Heidegger's "destruction" of classical ontology, pursued with the question of the meaning of Being in view, had for its first task the overthrow of the "ordinary concept" of time. This task formed a precondition for the analytic of Dasein, which is there through its openness to the question of the meaning of Being, that is, through its pre-comprehension of Being. Temporality constitutes "the being of a being-there (Dasein) which comprehends Being," and is the "ontological meaning of care" as the structure of Dasein. Consequently, the question of Being can be approached only through the horizon of time. The aim of Being and Time thus becomes clear; it is at once preliminary and urgent. Not only must there be an explicitation of temporality as seen in the traditional concepts underlying everyday language and the history of ontology from Aristotle to Bergson, but the possibility of this ordinary conceptuality must also be accounted for by recognizing in it a "rightful due." ¹

Hence traditional ontology can be destroyed only by repeating and interrogating its relation to the problem of time. How has a certain conception of time implicitly governed the determination of the meaning of Being throughout the history of philosophy? Heidegger suggests the answer as early as the sixth section of Being and Time. But he only suggests it, and it is considered as merely a sign, an indication, an "outward evidence" (p. 47). This evidence is found in "the treatment of the meaning of Being as παρουσία or ὀόσια, which signifies 'presence' (Anwesenheit) in ontologico-temporal terms. A being is grasped in its being as 'presence' (Anwesenheit); this means

that it is understood by reference to a determinate mode of time, the ‘present’ (Gegenwart).”

According to Heidegger, the present is already given a privileged position in the Poem of Parmenides. The λέγειν and the νοεῖν comprehend the present in the form of that which endures and persists – near and available, seen before us and given to us: a present in the form of the Vorhandenheit (“presence-at-hand”). This presence presents itself; it is apprehended in the λέγειν or in the νοεῖν according to a process whose “temporal structure” is a “pure presentation,” a pure making-present (reinen Gegenwärtigens). “Those beings which show themselves in this [pure making-present] and for it, and which are understood as beings in the most authentic sense, are thus interpreted with regard to the present; that is, they are conceived as presence [Anwesenheit] (οὐσία)” (p. 48).

This chain of solidary concepts (οὐσία, παρουσία, Anwesenheit, Gegenwart, gegenwärtigen, Vorhandenheit) is deposited at the start of Being and Time: both posited and provisionally abandoned. If the category of Vorhandenheit, of beings in the form of substantial and available objects, continues to be operative and to have thematic value, the other concepts remain hidden until the end of the book. Not until the last pages of Being and Time (of its first and only published part) is the chain of concepts set forth again – this time without elision and like the very concatenation of the history of ontology. Here it becomes

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2 Ibid., p. 47. The same problem, in the same form, is central to Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. This is not surprising, for the work “envelopes” Being and Time: based on courses given in 1925-26, it is presumed to correspond in content with the second unpublished part of Being and Time. In setting forth “the aim of fundamental ontology,” as well as the necessity of the analytic of Dasein and the exposition of “care as temporality,” Heidegger writes: “What is the significance of the fact that ancient metaphysics determines the ontos on – the being that exists in the highest degree – as dei on? The Being of beings is clearly understood here as permanence and persistence (Beständigkeit and Ständigkeit). What project is found in this comprehension of Being? A project related to time; for even ‘eternity,’ interpreted as the nunc stans, is thoroughly conceivable as a ‘now’ and as ‘persistent’ only on the basis of time. What significance is there in the fact that a being properly speaking (das eigentlich seiend) is understood as ousia, parousia, and in terms of a meaning that basically signifies ‘presence’ (das Anwesen), the domain immediately and constantly present (gegenwärtigen Besitz), or ‘having’ (Habe?) This project reveals that Being means permanence in presence. Is it not in this way that – even in the spontaneous comprehension of Being – temporal determinations accumulate? ... The essence (Wesen) of time, such as it was presented by Aristotle in a manner decisive for the subsequent history of metaphysics, does not furnish an answer to these questions. On the contrary: one could show that, precisely, this analysis of time is guided by an understanding of Being which, hidden from itself in its own operation, sees Being as permanent and as a present (Gegenwart), and then determines the ‘being’ of time on the basis of the ‘now’ (Jetzt) – that is, a character of time which in itself is always present (anwesend), and thus really is in the ancient sense of the word” (Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, sect. 44; cf. the English translation by James S. Churchill. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1962, pp. 248-50).