

CHAPTER I

BEFORE JUDGMENT

JUDGMENT AND TRUTH

A discussion of the problem of truth cannot avoid beginning with the problem of its relation to judgment, traditionally considered the very locus of truth. The question is posed by Heidegger in §44 of *Being and Time*. In this section, Heidegger attempts to “deconstruct” the traditional definition of truth, an operation that is one of the fundamental stages of the complex strategy that guides the research on the meaning of being in general, the aim of which, as explained in §6, is to loosen a consolidated tradition, “until we arrive at those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of being—the ways which have guided us ever since.”¹ In the case of truth, Heidegger’s argument moves first from its traditional definition as *adequatio intellectus et rei*, which is articulated in three theses:

- (1) that the “locus” of truth is assertion (judgment); (2) that the essence of truth lies in the “agreement” of the judgment with its object; (3) that Aristotle, the father of logic, not only has assigned truth to the judgment as its primordial locus but has set going the definition of “truth” as “agreement.”²

The destruction of these theses is a complex procedure in which the destructuring return converges with the recovery of the authentic Aristotelian understanding of truth. The result of this return leads to a real overturning, an inversion of the first of the three theses, which Heidegger tries to confirm in Aristotle himself: judgment is not the locus of truth, but rather truth is the locus of judgment. For Heidegger, this antepredicative truth coincides with being-in-the-world, namely, with the disclosedness of Dasein.

Here we should not be interested in the consequences of this Heideggerian argument as regards the conception of truth as correspondence, but rather with its premises, by trying at the same time to follow the thread of its legitimacy that Heidegger claims to have rediscovered in Aristotle. It cannot be denied that at first glance the claim “the judgment is in truth” appears to be contrary to the Aristotelian text, and in particular to the definition of apophantic discourse in *De Interpretatione* 4,17a 1–3, to which most traditional interpretations typically refer. In this passage from *De Interpretatione* Aristotle in fact claims: “Every sentence has meaning (not as a tool but, as we said, by convention), but not every sentence is a proposition—only those in which there is truth or falsity (*en ô tò aletheúein è pseúdesthei hypárchei*).” To the letter, so it seems, Aristotle says precisely that the true and the false are in discourse. Heidegger nevertheless insists that the discourse is in truth, and thus that discourse *presupposes aletheúein* and *pseúdesthai*, namely, as it translates when respecting the verbal character of these expressions, that discourse presupposes disclosure and concealment as attitudes of Dasein. Truth is thus the *ontological* condition of judgment.

How is such a claim possible? Does it not risk being philologically incorrect, or even completely arbitrary? The thesis I would like to put forward is that Heidegger’s claim has its own legitimacy, and I will try to show (1) its correspondence to the authentic meaning of Aristotle’s claim; and (2) the reason for this inverse formulation. Rather than follow the phenomenological analyses through which Heidegger tries to justify his interpretation,³ I will instead attempt to justify it based on Aristotle’s definition of apophantic discourse, by trying to understand the meaning of the expression *en ô tò aletheúein è pseúdesthei hypárchei*, and in particular, the meaning of the construction *en ô hypárchei*, which articulates the relation between truth and judgment.

HYPÁRCHEIN EN TINÍ: ONTOLOGICAL ANTECEDENCE

The expression *hypárchein en tini* appears in many places in Aristotle’s works. One of the more important instances is in the *Categories*, precisely where he addresses the distinction between primary and secondary substances. Here Aristotle writes:

The species in which the things primarily called substances are (*en oís eídesin hypárchousin*), are called *secondary substances*, as also are the genera

of these species. For example, the individual man belongs (*hypárchei*) in a species, man, and animal is a genus of the species; so these—both man and animal—are called secondary substances.⁴

The translations found in the principal European languages confirm the idea that the construction *hypárchein en tini* alludes to “being contained in something.”⁵ What this might mean is not at all clear. We can above all take note that Aristotle distinguishes here two forms of inclusion:

1. inclusion in a subject (*eínai en tini*);
2. inclusion in a second substance or predicate (*hypárchein en tini*).

They are incompatible, since in the first case the predicates are in their subjects, while in the second case the subject (primary substance, which on the other hand cannot be other than the subject) exists in its substantial predicates (secondary substances). The primary substances therefore exist in their secondary substances, but, as subjects, include their accidents.

The primary substances are thus “in” the secondary substances, but not as these latter are in subjects: in fact, Aristotle writes, “It is a characteristic common to every substance not to be in a subject (*mè en hypokeiménō eínai*).”⁶ And a bit later he reaffirms:

We need not be disturbed by any fear that we may be forced to say that the parts of a substance, being in a subject (the whole substance), are not substances. For when we speak of things *in a subject* (*hōs en hypokeiménois ónta*) we did not mean things *existing* [my italics] in something as *parts* (*tà hōs méré hypárchonta én tini*).⁷

There are therefore two ways of “being in,” distinct through a terminological differentiation: *eínai* is used for the accidental relation, *hypárchein* for the substantial relation. The meaning of inclusion is also different: the accidental predicates *are* in their subjects, while the primary substance (that can only be subject) *exists* (as the Italian translation conveniently states) in its substantial predicates (the secondary substances). Why didn’t Aristotle use the verb *eínai* for this second way of “being included”? Probably because in this case the relation defined as *hypárchein en tini* would have been reduced to a predicative relation, which Aristotle clearly wanted to avoid.

The difference between *einai* and *hypárchein* is fundamental and therefore distinguishing: C. H. Kahn observes that in contrast to *einai*, *hypárchein* carries a temporal connotation of antecedence, the sense of a “being before,” as with a principle (although not in the causal sense).⁸ *Hypárchonta* are the circumstances, the conditions, the resources or means that they have at their disposal because something happens; in its impersonal use, *hypárchei* means “is given, the fact is.” Originally, *hypárchein* in fact signifies “to begin” or “to take initiative” or “to make the first attempt” in completing something. This connotation is particularly clear in its absolute use:

In this absolute use *hypárchō* means not “to make a beginning” (in doing something) but “to *be* a beginning,” “to be on hand (from the beginning, at the start).” In this use *hypárchō* is practically a synonym for *páreimi* “to be present with,” “to be available for.” In the most natural and typical cases, the temporal sense of “previously,” or “already, at the start” is clearly implied.⁹

As a variant of *árchein* (“to command, to order, to begin”) with the prefix *hypó* (“under”) added, *hypárchein* thus alludes to an implicit or underlying principality that introduces a relation of dependence or of subordination.

“Being present from the beginning” is thus not so much a relation of spatial inclusion, but a relation of condition/conditioned: whatever *hypárchei* (is given) must be there because something happens, but that does not mean that what happens follows due to the simple fact that there is that something. It therefore constitutes a *necessary* but not *sufficient* condition. By speaking of primary substances, Aristotle in fact says that without them neither the secondary substances nor any other thing would exist.¹⁰ The primary substances “are” *already* in the secondary substances in the sense that *they precede them from an ontological point of view*. The substantial predicates (but the discourse could easily be generalized to every type of predicate) do not exist in themselves, but exist only because the primary substances *already* exist (this is the core of Aristotle’s polemic against the separate existence of the ideas maintained by Plato).

HYPÁRCHEIN TINÍ: THE ESSENTIAL ANTECEDENCE

Aristotle, however, uses the verb *hypárchein* also to express another type of relation: this deals with the expression found above all in the *Prior and*

Posterior Analytics, “*tò B tò A hypárchei*,” normally translated as “B (namely, the predicate) belongs to A.” Such a form is thus considered equivalent to the copulative form “A is B,”¹¹ where it expresses a necessary connection, such that it is convertible with it, even though the opposite is not possible:

The conversion of an appropriate name which is derived from an accident is an extremely precarious thing; for in the case of accidents and in no other it is possible for something to be true in a certain respect and not universally. Names derived from definition and property and genus are bound to be convertible; e.g. if being a two-footed terrestrial animal belongs to something (*hypárchei tini*), then it will be true by conversion to say that it is a two-footed terrestrial animal. Likewise, also, if derived from the genus; for if being an animal belongs to something, then it is an animal.¹²

Hypárchein tini expresses a necessary relation between the subject and predicate, that of subsumption, which excludes identity.¹³

The distinctions that we have up to this point developed can thus be summarized according to the following schema:

1. *eínai en tini* to be in a subject (predicative relation of the accidental type)
2. *hypárchein tini* to belong to (predicative relation of the substantial type)
3. *hypárchein en tini* to exist in something (existential relation)

The primary substance therefore “exists in secondary substances” in the sense that it is its condition of possibility. These secondary substances, conversely, *belong* to the primary substances, in the sense that they are *part* of their essential definition. Therefore, only this is a true predicative relation, as it is impossible for the primary substances to be predicated of anything.

Contemporary logic uses “belonging” to indicate the relation between individual and species, and “inclusion” to indicate the relation between species and genus, according to a relation of increasing extension. These two relations are analytically distinct, respectively, through the functor of belonging “ \in ” (Peano) and that of inclusion “ \supset ” (Gergonne). Aristotle has been rebuked for not distinguishing “the relation of inclusion among classes from the relation of the belonging of an individual to a class. It is always a matter of *hypárchein*: in the

first case, of the genus to the species, in the second of the species to the individual. He therefore supposed that the relation was the same in both cases. [. . .]¹⁴ This analysis is not, however, completely true. Aristotle, as we have seen, clearly distinguishes these two relations, not by referring to two distinct lexemes, but to two different syntactical constructions of the same lexeme, or to be precise, of the verb *hypárchein*: by now, one can say that Aristotle uses the expression “belonging to” and “being included” (or better: “being in”)—or at least in this way they make for equivalent translations, as one sees from those noted in note 5—in a manner directly opposed to how it is done in set-theory.

The different syntactic construction—prepositional (*en tini*) or with the simple dative (*tini*)—ought instead to be understood as the reference to an existential (ontological) dimension or to a predicative (logico-discursive) dimension, to which there correspond two different types of necessity:

- a1. *Hypárchein en tini* expresses the idea that the primary substance (A) is the necessary condition of the existence of the secondary substance (B) which would not exist without it;
- a2. *Hypárchein tini* expresses the idea that the predicates are a necessary condition of the definition of the subject, to which they belong essentially: if there were not these predicates, that subject would not be what it is.

It would thus be a matter of the distinction between an existential relation and a definitional relation, between existence and essence, between *that it is* and *what it is*. In both cases, the meaning of the temporal anteriority of the verb *hypárchein* is preserved: as ontological antecedence or as essential antecedence (according to the Aristotelian definition of essence, which indicates what the subject was *already*, *tò tí en eínai*). That these relations should not be considered equivalent is shown by the fact that, while a2 can be immediately converted into the predicative form ($S \supset P$ equals “S is P”), a1 cannot be: one cannot say that a given secondary substance *is* a certain primary substance, and that affirms precisely the resistance of the relation *hypárchein en tini* to predication. It expresses instead an *antepredicative* relation, which precedes every predication and makes it possible: without the primary substances there would be no secondary substances, and even more so, no accidents. The translation of *hypárchein* as “to exist”—and of the substantive *hyparxis* as “existence,”

above all since the Hellenistic period¹⁵—only confirms this interpretation: primary substance here tends to be confused with the very notion of “existence,” as the ontological *prius* of any other predicate. Its characteristic of “category” tends therefore to lessen and instead inclines toward an ontological modality, that of the entity that exists in itself, the *tóde ti*. In short, this could constitute an implicit formulation of the idea, found in Kant, that *existence is not a real predicate*: it is not a predicate that should be part of the essential definition of a subject because, in general, *it is not a predicate at all*.

THE *INESSE*: FROM BOETHIUS TO LEIBNIZ

That existence, and as a result truth—whose relation to the discourse is of the same type as that of primary substance with secondary substances—were fallaciously considered as “predicates” is thus an error that also has a linguistic basis. This misunderstanding was probably cemented into place by Boethius, who translated the verb *hypárchein* as *inesse*, “to be contained in.” This terminological choice made it so that at a certain point both the form *hypárchein en tini* and also the form *hypárchein tini*, were placed in the same conceptual realm, even though Aristotle had kept them far apart. Moreover, the predication defined by Aristotle as “*éinai en tini*” (it is also a way of “being in,” but one that concerns intercategory or accidental predication) was also added to it. One could compare the Latin translation, already cited in note 5 (the passage from Aristotle in which the relation between primary substance and secondary substances is defined), to the use that Boethius made of the verb *inesse* to indicate the accidental relation. In a passage from his commentary on *De Interpretatione*, Boethius writes:

Dicit autem esse verbum semper eorum quae de altero praedicantur notam, quod huiusmodi est ac si diceret nihil aliud nisi accidentia verba signifi care. Omne enim verbum aliquod accidens designat. Cum enim dico cursus, ipsum quidem est accidens, sed non ita dicitur ut id alicui inesse vel non inesse dicatur. Si autem dixero currit, tunc ipsum accidens in alicuius actione proponens alicui inesse significo.¹⁶

The expression “B *inest* A” thus becomes, starting from Boethius, the canonical form for expressing the relation between subject (A) and predicate (B) as the general relation of “inherence.” *Inesse* appears as an ambiguous term

that, besides reducing the antepredicative relation (*hypárchein en tini*) to a predicative one, does not in any way allow for distinguishing between the *meaning* and the *mode* of the relation between subject and predicate. Leibniz is connected to this use, who defined the predicative relation in general as *inesse* by understanding it as *the inclusion of the predicate in the subject*, and by justifying his thesis in this way:

Therefore the predicate or consequent is always in the subject or antecedent, and the nature of truth in general, i.e. the connection between the terms of a proposition, consists in this very thing, as Aristotle has also observed. And indeed, in identities this connection and inclusion of the predicate in the subject is explicit, whereas in all other truths it is implicit and must be shown through the analysis of concepts, on which *a priori* demonstration is founded.¹⁷

This reference to Aristotle is justly contested by scholars: to understand the relation of *inesse* in the way that Leibniz did in fact brings about a distortion of the Aristotelian distinctions between the relation *hypárchein en tini* (which we have defined as “ontological”), the relation *hypárchein tini* (which we have defined as “essential”), and the relation *eínai en tini* (accidental). *Inesse* in this case indicates the subject-predicate relation, and in a way that the predicates are contained, *implicated*, in the subject, in the form $A \supset B$: for Leibniz, the subject is the antecedent of a relation of implication, of which the predicate is the consequent. The difference from the relation *hypárchein en tini* described by Aristotle is thus clear: while Aristotle posits the subject as the consequent (or even as the necessary condition) of the predicate, for Leibniz the opposite is the case. To the end of showing it graphically, we can thus write the first in the form (a1) “ $B \rightarrow A$,” and the second in the form (a2) “ $A \supset B$.”

1. a1 signifies that the consequent is the *ontological* condition of possibility for the antecedent, which would not exist without it. The *modus tollens* of this implication corresponds to the Aristotelian claim according to which, if there were no primary substance, there would be no secondary substances.
2. a2, in the opposite manner, expresses the meaning of the relation of Leibnizian inherence: the subject includes all of its predicates, which constitutes its explication. One finds here the logical form of

“the principle of sufficient reason,” which is the logico-metaphysical equivalent of the ontological constitution of the monads: “*The complete or perfect concept of an individual substance contains (involvit) all of its predicates, past, present and future,*”¹⁸ which are contained in it (*in rei notione continentur*).

As we have seen, while *a2* can be immediately transformed into a predicative form (“ $A \supset B$ ” is equivalent to “*A is B*”), for *a1* this is not possible. This shows the undeniable resistance of the relation *hypárchein en tini* to the predicative form and expresses the idea that the primary substance cannot ever be the sufficient condition of its predicates, as instead happens in Leibniz with the concept of the monad.

Once the monad is set, so too are all of its predicates. That explains how for Leibniz the relation of inherence, even if only virtual, is in the end resolved into a relation of identity, in an *idem esse*. All truths, Leibniz writes, can be traced back to identical truths, from the most complex to the most basic, and these to the most primary truths, which are nothing but the predications of identity of the type “ $A = A$ ”:

Now it is evident that every true predication has some basis in the nature of things, and even when a proposition is not identical, that is, when the predicate is not expressly contained in the subject, it is still necessary that it be virtually contained in it, and this is what philosophers call *in-esse*, saying thereby that the predicate is in the subject.¹⁹

The equivalence between subject and predicate is thus possible only if any condition of asymmetry is eliminated, whether it is logical or, above all, ontological: namely, *temporal*. The truths that do not possess such symmetry are in fact the truths in which the connection between the subject and the predicate varies in time and is not stable—contingent truths.²⁰ Their reduction to truths of reason thus brings to the fore the cancellation of their temporal character; their apriority is equal to an *absence of time*. The relation of equivalence therefore supposes the coincidence, at least *virtual*, of accidental relation and substantial relation: as has been suggested, this relation is prepared through the very way in which Boethius understood *inesse*.

The equivalence of truths of fact and truths of reason, of the logical order with the ontological order, is nevertheless possible, according to Leibniz, only for a divine intellect, which is the only one capable of capturing the totality

of historical predicates and thus their equivalence with the subject about which they are predicated: the nature of an individual substance or of a complete being is such by being sufficient to understand and to deduce from it all of its possible predicates, even those determinations that we can understand only through history and that we thus call “accidentals.”²¹ In this way, Leibniz achieves the complete reduction of the problem of truth to one of predication. On the contrary, in Aristotle the relation that he calls *hypárchein en tini* constitutes a relation that is not predicative and not reducible to Leibnizian *in esse*. In fact, it constitutes the point of greatest resistance against making judgment a complete matter of logic, whose inscription onto a theological background (a background of possible *infinity*, unknown to Aristotle), turns the predicative relation into an analytic relation of the inclusion of the predicate in the subject, and in the end a relation of identity—the result of which is one of the most radical outcomes of eighteenth-century rationalism, and whose effects reach all the way to Hegel by equating contingent truths and necessary truths, the accidental relation with the substantial relation, truths of fact with those of reason.

THE PRESUPPOSITION OF TRUTH

At this point let us return to the Aristotelian definition of apophantic discourse: “Every sentence has meaning (not as a tool but, as we said, by convention), but not every sentence is a proposition—only those in which there is truth or falsity (*en ô tò aletheúein è pseúdesthei hypárchei*).”

Commenting on this definition in its Boethian translation (*Enunciativa vero non omnis (oratio), sed in qua verum vel falsum inest*), 22 Heidegger writes:

The only speech that indicatively shows something, [and thus is a statement,] is speech in which uncovering or covering-over is present. The Greek word that we translate as “is present,” is *hypárchein*, “to be there.” But in this case it does not have the meaning it often can, namely, “occurring” in the quite broad sense of “there is something,” as if Aristotle meant to say: “Only such speech is indicative in which uncovering and covering-over occurs”—as if covering and uncovering could sometimes occur, and sometimes not. Here, instead, *hypárchein* has the weighty sense of the philosophical concept that is used by Aristotle: *hypárchein* means “being there a priori,” “underlying something in such a way that

everything else is sustained by this thing that is there a priori.” For that reason Boethius translates the Greek *hypárchein* in an entirely correct way as “in-esse,” “being-within-[something],” in this case: “belonging to the very essence of speaking.”²³

Heidegger here understands the *inesse* of Boethius in the authentic Aristotelian sense and in particular shows that he clearly understands the significance of the anteriority proper to the verb *hypárchein*: “Aristotle says *en ô . . . hypárchei*, a discourse is propositional through *aletheúein è pseúdesthai* not merely being found in it, but *lying in it as underlying it*, as contributing toward its *ground* and its *essence*.”²⁴ Only in this way, as we have seen, does the connection between *hypárchein* and essence become understandable, which otherwise in Boethius’s use of the verb *inesse* would be completely unexplainable. Truth is the “past” of discourse, what precedes it as its necessary condition of possibility: without truth there would be no discourse. In fact, Heidegger writes, if there were also no discourse, it would not be for this reason that truth would not be: “even when nobody *judges*, truth already gets presupposed in so far as *Dasein* is at all.”²⁵

Now, the traditional thesis translates the Aristotelian claim into a spatial language that in fact betrays its meaning. Whatever *hypárchei* thus becomes the “content” and therefore something that presupposes its own container, thus completely inverting the relation of temporal anteriority. In accordance with this spatial language, Heidegger then reformulates the relation of anteriority between truth and discourse by saying, not that truth *is in* discourse, but on the contrary, that *discourse is in truth*:

Not only is it wrong to invoke Aristotle for the thesis that the genuine “locus” of truth lies in the judgment; even in its content this thesis fails to recognize the structure of truth. *On the contrary*, whether as a mode in which uncoveredness is appropriated or as a way of Being-in-the-world, assertion is grounded in *Dasein*’s uncovering, or rather, its *disclosedness*. The most primordial “truth” is the “locus” of assertion; it is the ontological condition for the possibility that assertions can be either true or false—that they may uncover or cover things up.²⁶

In the passage from temporal representation to spatial relation, the relation of antecedence becomes a relation of inclusion, while the antepredicative relation becomes a predicative one. But for Heidegger, the fact that Aristotle,

in the definition of apophantic discourse, did not use the adjectives *alethés* and *pseudés*, but the verbs *aletheúein* and *pseúdesthai*, signifies that discourse is grounded in a faculty, the possibility of a comportment for Dasein, a disclosing (true) attitude or a concealing (false) one.

As assertion, the *lógos apophantikós* certainly has the possibility of being true or being false, but this manner of being true, of becoming manifest, is grounded in a manifestness which, because it lies *prior* to *predication* and the assertion, we designate as *pre-predicative manifestness*, or better, as *pre-logical truth*. “Logical” is here taken in a quite rigorous sense, namely having to do with the *lógos apophantikós* in the form we have interpreted it.²⁷

It is therefore in order to confirm the authentic content of the Aristotelian thesis—the idea that truth is the *ontological condition* of discourse, what precedes it and grounds it—that Heidegger has inverted the traditional thesis. As the container precedes the content spatially (it is its *foundation*), one will have to say then that truth is the locus of discourse, and not the other way around. The true foundation, therefore, is truth.

The discussion surrounding the meaning of the expression *hypárchein en tini* thus shows, in conclusion, that truth cannot be understood as a predicate, as predicates—Leibniz says—are what are contained, implicated in a subject. Its “antepredicative” character is what for Heidegger coincides with the very existence of Dasein:

The truth which has been presupposed, or the “there is” by which its Being is to be defined, has that kind of Being—or meaning of Being—which belongs to Dasein itself. We must “make” the presupposition of truth because it *is* one that has been “made” already with the Being of the “we.”²⁸

Truth carries with itself the necessity of a presupposition, or even of the facticity of Dasein as “being *already* in”: thus, Heidegger specifies, “It is not we who presuppose ‘truth’; but it is ‘*truth*’ that makes it at all possible ontologically for us to be able to *be* such that we ‘presuppose’ anything at all. Truth is what first *makes possible* anything like presupposing.”²⁹ Truth—like existence—in this way expresses a condition of *absolute* antecedence in respect to discourse: its “interiority” to discourse is nothing other than its *anteriority* in respect to discourse.