*:

Ontically, ‘letting something be involves’ signifies that within our factual concern we let something ready-to-hand *be* so-and-so *as it is already and in order that it be such*. The way we take this ontical sense of ‘letting be’ is, in principle, ontological. And therewith we Interpret the meaning of previously freeing [Freigabe] what is proximally ready-to-hand within the world. *Previously letting something ‘be’ does not mean that we must first bring it into its Being and produce [herstellen] it; it means rather that something which is already an ‘entity’ must be discovered in its readiness-to-hand, and that we must thus let the entity which has this Being be encountered.*⁸

This passage strongly suggests firstly, that we do not “bring entities into their Being”—that is, we do not make entities *be* or cause them to be. When Heidegger says “something which is already an ‘entity,’” he is expressly indicating that, in being an ‘entity’ [‘*Seindes*’] it is something which, prior to encounter, already *is*, “has” Being. We cannot then easily separate an ontic realism from a claim about Being itself. Secondly, the passage indicates that in encountering we are letting the entity, which already is, show up, let it be. When we “let something be,” then, we are neither producing the entity nor its being; both the entity and its being were already lying in wait. What we *are* doing is allowing some mode of Being for the entity to *express itself*, give itself over. Therefore we *are*, without a doubt, *effecting* the entity, and even its Being. When Heidegger says Being depends on Dasein, he does not mean without Dasein there would be no Being; he means rather that Being relies on Dasein in order to find its full expression, its ultimate, explicit articulation, and *this too opens up ways of Being for the entity*. Thus, “Being comes to destiny in that It, Being, gives itself.”⁹

3.1.2

We cannot, then, read Being’s “being” only “in the consciousness” as indicating some sort of idealism. While Heidegger ostensibly expresses a priority of idealism over realism on this issue, we have to ask whether this is not a caricature of realism, given the way he states it: “But

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁸ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 117. Emphasis added.

⁹ Heidegger, M. “Letter On Humanism.” *Basic Writings of Martin Heidegger*, p. 293.

[realism] immediately falls short in attempting to explain this reality by means of the real itself, in believing that it can clarify reality by means of a causal process.”¹⁰

But is it really an essential feature of realism that it posits Being as only explicable *through entities*? And is it really a feature solely found in idealism that the converse is posited? That is, is it really charitable or reasonable to uphold that “If what the term ‘idealism’ says, amounts to the understanding that being can never be explained by entities but is already that which is ‘transcendental’ for every entity, then idealism affords the only correct possibility for a philosophical problematic”?¹¹ Heidegger himself seems to answer this question when, immediately following, he snidely comments, “*If so, Aristotle was no less an idealist than Kant.*”¹² This remark, though made in passing, seems to indicate a tacit acknowledgment of the absurdity, and underhandedness, of defining idealism in opposition to realism in this way.

Conversely, what Heidegger posits as a shortcoming of idealism is typically seen to be one of its *defining features*: “As compared with realism, *idealism*, no matter how contrary and untenable it may be in its results, has an advantage in principle, provided that it does not misunderstand itself as ‘psychological’ idealism.”¹³ That is, “if ‘idealism’ signifies tracing back every entity to a subject or consciousness whose sole distinguishing features are that it remains *indefinite* in its Being and is best characterized negatively as ‘un-Thing-like,’ then this idealism is no less naïve in its method than the most grossly militant realism.”¹⁴ But this *is* what idealism, particularly transcendental idealism, does. When Kant says that, “the empirical consciousness of a given manifold of one intuition stands under a pure *a priori* self-consciousness”¹⁵ he is simply tracing back every object to the subjective, the immanent, and placing its Being, as categorially grasped, squarely within the realm of self-consciousness.

In idealism, then, Being remains a “psychological” fact, a category of the understanding. For Heidegger, Being cannot be thought of in this way, as something imposed by the faculties, but instead must be seen as something already “there,” yet hidden to entities unlike us. When Heidegger says that Being is “only understandable in Dasein,” he is expressing what is in a certain sense the *opposite* of what Kantianism would say: rather than artificially or synthetically “adding” Being to entities, we are the only entities capable of “seeing” Being and bringing “it” out into the open for understanding. The origins of this departure from Kant, and how crucial a role it plays in Heidegger’s philosophy, will be the topic of the next section.

3.2 The Correlation and the Categorical

3.2.1

In his recent book *After Finitude*, Quentin Meillassoux has sought to explicate and criticize what he sees as the anti-metaphysical orthodoxy that has come to prominence since the “back to Kant” movement of the 19th century. As Meillassoux sees it, the central pillar of this critical

¹⁰ Heidegger, M. *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 223.

¹¹ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 251.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 251. Emphasis added.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 251-252.

¹⁵ Kant, I. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 253.

philosophy, which lies at the heart of both the Analytic and Continental traditions, is what he calls “correlationism.” He formulates the thesis of correlationism as follows:

By ‘correlation’ we mean the idea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other. We will henceforth call correlationism any current of thought which maintains the unsurpassable character of the correlation so defined.¹⁶

Correlationism sees thinking and Being as intrinsically tied to one another, so that any talk of Being reveals less about Being than it does about thinking. To characterize the correlation another way, “thought cannot get *outside itself* in order to compare the world as it is ‘in itself’ to the world as it is ‘for us’, and thereby distinguish what is a function of our relation to the world from what belongs to the world alone.”¹⁷ Instead, any metaphysical endeavor is doomed to be trapped within the sphere of “cognition about the metaphysical” rather than the metaphysical itself. This basic idea can be traced back to Berkeley, but it received its most systematic treatment in Kant, on whose “Copernican Revolution” Meillassoux considers it to rest. According to Kant’s revolutionary idea, the mind is active in constituting the objects of its beholding, and therefore “objects must conform to our cognition”¹⁸ rather than the other way around.

Meillassoux’s definition of correlationism, however, is somewhat vague. What, *exactly*, do we mean by ‘thinking’ or ‘thought’? If we use these words themselves in a pre-critical sense, which is entirely unclarified, and which runs the gamut across all sorts of possible activities, we have only formulated the content of correlationism very imprecisely. Any reaction to correlationism, therefore, will likewise be unfocused. For instance, by ‘think’ do we mean ‘perceive,’ ‘conceive,’ ‘conceptualize,’ ‘cognize,’ ‘categorize,’ ‘behold,’ ‘observe,’ ‘understand,’ ‘comprehend,’ ‘judge,’ ‘reflect upon,’ ‘imagine,’ ‘consider?’ These words and phrases are all possibilities, but all have slightly different senses, and any sophisticated philosophy will differentiate at least some of them from others. Kant, for example, distinguishes between thinking an object and cognizing it.¹⁹ If, then, we mean all of these possible activities together, then we have a definition of the correlation that simply encompasses too much. We need, instead, to strip correlationism down to its main point and define it accordingly.

Fortunately, the way to proceed in this direction is clear: since correlationism received its most methodical treatment in Kant, we should look at his insight, his “Copernican Revolution.” As Meillassoux says, “Not only does it become necessary [in correlationism] to insist that we never grasp an object ‘in itself,’ in isolation from its relation to the subject, but it also becomes necessary to maintain that we can never grasp a subject that would not always already be related to an object.”²⁰ But doesn’t this simply seek to capture Kant’s famous remark, that “thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.”²¹ That is to say, only in the synthesis of the concepts with the intuitions can understanding come about.

¹⁶ Meillassoux, Q. *After Finitude*, p. 13.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁸ Kant, I. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 110.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

²⁰ Meillassoux, Q. *After Finitude*, p. 13.

²¹ Kant, I. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 193.

This proposition has two sides. Firstly, understanding is always understanding of *something*—concepts cannot be divorced from intuitions. Secondly, understanding can never proceed naively, that is, passively, without the application of the categories in a synthetic act.²² Thus, we can never “get outside ourselves” in order to perceive or understand entities in an unmediated fashion. For Heidegger, this first condition is not merely accepted, but vitally informs his conception of Being-in-the-world; Dasein cannot simply be separated from that wherein it factually exists. To conceptualize such a condition of Dasein’s Being is to, quite simply, think of Dasein not *as Dasein*, not as the kind of entity which it fundamentally is, and instead to abstract it, erroneously, as an isolated subject. As Wittgenstein famously said, “An inner process stands in need of outward criteria.”²³ Heidegger’s point is similar: Dasein is fundamentally already in the midst of things, embedded in a world.

But as I will argue, for Heidegger, following Husserl, the second condition of correlationism, while accepted in its essential makeup, is fundamentally flawed in its Kantian interpretation. The way in which Husserl’s phenomenology rethinks the idea that there can be no intuitions without concepts, and how that profoundly affected Heidegger’s thinking, leads to a radical reversal of the tables on the *spirit*—though technically not the *letter*—of correlationism.

3.2.2

In *History of the Concept of Time*, Heidegger notes that, as far as he is concerned, Husserl’s phenomenology has three fundamental insights which are intimately connected with each other: intentionality, the categorial intuition, and the true sense of the *apriori*. While their connection with each other merits a cohesive approach to any analysis of these insights, the categorial intuition in particular has direct bearing on the issues laid out in 3.2.1, and therefore we will focus primarily on it. Understanding the fact that Heidegger sees the categorial intuition as representing a momentous shift away from the Kantian paradigm will help us to illuminate the way in which phenomenology dramatically alters the spirit of correlationism.

The origin of the insight lies in Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*, where, in an oft-cited passage he proclaims that:

*Not in reflection on judgments, nor even upon fulfillments of judgments, but in the fulfillments of judgments themselves lies the true source of the concepts State of Affairs and Being (in the copulative sense); not in these acts as objects, but in the objects of these acts, do we have the abstractive basis which enables us to realize the concepts in question.*²⁴

That is, concepts do not first arise in operations of reflection upon intentional acts, but in the primary intentional acts themselves. In an act of perception, for example, seeing an entity does not mean synthesizing the purely sensual intuition with an *apriori* category of understanding,

²² Recently “non-conceptualism” has become a hot topic in Kant scholarship, which maintains that the phrase “intuitions without concepts are blind” does not entail there can be no intuitions without concepts. Instead, such intuitions would be, just as Kant literally says, *blind* intuitions. And, indeed, there is a great deal in the first *Critique* to support this reading, but such details do not directly press on our current investigation.

²³ Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 153.

²⁴ Husserl, E. *Logical Investigations II*, 2nd ed., p. 279.

like Being, in a separate act. Instead, the category itself is already presented in the original act. He goes on to provide the example of seeing an aggregate of entities:

An aggregate, e.g., is given, and can only be given, in an actual act of assembly, in an act, that is, expressed in the conjunctive form of connection *A and B and C*. . But the concept of *Aggregate* does not arise through reflection on this act: instead of paying heed to the act which presents an aggregate, we have rather to pay heed to what it presents, to the *aggregate* it renders apparent in *concreto*, and then to lift the universal form of our aggregate to conceptually universal consciousness.²⁵

Categories, then, are themselves objects of intentional acts, not modifications upon those acts. And thus, intuitions are *inherently categorial*. If we then take the Kantian insight and argue that there are no intuitions without concepts, Husserl would not disagree. But it is imperative to note how this is a robust departure from Kantianism. The categorial is not a psychical process or element that is imposed upon the ‘sensible manifold.’ As Sheehan says, “For Kant, categorial intuitions are impossible, since the categories of the understanding function merely to bring the hyletic data into categorial form, such that the object known is posited in a synthesis of intuition and concept.”²⁶ For Husserl, on the other hand, intuitions are not fully characterized simply by their sensuousness, but, as we have said, must be assessed as inherently categorial. What Heidegger picks up on in this novel doctrine of phenomenology is that, as László Tengelyi says, “It is part and parcel of this view to maintain that the categories have nothing to do with these acts, but they relate [...] to their objective counterparts.”²⁷ Heidegger himself speaks to this:

One sees in the antithesis of the two kinds of intuition [sensuous and categorial] a recurrence of the old contrast of sense and understanding. If one adds to this the conceptual pair of *form* and *matter*, the issue may be laid out in the following fashion: Sensuousness is characterized as receptivity and understanding as spontaneity (Kant), the sensory as matter and the categorial as form. Accordingly, the spontaneity of understanding becomes the formative principle of a receptive matter, and in one stroke we have the old mythology of an intellect which glues and rigs together the world’s matter with its own forms. Whether it is metaphysical or epistemological as in Rickert, the mythology is the same. Categorial intuition is subject to this misunderstanding only as long as the basic structure of intuiting and of all comportments—intentionality—is not seen or is suppressed. The categorial ‘forms’ are not constructs of acts but objects which manifest themselves in these acts.²⁸

But in pointing out that the categorial forms are objects rather than traces of the subject, the categorial intuition represents for Heidegger “a paradigm of phenomenological proximity to the ‘things themselves.’”²⁹ Heidegger continues the above passage by stating, in no uncertain terms, this profoundly anti-idealist position:

They [the categorial forms] are not something made by the subject and even less something added to the real objects, such that the real entity is itself modified by

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

²⁶ Sheehan, T. *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, xiii.

²⁷ Tengelyi, L. *The Wild Region in Life History*, p. 24.

²⁸ Heidegger, M. *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 70.

²⁹ Tengelyi, L. *The Wild Region in Life History*, p. 24.

the forming. Rather, they actually present the entity more truly in its 'being-in-itself.'³⁰

But Heidegger goes further, identifying this insight as a bludgeon against idealism, particularly Kant's sophisticated transcendental idealism:

Today we are in a position to move against idealism precisely on this front only because phenomenology has demonstrated that the non-sensory and ideal cannot without further ado be identified with the immanent, conscious, subjective. This is not only negatively stated but positively shown; and this constitutes the true sense of the discovery of the categorial intuition [...].³¹

So, contrary both to the earliest forms of logical positivism—which attempted to reduce all talk to sense data talk—and Kantianism (as well as neo-Kantianism)—which says the category is applied in a synthetic act of the faculties—phenomenology, as a result of the insight of the categorial intuition, holds that the categorial forms are intrinsic to intuition. Therefore, they are impossible to reduce to sensuousness or to identity with the subjective. In place of these critical philosophies, then, phenomenology holds out the promise of being able to describe a “categorially charged facticity.” In his book tracing Heidegger's thought leading up to *Being and Time*, Kisiel notes the young phenomenologist's motivations for turning away from neo-Kantianism precisely on this issue. In direct opposition to a neo-Kantian critical philosophy that shuns metaphysics, phenomenology provides a legitimate basis for speaking metaphysically (although certainly not in a freewheeling, pre-critical manner). As Heidegger sees it, that legitimate basis rests on phenomenology's novel insights, which identify not only sensuous, but categorial facticity: “That the differentiations of meaning stem directly from the domains [of reality] themselves (implying that they are already ‘categorially’ structured, that they therefore need only to be ‘read off’ from such ‘facticities,’) already amounts to a ‘hermeneutics of facticity’ ensuing from the young Heidegger's commitment to Aristotelian-scholastic realism.”³²

While this passages from Kisiel's book focuses on the Heidegger of nearly a decade before *Being and Time*, it is impossible to dismiss this predilection as a naïve soirée of Heidegger's youth. At the time *History of the Concept of Time* was written years later (1925, only two years before *Being and Time*), Heidegger himself puts the categorial intuition in such terms as its possible impact on the problem of universals.³³ It is clear that the Heidegger of *Being and Time* continued to be fascinated by the groundbreaking insight of the categorial intuition and the new, anti-Kantian direction it afforded philosophy in his time. When Kisiel asks, “How do we know that there are different domains of reality? How are such differentiations articulated?” the response is that, “The young Heidegger's answer is, in its simplicity, a paragon expression of the basic phenomenological conviction in the possibility of description: such differentiation can only be ‘read off’ from the reality itself.”³⁴ And this is really no different a conviction than when Heidegger declares in *Being and Time* that “only as phenomenology, is ontology possible.”³⁵

Kant's so-called “realism,” that conceptualizes the noumenon (despite its unknowability) as a vast swath of undifferentiated “stuff,” is diametrically opposed to the authentic realism

³⁰ Heidegger, M. *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 70.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

³² Kisiel, T. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, p. 27.

³³ Heidegger, M. *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 71-72.

³⁴ Kisiel, T. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, p. 26.

³⁵ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 60.

Heidegger sees phenomenology as opening up. In Graham Harman's words, echoing Heidegger's critique of the "old mythology" of the constructive intellect, "To speak of some raw, dough-like matter that would then be shaped into objects by categorial intuition is to retreat into a distinction between sensibility and understanding that Husserl's *Second Investigation* aimed to destroy."³⁶ Indeed, this criticism of the view of reality as a homogenous mush is, I believe, a recurring theme throughout Heidegger's corpus—from his earliest days, which Kisiel chronicles, all the way to his critique of modern technology as an "enframing" of the world into undifferentiated raw material simply "on hand," waiting to be processed and refined by us into form.

We see then not only how profound a departure from Kant the categorial intuition in fact is, but that *Heidegger saw it precisely as that*. Braver summarizes the idealist "Copernican Revolution" by stating that "Kant's anti-realism begins from his rejection of any such access [to reality as it is], since all contact with the world bears the imprint of mental activity."³⁷ For Heidegger all contact with the world indeed bears the imprint of the categorial forms, but only because the categorial forms are already "out there," so to speak—independent of Dasein. There is no room for "mental activity," not only because it is made unnecessary by the categorial intuition but because, as Heidegger believes, understanding is decidedly pre-cognitive; for Heidegger it is not, as it is for Kant, the "faculty of Cognitions."³⁸ So contrary to Kant, and in the spirit of Husserl, understanding is not born out of a synthetic act. But contrary to both Kant and Husserl, neither does it have anything to do with intuitions or consciousness in any thick, cognitivist sense.

We should, therefore, temper our understanding of Heidegger's approving view of the categorial intuition with the fact that he is not without his own criticisms of the notion. However, Heidegger's objections have to do with the 'intuition' in 'categorial intuition,'—that is, of Husserl's quite traditional conception of intentional acts directed toward present-at-hand objects—rather than the idea of the categorial belonging to pre-judgmental or pre-inferential encounter with entities. This break with Husserl stems from Heidegger's critique of intentionality, the first insight of phenomenology upon which the categorial intuition is founded. In place of intentionality, Heidegger places *care*.³⁹ Because Dasein is not a subject indifferently perceiving objects and their properties, it cannot be thought of as intentionally directed to things in isolation from everything else, but rather concernfully comported toward a holistic world full of pre-existing significance, which is the character of Dasein's Being-in-the-world. Care or, as Dreyfus puts it, "intentionality without self referential mental content" is the primary way of Dasein's being, "characteristic of the unimpeded mode of Dasein's everyday activity, whereas mental-state intentionality is a derivative mode [...]."⁴⁰

The upshot is that, despite his criticisms of the concept of 'intuition,' Heidegger approved of the anti-Kantian flavor of the breakthrough that was the categorial intuition, as Taylor Carman explains:

³⁶ Harman, G. "Physical Nature and the Paradox of Qualities." *Towards Speculative Realism*, p. 135.

³⁷ Braver, L. *A Thing of This World*, p. 21.

³⁸ Kant, I. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 249.

³⁹ Heidegger, M. *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 303-304.

⁴⁰ Dreyfus, H. *Being-in-the-World*, p. 59.

[...] far from representing a full-fledged endorsement of Husserl's position, I believe [Heidegger's qualified approval of the categorial intuition] represents instead a merely negative or oblique point against the competing intellectualist assumption of the neo-Kantians that all our experience of the world is structured by concepts and judgments. What Heidegger liked in Husserl's theory, then, had nothing to do with the supposed primacy of intuition, but lay rather in the idea that our understanding of being—not just existence, but also predication and identity—is something essentially nonconceptual, prior not just to reflection and introspection, but even to the formation of judgment and propositional thought.⁴¹

But Carman has here raised a question about the subtle distinction between the categorial forms and the concepts or categories proper. If our understanding of being is essentially nonconceptual, inherently unmediated by categories, yet the very insight which tells us this is the categorial intuition, what is the relationship between the categorial and the categories? We will turn to this question presently.

3.2.3

According to Husserl, the categorial forms are objects of intentional acts. What then is their relationship to other objects of these acts? What relation does the categorial form subsisting in the chair have to the sensuous character of the chair? In a rather Aristotelian sense, Heidegger specifically refers to the categorials as being “in” the entity: “The discovery of the categorial intuition is the demonstration, first, that there is a simple apprehension of the *categorial*, such constituents in entities which in traditional fashion are designated as *categories* [...].⁴² What then is the relationship between the *categories* and the *categorial* forms? Kisiel indicates that Heidegger, as the above quote might imply, distinguished them during the lecture courses on which *History of the Concept of Time* is based. On Kisiel's reading, the categorials are not categories *qua* categories. That is, they are entirely pre-linguistic, and so entirely non-propositional:

I have underscored these two terms [‘categorial’ and ‘categories’] because student notes indicate that Heidegger highlighted their distinction in his summary review of the lecture hour. The basic point is that categories are already ‘seen’ in perception, for example, though not *as* categories but such that the simple perception of an object is in its way absorbed and engrossed in categorial apprehension. Categorial intuition here is intuition of that which is then conceptually grasped as a category. There is therefore a distinction between the *categorial*, that which can eventually be grasped as a category, and the *category* as a concept. The distinction is important in understanding in what way the discovery of the categorial intuition provides the basis for research into the categories and apriori structures of experience.⁴³

Categories, as conceptual constructs, then, are *derived* from the categorial forms which are already presented in simple intuitions. The categorials, then, are in a strong sense, *ineffable*. As soon as one begins to articulate the categorial, to state it and so linguistically manipulate it, it

⁴¹ Carman, T. *Heidegger's Analytic*, p. 65.

⁴² Heidegger, M. *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 48.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 48 Kisiel's footnote.

must be transposed into a category, a concept. And because the categorials are fully “articulated” in the world, while, as was argued in 2.3, the categories are inherently vague, we can see how categories are Dasein-dependent “approximations” toward the categorial forms that the categorial intuition demonstrates independently subsist.

Linguistic representations, then, “get at” reality, but, of course, only conditionally. This conditionality is twofold, and echoes the twofold nature of conditionality outlined in 2.3.1. Firstly, any uncovering of an entity simultaneously covers it over in some other respects, since access is perspectival; with regard to the categorial forms we can say that, in any encounter, some categorial forms that subsist in the entity come to the fore while others retreat. For no entity is exhausted by just one categorial, in just the same way that, obviously, more than one concept can describe a given entity. And secondly, concepts, as human constructs that are approximations from categorial forms, can only be finitely articulated, and so are inherently vague. But in moving from categorial to category, we add nothing, *nothing whatsoever*, to the original intuition. On the contrary, we are only *subtracting*. In just the same way, then, that an assertion represents the world (in the phenomenological, not imagistic sense), so too does a category represent the categorial. In fact, these two claims point to precisely the same phenomenon, since assertions are composed of categories, and the world is composed of the categorial.

Now, there is at least one major objection to the interpretation I have outlined here, that there is a distinction between the categories and the categorial forms, and that we “see” the categorials, subsequently approximating them into the categories proper. This objection forms the basis for the argument that Heidegger was a linguistic idealist, as has most forcefully been promoted by Cristina Lafont.⁴⁴ Certain slogans peppered throughout Heidegger’s career seem to imply such a linguistic idealism: in *History of the Concept of Time*, Heidegger says that “we do not say what we see, but rather the reverse, we see what one says about the matter.”⁴⁵ Later in his career, after the so-called turn in his thought, Heidegger will infamously, and more than once, claim that “language is the house of being.” Such phrases certainly seem to contradict what I have argued in this chapter, that the categorial forms hold primacy and that the categories, which make up language, are there derived. These pithy slogans seem, instead, to inextricably link Dasein’s understanding (*Verstand*) with discourse (*Rede*).

However, Heidegger also seemingly contradicts these sentiments. He says, “Interpretation is carried out primordially not in a theoretical statement but in an action of circumspective concern—laying aside the unsuitable tool, or exchanging it, ‘without wasting words’. From the fact that words are absent, it may not be concluded that interpretation is absent.”⁴⁶ This passage seems instead to caution that understanding is indeed separable from discourse in Heidegger’s phenomenology.⁴⁷ While this may simply be an inconsistency on Heidegger’s part, Wrathall has argued that, contra Lafont, the supposedly “idealist” slogans do

⁴⁴ Lafont, C. *Heidegger, Language, and World-Disclosure*.

⁴⁵ Heidegger, M. *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 56.

⁴⁶ Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 200.

⁴⁷ The “Letter on Humanism” likewise strongly distinguishes the ability to have a world of significance from the ability to talk about it: “Because plants and animals are lodged in their respective environments but are never placed freely in the clearing of Being which alone is “world,” they lack language. But in being denied language they are not thereby suspended worldlessly in their environment.” (Heidegger, M. “Letter on Humanism,” p. 230.)

not represent anything of the sort. His argument has two components. Firstly, he says that the early Heidegger, who says that we “see what one says about the matter,” is referring to Dasein’s inauthentic mode of Being.⁴⁸ This contention seems to find support in the fact that Heidegger says we see what “one says”, invoking *Das Man*, or the collective, inauthentic Being-with-others that levels off all experience to the same homogeneity. In inauthenticity, idle talk takes hold, warping both genuine understanding and genuine discourse. By contrast, “Authentic contact with the world, of which we are capable, is decidedly not cut to the measure of what we are able to say about the entities we encounter.”⁴⁹ And this is in fact the promise that phenomenology holds out, of being able to cut through the layers of conceptual (that is to say, *not* categorial) baggage that the history of philosophy has laid on top of the phenomena.

The second thrust of Wrathall’s argument consists in clarifying the later Heidegger, who called language the “house of being.” The essence of his argument lies in the fact that the later Heidegger used ‘language’ to denote something entirely different from that to which he earlier referred. For the later Heidegger, “the essence of language cannot be anything linguistic.”⁵⁰ Rather, language is, oddly, pre-linguistic, and consists in the “deeper, background phenomenon of a preverbal articulative gathering of meanings.”⁵¹ Wrathall meticulously traces the development of Heidegger’s thoughts on language from mere verbal signage to what he sees as its more originary foundation in this constitutive web of meaningfulness.

The later Heidegger, then, to put it simplistically, moves ‘language’ from the categories to the categorials—true language is the ineffable background from which what we commonly call ‘language’ then springs. Philipse characterizes the relationship between the background categorials and the foreground categories: “the world as that in which we are involved is meaningful independently from language. World is characterized by holistic significance (*Bedeutsamkeit*) and language can be used for articulating pre-existing meanings.”⁵² But here, according to Wrathall, Philipse is using the earlier Heidegger’s narrow understanding of language. In the later Heidegger, ‘language’ instead designates *Bedeutsamkeit*, the “categorially charged facticity” itself. As we have seen, the pre-existing significance that constitutes the world impresses upon Dasein, not vice versa, and thus Dasein does not actively constitute its world.

3.2.4

As Meillassoux defines it, correlationism champions the idea that “Everything is inside because in order to think anything whatsoever, it is necessary to ‘be able to be conscious of it’, it is necessary to say it, and so we are locked up in language or in consciousness without being able to get out.”⁵³ But what happens when we do not presuppose that consciousness imbues the world with the conceptual and the meaningful, but that, in a radical sense, entities are already rich with categorial meaning?

⁴⁸ Wrathall, M. *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, p. 123.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁵⁰ Heidegger, M. *On the Way to Language*, p. 24.

⁵¹ Wrathall, M. *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, p. 133.

⁵² Philipse, H. “Heidegger’s ‘Scandal of Philosophy’: The Problem of the *Ding an Sich* in *Being and Time*.” *The Transcendental Heidegger*, p. 183.

⁵³ Meillassoux, Q. *After Finitude*, p. 15.

I believe this is the view Heidegger sees the categorial intuition as opening up: a sort of realism *within the correlation*. If we take the Kantian dictum then that “intuitions without concepts are blind,” we can appropriate it in a way that technically remains true to it, yet simultaneously undermines the spirit that motivates every historical formulation of correlationism. Indeed, intuitions are always conceptual, but this is not a fact about transcendental faculties of understanding, but a fact which states that the world is already radically conceptual, *in a sense*. In actual fact, there are no concepts *qua* concepts in the world, certainly not linguistic concepts. Instead, the world is radically content-rich, conducive to being taken up by ‘acts of ideation’ into conceptual representation. The categorial is already “out there”—but not *qua* the *categories*. ‘Chair’ for example, is a concept, a human category. As we outlined in chapter 1, ‘chair’ as such then is embedded in Dasein’s collective social facticity. But it approximates (failure of bivalence) the categorial that is already subsistent “out there”; it provides us not an image of the categorial, but the conditions for either bearing out the categorial world (as in the hermeneutic understanding that comprises Being-in-the-world), or pointing it out (discourse).

If we accept, then, a “categorially charged facticity,” and reject the idea of an intellect that “glues and rigs the world’s matter with its own forms,” we can hardly, then, speak of an A5 Active Knower, one of Braver’s anti-realism matrices. The paradigmatic expression of A5, unsurprisingly, comes from Kant’s first *Critique*: “The order and regularity in the appearances, which we entitle *nature*, we ourselves introduce. We could never find them in appearances, had we not ourselves, or the nature of the mind, originally set them there.”⁵⁴ But, as we have seen, what Heidegger takes away from the categorial intuition is in direct opposition to this. We can, and do, find order and regularities, not because we introduce them, but because they are already subsistent and encountered in any comportment. They cannot be reduced to sensuous intuitions, nor to the realm of a constituting subjectivity.

3.3 Conclusion

As we have seen, the profound insights of phenomenology are precisely that by which Heidegger rejects the Kantian paradigm of A5 Active Knower. Instead, he sees phenomenology, in noticing the true origin of the categories, as affirming the correlationist motto that “intuitions without concepts are blind” while simultaneously debunking Kant’s “Copernican Revolution.” This sort of realism, then, which takes place within the correlation, nevertheless breaks outside of its confines by dramatically relocating the origins of the conceptual, and therefore the meaningful and the significant, taking them out of the intellect and situating them firmly in the world itself. The world of categorial forms and modal possibilities is not constituted by us, but is already extant, and presents itself as available in such terms. Only by abstraction could it seem otherwise.

⁵⁴ Kant, I. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 241.

CONCLUSION

I have attempted to show, by analyzing the relation between the realism matrices Braver lays out and Heidegger's thought, that the latter cannot be seen as anti-realist. While Heidegger rejects R2 Correspondence, R3 Uniqueness, and R4 Bivalence, it has been my intention to show that none of these matrices constitutes an essential component of a thoroughgoing realism. On the contrary, they all constitute a dogmatic way of viewing realism, a naïve formulation of it that should not be taken as exhaustive of its possibilities.

I have also attempted to show that, in the cases of R2 Correspondence and R4 Bivalence, Heidegger's is not a comprehensive rejection. He does not deny that correspondence can occur, but rather denies that it is *the most fundamental characterization of truth*—"truth" as a phenomenon, lies at a deeper level, on which correspondence is based. Likewise, the rejection of bivalence is somewhat nuanced; while bivalence itself, as a semantic principle, does not hold, this does not entail that the world is indeterminate or metaphysically vague. Instead, our *encounters* with the world do not divide up neatly into "truth" and "falsity," since uncovering an entity in some way or other necessarily results in covering up other things about it. In addition, whenever we *speak about the world*—that is, describe it in assertions—we make use of concepts which are *inherently vague* because they only approximate the determinate nature of the world. Thus, I have characterized Heidegger's position towards R2 and R4 as pseudo-rejections, because he denies their centrality rather than their possibility—as is the case of R2—or their ultimate validity as descriptions, rather than their efficacy as "regulative ideals"—as with R4.

On the contrary, Heidegger wholly rejects R3 Uniqueness, and I believe this is the crux of the issue. I have attempted to show that R3 is a central assumption of some forms of realism, but that its rejection, counter to the claims of many in the history of philosophy, does not entail anti-realism. Instead, Heidegger is able to construct a novel, plausible, and—dare I say—commonsensical direct realism from its ashes. This direct realism asserts that we do not interface with the world by means of representations or any other form of intermediate entities, but that we conditionally access entities themselves. This conditional access means that our encounters with entities never exhaust them, their Being or their possibilities-for-Being, but that this does not disallow genuine contact with their Being.

Ultimately, I argue that despite these rejections (or pseudo-rejections) of the three matrices R2, R3, and R4, Heidegger has not only implied nothing anti-realist, but has at the same time provided a new way of characterizing R5 Passive Knower. If we do not look at truth as a correspondence relation, but as the prior openness of Dasein to the world, then it is easy to see that Dasein, even when in error, is always related directly to the world, has access to it. From this we see that truth is not always something which is strictly bifurcated against falsity, but that the two occur in tandem, always fused in some ratio as we navigate the world, and therefore no access to the world, nor any conceptual description of it, can be the one and only Truth. Indeed, the world is disclosed in a variety of different ways, under different circumstances and conditions, and in each case this is the event of truth, the uncovering of entities and their Being. We are thus Passive Knowers, who are not bound by the constraints of an *apriori* ordering intellect but, on the contrary, are *always* getting outside ourselves to the things themselves. This getting to the things themselves occurs in the categorial apprehension of entities in the world—seeing them *as* this or that, always in ways that bring out the entities in one direction or another but disguise them in other ways. In doing so we do not view "images" of entities, but the entities themselves, as they are in themselves—their very own capabilities, possibilities, and modes of

Being. Despite, then, the rejection of the other matrices, I believe in the end that Heidegger's philosophy is robustly realist, in that it roundly rejects the Kantian paradigm of the Active Knower and replaces it with a sophisticated, rather than naïve, brand of direct realism, of Passive Knowing, which can both account for error and can storm the arguments of transcendental idealism's conceptualism.

For Heidegger, such an overcoming of the Kantian picture, which closes off human being from the world, and places it solely within its own solipsistic realm, was only possible through the most extreme form of such transcendentalism. Husserl's phenomenology, in "bracketing" the question of the Being of entities, reducing Being itself to a mere correlate of consciousness, opened the door for insights which, I believe, Heidegger saw as undermining the very starting point which led to them. The "hermeneutic circle" of phenomenology, then, proceeded from a profoundly transcendental position, a position necessary in order to clarify the notion of a pure phenomenological seeing, to get, as the rallying cry goes, "to the things themselves!" But in working from that position, that starting point, phenomenology overcame in Heidegger's philosophy the flaws that characterized its Husserlian formulation, with its idealist presumptions.

But rather than a weakness of phenomenology as a method, I believe this hermeneutic circle characterizes its strength. This process is much like that which occurs in the natural sciences, where a starting point that is generally "on the right track" manages to perform, through accumulation of data, successive rounds of descriptive and explanatory purification. Ultimately, the starting point, in accordance with a worthwhile methodology, yields insights that clarify the flaws in the starting point itself. This process repeats, with each iteration closing in more closely on the set of facts in question. Husserl's version of phenomenology, as Heidegger saw it, continued to harbor traces of the Modernist tradition, but itself contained the methodological power to ferret out those traces. The categorial intuition, as one of its central insights, moved against Kantianism, but in doing so also laid the groundwork, in pointing out a "categorially charged facticity" for moving against problems with the notions of intentionality, intuition, and the subject-object paradigm itself; the insight thus acted as a springboard for Heidegger's critique of the subject-object model, and the priority of the present-at-hand mode of entities.

Phenomenology thus lives up to Husserl's hope of a rigorous methodology of philosophy, analogous to the methodology of the natural sciences. But the consummation of phenomenology as a worthwhile method of inquiry is only possible on the basis of a "hermeneutic circle" of successive clarification. In positing the least metaphysical (or, even stronger, the most anti-metaphysical), of methods, which brackets not only beings but Being itself, phenomenology attained the insights Heidegger recognized as its most profound—among them the thoroughly anti-Kantian categorial intuition. These insights, however, moved at the same time against the spirit of this bracketing which birthed them, the spirit of this radical anti-metaphysicalism; thus, Heidegger's appropriation of *ontology* as a pressing area of inquiry. Only by *going through* the least ontological presuppositions could the question of ontology be reawakened. It is only by way of the most conservative inward methodology, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, that, as I believe Heidegger saw it, we gain the tools for a legitimate, post-critical outward inquiry. It is only by bracketing the world that we thus achieve the ability to return to it.

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VITA

Graham Bounds was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1988. He received his Bachelor of Science in the field of biological sciences from Louisiana State University in 2010, with a minor in philosophy. His philosophical areas of interest are diverse and include philosophy of mind, phenomenology, metaphysics, logic, epistemology, philosophy of science, aesthetics, and German idealism. Graham is interested in the intersection of analytic and continental thought and believes the future of philosophy lies in bridging these two traditions. He will complete his Master of Arts in philosophy at Louisiana State University in May 2012.