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Tobias Keiling

**“Worlds, Worlding”**

Translated by Ian Alexander Moore

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The following reflections have three goals. They aim to contribute to the interpretation of Heidegger’s philosophy; here, reflections from Heidegger’s late philosophy, which is often taken to be problematic, will be thematized. More precisely, I would like to attempt to clarify the term ‘worlding’ in my title, which has not found a place in the general philosophical lexicon or in everyday language but is evidently laden with the connotation of being a ‘Heideggerianism.’ To shed a bit of light on this term is the first goal of this contribution.

The second goal consists in bringing ‘worlding’ to bear on a debate that connects current discussions in philosophical metaphysics with Heidegger interpretation. The debate is over a plausible conception of so-called *ontological pluralism*. There seem to me to be good reasons for the position developed by Kris McDaniel according to which Heidegger’s philosophy can be associated with the thought of an ontological pluralism. Even so, it is, in principle, not only problematic to reduce the complex work of an author such as Heidegger to a single conception; Heidegger’s philosophy can also be connected with the thought of ontological pluralism in different ways.

A third goal stems from current debates connected with a renewed interest in the concept of realism. These debates concern the basic metaphysical orientation of philosophy and of phenomenology in particular. In conjunction with Heidegger’s discussion of ‘worlding,’ a

specific motivation for what I would like to call a *phenomenological realism* can be developed from the discussion of ontological pluralism.

## 1. ‘World’

In philosophy, the concept of world has had a long and complex history.<sup>1</sup> It plays a central role in debates over the metaphysical commitments of philosophy. I would accordingly like, to bracket this history and to choose another approach, beginning with the observation that the term ‘world’ in English—as in other languages—appears to be marked by a specific ambiguity.

This ambiguity is related to the question of whether there is one or rather several ‘worlds.’ The first paradigmatic use of the term implies that the latter is not the case. One speaks for example of a child being *brought into the world*. Or one says there is nothing of the sort *in the whole wide world*, by which one means that it simply does not exist. According to this use of the term, to show up in the world—for instance as an independent being or as a person such as the newborn—and to exist at all are one and the same. However, the term ‘world’ can be also used in a different way, which no longer implies the equivalence between appearing in the world and existing. For instance, whoever is immersed in *the world of soccer* does not thereby exclude

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<sup>1</sup> Tellingly, the respective entry in the extensive *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* is one of the longest. See Thomas Rentsch, Hermann Braun and Ulrich Dirks, “Welt,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer, Volume 12 (Basel: Schwabe, 2004), 408–43. Among the plethora of literature on the history of the term and on the discussion in phenomenology, see especially Christian Bermes, *‘Welt’ als Thema der Philosophie: Vom metaphysischen zum natürlichen Weltbegriff* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2004); Walter Biemel, *Le Concept du monde chez Heidegger* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1950); Rémi Brague, *The Wisdom of the World: The Human Experience of the Universe in Western Thought*, trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Klaus Held, *Phänomenologie der natürlichen Lebenswelt* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012); Ludwig Landgrebe, *Phänomenologie und Metaphysik* (Hamburg: M. von Schröder, 1949); Søren Overgaard, *Husserl and Heidegger on Being in the World* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2004); John Sallis, “The Concept of World: A Study in the Phenomenological Ontology of Martin Heidegger,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Tulane University (1964). See also Heidegger’s sketch of the history of the concept in GA 26: 218–38; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 170–84.

the possibility that there is also something like *the world of baseball*. Nor does it imply that whatever does not appear in one of these worlds must not exist at all.

It seems to me to be a plausible observation that both meanings are easy to distinguish in everyday language without making them completely heterogeneous. Rather, significant commonality is indicated by the thought that what is at issue in both meanings is evidently an appearing in something and a belonging to something; only, what is at issue in one case is a belonging to a context that implies completeness and universal extension, whereas in the other it is a context for which this does not hold. In the first case there is only ‘one world,’ whereas in the second there are different ‘worlds’ in the plural.<sup>2</sup> Yet what can be noticed so easily nevertheless makes the *conceptual* determination of the term ‘world’ very difficult, for it remains to be decided whether one of its two meanings has precedence. In any case, something like the thought of a belonging-to or an appearing-in cannot be grasped with the necessary precision without saying more precisely whether that to which something belongs or in which it appears is a part or a whole, something singular or something among others.

If, following these considerations, the question is posed as to what Heidegger’s coinage ‘worlding’ has going for it, one will evidently have to admit at first that it simply does not correspond to either of these meanings. At issue instead is a nominalized form of the verb *to world*, such that Heidegger’s innovation evidently consists at first in having shifted the focus of the discussion from a noun to a verb. But what does it mean *to world*? Is ‘worlding’ something like the belonging-to or appearing-in of something in the world or in a world, a basic feature implied by both meanings of ‘world’?

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<sup>2</sup> Drawing on Heidegger and other authors, Günter Figal has argued that we should take this tension between totality and plurality to be constitutive for the understanding of ‘world’ in modernity. He does not, however, relate it to worlding understood as a verb. Günter Figal, *Objectivity: The Hermeneutical and Philosophy*, trans. Theodore D. George (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 146–53 (§ 16).

One will, at first, have to answer in the negative, if only because Heidegger never uses the verb coined by him in such a way that it expresses such belonging. Rather, it is typical for Heidegger's determinations of worlding to use either impersonal verbal forms and thus to avoid the specification of a subject or to designate by 'the world' a subject that adds almost nothing to the semantics already contained in the verb *to world*. Since, however, *the world* that *worlds* is in the singular, one might have the impression that Heidegger simply has recourse to the first meaning of the term 'world' for the tautological determination of the concept of world and that the second meaning plays no role here.

Upon closer inspection, however, the problem of the plurality of different worlds is likewise present when Heidegger speaks about 'worlding,' as can be shown in two frequently cited passages from Heidegger's early and late work (2.). With a perspective sharpened by our consideration of these two passages, we can also find the tension between both meanings of the term in *Being and Time*, even if there is no talk of worlding as a verb in that text (3.).

## 2. Worlding in the Early and Late Heidegger

The first passage, from the so-called war emergency semester lecture course *Towards the Definition of Philosophy* (1919), concerns the example, which was later to become famous, of how the phenomenal meaning of a lectern is constituted for a teacher who is going to speak at it. Heidegger opposes the idea that what is constituted in this process is "things with a particular character of meaning, objects, which are then conceived as meaning this or that."<sup>3</sup> The lectern is not an object that would first be grasped in these properties and would only then be situated in a

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<sup>3</sup> GA 56/57: 72–73; *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2000), 61; trans. mod.

lifeworld. Rather, the lectern, in the manner that is decisive for me as the teacher, is “immediately” constituted as something that should perform a certain function in the context of the upcoming lecture. There are no “mental detours” here into other forms of constitution; rather, “the meaningful is primary.”<sup>4</sup> In order to elucidate this immediate experience, Heidegger refers to verbal *worlding*: “Living in an environment, it signifies to me everywhere and always, everything has the character of world. It is everywhere the case that ‘it worlds’ [es weltet], which is something different from ‘it values’ [es wertet].”<sup>5</sup> Instead of detailing why he coins these verbs here or what this immediate worlding has going for it, Heidegger only explains that, between ‘worlding’ and ‘valuing,’ there must be a connection that nevertheless “belongs to the idea of eidetic genealogy” and “leads into difficult problem spheres.”<sup>6</sup> That for Heidegger it does not come down here to the eidetic structures of meaning proper to ‘worlding’ and ‘valuing’ but rather to the immediacy and authenticity of experience is also confirmed by the fact that shortly thereafter he characterizes “seeing the lectern” with the later-prominent term *Ereignis* (“event of appropriation”). By this he means that the lived experience is “proper to me,” that what is essential in “seeing the lectern” presents itself as immediately given *for me*: “I appropriate [er-eigne] it to myself, and it appropriates itself [er-eignet sich] according to its essence.”<sup>7</sup> Worlding is thus characterized by an experience that can be defined as the opposite of alienation: the experience enters into a mode of heightened authenticity, in which I grasp myself all the more as I am more strongly integrated into the context of meaning in which something shows itself as something.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> GA 56/57: 73; *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, 61.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.; trans. mod.

<sup>7</sup> GA 56/57: 75; *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, 63.

Although the impersonal linguistic form (*it worlds*) as such does not express this, the context in which it is used makes it clear that in at least two respects we are dealing not with *the* world but with *one* world among others that is worlding here. On the one hand, the constitutional context of the environment arises only *for me*. “My seeing” is, as Heidegger had emphasized previously, in no way necessarily universal or categorial, but “to a high degree something individual.”<sup>8</sup> The environment is *mine*, for which reason Heidegger uses the indeterminate article and speaks of “*an* immediate environment.”<sup>9</sup> By this he obviously does not mean the non-perspectival totality that *the world* in the singular indicates. On the other hand, the indication that valuing and worlding do not coincide implies that the life-worldly experiential context of the environment is not at the outset identical with the context of normative validity, even if Heidegger does not determine their relation more precisely. In any case, only one further step would be necessary here to characterize not only the individual environment, but also the context of meaning in which valuations are made, as *a world*.

The question concerning the plurality of different contexts of meaning is even more clearly recognizable in the second canonical passage, which can be found in the remarks about worlding in “The Thing” (1950). Immediacy is again connected with worlding. Heidegger considers worlding to be a genuine way in which the world appears when he writes: “The world presences [*wes*t] by worlding.”<sup>10</sup> To elucidate this, Heidegger adds: “That means: the world's worlding cannot be explained by anything else nor can it be fathomed through anything else”; no “will to explain” can “reach into the simpleness of the simple onefold of worlding.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> GA 56/57: 72; *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, 60.

<sup>9</sup> GA 56/57: 72; *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, 61; emphasis added.

<sup>10</sup> GA 7: 181; *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 177.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

Even if, at first blush, it may again seem as if Heidegger had decided here in favor of understanding world as the totality of simpleness, upon closer inspection the plurality of understandings of the world still plays a role in this passage. For, the “will to explain” fails at adopting a relation of justification or explanation between the different dimensions of the world that Heidegger calls the world of the fourfold: earth, sky, divinities, mortals. The attempt to represent these dimensions as sets of entities structured hierarchically, as “separate realities, which are to be grounded in and explained by one another,” misses what the “united four are [. . .] in their essential nature.”<sup>12</sup> To be sure, Heidegger does not explicitly characterize the previously elucidated dimensions of the fourfold as different worlds in the plural. But insofar as what is at issue is not individual entities but in each case specific realms or forms of experience that are connected as phenomenal categories, it seems natural to associate these realms or forms with the second meaning of ‘world.’ In any case, “The worlding of world” results only from the interaction of the four dimensions of the fourfold, an interaction that Heidegger calls “fouring.”<sup>13</sup> One thus arrives at worlding understood as a verb only when, in contrast to a plurality of respectively coherent experiential contexts, yet another form of coherence puts these experiential contexts in relation. The unity of the world in the singular thus does not “come about in such a way that it encompasses the four and only afterward is added to them as that compass.”<sup>14</sup> Rather, Heidegger again associates worlding as the setting-in of such a unity of multiplicity with “appropriating [*Ereignen*].”<sup>15</sup>

### 3. The “Prevailing of World” in *Being and Time*

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<sup>12</sup> GA 7: 181; *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 177–78.

<sup>13</sup> GA 7: 181; *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 178.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*



In *Being and Time*, there is no talk of worlding or of the event of appropriation as the later Heidegger understands these terms. However, a marginal note in Heidegger's personal copy of *Being and Time* shows that the connection between world and worlding is nevertheless thematic. Heidegger notes that, at the end of the chapter on the "Worldhood of the World," the term 'worldhood' is not the best description of what was at issue for him there: "better: the prevailing of world [*das Walten der Welt*]." <sup>16</sup> Even if Heidegger does not speak of 'worlding,' this remark evidently points to the verbal meaning of world. Later, Heidegger sees that making this explicit is a better alternative to the formal terminology of *Being and Time*.

If one follows this remark, Heidegger's description of 'worldhood' is to be understood as a determination of the verbal sense of worlding. This fourth concept of world, which Heidegger demarcated at the beginning of the chapter and attempts to define positively, would have to be characterized not only by the immediacy and self-referential dynamism associated with worlding in the lectern-example and in the passage from the thing-lecture; the connotations of totality and plurality would also have to be found in the concept of 'worldhood'—which turns out to be the case. To be sure, Heidegger does not say much about the fourth concept of world when he is distinguishing the various meanings of 'world.' But what he does say reflects exactly the tension between world in the singular and world in the plural: "Finally, 'world' designates the ontologico-existential concept of *worldhood*. Worldhood itself may have as its modes whatever structural wholes any special 'worlds' may have at the time; but it embraces in itself the *a priori* character of worldhood in general." <sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> GA 2: 118.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 93 (German 65).

Heidegger thus defines the concept of world that is decisive for *Being and Time* through the function it has of mediating between one world and different worlds. What the ‘modes’ of worldhood are will nevertheless be answered differently from what the lecture course from the war emergency semester would lead one to expect. Heidegger does raise the question of whether every Dasein would not have to have its own world if worldhood is an existential and thus a determination of Dasein. But the question, how then “can there be a ‘common’ world?,” is falsely posed, for it assumes that every Dasein always already opens an individual world and thus functions as its transcendental subject.<sup>18</sup> Yet this is not the case. Rather, Dasein realizes its particularity only in authentic action.<sup>19</sup> A world that is its own can, if at all, be attributed only to authentic Dasein. In contrast to the discussion of the environment in the example of the lectern, the world-opening function of the subject is no longer a given in *Being and Time*.

The detailed discussion in the chapter on “World and Worldhood” indicates that it is not the plurality of different subjects, but the “referential totalities” individuated by practices, that respectively define a world, for instance the “work-world” of craftspeople with their hammers and nails.<sup>20</sup> The “respective structural whole” of a world is thus characterized by the fact that, within this world, certain actions become meaningful, whereas others are excluded. In his determination of these structures of meaning, Heidegger abstracts from the actions that individuate worlds, but not from the basic assumption of his theory of action according to which all action presents a manner of dealing with beings. A referential totality is accordingly defined

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 92 (German 64)

<sup>19</sup> See John Haugeland, “Heidegger on Being a Person,” in *Dasein Disclosed*, ed. Joseph Rouse (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 3–16.

<sup>20</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 114 (German 82), 101 (German 71). Heidegger not only speaks of referential totalities in the plural but also uses the indeterminate article. See *ibid.*, 99 (German 70), 106 (German 75), and *passim*. On the tension between the plurality and unity of world in the chapters on being-in-the-world, see Tobias Keiling, “Being-in-the-world as a Concept in Phenomenology,” in *Springer Encyclopedia of Phenomenology*, ed. Nicolas de Warren and Ted Toadvine (forthcoming).

as the respective “categorical whole of a *possible* interconnection of the ready-to-hand.”<sup>21</sup>

Heidegger hereby anticipates his later consideration that things are what show up at the intersection of the world-dimensions of the fourfold.

The chapter on world in *Being and Time* is nevertheless markedly different from the later descriptions, because in *Being and Time* Heidegger conceives of Dasein as the authority whose being-in-the-world mediates the plurality and totality of world. This can best be described with recourse to the modalities of actuality and potentiality: Dasein is in each case admitted into a referential totality in which it acts. Belonging to *this* world comprises its actuality. But with the freedom to determine itself differently, Dasein can engage in another activity. The “*a priori* character of worldhood in general” addressed at the beginning of the chapter on world thus consists in the possibility of, in principle, disclosing innerworldly entities by a *different* way of dealing with them and thus of moving into a *different* world. A new world opens up for the person who decides to play soccer rather than baseball, where there are not only different social roles, but things themselves appear differently: the ball that is at the center of the world of soccer is highly inappropriate for playing baseball.

Because action can be described as “skillful coping”<sup>22</sup> only relative to one world among others, such shifts between worlds are not simply losses of friction that interrupt or even thwart whatever counts as successful action within a world. Rather, authentic action consists in going beyond or changing the norms of a world. Its phenomenal correlate is the possibility of transitioning from one particular world into another. These transitions constitute what Heidegger in his marginal note calls the “prevailing of world” and describes in other contexts as ‘worlding.’

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<sup>21</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 184 (German 144).

<sup>22</sup> Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

What this reveals is that the unity and plurality of world are decisive to preserve the freedom of Dasein: the fact that authentic action is nothing other than worlding understood as a verb does not mean that one should take as a task for one's freedom to give oneself over to the world as a real total occurrence; for the totality of the *one* world is contained in worlding only in possibility. Human freedom, in contrast to unfreedom, realizes itself only partially, which means, for the phenomenon of worldhood, that this can never be experienced directly, but only in shifting from one world into another.<sup>23</sup> As pure possibility, the worldhood of being-in-the-world shows up only indirectly, in the possibility of a transition between realized or realizable particular actualities.

#### 4. Ontological Pluralism in *Being and Time*

If the term 'world' connotes both plurality and totality, Heidegger's verbal conception of worlding can be understood as an attempt to bring the ambivalence of the noun 'world' into the description of a dynamic that connects both meanings. 'Worlding' is not simply a third basic meaning or one that would connect the other two by emphasizing the shared meaning of a belonging-to or an appearing-in, but rather the attempt to bring the very tension between the connotations of plurality and totality into a novel conception of world. It is this fundamental thought which Heidegger articulates in different ways in different phases of his work.

To make the scope of this discussion clear, it will be useful to situate it in another context, namely, the debate over *ontological pluralism* in contemporary metaphysics.<sup>24</sup> For,

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<sup>23</sup> See Günter Figal, *Martin Heidegger: Phänomenologie der Freiheit*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 131–234. Figal aptly describes this difference as the “difference of freedom.”

<sup>24</sup> See Jason Turner, “Ontological Pluralism,” *Journal of Philosophy* 107, no. 1 (2010): 5–34.

insofar as ‘world’ can also designate the domain of objects in ontology, the answer to the question of whether we can speak meaningfully of one or also of several worlds will have implications for the conception of ontology that one would like to ascribe to Heidegger or to endorse for one’s own part. Kris McDaniel attempts to do both in a pathbreaking essay<sup>25</sup> that aims, against Theodore Sider’s *ontological realism*<sup>26</sup> and with recourse to the history of philosophy, to rehabilitate the thought that there are constitutively different ways of being, such that the unity of being can come about only as a unity of analogy.

McDaniel confines his interpretation to the period of *Being and Time* and reformulates, in the wake of Quine, the ontological pluralism he attributes to Heidegger with the help of terms from mathematical logic. The “generic sense of ‘being’” can be expressed by the unrestricted existential quantifier  $\exists$ , and the description of the different ways of being should likewise be denoted by correspondingly qualified and limited quantifiers:

A natural thought then is that the specific senses of ‘being’ also are best represented by quantifiers. The notion of a *restricted quantifier*—one that ranges over only some proper subset of that which the unrestricted quantifier ranges—is perfectly intelligible.

Heidegger’s senses of ‘being’ are properly represented in a formal system by special restricted quantifiers.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Kris McDaniel, *The Fragmentation of Being* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), chapter 1. First published in “Ways of Being,” in *Metametaphysics: New Essays on the Foundation of Ontology*, ed. David Chalmers, David Manley, and Ryan Wasserman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 290–319.

<sup>26</sup> Theodore Sider, *Four-Dimensionalism: An Ontology of Persistence and Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) and “Ontological Realism,” in *Metametaphysics*, ed. Chalmers, Manley, and Wasserman, 384–423.

<sup>27</sup> McDaniel, *The Fragmentation of Being*, 24.

One of the examples that McDaniel gives is the way of being of Dasein (existence), which can be expressed by the quantifier  $\exists_{\text{existence}}$ . The scope of the respective quantifiers is obviously different: the generic existential quantifier encompasses everything that *is*, irrespective of the types or ways of being; the specific existential quantifier  $\exists_{\text{existence}}$ , in contrast, encompasses only entities of the type or way of being of Dasein. McDaniel rejects the introduction of a special predicate or the denotation of different ways of being as properties when he claims that this would reduce the ways of being to entities. Put in Heidegger's terms, it would confuse the ontic and ontological levels of analysis.

The rationale of McDaniel's formalization derives from his goal of rehabilitating the thought of the analogy of being. McDaniel describes Heidegger's ontology as the attempt to define the meaning of the generic unrestricted existential quantifier by means of restricted quantifiers: "How it is to be defined is not at all obvious, given that Heidegger does not seem to think that the generic sense of 'being' is merely the disjunction of the various specific senses of 'being.'"<sup>28</sup> In McDaniel's reconstruction, Heidegger thus develops a variation of the analogical determination of the meaning of being. This determination is supposed to take place in such a way that the generic meaning of being (which is expressed by  $\exists$ ) is determined as an interplay of different types or ways of being such as that of Dasein's existence (which is expressed by the restricted quantifier  $\exists_{\text{existence}}$ ). The generic meaning of being is to be "defined up" from the meaning of the different types or ways of being.<sup>29</sup>

This goal differs in particular from the opposite aim of determining the meaning of restricted quantifiers from that of the unrestricted quantifier, for example by delimiting different domains of being within being as the highest genus. McDaniel formulates this as a thesis on the

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 26.

metaphysical meaning of the semantics of being: what is “semantically primitive” or “metaphysically basic” is not the unrestricted concept of being, but the restricted predications. The inverse thesis that the unrestricted concept of being is metaphysically basic instead characterizes Sider’s position of ontological realism, from which McDaniel distinguishes Heidegger’s and his own proposal:

Ontological realism is abhorrent to Heidegger. Not because all quantificational expressions are metaphysically on a par: the true logical joints—it would be better to say the true *ontological* joints—do not correspond to the unrestricted existential quantifier, but rather to semantically primitive restricted quantifiers. They are the fundamental quantifiers.<sup>30</sup>

What is therefore decisive for the meta-ontological framework that Heidegger constructs is the explanatory direction of the ontological categories. A theoretical language that takes the meaning of the unrestricted existential quantifier to be basic is inferior to a theoretical language that is oriented to the meanings of the restricted quantifiers but at the same time does not abandon the question concerning what the meaning of the unrestricted existential quantifier is all about. The perfect ontological theoretical language, which one can call, with Sider, “ontologese,” should contain not only the unrestricted existential quantifier but also the semantically primitive restricted quantifiers: “The appropriate language for doing metaphysics must have *each* of these quantifiers in order to mirror the logical joints of the world.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 33.

We presumably come closer to Heidegger's own terminology when we conceive of the question concerning the semantically primitive and metaphysically fundamental theoretical language as a question concerning the *phenomenological* validity of ontological concepts. For, even if Heidegger again and again modifies and perhaps ultimately abandons both ontological questioning and determining the phenomenological method, the close connection between phenomenology and ontology as programmatically carried out in *Being and Time* is characteristic of his approach.<sup>32</sup> The determination of the meaning of being, just like all other ontological concepts, must be made plausible in view of phenomena. The concept of 'world' in Heidegger as in other phenomenologists thereby serves to delineate the sphere of phenomena that is paradigmatic for a phenomenological ontology. 'World' is the measure of a phenomenological ontology.<sup>33</sup>

There is a direct conceptual connection with McDaniel's analytic metaphysics here. For McDaniel it is also the case that the metaphysical commitments and terminological determinations of ontology must be measured according to whether they present true descriptions of the world. A reduced theoretical language proves insufficient if it assumes that the meaning of restricted existential statements can be derived from the meaning of the unrestricted existential quantifier. However, not all existential quantifiers that can be formulated by the combination of

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<sup>32</sup> On the relation between ontology and phenomenology in Heidegger, see Klaus Held, "Heidegger und das Prinzip der Phänomenologie," in *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie*, ed. Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), 111–39; Klaus Held, "Die Welt und die Dinge," in *Martin Heidegger: Kunst, Politik, Technik*, ed. Karsten Harries and Christoph Jamme (Munich: W. Fink, 1992), 319–34; Günter Figal, "Phänomenologie und Ontologie," in *Heidegger und Husserl: Neue Perspektiven* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2009), 9–23; and Tobias Keiling, *Seinsgeschichte und phänomenologischer Realismus: Eine Interpretation und Kritik der Spätphilosophie Heideggers* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 92–206.

<sup>33</sup> See Tobias Keiling and Thomas Arnold, "Einleitung—Phänomenologische Metaphysik?," in *Phänomenologische Metaphysik: Konturen eines Problems seit Husserl*, ed. Tobias Keiling (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 1–19. On the understanding of phenomenology as a theory of normativity, see Steven Galt Crowell, *Normativity and Phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Sacha Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and *Normativity, Meaning, and the Promise of Phenomenology*, ed. Matthew Burch, Jack Marsh, and Irene McMullin (New York: Routledge, 2019).



particular predicates also define proper ways of being. Rather, it is a matter of identifying the semantically primitive and metaphysically basic quantifiers that conform to the “logical joints of the world.” In Husserl’s terminology, this demand can be articulated in the thought that the existential quantifiers are to be chosen in such a way that they correspond to the eidetic structures of the appearing world.<sup>34</sup> McDaniel thus conceives of a specific version of the phenomenological orientation of fundamental ontology when he summarizes Heidegger’s position as follows:

Heidegger does not view his list of the various flavors of being as arbitrary. He intends his list to capture the real *ontological* structure of the world. [. . .] Heidegger thinks that the ways of being he calls our attention to are metaphysically special: the restricted quantifiers that represent them enjoy a status unshared by most of their brethren. There are only a few, proud restricted quantifiers that are metaphysically basic.<sup>35</sup>

In Husserlian terms, Heidegger aims in *Being and Time* to clarify the meaning of being by combining different regional ontologies, providing an alternative to Husserl’s own approach of distinguishing formal and material ontology.<sup>36</sup> For, while formal and material ontology would, in McDaniel’s descriptive language, be complementary attempts to determine the meaning of the unrestricted existential quantifier, there is no reason to privilege a formal and a material way of being in the way Husserl envisages. If one follows McDaniel, Heidegger in *Being and Time*

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<sup>34</sup> For Husserl, science and reason in general aim for this correspondence as well. See Dominique Pradelle, “La doctrine phénoménologique de la raison: Rationalités sans faculté rationnelle,” in *Les Ideen de Husserl*, ed. Antoine Grandjean and Laurent Perreau (Paris: CNRS, 2012), 243–63.

<sup>35</sup> McDaniel, *The Fragmentation of Being*, 29.

<sup>36</sup> On Husserl’s understanding of ontology, see Claudio Majolino, “Mapping Husserl’s Ontology and Its Boundaries,” in *The Husserlian Mind*, ed. Hanne Jacobs (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2021), 494–508.

develops a specific form of ontological pluralism that takes a “list” of the different metaphysically basic ways of being as its point of departure so as to then say more precisely how these cohere.

## 5. The Ontological Pluralism of the History of Being

McDaniel thus offers what is in many respects a plausible reconstruction of the basic structure of *Being and Time*'s fundamental ontology. Yet, especially in later texts dealing with the set of problems of the so-called “history of being,” a different form of ontological pluralism comes to the fore that does not immediately overlap with the version identified in *Being and Time*. There, the meaning of being does not result from the (synchronic) combination of different ways of being that define ontological regions or semantically primitive quantifiers but rather from the historical interplay of different (diachronic) understandings of being in general, which Heidegger calls *epochs of being*. These, too, define respectively different ways of being.

These two forms of pluralism are not obviously mutually exclusive, but in terms of the development of Heidegger's texts there is a clear displacement of interest in the synchronic to the diachronic meanings: if something like an analogical meaning of ‘being’ results, then it is by taking as one's point of departure the different ontological epochs and their respectively specific understandings of being, whose objective domain is in each case unrestricted. The late Heidegger neither attempts to combine a formal and a material ontology nor proceeds from regional ontologies that statically divide entities up into different domains defined by respective ways of being. Rather, at issue is the historical multiplicity of what the unrestricted existential quantifier is also supposed to express: the meaning of being in general.

Two passages can help to clarify this conception. These passages are characteristic of Heidegger's preoccupation with the plurality of different epochs in the history of being, as developed in texts after the end of World War II in parallel with the description of the world as a fourfold.

Thus one reads in a text from 1968 that “throughout its entire history,” “metaphysics” has spoken “of the being *of beings* in its various transformations as *idea, energeia, actualitas*, monad, objectivity, absolute spirit, absolute knowing, will to power.”<sup>37</sup> These ‘metaphysical’ determinations in each case proceed from one way of being—for instance the way of existence of ideal objects—and attempt from there to determine the meaning of being in general. They thus follow the explanatory direction described by McDaniel in which an originally restricted meaning of being is adduced to explain being in general. Heidegger characterizes the way of being that has paradigmatic status in an epoch by using key words of different philosophical systems. Yet Heidegger opposes to this approach the idea that none of these determinations alone can be decisively valid. It is accordingly a different question to ask “from where the essence of *being*” is determined in contrast to these epochs of being.<sup>38</sup> Although these ‘metaphysical’ determinations continue to be relevant for the determination of the meaning of being, beginning with epochal ways for entities to be in order to find the meaning of being requires getting clear on the historicity of being itself. It compels one to confront “the problem of history,” which Heidegger’s own philosophy attempts to do, while Husserl, in contrast, supposedly never succeeded in “even posing” the problem.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> GA 14: 147.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> GA 14: 149.

We can understand this remark as saying that Husserl's philosophy of history does not proceed from the assumption of heterogeneous historical epochs in the interpretation of being. Heidegger, in contrast, is persuaded that the meaning of being is subject to radical epochal ruptures. These epochal meanings of being are explanatorily more basic with regard to the meaning of being itself. If it is possible to determine the meaning of being as such, it will not happen by combining an ahistorical formal ontology with an ahistorical material ontology. The correct ontological approach must instead take Husserl's distinction between logical form and material determination to be secondary vis-à-vis the pluralism of the different ontological epochs. This alone elevates philosophy from the ahistorical theoretical level of 'metaphysics' to the level of what Heidegger calls 'thinking.' Philosophy as 'thinking' can thus be defined as proceeding from ontological pluralism in its being-historical version.

This contrast between two philosophical forms of theory is also decisive for a second canonical passage on the plurality of ontological epochs, which can be found at the beginning of "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking" (1964). Being-historical pluralism is emphasized as the decisive point of departure for ontology when Heidegger claims here that "we lack any criterion which would permit us to evaluate the perfection of an epoch of metaphysics as compared with any other epoch. [. . .] Each epoch of philosophy has its own necessity."<sup>40</sup> However, at issue here is only epochs of that form of theory that Heidegger again calls 'philosophy' or 'metaphysics' and already in the title distinguishes from 'thinking.' The farthest that metaphysical philosophy can go is to become aware of its own historicity. Heidegger calls this the "gathering" into its "end."<sup>41</sup> The list of the different epochs of being is closed, with the result that one attains a sort of overview of the different historical ways of being. But the task of

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<sup>40</sup> GA 14: 70; *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 56.

<sup>41</sup> GA 14: 71; *On Time and Being*, 57.

‘thinking’ does not consist in tallying up the different ways of being, but rather in a genuine renewal of philosophy. Yet this means considering not only the historiographic plurality of meanings of being but the *possibility* of such epochal understandings of being, a possibility for which Heidegger gives the title “the clearing” and which he expressly distinguishes from the task of determining the relation between being and time in order to thereby answer the question of being.<sup>42</sup> Instead of aiming to *answer* the question of being—for instance with regard to the Temporality [*Temporalität*] of being—Heidegger now aims to approach the question of being by elucidating the structure of the ontological pluralism of the history of being.

We can document different ways in which Heidegger attempts, after the failure of *Being and Time*, to do justice to this “task of thinking” with a new philosophical beginning. The specific version of ontological pluralism indicated by the history of being thereby defines the decisive problem: how can the heterogeneity of the epochs in the history of being be preserved without the philosophical new beginning breaking with all previous understandings of being in such a radical way that thinking leaves behind both the plurality of ontological epochs and the historicity of being? How is the genuinely “historical and destinal character” [“*Geschickliche*”] of the history of being to be thought without conceiving of the epochs of being “like apples, pears, peaches, lined up on the counter of historical representational thinking.”<sup>43</sup> Every attempt to answer or modify the question of being should neither become a regress nor claim that it has positioned itself outside the history of being.<sup>44</sup> The problem raised

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<sup>42</sup> GA 14: 90; *On Time and Being*, 73; trans. mod.

<sup>43</sup> GA 11: 73; *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 66; trans. mod.

<sup>44</sup> See Tobias Keiling, “Heidegger’s *Black Notebooks* and the Logic of a History of Being,” *Research in Phenomenology* 47, no. 3 (2018): 406–28. The latter is a worry that arises with the idea that the clearing can be construed as a sufficient condition for the possibility of different ways of being to obtain. Thinking the clearing would then be considering the ground of different epochal understandings hence positioning thinking outside the history of being. But whether the clearing should be understood in such a way is a matter of debate, see Mark A. Wrathall, *Heidegger on Unconcealment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2011), 32-4); Katherine Withy, *Heidegger on Being Self-Concealing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2022), 125-28 (§ 18)

by the ontological pluralism of the history of being can therefore be conceived as the dilemma of whether Heidegger's own new beginning leaves behind the history of being or presents only a further epoch of ontology. With this dilemma, Heidegger would have at least discovered something like another "transcendental dialectic."<sup>45</sup>

## 6. The Phenomenon of 'World Entry'

For the claim of a phenomenological ontology, however, this result is unsatisfying, since for such an ontology every determination of being must become plausible in view of in the appearing world. The question concerning the interconnection of the epochs of being should be established not only with reference to the tension between different forms of theory and the problem of a new beginning 'beyond' metaphysics, but in view of the 'things themselves.' It stands to reason that this is specific motivation for Heidegger's preoccupation with 'worlding': to grasp the *phenomenon* in which an ontological pluralism is *phenomenologically* confirmed.

The considerations up to this point have led to the result that Heidegger's preoccupation with worlding (understood as a verb) can be interpreted in the context of the question concerning the unity and plurality of different worlds (1.–3.). This connects with the observation that Heidegger attempts to conceive of an ontological pluralism, whether in the synchronic version of *Being and Time* as described by McDaniel (4.) or in a being-historical version (5.). Both versions of Heidegger's ontological pluralism go beyond the thought of an analogy of the ways of being at least to the extent that they want to grasp the constitution of the meaning of being in general

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<sup>45</sup> I argue for this minimal result of Heidegger's phenomenological ontology in Tobias Keiling, "Phenomenology and Ontology in the Later Heidegger," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahevi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 251–67.

not only as a “defining up” of restricted meanings of being but also in a phenomenology of worlding.

This result will now be developed in two steps aiming at a realistic orientation of this conception in a specific sense. For, every theory of the plurality of being is obviously incomplete so long as the thought of an analogy of the meanings of being remains a mere assertion. But what also needs to be specified is the thought that the phenomenology of worlding is the measure for a phenomenological ontology and thereby mediates world in the singular and world in the plural. Heidegger attempts to provide this by adopting a uniform-plural ontic reference point of ontology. Heidegger takes this into account immediately after *Being and Time* with reference to the phenomenon of so-called “world entry” (6.) and later names it with the concept of the “thing” (7.).

This connection becomes clear in Heidegger’s so-called “Leibniz lecture course” from 1928, which, alongside the two canonical passages on worlding from 1919 and 1950 discussed above, offers perhaps the most interesting context for a discussion of the verbal concept of world. Here, Heidegger elucidates the concept ‘world’ or its Greek equivalent *kosmos* in a way that connects the plurality and unity of world with the difference between being and entities, i.e., with the so-called ontological difference. Heidegger thereby emphasizes that the world designates neither “present-at-hand beings as such, heavenly bodies, the stars, the earth, even a particular being,” nor their sum total, “all beings together”; ‘world’ is not a “name” for entities, but a “title for the *mode of being*.”<sup>46</sup>

One way to interpret this remark in the context of phenomenological ontology is to take it to mean that ‘world’ is the phenomenal correlate not of individual entities or of the sum total of

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<sup>46</sup> GA 26: 219; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*; trans. mod.

all entities but of being itself. World is the phenomenon of being. However, this phenomenal trait consists not in a uniform characteristic, in a signature of being indicating that an entity belongs to a single whole. As Heidegger goes on to describe the phenomenality of world, it implies not a single totality but a specific combination of plurality and unity corresponding to the ambivalence that can be found in the term 'world.' Heidegger therefore emphasizes that 'world' or *kosmos* can also be qualified in such a way that a "particular condition of beings" in contrast to another condition, "this world of beings in contradistinction to another," is meant.<sup>47</sup> A consequence of this consideration is that the ontological difference, i.e., the difference between being and entities, is plurivocal. On the one hand, there are ontic differences within entities themselves, which can be brought together in a unity that can bear the title 'world' and that defines a way of being. On the other hand, a corresponding unity can be constituted in different ways; entities in their totality can also be interpreted in different ways: "Beings themselves remain the same, while their total condition, their world, can differ."<sup>48</sup> The idea here is not only that there are a multiplicity of different ways of being. If the interpretive scope is "beings themselves," then the distinction between worlds in the plural pertains to variations in the meaning of being in general, i.e., what Heidegger beginning in the 1930s attempts to show in the history of philosophy by distinguishing different epochs of being. Even so, the (ambivalent) meaning of being is not yet exhausted with the discovery of this plurality. For one can at the same time "hold the view that the world of beings always remains the same."<sup>49</sup>

Recalling the example discussed above, we can explain this thesis by saying that the world of soccer and the world of baseball both make sense of the same entities. The baseball

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.



player may not know what to do with soccer balls, but even for her they are not simply nothing. They are always still *something*. Since ‘world’ can also designate the merely ontic appearing-together of entities, as Heidegger emphasizes, the two worlds are not distinct in extension: they ‘contain’ the same entities but not a single meaningful context in which these entities could find their place. In another passage of the Leibniz lecture course, Heidegger names this structureless connection of entities the “factual dispersion” of the ontic; this forms the phenomenal point of departure for ontology (“the authentic concreteness of the origin”), but for its own part is characterized by “metaphysical neutrality.”<sup>50</sup> Heidegger sometimes calls such metaphysically neutral entities ‘being-less’ [‘*seinlos*’].<sup>51</sup> Given that they are the hinge, as it were, between worlds, they are all but irrelevant for the project of a phenomenological ontology. The fact that different worlds are anchored in the same entities rather is decisive for “the concept ‘world’” as Heidegger develops it in the Leibniz lecture course. For it ensures that this concept does not simply designate a univocal totality of entities but must have “a peculiarly universal character” that can only assume “totality relative to dispersion.”<sup>52</sup> Only relative to dispersed entities can the concept of world succeed at relating unity and plurality and thus to connect “both meanings” of the term ‘world.’<sup>53</sup> For this term “primarily and properly means the mode of beings—and means, at the same time, these beings themselves”; it is this ambiguity that Heidegger aims to summarize with the phrase “beings in a certain mode.”<sup>54</sup>

Heidegger here refers back to the war emergency semester lecture course when he remarks that the use of the “verb ‘to world’” is supposed to “express this mode of being.”<sup>55</sup> But,

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<sup>50</sup> GA 26: 175; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 137.

<sup>51</sup> See the passages discussed in Mark A. Wrathall, “The Question of Ontological Dependency,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 30, no. 3 (2022): 547–59.

<sup>52</sup> GA 26: 221; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 172.

<sup>53</sup> GA 26: 221; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 173.

<sup>54</sup> GA 26: 222; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 173.

<sup>55</sup> GA 26: 219; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 171.

with this reference to worlding, he does not say that the dynamization of the ontological difference indicated by the verb also includes univocity, for he now also expressly maintains that “beings can world in such-and-such a way.”<sup>56</sup> But this again poses the task; it does not yet solve how there can be a concise description of uniform-plural ‘worlding.’ In the Leibniz lecture course, Heidegger has in view a “genuinely transcendental meaning” of the concept of world, for which the ambivalence of worlding is thought to be only “preliminary.” This transcendental sense should succinctly capture the veering between world as plurality and as unity without silencing this dynamic.<sup>57</sup>

Heidegger comes closer to providing this genuine, transcendental concept of world by pursuing the thought that entities remain, in some relevant sense, *the same* in different worlds. In the Leibniz lecture course, this is made concrete by means of an analysis of a particular phenomenon, namely, the so-called “*entry into world by beings*.”<sup>58</sup> In *Being and Time*, Heidegger assumes that temporality [*Zeitlichkeit*] is the decisive ontological determination of Dasein, for which reason world-entry can be described as a phenomenon of temporality: “when temporality temporalizes [*Zeitlichkeit sich zeitigt*], only then do beings have the opportunity to enter the world.”<sup>59</sup> Yet, in a second step, the Leibniz lecture course goes beyond this thought when it once again places the mere possibility of world prior to this specific realization of world-entry. Seen “metaphysically”—and this perspective is decisive for Heidegger in the Leibniz lecture course, which aims to develop a “metaphysics of Dasein”—Dasein is the “existent possibility” for world entry.<sup>60</sup> While one must assume, from the perspective of *Being and Time*,

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<sup>56</sup> GA 26: 221; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 172.

<sup>57</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> GA 26: 270; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 209; emphasis added, translation modified.

<sup>59</sup> GA 26: 249; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 193.

<sup>60</sup> GA 26: 125, 249; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 100, 193.

that “possibility as an *existentiale* is the most primordial and ultimate positive way in which Dasein is characterized ontologically”<sup>61</sup> yet becomes sufficiently comprehensible on the basis of the temporality of Dasein, Heidegger now contends that Dasein qua being-in-the-world is the possibility of situating entities in the intelligible contexts of *different* worlds. The freedom of being able to comport oneself toward entities is thus no longer constrained by the idea that temporal categories are sufficient to describe the deepest levels of the constitution of Dasein.

In the Leibniz lecture course, Heidegger thus deepens a fundamental consideration of his phenomenology of freedom: human freedom is characterized by understanding oneself from one’s “own capacity-for-being”; “metaphysically,” this means being “the *origin of anything like ground*,” becoming involved in the “binding nature” of contexts of justification, so that knowing and acting can be measured by standards of justification.<sup>62</sup> This freedom to bind oneself to norms is not only explanatorily basic in contrast to the position that would tie Dasein down to a *temporal* way of being. It is also significant for the context of problems in ontology, because the ambivalence of plurality and unity again emerges in the description of what it means to bind oneself to “*anything like ground*.” ‘Ground’ is as little univocal as is ‘being.’ Heidegger expressly affirms this: “The essence of ground differentiates itself into diverse sorts of ‘grounds.’”<sup>63</sup> He gives as an example the doctrine of the four causes, which in each case establish different contexts of justification and grounding. ‘Ground,’ however, is plural “not because there are different beings.”<sup>64</sup> The fact that entities are not identical and that there are different regions of being does not explain the plurality of justificatory contexts. The plurality is

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<sup>61</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 183 (German 144–45).

<sup>62</sup> GA 26: 276–77; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 213–14; trans. mod. For this conception of metontology, see Steven Galt Crowell, *Husserl, Heidegger and the Space of Meaning: Paths toward Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 222–34.

<sup>63</sup> GA 26: 277; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 214.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

instead grounded in the fact that the “metaphysical essence of Dasein as transcending has the possibility of first establishing world entry.”<sup>65</sup>

World entry thus becomes the *uniform* phenomenal reference point for the plurality of *different* justificatory contexts. Heidegger does not name these contexts worlds in the plural, but in view of the above-developed versions of ontological pluralism, the different possibilities of “establishing world entry for beings” can doubtless be designated as worlds. It is decisive for Heidegger that freedom is realized only in different forms of norm-responsiveness and that even the self does not offer a space for retreat from this plurality. “Dasein is groundable,” even “for its own self-understanding,” “along different possible directions in different ways, but never in a single way.”<sup>66</sup> Itself groundless, the freedom of Dasein is demonstrated in its ability to found for itself *more than one* context of justification. Since justification occurs within worlds in the plural, the freedom of being able and having to interpret entities in constitutively different ways goes together with the plurality of grounding. Neither Dasein itself nor another being can ever be univocally described; nor can their appearing ever be traced back to a univocally apprehensible ground. This not only has the existentialist consequence that the decision between soccer and baseball, although it establishes which norms I will respectively follow, is not itself the response to a further norm that transcends them but it is the product of my self-understanding.<sup>67</sup> It also has the consequence that an entity is always ‘more’ than I can grasp within those norms that comprise one world among others. For the baseball player, the soccer ball is not only *not* a baseball; it also offers them the possibility of entering the world of possible actions that is

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.; trans. mod.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> See Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom, and Normativity*, 204: “The primary form of normativity originates in the agent’s self-understanding and in the way in which this self-understanding structures and influences her encounter with entities and other agents”.

afforded by the soccer ball and other entities relevant in the world of soccer, thus deciding to enter into a different world. To use the later concept, the soccer ball is a ‘thing’ insofar as it holds open for them this possibility, even when, on the basis of their prior decisions, they are immersed at the moment in the world of baseball. Nothing compels them to decide for soccer, but nothing holds them back from this either.

## 7. The Realism of Worlding

Even if Heidegger does not draw this consequence, the two tasks that he identifies at the end of the Leibniz lecture course are tied to worlding (understood as a verb) and the problem of the unity and plurality of world. Neither the “clarification of the origin of the plurality of ground, the forms of ground,” nor the “interpretation of the essential recoiling of ground back into one ground” can succeed without saying more about how world in the singular and world in the plural relate.<sup>68</sup> Instead, the question concerning how the variety of grounds are associated without assuming an overarching ultimate norm mirrors the question concerning the unity or plurality of world. On its own, the phenomenology of human freedom as it is developed in the Leibniz lecture course as a metaphysics of Dasein thus does not yet offer an answer to these questions. For, even if it is clear that the freedom of Dasein first of all consists in being able to relate to entities in *different* ways and also always to enable “world entry” for Dasein in a different way, little is said thereby about these entities that appear in the different worlds in which Dasein realizes its freedom.

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<sup>68</sup> GA 26: 278; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 215.

And yet a decisive hint is given by the insistence on recourse to entities that, in a metaphysically neutral way, remain the same in different worlds: the “concreteness of the origin” in the “factual dispersion”<sup>69</sup> of entities *prior* to world entry occupies the same systematic position as the one Heidegger later points to with the concept of the *thing*. Despite the differences across the history of Heidegger’s works, the determinations of worlding as the appearing of the thing in the 1950s can be interpreted as the attempt to clarify, in the world entry of “each present thing,” what it means that “world worlds.”<sup>70</sup> The ‘thing,’ as a metaphysically neutral or pre-ontological category whose meaning remains at least relatively constant across the different epochs of being, is also decisive in the context of the history of being. As Heidegger affirms in the artwork essay, the different epochs of being present respective “interpretations of the thingness of the thing.”<sup>71</sup>

If, in these different contexts, the relation between plurality and unity, the double manifestation of worlding, can be explained only in the appearing of an individual something, then the talk of thinging in Heidegger’s sense of the term appears to be an indispensable category to clarify the varieties of ontological pluralism. Heidegger thus goes beyond the thought of an analogical meaning of being in a specific way: in order to make the thesis of the analogical meaning of being phenomenologically plausible and “to define up” the meaning of the

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<sup>69</sup> GA 26: 175; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 137.

<sup>70</sup> GA 7: 183; *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 180.

<sup>71</sup> GA 5: 6; *Poetry Language Thought*, 22. Here I follow an indication provided by John Sallis, who points to the increasing significance of the *thing* after *Being and Time*. See John Sallis, *Echoes: After Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 64n21: “Heidegger systematically avoids the word *Ding* (thing) on the ground that ‘in addressing these beings as “things” (*res*), one tacitly anticipates their ontological character,’ taking it for granted in all its indefiniteness, taking for granted, in the end, the determination handed down by the ontology of *Vorhandenheit* rather than reopening the question of the ontological character of what would otherwise have been called things (SZ 67f.). In later texts, on the other hand, he comes to use the word so decisively that it even serves to entitle some of those texts, for example, *Die Frage nach dem Ding* (*Vorlesung* presented in 1935–36) and “Das Ding” (*Vortrag* first presented in 1950). The story of this return of *das Ding* remains to be told.” I have attempted to tell this story in Keiling, *Seinsgeschichte und phänomenologischer Realismus*, 206–427. I understand it as an answer to the failure of Heidegger’s attempt to develop an ontological monism by answering the question of being.

unrestricted concept of being, a metaphysically neutral category of reality is necessary. This is all the more necessary if we are not to proceed from the assumption that the “list” of the different ways of being can be closed. But this is precisely what is supposed to distinguish Heidegger’s historical ontology from Husserl’s ontology, indeed already in their approaches.

With respect to the history of philosophy, we can thus say that Aristotle was right. One should take the manifold meaning of ‘being’ as one’s point of departure for ontology. Additionally, Aristotle was also right when he made the ‘something,’ the *tode ti*, be the first category (*Cat.* 3b10). In connection with an ontological pluralism, the precedence of this category does not, however, mean that that the world is an ensemble of substances. Rather, the thesis on the precedence of the *tode ti* among the categories is to be understood as indicating that different ways of being, as well as, corresponding to these worlds in the plural, different justificatory contexts, can be distinguished and related only with reference to *things* in Heidegger’s sense of the term.

This amounts to a realism in a specific sense, which I would like to call *phenomenological realism*. I have systematically outlined the position elsewhere.<sup>72</sup> This form of realism no longer holds out the prospect of completely describing the *one* world as Sider’s ontological realism or a metaphysical realism in Putnam’s sense attempts. Against these ontological monisms, phenomenological realism insists on ontological pluralism. Even so, this realism asserts further that entities possess constitutively more than one way of being and yet in a certain way remain themselves. At least for the Dasein that makes use of its freedom authentically, things show themselves in more than one world, at least according to possibility.

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<sup>72</sup> See Tobias Keiling, “What Is Phenomenological Realism? Metametaphysical Considerations,” in *New Realism: Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Alexander Kanev (Sophia: Sv. Kliment Ohridski University Press, 2019), 187–208.

McDaniel himself comes close to this consequence in his reconstruction of Heidegger when he draws attention to the possibility that semantically primitive and metaphysically fundamental quantifiers can overlap. Whereas, in the first publication of his essay, he does not assume that Heidegger or any other philosopher had ever expressly espoused this position, McDaniel makes a different claim in the book version: “Another view worth considering holds that the domains of the fundamental quantifiers overlap. This view is interesting, for according to it, there is an  $x$  such that  $x$  exists in more than one way.”<sup>73</sup> Not only Aristotle but also Thomas Aquinas and Bertrand Russell would have espoused versions of this thought, especially since it can be motivated by a simple thought experiment McDaniel goes on to develop. If the above considerations are correct, then not only should Heidegger be considered a part of this genealogy, since the being-history version of ontological pluralism presupposes that something exists/did exist in different epochs of being. Moreover, there are good reasons for the position that one should take the overlapping of the ways of being as the point of departure for justifying an ontological pluralism phenomenologically. That is precisely what it means to make the worlding of the world(s) thematic.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> McDaniel, *The Fragmentation of Being*, 36. Cf. the first version: “Ways of Being,” 313.

<sup>74</sup> An earlier version of this text was published under the title “Die Welten und das Welten: Heideggers ontologischer Pluralismus,” in *Die Welt und das Reale*, ed. Karel Novotný and Cathrin Nielsen (Nordhausen: Traugott Bautz, 2020), 205–224.