HEIDEGGER'S PROBLEMS
WITH ORDINARY GRAMMAR

Wanda Torres Gregory
Simmons University, Boston, Massachusetts
torres@simmons.edu

Resumen: Heidegger constantemente alegó que la gramática ordinaria era inadecuada por una razón u otra. Este artículo tiene por objetivo analizar cómo Heidegger definió la gramática en tres etapas de su filosofía—desde sus primeras incursiones en la lógica pura, a través de su proyecto de la ontología fundamental y la fenomenología existencial, hasta sus reflexiones posteriores en términos del pensar histórico del ser (*seynsgeschichtliches Denken*). Sostengo que sus apropiaciones del *logos* aristotélico, particularmente en términos de sus funciones supuestamente originales, es una constante en su concepto de lenguaje. La clave a sus conceptos de gramática radica en la síntesis del *logos*, la cual consiste básicamente en componer algo *como* algo. Mi análisis muestra cómo las distinciones que Heidegger trazó entre una síntesis primordial y sus formas presuntamente derivadas y defectuosas se aplican en sus críticas de la gramática ordinaria a lo largo del desarrollo de su pensamiento. También discuto la naturaleza problemática de las críticas y prescripciones de Heidegger mismo con respecto a la gramática, la cual sostengo se exacerba en su filosofía posterior.

Abstract: Heidegger constantly claimed that ordinary grammar is inadequate for one reason or another. In this article, I analyze his different views of grammar across three stages of his philosophy—from his early ventures in pure logic, through his project of fundamental ontology and existential phenomenology, to his later reflections in terms of beyng-historical thinking (*seynsgeschichtliches Denken*). I claim that his appropriations of the Aristotelian *logos*, particularly in terms of its supposedly original functions, is a constant in his concept of language. The key to his concepts of grammar lies in the synthesis of *logos*, which basically involves assembling something *as* something. My analysis shows how Heidegger's distinctions between a primordial synthesis and its allegedly derivative and defective forms are applied in his critiques of ordinary grammar throughout the development of his thought. I also discuss the problematic nature of Heidegger's own critiques and prescriptions regarding grammar, which I argue is exacerbated in his later philosophy.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Heidegger often had problems with ordinary grammar. I am referring to his views, rather than his own use (or as some would argue, deliberate misuse) of grammar. By 'ordinary grammar,' I mean here what is commonly defined as the system of practices, standards, and rules of word inflection, syntax, and sentence formation in natural languages. My

point is that Heidegger persisted in believing that this grammar is *inadequate* for one reason or another. Over time, he developed different theories of grammar in general. So, his diagnosis of what ailed ordinary grammar changed. He also prescribed and tried to reflect in his own use of grammar different ways of overcoming what he believed were its inherent problems.

The traditional definition of *logos* in terms of reason and speech (*ratio et oratio*) constantly frames Heidegger's different grammatical diagnoses and prescriptions. Aristotle's definition of *logos* in terms of *apophansis, sýnthesi*, and *phonē semantikē* provides the main setting. In the standard rendition, *apophansis* means assertion, *sýnthesi* refers to the propositional copula, and *phonē semantikē* corresponds to sonorous expression of meaning. Heidegger first accepted this traditional *logos,* but he soon began to criticize its neglect of existential conditions as well as its ontology of presence, and he eventually rejected it as the "fitting word" for the essence of language. However, even in his criticism of the *logos* of metaphysics, he retains the notion of its three fundamental functions. What he does is point to more original or primordial forms of *apophansis, sýnthesi*, and *phonē.*

I will focus here on the concept of synthesis -the main key to Heidegger's different theories of grammar. Broadly speaking, synthesis involves composing something according to an as-structure, that is, assembling something *as* something. The assembling of something as something in ordinary grammar typically occurs in declarative sentences in which we apply a predicate to a subject. In Heidegger, this type of assembling is rarely adequate. I identify three stages of his interpretations of grammar and its mode of synthesis: The first is from the perspective of pure logic; the second

covers the period of his project of fundamental ontology and existential phenomenology, and the final stage begins with his reflections on the essence of language in its relation to beyng (*Seyn:* using the archaic spelling of '*Sein*' to distinguish his thinking from metaphysics) and the appropriating-event (*Er-eignis:* hyphenating '*Ereignis*' to distinguish the event as the primordial disclosure that makes visible, '*eräugnen,*' appropriates, '*aneignen,*' and brings to what is proper or belongs to, '*eignen,*' everything that is as its own, '*eigen*').[1] I will discuss each stage in very broad strokes to focus on his problems with ordinary grammar. I also aim to show what is problematic with Heidegger's views in each case.

Part One: Pure Logic

In 1912 to 1913, the young Heidegger applies what he calls "fundamental distinctions" made by Edmund Husserl, Emil Lask, and Hermann Lotze to develop his theory of judgment in accordance with the principles of pure logic. He applies Husserl's critique of psychologism to distinguish the ideal, extra-temporal, logical content from the real, temporal, psychological acts of judging. Lask's program for the emancipation of logic from grammar and his meta-grammatical subject-predicate theory serves to make the distinction between judgment as a logical entity and the ordinary grammatical sentence. Like Lask as well, Heidegger uses Lotze's distinction between what is and what holds or is valid (*gilt*), which he argues is a property unique to judgments.

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[1] Bibliographical references are abbreviated in the text and notes. For my more general account and critique of Heidegger's interpretation of logos through these three stages, see: HPL.

In the young Heidegger's conception, language is basically the body of sentence-forms and word-forms that can be perceived by our senses and are instruments for communicating thought, which he understands in terms of cognitive representation. Aiming to establish judgment as the proper object of logic, he differentiates the "pure sense that endures in itself" from the fluctuating psychological and physical conditions in which we formulate judgments through declarative sentences (GAI, p. 22).[2] Language, which belongs in the sphere of what is real, provides only the "grammatical" form of judgments, which themselves belong in the ideal logical domain.

The young Heidegger argues that there is a fundamental difference between grammatical sentences and logical judgments by pointing to their diverse forms of synthesis (GAI, p. 32). Declarative sentences containing judgments connect subjects with predicates, but grammatical analyses rarely grasp the logical sense, because there is no "univocal correspondence" between what is logical and what is grammatical (GAI, p. 178). A declarative sentence could fail to express a judgment properly and could even invert the logical synthesis. In this sense, the ordinary subject-predicate relation provides merely a contingent synthesis. Given that a one-to-one correspondence is only coincidental, Heidegger thus stresses that sentence and judgement "can indeed go 'parallel,' but *must* not" (GAI, p. 178).

Heidegger later identifies his 1915-1916 habilitation as his first step in the path of the questions concerning being and language. At this point, he associates the being-question with Duns Scotus' doctrine of the categories and identifies

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[2] All English translations of GAI are mine. Quotes from English translations have the page number of the translation followed by the page number of the original German text after a forward slash.

the language-question with the *grammatica speculativa* (later discovered to be written by Thomas of Erfurt, not Scotus). He describes this grammar as "the metaphysical reflection on language in its relation to Being." Heidegger's retrospective self-critique of the habilitation also focuses on its observance of "the ruling standard of the doctrine of *judgment* for all onto-logic" (US, p. 6/ pp. 91-92).[3] This is clearly confirmed in the habilitation where he defines the concept of the pure *logos* in terms of judgment, which he identifies as the proper bearer of truth and primordial structure of the knowledge of being understood as objectivity (GAI, p. 268).

In Heidegger's interpretation of Erfurt's *grammatica speculativa*, judgments are noematic acts that belong to the logical sphere, which differs from the psychologically real sphere (GAI, pp. 270-71, p. 277). Heidegger also argues that judgments have the property of holding or being valid in the copula, which is what I identify as their logical synthesis (GAI, p. 269). Judgments are meaning-complexes (GAI, pp. 336-37). Their syntheses of something as something are determined by ideal meaning-categories or meaning-forms (GAI, p. 323). The proper perspective into this (veritable) transcendental grammar is thus pure logic (GAI, pp. 327-28). From this pure logical perspective, meaning-categories do not pertain to the "*phonetic structure*, as word-forms" of discourse, but to its "*non-sensuous,* logical" parts (GAI, p. 323). In contrast, the verbal syntheses of ordinary grammar pertain to the phonetic verbal structure.

However, the young Heidegger also seems to be following Husserl, who had suggested that certain ordinary grammatical distinctions could be seen as reflections of essential semantic distinctions (HU, IV §4). In this vein,

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[3] Cf. GAI, p. 55.

Heidegger claims that for Erfurt the elements of Donatus's grammar, which includes nouns, pronouns, verbs, participles, etc., are themselves meaning-categories (GAI, pp. 341-46). This classification of the grammatical categories as meaning-categories suggests that ordinary grammar is still somehow linked to the grammar of pure logic. In Heidegger's portrayal, Erfurt's instrumental definition of language as the organic whole of sensible expressions of non-sensible meanings and sense suggests this link (GAI, pp. 290-93, 304-305). Ordinary grammar would pertain to the language-forms (words and sentences), which belong to the sensible, temporal, and changing sphere of what is (GAI, pp. 290-93). The grammar of pure logic comes into play insofar as the language-forms become expressions by virtue of "meaning-bestowing" acts of consciousness (GAI, pp. 308-310).

In Heidegger's rendition of Erfurt, a linguistic expression is also a unity of a sign and what it signifies (GAI, p. 295). This unity reflects the "togetherness" (*Beisammen*) of the logical content and the linguistic expression of a judgment. However, this bond does not apply to a logical structure such as a judgment, for it does not require linguistic expression to hold or to be valid (GAI, p. 291). Furthermore, Heidegger claims that logical structures and their properties, such as validity, are "earlier" than their linguistic forms of expression (GAI, p. 291). In this sense, the "logical conditions" and "logical structure" of language are determined by the ideal meaning-categories (GAI, p. 339).

The young Heidegger assigns to the philosophy of language the central task of being the "science" that searches for the "logic" of language. He explicitly discards psychological and historical investigations that explain language in its "real existence" from this task. Instead, the

aim is to investigate language in its "rational side, i.e., concerning content" and its "ultimate theoretical foundations" (GAI, pp. 339-40). Such investigation would presumably give insight into the pure syntheses that are at play in the determination of its logical structures by the meaning-categories.

However, Heidegger's habilitation project also espouses the theological concept of a living *logos*. His espousal is most evident in the later conclusion (1916) to his habilitation, where he claims that we "cannot remain in the sphere of logic." Instead, we have to move toward the metaphysical sphere to attain the "proper optic" needed for the neo-Kantian project of developing the system of the categories. Medieval philosophy thus offers a unique approach for this project, namely, through the "metaphysical-teleological account of consciousness" as a "living activity that is full of sense and involved with sense" and is "*essentially historical*" (GAI, pp. 405-407). This account suggests that there would be a corresponding grammar, with its forms of syntheses at play in the living, historical conditions.

The medieval orientation to the living *logos* that Heidegger proposes in the step beyond the sphere of logic toward metaphysics also goes beyond his ideal "science" of language, precisely because it focuses on language in its real existence. In fact, he endorses this medieval orientation when he explains how the lived experience of language is captured in the *grammatica speculativa*. In this vein, he argues that the "necessary and valuable" distinction between logical structures and ordinary grammatical forms collapses "*as soon as one lives in knowledge and its presentation*" (GAI, pp. 294-95).[4] Put otherwise, the medieval orientation offers a phenomenology of the lived discourse that goes

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[4] Cf. GAI, p. 336.

beyond the sphere of logic. In this sense, the *grammatica speculativa* would seem to offer phenomenological insight into real syntheses as well.

The young Heidegger also endorses the scholastic "genetic" and "teleological" view of language, which centers the genesis and *telos* of language on the "finished communication of the sense of discourse." When we understand the *telos* of language, we can grasp the "overruling significance" of meaning in our communication. Heidegger also notes that without language as the instrument for communication, neither everyday nor scientific discourse could "*express*" and "bring to presentation" their "meant objects and states-of-affairs" (GAI, pp. 305-306). Once again, this suggests that ordinary language and its particular grammatical syntheses play an important role in what he describes as "the whole of relations: language-form, language-content, and fulfilling object" pertaining to knowledge (GAI, p. 336).

Heidegger's project for the philosophy of language in the habilitation thus has two distinct agendas. One is the logical agenda of developing a science of language that corresponds with the concept of the pure *logos* and its synthesis. This science focuses on the ideal conditions of possibility for the expression of judgment and the communication of knowledge. The other is the metaphysical agenda of developing a metaphysical-teleological understanding of language, which corresponds with the concept of the living *logos* and its synthesis. Metaphysics focuses on the existential conditions of possibility and the lived experience of expression in discourse. Insofar as Heidegger suggests that the *grammatica speculativa* can fulfill these distinct agendas, he assumes (without argument) that the pure *logos*

and the living *logos* and their corresponding forms of syntheses are somehow compatible with one another.

The young Heidegger follows both Erfurt and Husserl in also believing that certain grammatical distinctions, e.g., between noun and verb, reflect logical distinctions, though in a distorted fashion. In terms of the logical agenda of his habilitation, this reflection is possible because the ideal meaning-categories set the logical conditions of language. In this sense, the grammar of ordinary language is itself determined, albeit only in part, by logic. In terms of the metaphysical agenda, the other form of determination would come from the existential conditions of the living, historical spirit. It is the latter approach that will prevail as Heidegger develops his thoughts on language and grammar in terms of his existential phenomenology.

Part Two: The Project of Fundamental Ontology and Existential Phenomenology

In 1919, Heidegger takes a decisive step away from the pure *logos* toward the existential *logos*:

[The] categories of grammar originate in living speech, in those of the immanent speaking of life itself (which are not the categories of logic, to be sure!). The grammatical categories originate, in great part, historiologically (GA61, p. 63/p. 83).

However, by 1924-25, in his critique of the rule of propositional logic over *logos,* Heidegger proposes that "[a]ll grammatical categories . . . are essentially determined by this theoretical logic" (GA19, p. 175/p. 253). So, at this later point, he believes that, because propositional or theoretical logic is based on the traditional ontology of presence, it determines ordinary grammar by *distorting* its living origins.

In 1927, the distortion of grammar by propositional logic presents a major obstacle in *Being and Time* for Heidegger's project of fundamental ontology and the Da-sein analytic. The central problem of the oblivion of being (*Seinsvergessenheit*), which is sanctioned by the traditional ontology that interprets being in terms of presence, is reflected in ordinary grammar. The logic of traditional ontology is itself determined by the oblivion of being at the same time that it provides the principles and rules of thinking that perpetuate this oblivion. Heidegger identifies it as the logic that defines *logos* as speech or discourse (*Rede*) interpreted in terms of cognition, as reason, judgment, proposition or theoretical assertion, among other things (SZ, p. 28/p. 32).[5] In its regulatory role, traditional logic serves as the "foundation" of grammar, which itself is "based on the ontology of objective presence" (SZ, p. 148/p. 159).[6] The traditional grammatical categories and principles are in this sense ontologically inadequate, *distorted* by the ontology and logic of presence.

The contributions of logic to the oblivion of being are visible in the conceptual "prejudices" that Heidegger claims occlude in advance the question concerning the meaning of the being of beings. According to this logic, the word '*Sein*' refers to the most universal and emptiest of concepts, which is thereby considered indefinable, and is assumed to be self-evident when we know something, make an assertion about something, or relate to any being. The propositional *logos* of tradition has served as the "guideline" for the development of the main structural forms and elements of discourse (SZ, p. 165/p. 155). It has determined not only ordinary grammar, but

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[5] Cf. SZ, p. 144/p. 154.
[6] Cf. SZ, p. 155/p. 165.

also the average understanding that is reflected in the use of the words central to the project of fundamental ontology.

As the Da-sein phenomenological analysis reveals, everyday discourse is the idle talk (*Gerede*) of the inauthentic being-in-the-world with one another. Its worldly expressedness as language is immersed in the traditional ontological interpretations. The same immersion applies to the very discipline of grammar, for it is based on the metaphysical interpretation of *logos* as theoretical assertion (SZ, p. 155/pp. 165-66). In this sense, Heidegger claims that "most of the words, but above all the 'grammar'" are lacking for the question concerning the meaning of being (SZ, p. 34/p. 39). Ironically, he now inverts his earlier call for a pure logic emancipated from ordinary grammar, by claiming that the being-question involves "*freeing* grammar from logic" (SZ, p. 155/p. 165).

In Heidegger's rendition, grammar as the discipline that is subjugated to the logic of objective presence is ontologically inadequate. The subject-predicate relation and the propositional copula are structures that are determined by the traditional cognitive model that interprets beings in their presence-at hand (*Vorhandenheit*). The "apophantical" as-structure, which is fundamental to this grammar, pertains to objects of cognition and their abstract properties and relations. Heidegger's example of the proposition in which the property of heaviness is ascribed to the hammer as a thing present-at-hand thus serves to illustrate the synthesis that operates in the derivative and deficient mode of interpretation (SZ, §33).

Heidegger takes a preparatory step in the freeing of grammar from logic by locating the original or primordial mode of interpretation in circumspection (*Umsicht*)—the pretheoretical and prepredicative seeing in which Da-sein

understands beings within its world in their readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*) (SZ, p. 140/p. 149). Circumspective concern (*Besorgen*) takes form according to the existential as-structure, in which beings within the world are understood as ready-to-hand, that is, in their instrumentality. The interpretation of beings as present-at-hand is derivative; it arises upon a lack or a deficiency in the usual handling of the ready-to-hand. The traditional grammar of presence overall remains blind to the primordial modes and structures of interpretation. So, to free grammar from logic, Heidegger argues that we "must inquire into the basic forms in which it is possible to articulate what is intelligible in general, not only of the innerworldly beings that can be known in theoretical observation and expressed in propositions" (SZ, p. 155/p. 166).

Discourse is central to the inquiry into the existential grammar that Heidegger envisions for the liberation from the logic of presence. As the articulation of intelligibility, discourse performs the syntheses that are fundamental to the existential as-structure of the understanding, its development in interpretations, and its verbal expressions. The primordial syntheses performed by discourse let beings within the world be seen in their meaningful totality as equipment (*Zeug*). Discourse thereby first structures the understanding and interpretation of what is ready-to-hand in terms of its equipmental possibilities of being, that is, regarding its possible uses. Discourse is also at play when the everyday interpretation takes form in words and sentences, not only in its synthetic function, but also in its phonetic role, that is, as language in the sense of worldly expressedness in sonorous speech and in concrete verbal speaking. For example, in the context of Da-sein's everyday equipmental activities, discourse would play the role of articulating the as-structure of the uttered sentence 'The

hammer is too heavy,' as well as the role of letting the hammer be seen in its excessive heaviness, as 'too heavy,' through the sonorous expression.

The synthetic function of discourse is at play in both the primary and the derivative and deficient modes of interpretation and their sonorous expressions (SZ, p. 150/p. 161). The existential grammar in which discourse plays the central role of articulating Da-sein's understanding and interpretation would thus offer an account of the ordinary grammar, which is determined by logic as well. The latter is the grammar of presence that prevails in traditional ontology and is harbored in the language of the everyday. The oblivion of being is the ultimate basis of this prevalence. The as-structure articulated by discourse here is fundamentally ontological, insofar as it pertains to the being of beings, and not merely ontical, pertaining to beings in their readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand. The ordinary grammar of tradition and of the inauthentic everyday are oblivious to the difference between being and beings and to the manifold meaning of being. Heidegger thus bemoans the absence of an ontologically adequate as-structure "in which to grasp beings in their *being*" (SZ, p. 34/pp. 38-39). Accordingly, the goal of retrieving the "original experiences" of "the first determinations of being" is one that includes the development of an ontologically adequate grammar of being (SZ, p. 20/p. 22).

Given that the project of fundamental ontology must unfold through the Da-sein analytic, the development of an ontologically adequate grammar of being would depend upon that of the existential grammar. However, given the hermeneutical circle of understanding, the existential grammar itself presupposes the original grammar of being that has been covered up in traditional ontology. The

question is whether its retrieval would allow us to develop an ontologically adequate grammar of being as such, beyond the categories and principles of the existential grammar. *Being and Time* did not reach the point beyond the Da-sein analytic, so the question remained open. Heidegger's later "turn" (*Kehre*) to being and criticism of the anthropocentrism in metaphysics could be interpreted as its negative closure.

Heidegger's ambiguous treatment of discourse and language poses another challenge to his project in *Being and Time*. On the one hand, language has its existential-ontological roots in discourse. On the other, discourse itself is always already language, its worldly expressedness. In terms of the synthetic function that articulates the as-structure, the identification of discourse with its worldly expressedness would entail that the synthesis is linguistic as well. Given that discourse is equiprimordial with understanding and mood, the entire existential-ontological foundation of language would itself be immersed in language. This immersion is implied in Heidegger's characterization of the authentic discourse of conscience in terms of wordlessness and reticence.[7] In this sense, language appears to play a key part in determining the existential grammar that he claims determines language. This unresolved problem perhaps inspired Heidegger's later formulation of the question concerning language in its essence.

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[7] For my discussion of Heidegger's concept of silence in *Being and Time*, see: SSH, Section I.I.

Part Three: Beyng-historical Thinking

The German term '*seynsgeschichtliches Denken*' is in the genitive case, which allows for the ambiguous rendering that Heidegger gives to his later philosophy as a thinking that is 'of' –both belonging to and concerning- beyng itself and its history. In his pursuit of the question concerning the essence of language in terms of this beyng-historical thinking, ordinary grammar poses stark dangers. Our very essence is at stake in the task of "shaking up" propositional logic and the grammar that it determines (GA38).[8]   The rule of metaphysical logic over grammar, which is concealed in the process whereby the word '*Sein*' becomes an empty word and its meaning a mere vapor, places the "destiny of the West" at risk (EM, II). The logical-grammatical and anthropocentric conception of language that prevails in metaphysics repeatedly receives the brunt of Heidegger's critique.[9] The language that he claims is itself determined by metaphysics is also a constant target.[10] In the end, he claims that the unessence (*Unwesen*) of language is determined by the en-framing (*Ge-stell*) that rules as the dangerous essence of modern technology. In the ordinary grammar of the language-machine (*Sprachmaschine*), the as-structure accordingly distorts beings as standing-reserve (*Be-stand*).[11]

In the later Heidegger, the characteristics of the adequate grammar of being change considerably. It becomes the grammar of beyng that belongs to the mysterious language of the truth of beyng in the

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[8] Cf. GA36/37.

[9] Cf. GA9, p. 194/p. 314; ZS, pp. 50-51, 70-71.

[10] Cf. GA9, p. 235/p. 357; US, p. 103/p. 35.

[11] Cf. EM, p. 51/pp. 38-39, p. 56/p. 120; GA9, p. 280/p. 253, p. 317/p. 197, p. 58/p. 160, p. 132/p. 263; WHD, pp. 34-35/p.58; PT, p. 29/p. 45; HH; UTS.

appropriating-event. Poets and thinkers are the few mortals who remain mindful of the silent essence of language. Their reticent sayings co-respond (*ent-sprechen*) to and are appropriated (*ereignet*) by the language of beyng in the appropriating-event. Heidegger claims that we can only prepare ourselves for a transformation of language in poetry and beyng-historical thinking (US, p. 136/p. 267). In this vein, he distinguishes their ways of speaking "of" language from the dominant objectifying method that "takes up a position above" and speaks "about" language (US, pp. 50-52/pp. 149-51). In his rendition, they are non-objectifying and non-propositional ways of saying.[12] Heidegger concedes that the "conceptual language" of metaphysics is "unavoidable" (GA65, p. 336/p. 29).[13] However, he also claims that beyng-historical thinking is "more rigorous than the conceptual" form of thinking (GA9, p. 271/p. 357).[14] Presumably, its rigor is reflected in its immanent "in-grasping" (*Inbegriff*) of beyng (GA65, p. 45/pp. 64-65). The as-structure of the sayings in poetry and thinking is thus extraordinary in that they relate to beyng *as* beyng in their different ways (GA9, p. 391/pp. 311-12).

The extraordinary character of poetry lies in its being the inaugural saying, which for the first time brings into the open all that which we can discuss and deal with in everyday language (GA39, Part Two:§15a). Correspondingly, Heidegger claims that the overcoming of logic must involve a reflection on poetry as the primordial language (*Ursprache*), which is preserved, but declines in ordinary language—the forgotten and used-up poem (GA39, Part

[12] Cf. GA65, p. 10/pp. 13-14, p. 332/p. 472; PT, pp. 46-47/pp. 30-31; G, p. 67/p. 43.
[13] Cf. GA65, pp. 3-4/pp. 3-4; US, p. 25/p. 116; GA9, pp. 367-68/pp. 208-209; PT, p. 62/p. 17.
[14] Cf. GA9, p. 250/p. 328.

One:§7b).[15] Beyng-historical thinking is unique in its struggle "to say the language of beings *as* language of being" in its authentic anticipation of the transformation of language that is needed (GA65, p. 54/p. 78). Poetry and thinking thus have the "saving" task in the dangerous age of en-framing, which includes the "liberation of language from grammar into a more essential framework" (GA9, p. 193/p. 314).

Heidegger reappropriates the functions of the Aristotelian *logos* in his later reflections on the essence of language, though he explicitly rejects the metaphysical *logos*. The word becomes the silent saying in the appropriating-event, which itself reticently shows and points (*apophansis*), gathers (*sýnthesi*), and appropriates mortals to co-respond in sounds (*phonē*) to the truth of beyng.[16] The primordial synthesis, which is now the gathering (*Sammeln/Sammlung*) of beyng itself, is what ultimately defines the grammar of the mortals as those beings whose saying is sonorous. The as-structure that operates in the essence of language is the original assembling that joins all beings and fits each into the whole of beyng. In Heidegger's obscure rendition, it is the mysterious appropriating 'as':

The origin and the mystery of the 'as'—something as something—from the event as deliverance. Individual 'objects,' things in general ever this and that—as one: always already out and in the world-earth. The 'as' the concealed and in this word only barely graspable abyss of the word (GA85, p. 46/p. 55).

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[15] Cf. GA38, §31; GA39, §7; UTS.
[16] For my discussion of the later Heidegger's concept of silence, see: SSH, especially chapter 8.

Our ability to speak in sounds that take form in words and sentences is enabled by the word, by language in its essence, which originally discloses being and enables us to see beings *as* beings.[7] The word itself "is not anything human" and "cannot be anything linguistic" (US, p. 207/30).[8] It is instead the primordial phenomenon (*Urphänomen*) of beyng itself. (PT, p. 41/p. 25). As such, it enables what is linguistic and thereby what is grammatical as "a phenomenon that occurs in" the human being (US, pp. 96-97/pp. 203-204).

The later Heidegger's concept of grammar in general is incompatible with what I identify as his linguistic immanence theory. This theory is reflected in his claim that we move "within language," which we "encounter . . . everywhere" (US, p. 126/p. 257).[19] It implies that there is no *pou sto*, no place for us to stand outside the realm of the word that defines out essence as the sonorous sayers: "In order to be who we are, we human beings, remain committed to and within the being of language, and can never step out of it and look at it from somewhere else" (US, p. 134/p. 266). In this sense, there is no standpoint for the reflection on the essence of language beyond and above our beyng-historically determined languages. However, the problem is that Heidegger's assessments of and prescriptions for languages and their respective grammars clash with his own claims concerning our linguistic immanence.[20]

Heidegger's differentiation of the primordial grammar of beyng and the extraordinary grammar of the poets and

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[17] Cf. GA5, p. 59/p. 198; US, p. 135/p. 237.
[18] Cf. US, 23-24/114, 81/186.
[19] Cf. US 83/188; HH 35/296, 43/307; WHD, 192/169.
[20] Cf. GA38, p. 24/p. 26; GA65, pp. 352-54/pp. 500-502; US, p. 134/p. 266.

thinkers from the ordinary grammar that is determined by metaphysical logic and the essence of modern technology is evaluative and prescriptive. However, the comparative evaluations and prescriptions place him beyond the realm of essence of language and its primordial synthesis. So, he inconsistently steps outside and looks at the realm from above in his contrasts between the ordinary and the extraordinary grammars in terms of their closeness to or remoteness from the word. In this sense, Heidegger's critical distinctions between the deformed as-structures of the unessence of language and the authentic as-structures of poetry and thinking in their co-respondence with the word are unsound.

The ordinary grammar that Heidegger finds problematic belongs to the European languages, which he claims are immersed in the metaphysics of presence. Yet, he is able to make his critical points about metaphysical assumptions *in and through* one of these languages. Thus, his claim that there is something amiss with this grammar as a whole is not at all convincing. Though his sayings aim to be transformative as they bend or even break the grammatical rules of his native tongue, the as-structure of ordinary grammar itself allows for their meanings to be conveyed. So, Heidegger fails in his own formulations to make a consistent case for the need to overcome ordinary grammar.

The later Heidegger's concept of grammar encompasses all forms of thought, for he proposes that only when mortals speak can they think.[21] Put otherwise, thinking is possible only because we can let something be seen as something in word-sounds. The word-sounds of the mortals are themselves possible only because of the word, the gathering

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[21] Cf. WHD, p. 16/p. 51; PT, p. 44/p. 28.

essence of language. It is only if the essence of language speaks that mortals can speak.[22] So, the primordial 'as' sways through the linguistic 'as.' Heidegger thus assumes that our understanding and interpretation of something as something is determined by language and ultimately by its essence. In terms of the synthetic as-structure of language, this would imply that the mortals originally let something be seen as something in words-sounds, *blindly*, that is, independently of any sort of concept and category. Assuming that Heidegger indeed suggests this order, his own ability to fathom the primordial 'as' would place him, once again, beyond and above the realm of the essence of language. In sum, his later problems with ordinary grammar are the most problematic of all.[23]

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[22] Cf. HH, 34/99; PT 41/25; US.

[23] For my more general critiques of later Heidegger, including his concept of grammar, see: HPL, Conclusion; SSH, chapter 5.

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