Introduction

In the Fall of 1946 Heidegger attributes the unfinished project of *Being and Time* to metaphysical pretensions that he had come to see as deeply and misguidedly humanistic. With its reliance on "the language of metaphysics," he admits, the project of thinking being without centering it in human being failed (GA9, 328). Questions of candor and revisionism aside, this repudiation of metaphysics, already commencing a decade earlier, contrasts sharply with Heidegger's commitment to metaphysics in the 1920s. That commitment can be traced to his 1919 letter to Engelbert Krebs, the priest who conducted his marriage ceremony. Heidegger writes Krebs that insights into historical knowledge have made "the *system* of Catholicism problematic and unacceptable to [him] – but not Christianity and metaphysics (the latter, to be sure, in a new sense)" (Denker et al. 2004, 67).

The metaphysics Heidegger had in mind was not theology but ontology – "in a new sense," to be sure, but nonetheless a recognizably modern version of this part of the subject matter of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, what Baumgarten labeled *Metaphysica generalis*.[1] But this new ontology was not to be a formal ontology, the sort of ontology that would be the counterpart of formal logic and take its bearings from categories applicable to any science. Heidegger had designs instead on a fundamental ontology that would not make the mistake of overlooking the foundation of any ontology: distinctively human ways of being (existence) and the senses of being that are disclosed therein.

Yet, infamously, Heidegger found himself unable to convert the existential analysis in *Being and Time* into a fundamental ontology and, by the mid-1930s, he rejects "ontology" as well as "metaphysics" as rubrics for his ventures in thinking. Among the reasons given for this development,

[1] Scotus 1997, 14: "*Ideo de hoc quaeritur primo utrum proprium subiectum metaphysicae sit ens in quantum ens (sicut posuit Avicenna) vel Deus et Intelligentiae (sicut posuit Commentator Averroes).*"

perhaps the most prevalent is the notion that metaphysics, as a theoretical science, objectifies and thereby disastrously distorts the experience of being, thus playing into an all-too-human delusion that being is equivalent to what is available, computable, reproducible, and – in the end – ultimately exhaustible by technology, "the complete metaphysics" (GA7, 78–79).

But there is another possible, undoubtedly complementary reason for this sea-change in Heidegger's thinking. Could it be that he gives up on ontology because it is inherently illogical? That a logically coherent ontology is an oxymoron? Or, if logic gets in the way of questioning what "being" means, is he forced to set it aside as well? Particularly in the first few years following the publication of *Being and Time*, reflections on logic and its import for ontology take center stage, raising new questions about the extent to which, in Heidegger's eyes, logic should regiment our thinking, especially when it comes to thinking about being in contrast to beings.[2] Are these new questions part of the motivation for abandoning a science of being in the early 1930s? And if so, is it because he comes to see that any thinking about what it means to be founders on logic, thereby requiring revising if not abandoning, not only ontology, but logic itself, as it is traditionally conceived? But in that case, is not his own thinking deeply irrational since being – particularly, being conceived as self-concealing – arguably cannot be described in noncontradictory terms?

Heidegger thinks that those who charge him with irrationalism severely misunderstand him (GA66, 301). Indeed, he is often adamant in his commitment to logical principle. One of his favorite tactics in critical studies of interpretations of his predecessors and contemporaries is precisely to demonstrate that what seemed to be a contradiction is simply an

[2] The interest in logic is neither new nor passing for Heidegger. Inspired by Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (1900–01), both Heidegger's dissertation and habilitation lie within the ambit of debates over logic's autonomy; a 1912 essay canvasses "Recent Research on Logic" (with references to Frege and Russell; GA1, 42f); and in 1915 he describes logic as "the discipline that interests [him] the most" (GA16, 38). He finds in Scholastic thought (*ens logicum*) the equivalent to the ideal character of propositions in themselves, a notion inherited by Husserl from Bolzano. Instead of being reduced to the acts of entertaining or expressing propositions, logic is grounded in the meanings of propositions (GA1, 276–278). Heidegger regularly develops his subsequent thinking with a view to the status, conditions, and principles of logic. Thus, the question of the meaning and scope of logic is not only a mainstay of his published and unpublished writings, but also the explicit theme of lectures in the 1920s (GA21, GA26, GA62), 1930s (GA38, GA45), 1940s (GA55), and 1950s (GA10, GA11, GA79).

instance of vagueness or ambiguity. In these contexts and elsewhere his allegiance to logical principle is patent. At the same time, however, given that logic, as he sometimes alludes, applies pre-eminently if not exclusively to beings that are on hand (*vorhanden*), it is hardly obvious what import it has for thinking about being. In the end, then, the question is inescapable: When it comes to Heidegger's own thinking, particularly his post-metaphysical thinking when he gives up on ontology and perhaps logic, is he compelled, if not to contradict himself, then to wallow in vagueness and ambiguity himself? Or does his thinking instead represent with exemplary and dogged clarity, as several contributors to this volume suggest, the limits of logic when it comes to thinking of being? Or is the morale of his thinking instead a reminder, as yet another contributor suggests, not to let ourselves be held captive by the very image of a boundary and, with it, the pretension of being able to think the limits of thinking?

Closely allied to these issues that have increasingly exercised philosophers of late are time-honored questions not simply regarding the normative reach of logic and its principles, but about the viability of raising such questions. Any attempt to question logic seems to force those who raise those questions to stumble as it were over their own logical feet. Can we plausibly ask for a reason for the principle of sufficient reason? If we take it upon ourselves to examine the validity of the principle of noncontradiction, are we not forced to beg the question or contradict ourselves? Or are there topics that can be meaningfully discussed but only by holding one or the other logical principle at bay? For Heidegger, at least at some junctures of his thinking, both being (in contrast to beings) and the nothing (in contrast to the naught) are those very sorts of topics. Yet when he discusses these topics himself, bending if not flaunting the logical and grammatical structure of our language, he exposes his thinking to the charge of producing non-sense. But what sort of non-sense? The phrase "the slowly not" is formally, that is, grammatically, nonsense, but in a way other than the phrase "round square" is. So, too, when Heidegger says that "being exists" is non-sensical since only beings exist (GA65, 30, 472–473), this sort of non-sense is less like the purely formal non-sense of "the slowly not" than the material non-sense of "round square," which rests on concepts that make obvious sense, as the analysis of the reasons for its non-sense make perfectly clear.

The chapters in this volume are ventures in thinking – indeed, radical, exploratory ventures (*avventure nel pensare*) – that attempt to address the questions raised above and many more that arise from Heidegger's

reflections on logic in the context of his attempts to think and say what it means to be.[3]

Normativity, the Phenomenology of Assertions, and Productive Logic

The first cohort of studies of Heidegger on logic in our volume addresses the issue of logic's normativity as well as two crucial parts of the puzzle of his thinking on logic in *Being and Time*: his conception of assertions and his projection of his existential phenomenology as a "productive logic."

Beginning with the debate between descriptivists and normativists in the philosophy of logic, Steven Crowell (Chapter 1) argues that Heidegger's ontology offers a phenomenological version of the normativist thesis. Reviewing Gillian Russell's defense of the descriptivist thesis that logic is tied to normativity only in combination with "widespread background norms," Crowell argues that, for Heidegger, logic is intrinsically normative because it is constitutive of the practice of reason-giving, a practice demanded of us by our being as care. The argument begins by showing why Heidegger abandons Husserl's descriptivist claim that logic deals with "truths in themselves" and interprets assertion (A *is* b) instead as a communicative comportment that depends on experiencing A *as* b in a shared and normatively structured context grounded in what we care about. While this view leaves much of the descriptivist position intact as regards truth, it also entails that logic is intrinsically normative: In any such context, we are responsible for the normative force of the reasons we adopt and are answerable to others for those reasons. Logic is thus constitutively normative of a practice, reason-giving, that is not optional for us. Crowell concludes by considering what implications this has for the "original questioning" proper to phenomenological ontology itself.

The changeover from taking a *as* b to the assertion that a *is* b is central, as just noted, to Crowell's reading of Heidegger on logic, as it is to other interpretations represented in the volume. Stephan Käufer does us the

[3] In Heidegger's day as in our own, the term "logic" operates on various levels. As Edward Witherspoon notes in Chapter 8, it can stand for a formal system (e.g., predicate logic), for debates about the adequacy of such systems (e.g., debates about conditionals), and for inquiries into notions ultimately underpinning those debates (a realm of inquiries typically grouped today under "philosophy of logic" or "philosophical logic"). The chapters in this volume, like Heidegger's own investigations, fall under the third class of inquiries, as they examine the bearing of Heidegger's thinking on questions of sense, non-sense, paradox, and the limits of thinking, as well as questions of the authority, normativity, and revisability of logic and its basic principles.

service in Chapter 2 of providing a close analysis of the crucial passage in which Heidegger gives his account of this changeover (*Umschlag*). Käufer distinguishes a strong reading of Heidegger's account (where assertions can only intend present-at-hand entities) from the more plausible reading that the assertions in question (those that can intend only present-at-hand entities) constitute a limiting case of assertions. Käufer argues for the latter reading by pointing out that, for Heidegger, assertions commonly intend ready-to-hand entities. To better understand what Heidegger means by the changeover, he turns to Aron Gurwitsch's more thorough, Gestalt-theoretic phenomenology of themes. In this connection he likens Gurwitsch's account of "restructuration" (the acutest thematic modification) to the sudden and wholesale character of the changeover from taking *a* as *b* (where *a* remains ready-to-hand) to making the theoretical assertion "*a* is *b*" (where *a* becomes something present-at-hand). Käufer concludes by arguing that understanding the unthematic as a thematic field dissolves any appearance of a self-reference paradox in Heidegger's theoretical assertions about what is not present-at-hand.

Another passage in SZ, one that, by contrast, is often overlooked or passed over without comment, contains Heidegger's words of praise for the "productive logic" of Plato and Aristotle, coupled with the suggestion that his phenomenology is bent on something similar. But in what sense is his phenomenology a productive logic? Richard Polt answers this question in Chapter 3, first by contrasting productive logic with symbolic logic and its purely reproductive character, given its reliance upon the fixity (the onhandness) of its symbols and notation. Moving beyond the confines of SZ, Polt then suggests two recurring tropes exploited by Heidegger that serve as elements of a productive logic: the productive tautology of verbalization – making nouns into verbs, as in "the world worlds" or "the nothing nothings" – and the appeal to deficient modes – exceptions that prove the rule, such as the neglect that nonetheless exposes a concern or the loneliness that confirms our social nature. As is particularly evident from the first of these tropes, Heidegger's productive logic is aligned with an attunement to the creative possibilities of language, unregimented by formal languages.

Language, Logic, and Nonsense

We noted earlier Heidegger's adoption in his habilitation of the Bolzano–Husserl notion that propositions in themselves, as the elements of logic, are not to be confused with their verbalizations. Yet the relationship of

language to logic quickly becomes a more complicated matter in the ensuing years, from the analysis of discourse as a basic existential in *Being and Time* to his mid-1940s gloss on language as "the house of being" (GA5, 310). Despite apparent retractions later, certain remarks in *Being and Time* appear to entail that language is not on a par with attuned understanding in disclosing meanings. Hence, his understanding of language and its logical import remains controversial. The next set of chapters weighs Heidegger's distinctive attentiveness to language and non-sense from a logical point of view, in the 1920s and beyond.

Sacha Golob begins his study in Chapter 4 by contrasting Dummett's Frege-inspired view of philosophy, one that focuses single-mindedly on linguistic analysis, and Dreyfus's view that this endeavor, however salutary for the analysis of concepts, fails to broach the nonconceptual dimensions unearthed by phenomenology. On Dreyfus's view, Heidegger is supposedly concerned with flagging the fact that the content of language (particularly assertions) fails to capture practical or perceptual content and reduces everything asserted to something present-at-hand. Golob argues, to the contrary, that the problem for Heidegger lies, not with assertions or linguistic content as such, but with a way of thinking about them, a specific "meta-language" or "logic." In addition to removing grounds for any self-referential paradox in Heidegger's use of assertions himself (to speak of what is not present-at-hand), this interpretation has the virtue of identifying a strong point of continuity with Heidegger's later work on language.

After rehearsing the motivations for an "austere" conception of nonsense associated primarily with several prominent interpretations of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, in Chapter 5 David R. Cerbone reviews Heidegger's own invocation of nonsensical statements and how it both illumines and challenges that austere conception. The import of Heidegger's treatment of such statements shows, Cerbone contends, that a practical ontological understanding – and not logic – is the primary source for identifying nonsense and that, by implication, logic is beholden to ontology rather than vice versa.

Heidegger's "destruction" of logic is aimed, Françoise Dastur argues in Chapter 6, neither at its elimination nor at some sort of irrationalism but at de-constructing the reigning, derivative conception of logic as a technical discipline, exclusively preoccupied with beings and to which ontology must be beholden. Heidegger undertakes the de-construction, Dastur contends, with a view to reinserting logic in ontology as a thinking of being not beings. The deconstruction consists, Dastur shows, in exposing four fraught presuppositions of that derivative conception of logic: the thesis

that truth resides exclusively in propositions, that the meaning of "being" is to be found in linguistic analysis of the copula, that logical negation is the source of all negativity, and that propositions and the implications of the predicative structure of assertions are logically and ontologically foundational for language.

Paradox, the Prospects for Ontology, and Beyond

Crowell and Cerbone argue, as noted, that Heidegger grounds logic ontologically, in who we are and what we do. But the very idea of this grounding raises issues of its own, questions about the reflexivity of logic and the very possibility of an ontology grounding it. In addition to familiar questions about question-begging and tripping over our own logical feet, Heidegger's own pronouncements about the ontological difference raise questions about the reach of logic and, indeed, the logical propriety of ontology itself. The next set of chapters addresses these concerns and Heidegger's approach to them, particularly after 1928.

In addition to stressing an "ontological distinction [*Unterschied*]" between ways of being, Heidegger speaks of the "ontological difference [*Differenz*]" between being and beings (GA24, 22, 109, 250, 454; GA26, 193, 200, 202; GA65, 250, 424, 465–469). Thus, he insists that being and beings (entities) are in each case different; being is never a being and whatever we can say about what a being is – formalized, for example, as Fx – does not amount to asserting that it exists, that is, ($x)(Fx). Prima facie the ontological difference presents a paradox that calls ontology into question. Since arguably only a being can be the subject of a proposition and since being itself is not a being, being cannot be such a subject. It is accordingly unsayable or sayable only by countenancing contradiction in its regard (the dialetheist recourse).

Denis McManus begins Chapter 7 by rehearsing reasons to think that, while appealing to a nonpropositional understanding does not appear to be a successful strategy in overcoming this paradox, a careful examination of its premises gives us good reasons to question its *exegetical* and *philosophical* force. Having said that, McManus also argues that, given Heidegger's philosophical framework, a different and more pressing paradox emerges. The reason is that, according to McManus, Heidegger is committed to the idea that Being in general is what determines *all* different ways in which entities are *thus-and-so*. However, since McManus argues that such a determining relation is irreflexive, he concludes that Being in general has no ways in which it is *thus-and-so*. And, if this is the case, Being cannot be what Being actually is, that is, Being cannot be the determiner of *all*

different ways in which entities are *thus-and-so*. Having said that, it should be clear that, according to McManus, Heidegger's ontology does rest on shaky ground. However, how to deal with such a paradoxical outcome is less obvious and, for this reason, McManus simply sketches some possible ways in which Heidegger might have tackled this problem and how philosophers might handle its implications.

While McManus offers reasons for thinking that ontology is ultimately a logically forlorn enterprise (both in general and for Heidegger), Edward Witherspoon argues in Chapter 8 that Heidegger countenances revisions to logic in order to accommodate the possibility of thinking of being. Witherspoon's chapter begins, much like McManus's, by setting up the problem that the ontological difference presents for ontology and reviewing the interpretive options, including the dialetheist option, offered by Casati and Priest, of countenancing contradiction. Witherspoon also joins McManus in underscoring the differences between Priest's and Heidegger's investigations. Witherspoon then argues that the ways in which Heidegger's approach *differs* from Priest's are ways in which it *resembles* Wittgenstein's. The central parallels between Heidegger and Wittgenstein are their common resistance to privileging logic as a formal system and their common turn to the grammar that is embedded in our language through our multiple attunements (to each other and to the world). Drawing on Cavell's account of *Stimmungen*, Witherspoon contends that the experience of nothingness in anxiety, so central to Heidegger's conception of being, is an attunement (albeit a largely repressed attunement) that engenders a mode of understanding that accommodates a revision of logical principles.

Like Witherspoon, Kris McDaniel in Chapter 9 focuses on the question of the authority of logic and contends that logic is rationally revisable. Yet he argues that Heidegger rejects the authority of logic, not because of the possibility of a transformative attunement, but for defensible metaphysical reasons. McDaniel describes a traditional theory according to which logical principles present themselves as unrevisable. Such is the theory, familiar to Heidegger, that logical entities – for example, propositions and relations among them – have discernible essences mandating adherence to the laws of logic. McDaniel argues that, in Heidegger's view, the representational properties of propositions are neither ungrounded nor grounded in something internal to propositions, as the traditional theory would have it. Instead they are grounded in the "deeper fact" of the primitive intentionality constituted by Dasein's pre-predicative openness to the world. Given this derivativeness, logic loses its authority as a standalone

domain and, more importantly, one to which ontology must be beholden. Forfeited, too, is the idea of a formal ontology equivalent to formal logic, but not without opening the door to a nonformal ontology, a bottoms-up approach to ontology that takes its bearings from differing yet analogous modes of being.

As the glosses on the previous three chapters make clear, the implications of Heidegger's thinking for logic and ontology are much debated. Filippo Casati's contribution in Chapter 10 takes us in a sense beyond a version of this debate by questioning one of its premises. He begins by sketching Heidegger's rendering of the basic problem of squaring a logic for beings with philosophy's concern for being. After demonstrating irrationalist and rationalist interpretations of Heidegger's response to this problem, Casati identifies a common presupposition of these interpretations, namely, a pretension of thinking the limits of thinking. He concludes by making the case that Heidegger, particularly in his late work, calls this presupposition into question.

Logical Principles and the Question of Being

The last two chapters in the volume turn to Heidegger's construal of specific logical principles and their bearing on the possibility of thinking of being. In Chapter 11 Katherine Withy shows how a version of the principle of sufficient reason resonates for Heidegger throughout the history of philosophy. Leibniz's modern formulation of the principle makes a claim on thinking only when it is understood as representing entities (as objects) to a subject. But the general principle (nothing is without reason) applies to all entities, insofar as they are grounded in being. However, the notion that being would itself have a reason in turn invites a regress and conflates it with entities. Yet while being is ontically indeterminate and ungrounded, it is historically determinate, relative to a respective epoch's response to the groundlessness of being's self-concealing. Whereas the Greeks preserve being's indeterminacy in this respect, medieval and moderns efface that groundlessness – they forget being by grounding it in an entity.

Heidegger's endorsement of the principle of noncontradiction as a law of thought is evident, Daniel O. Dahlstrom submits in Chapter 12, from his repeated strategy of exposing vagueness and ambiguity that create the illusion of contradiction. At the same time Heidegger acknowledges that the principle (together with the conception of the assertions constituting it) has been historically wedded to the idea that the principle applies solely

to beings, not being, and, indeed, solely insofar as they are on hand (the metaphysics of presence) – an interpretation of the principle that rules out the very prospect of thinking about being and different modes of being. Dahlstrom reviews how Heidegger attempts to respond to this challenge, not by rejecting or flouting the principle, but by demonstrating how it is existentially grounded in and constituted by being-here with others. Dahlstrom concludes by suggesting how the principle of noncontradiction, so construed, remains in force in Heidegger's attempt to think beyng, not as presence, but as the hidden clearing, present and absent at once, albeit not in the same respect.