The Question of Being:
Heidegger and Beyond

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy

University of Warwick, Department of Philosophy

September 2011

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Acknowledgements

I hereby declare that all of the work contained herein is my own, and that none of it has been published elsewhere, or submitted in pursuit of any other degree.

Abstract

The project of the thesis is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the question of Being posed by Heidegger, to identify problems with Heidegger's formulation of the question, and ultimately suggest a way in which these problems can be overcome.

The analysis begins by laying out Heidegger's initial attempt to formulate the question presented in *Being and Time* and the work immediately following it. The real concern here is to get clear about the constraints Heidegger places upon the formulation of the question, and how these structure the inquiry projected in his early work. This focuses on the importance of the question of the structure of questioning in relation to the question of Being, and the status of the question as a question of meaning. This involves examining the origins of the question in Aristotle, and providing a detailed account of Heidegger's theory of meaning and interpretation. The thesis then examines the way in which this initial formulation of the question evolves during the 1930's, moving from the *meaning* to the *truth* of Being. This involves providing a detailed account of Heidegger's theory of truth and the way this develops after *Being and Time*.

After this, the thesis moves on to assess Heidegger's attempts to formulate the question in relation to the constraints just outlined. This reveals several insurmountable problems in both Heidegger's later approach, and a number of serious problems with his earlier approach, the worst of which undermines the very aim of the project. The thesis concludes by showing that there are resources for overcoming this within the way that Heidegger's approach develops after *Being and Time*, once this development is understood in terms of Heidegger's account of metaphysics. This leads to the outline of an alternative formulation of the question.

Introduction: The Renewal of the Question

> For manifestly you have long been aware of what you mean when you use
> the expression "being". We however, who used to think we understood it,
> have now become perplexed.[1]

Heidegger opens his most famous work, *Being and Time*, by appealing to the above quote from Plato's *Sophist*. The point that Heidegger draws from this quote is that despite using the word 'Being' in a way that indicates we understand what we are saying, we are nonetheless unable to articulate this understanding when questioned.[2]

Given that our grasp of this expression is exercised more than that of any other expression, owing to the vast array of permutations of the verb 'to be' that we need to deploy in talking about anything, our familiarity with the expression 'Being' and its variants has a certain intimacy that is not matched by any other expression. Yet, Heidegger notes, despite this peculiar intimacy, we are not at all perplexed by our inability to articulate our understanding of the expression. Heidegger thus claims that if we are to ask the question of what 'Being' means, we must first of all come to terms with our inability to address this question straightforwardly. The peculiar fact that our lack of perplexity at this inability reveals is that we do not really understand the question in the first place. Thus, before we can even think of answering it, we must try to understand what the question itself means. Heidegger's gift to philosophy is this

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1 Plato, *Sophist*, section 244a (p. 987 in the *Collected Works*). It is important to note that the word used here is 'being' and not 'Being'. However, Heidegger himself moves directly from the former to the latter. This is understandable given the close relationship between the words which will be explained in fn 2, and in chapter 1, section 1.

2 Following the standard translation of Heidegger by Macquarrie and Robinson, I will use the capitalised term 'Being' for Heidegger's '*Sein*', and the uncapitalised terms 'being' and 'beings' to refer to '*Seiend*' and '*Seienden*', respectively. I will re-emphasize this difference in the text where I feel it is important. One undesirable consequence of this convention is that it tends to render the use of the capitalised expression 'Being' somewhat alien to our ordinary usage of the term (insofar as there is ordinary usage). This is alarming given that both Heidegger and myself will stress that any technical or theoretical usage of this expression must be rooted in such ordinary understanding. However, in this case, adequate rendering of the German distinction is more desirable. I will also treat the word 'entity' as effectively synonymous with 'being'.

concern with properly raising this question of the meaning of 'Being', or simply, the question of Being.

Perhaps what is most strange about what Heidegger goes on to do in *Being and Time*, and in his work after it, is that it is arguable that he ever makes clear the meaning of this question, let alone answers it.[3] This is not to denigrate Heidegger. It is not for a lack of serious and rigorous thought about the question and its answer that Heidegger was unable to provide a simple formulation of the project the question demands, or a comprehensive strategy to fulfil it. Nor is this to say that Heidegger provides us no resources to do so ourselves. One of the primary premises of this work is that it is only through an engagement with Heidegger's own thought that we will ever be able to provide such a simple formulation of the project or a strategy for fulfilling it. Nonetheless, one would be forgiven for thinking that Heidegger had given such a formulation. This is not only because of the fact that much has been written on what Heidegger's interpretation of the question is, but perhaps more importantly because even more has been written about what Heidegger's supposed answer, or the beginnings of his answer, were. This is indicative of the fact that many interpreters of Heidegger, along with others who place some discussion of 'Being' at the centre of their philosophy, have simply assumed that they understand the meaning of the question, and proceeded to discuss 'Being' on this basis, rather than genuinely questioning what it is to engage in such discussion. 'Being' thus becomes an almost empty term in much philosophical discussion, used in a haphazard way that hinders real attempts at

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3   It is by now a fairly well accepted point that Heidegger does not answer the question in *Being and Time,* and although there are interpretations which miss this point, they will be addressed in the main work. This is not to say that he does not indicate what he takes the answer to be, namely, *time*, but simply that these indications never turn into a properly articulated answer. There are of course still questions as to whether Heidegger thinks one can provide an answer to the question, and to what extent he provides anything like an answer in his work after *Being and Time*. Again, these questions must be addressed elsewhere. It is the claim that Heidegger does not even provide a sufficient formulation of the question which is most controversial, and demonstrating this point will be a major task of the thesis.

understanding and obfuscates its philosophical import.[4]

Heidegger is famous for diagnosing a historical trend of the forgetting of Being. This consists in large part in the fact that the question of Being "provided a stimulus for the researches of Plato and Aristotle, only to subside from then on *as a theme for actual investigation*".[5] Ignoring for the present the other salient points of Heidegger's complex reading of the overarching trends in the history of philosophy, a certain irony becomes apparent. This is present in the fact that many of those who take up Heidegger's renewal of the question of Being are themselves unable to adequately explain what the question means. This in effect amounts to a *second* forgetting of Being. However, this is perhaps a worse forgetting than the first, because we have moved from mistakenly thinking that we know what 'Being' means in a pre-theoretical way to mistakenly thinking we know what it means in a properly theoretical way. The former is a matter of familiarity while the latter is a matter of hubris.

This is not to say that all of those who take up and develop Heidegger's work are completely misunderstanding him, or that they have no grasp of the question at all.[6] There have been many positive contributions to thinking about Being after Heidegger, despite the pervasive confusion over what exactly it is a contribution to. Moreover, we cannot simply say that an inability to provide a simple formulation of the question demonstrates a complete inability to understand the question without thereby tarring Heidegger with the same brush. Rather, what is being claimed is that the absence of a clear explanation of what it is we are asking after in raising the question of Being has

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4   A similar point about the inability of much Heidegger scholarship to agree upon what precisely the central themes of Heidegger's work are has been made quite well by Thomas Sheehan ('A Paradigm Shift in Heidegger Research'). I entirely endorse this point, despite disagreeing with much of Sheehan's actual interpretation of what these themes are. This disagreement will become apparent in the course of the main work.

5   *B&T*, p. 2.

6   Three thinkers who here come to mind are Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Alain Badiou, who all engage in some thinking of Being, albeit in very different ways, and with different levels of engagement with Heidegger. I think that Deleuze's thought especially presents us with an incredibly profound attempt to answer the question, even if it is as lamentably unclear as Heidegger's own work at times.

muddied the waters of post-Heideggerian philosophical discourse.

The goal of the present work is to un-muddy these waters to some extent. First and foremost, this involves examining Heidegger's own attempt to formulate the question, and assessing his ideas about how we must approach it. What will emerge from this is an approach to the question which is very different, and perhaps even alien to Heidegger's own. However, it is nonetheless rooted in the founding gesture of Heidegger's project in *Being and Time*, namely, that this question is of fundamental importance, and if we are to tackle it with any degree of propriety, then we must understand what it is and what it demands of us.

However, there is a second motivation underlying the project outlined above. If I am committed to bringing an additional level of clarity to the philosophical discourse which has arisen out of Heidegger's own work, which is often loosely referred to as the 'continental' tradition[7], I am also committed to demonstrating the importance of the question to that philosophical discourse, which is equally loosely referred to as the 'Anglo-American' or 'analytic' tradition, which has to greater or lesser degrees eschewed Heidegger's enigmatic renewal of the question.

The idea underlying this commitment is that there is much work in the analytic tradition which would benefit from a more systematic consideration of the way different fundamental questions it raises are related. To take a somewhat hackneyed example, the debate over whether or not *qualia* and various other purported kinds of psychological entities exist still rages in the philosophy of mind. This debate tends to cross over with debates about what legitimately constitutes a property, the nature of identity, the

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7 I am well aware that allying the various major figures and themes that usually get grouped as 'continental philosophy' with Heidegger is an obvious oversimplification, especially given the antipathy of many of those figures to Heidegger's own work. Nonetheless, despite the noble efforts over the last thirty years to integrate the salient points of Heidegger's philosophy into the 'analytic' tradition (for which Hubert Dreyfus obviously deserves the most credit), it is fair to say that willingness to engage with Heidegger is a fault line between the two traditions, most especially with regard to the question of Being. This is not to say that there aren't those who attempt to straddle this fault line, a category within which I endeavour to be counted.

metaphysics of modality, what constitutes a fact, whether or not there are anything like 'essences' and if there are what they are, and most importantly what it is to say that anything exists. These issues are all related to one another in complex ways, and it seems that debates about one of them tend to involve either implicit or explicit appeal to 'intuitions' about the others. This is not to say that there are not attempts to tackle some or all of these in systematic ways.[8] Nor is it to claim that partially systematic or unsystematic approaches can have no insight here. Rather, the salient point is that even if there are some systematic approaches to these questions, there is no explicit questioning of the very systematic interrelation of these notions itself. No one has attempted to work out what a systematic engagement with these different questions as a whole would demand, independently of simply attempting to so engage with them. If in the continental tradition there is a pervasive assumption that we already have a good methodological grasp of the task, in the analytic tradition there is a pervasive ignorance of the need for such a unified methodology.

If we are to make use of the hard won insights of both traditions, to make them communicate in the proper manner, then we must situate them within the context of an overarching task – a task which itself makes demands of us, and which makes demands about how these insights are to be situated in relation to one another. With this in mind, I suggest that we might apply Heidegger's own words about Aristotle to himself, namely, that he "formulates [a] wholly fundamental and new position that he worked out in philosophy in relation to all of his predecessors… not in the sense of a system but

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8 I must single out Robert Brandom's eminently systematic work in the philosophy of language (stemming from *Making It Explicit*), which really should be treated as a foray into systematic philosophy as such, insofar as his concerns with other areas are motivated out of it. I can also recommend Colin McGinn's small but rewarding book *Logical Properties,* which explicitly tries to deal with the systematic interrelation of several of these issues in a very praiseworthy fashion, even if I entirely disagree with much of it. I must also mention Dale Jacquette's book *Ontology*, which not only attempts to tackle some of these questions in a systematic way, but does so through attempting to engage with Heidegger. I think it has serious problems on both accounts, but it is to be lauded nonetheless.

in the sense of a task."[9] Even if Heidegger's own philosophy is lacking, it is only through staying true to his attempted renewal of the question of Being that we can move forward in philosophy, and do so as it should be done.

The structure of the work is as follows:-

Chapter 1 provides the essential preliminaries for engaging with Heidegger's thought about Being, and examines the way Heidegger poses the problem of formulating the question of Being in *Being and Time.* It then raises some questions as to how this is to be understood, and presents some further resources for answering these.

Chapter 2 lays out the basic existential structure of Being-in-the-World, and situates Heidegger's account of meaning and understanding in relation to it. It then uses this to finish reconstructing the formulation of the question as the question of the *meaning* of Being.

Chapter 3 presents Heidegger's account of truth and the way this account develops after *Being and Time*. It then uses this to reconstruct Heidegger's later formulation of the question as the question of the *truth* of Being.

Chapter 4 summarises the salient points of the formulations presented in the proceeding chapters, and then uses these to assess their adequacy. It presents a series of problems for both formulations, and then draws a number of conclusions regarding the correct formulation of the question from these.

Chapter 5 concludes the investigation by returning to Heidegger's account of metaphysics, and uses this to outline a basic formulation of the question of Being. It then suggests how this might be further fleshed out, so as to make an answer to the question possible.

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9 *AM*, p. 10.

Chapter 1: What is the Question of Being?

The question with which we are concerned, which we have inherited from Heidegger, is the question of Being. There are many further things which can in turn be asked *of* this question, such as: why we should ask it, whether it can be answered, and even what an answer to it would look like. However, these further questions, important as they are, can only be answered on the basis of a proper formulation of the main question itself. Indeed, this question can only be *properly* answered after we have *properly* understood its significance, which is to say only on the basis of a thorough formulation. Providing such a formulation is thus a matter of great philosophical importance. However, if we are to live up to this task, then we must first examine and assess Heidegger's own attempts to formulate the question. It is only by doing this that we will get a grasp on the question, and only by getting a grasp on it that we might seek to provide a more adequate formulation of it than Heidegger's own.

Any examination of Heidegger's attempts to formulate the question of Being must begin with a study of *Being and Time*. This is because it is in this text that Heidegger first announces his attempt to reawaken the question of the meaning of Being, and, as such, all subsequent attempts at formulation both by Heidegger himself and by others are directly sensitive to it. How our own attempt at formulation is situated within this history of the renewal of the question of Being is thus determined first and foremost by its relation to this text. This chapter will thus focus upon the question as it is presented in *Being and Time* and those texts that immediately surround it. However, it will point to the ways that Heidegger's account of the question changes in his subsequent work, which will be discussed in more detail in the chapters that follow.

1. Being and Beings

To begin with, we need to roughly delimit what it is that Heidegger takes himself to be referring to in using the word 'Being' (*das Sein*), and to lay out the various relationships between it and other important terms. Most important among these is the relationship between 'Being' and 'beings' (*das Seiende*), which can also be translated as 'entities', or simply 'what is'.[1] Heidegger has a very loose conception of what counts as an entity – chairs, animals, planets, sonnets, numbers even, all are entities in some sense. Indeed, anything that we can think or talk about is a entity of some kind. Putting the breadth of this notion of 'beings' to one side, Heidegger initially defines what he means when he talks about 'Being' in terms of it: "When [B]eing is asked for, it involves inquiring into the basic character of the entity, what defines an entity as entity. What defines the entity as entity is *its [B]eing*."[2] Or, alternatively: "In the question which we are to work out, *what is asked about* is Being – that which determines entities as entities, that on the basis of which entities are already understood, however we may discuss them."[3] To paraphrase these remarks, beings count *as* beings insofar as they possess Being. However, this statement requires a certain amount of clarification.

First of all, Heidegger distinguishes between the Being of a *particular* being[4] and the Being of beings in *general*.[5] He also talks about *modes, kinds* or *ways* of Being

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1 In fact, the latter translation is strictly more accurate, given that 'das Seiende' is singular, rather than plural.
2 *HCT*, p. 144.
3 *B&T*, pp. 25-26.
4 As far as I am aware, Heidegger never explicitly addresses this distinction, but he does repeatedly talk about both the Being of beings and the Being of particular beings. For a brief example of the latter, see his discussion of the Being of a school building in *IM* (pp. 34-35).
5 In his early work, Heidegger uses the expression 'Being' (*das Sein*) interchangeably with 'the Being of beings' (*das Sein des Seienden*) and 'Being in general/Being as such' (*das Sein überhaupt*). However, he later comes to oppose Being as such, or Being in itself (*das Sein im selbst*) to the Being of beings. At one point he even renames the former Beyng (*das Seyn*) to contrast it with the latter (which remains '*Sein*'). We will not go through the significance of these terminological shifts here, it will suffice to point out that we cannot always take for granted the constancy of some of these terms in Heidegger's work. We will discuss these issues further in chapters 3 and 4.

(*Seinsarten* or *Seinsweisen*)[6], which are restricted to particular kinds of beings. This means that entities such as hammers and chisels may have the same mode of Being, while plants, animals and numbers *are* in different ways. This gives us three levels: the Being that belongs to *each* given entity, the mode of Being it shares with *some* other entities, and Being as such, which it shares with *all* entities whatsoever.

However, we must be careful not to treat Being as a *genus* that all entities belong to. Heidegger is very explicit on this point: "Being, as the basic theme of philosophy, is no class or genus of entities; yet it pertains to every entity. Its 'universality' is to be sought higher up. Being and the structure of Being lie beyond every entity and every possible character which an entity may possess."[7] What this means is that we cannot treat Being as if it were a *kind* to which all beings happen to belong, analogous to 'dog', 'tree', or 'electron', or even a *property* which all beings happen to possess, analogous to 'redness', 'conductivity', or 'mass'. This is because belonging to kinds and possessing properties is part of what defines beings as beings. To treat Being as a kind, property, or some set of properties that all entities have in common is thus to overlook precisely *what it is* for them to fall into kinds and possess properties at all, and thus to overlook Being proper. To think of Being in this way is to treat it as what Heidegger will later call *beingness* (*Seiendheit*).[8]

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger shows how this misunderstanding, when developed into the claim that Being is the highest genus, leads to two widespread contemporary assumptions about Being: that the concept of Being is empty, and that Being is indefinable.[9] He takes it that these assumptions are exemplified by Hegel's explicit

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6   Heidegger uses the expressions 'Seinsweise' (usually translated as *way* of Being) and 'Seinsart' (usually translated as *mode* or *kind* of Being) interchangeably for the most part (cf., the lexicon to *BPP*, p. 367).

7   *B&T*, p. 62.

8   Although Heidegger discusses beingness in several places, the best discussion of it is found in the fourth volume of his Nietzsche lectures (*N*, p. 156-157).

9   *B&T*, pp. 22-23. Dreyfus points out that in one of his own personal copies of *Being and Time,* Heidegger wrote 'beingness' in the margin next to these passages, thus indicating that even though he

classification of Being as the 'indeterminate immediate', which is so empty as to be identical with Nothing. In denying that Being is the highest genus, he rejects the basis for the claim that the concept of Being has no content. Nonetheless, in denying that it is a genus at all, he accepts that it is not amenable to the ordinary process of definition through genus and species. It should be noted that Heidegger does not think that one cannot treat Being as beingness without adopting these assumptions. Indeed, he takes it that the metaphysical tradition has adopted a series of different non-empty conceptions of beingness across its history, although his specific account of this history and its importance changes throughout his work. It is simply the case that at this point he holds that the conflation of Being and beingness underlies a historical trajectory which culminates in the contemporary perspective, as exemplified by Hegel.[10] The claim that Being has consistently been understood in terms of beingness is one of Heidegger's most persistent criticisms of the metaphysical tradition.[11]

We now understand that Being is not to be understood as anything like a property of beings, in virtue of the fact that it is that on the basis of which beings have anything like properties. However, we need to square this fact with the three levelled account of Being given above. The best way to understand this is to introduce some further concepts that Heidegger uses more heavily in the works that closely follow *Being and Time*, which deal with various *aspects* of an entity's Being: *what-being* (*Was-sein*), *being-so* (*Sosein*), *that-being* (*Dass-sein*), and *being-true* (*Wahr-sein*).[12] What-being and

had not yet coined the term, his thoughts about it are continuous with these earlier considerations.

10 Both Heidegger's account of the assumptions that characterise the contemporary perspective and his account of Hegel's place within the history of metaphysics change in his later work. He comes to interpret Hegel as understanding beingness in terms of "Will – as absolute knowledge", which is merely one stage in the history of metaphysics leading up to the end of metaphysics in Nietzsche, and the contemporary perspective of "Enframing" (*The End of Philosophy*, p. 66). We'll discuss Heidegger's relation to Hegel in more detail in chapter 4, section 3, part *iv*.

11 Heidegger doesn't directly address the issue of metaphysics in *B&T* in any detail, and his account of metaphysics and the metaphysical tradition does change across his work. His most detailed early treatment of the issue is found in *FCM*. His mature conception of metaphysics is best presented in *OCM*. We will discuss Heidegger's account of metaphysics, its relation to the question of Being and the way it changes in more detail in chapters 3, 4, and 5.

12 *FCM*, p. 348. The same list can be found, more or less, in Heidegger's analysis of the copula in *BPP*

that-being roughly correspond to the classical notions of *essence* and *existence*, respectively, governing *what* an entity is and the fact *that* it is. If the what-being of an entity incorporates its essential properties, then the entity's being-so extends beyond these to include *all* of its properties, even those that are *accidental*. Being-so is that aspect of Being in which the possession of properties as such consists, and thus it cannot itself be a property.[13] This is what underlies the fact that none of the other aspects of Being, nor Being as such, can be understood as properties of beings, not even essential ones. Being-true is a more difficult concept to explain, as it is linked to Heidegger's idiosyncratic ideas about truth. We'll discuss these in detail in the third chapter. In addition to these, Heidegger also sometimes talks about *how-being* (*Wie-sein*)[14] in place of that-being, to refer to an entity's mode of Being. It is the case *that there are* stones, animals, and numbers, but *how they are* is different in each case.

We can thus see the outline of a notion of Being which is neither empty nor a property, albeit one that requires a great deal more elaboration. We can also see how Heidegger's distinction between the Being of a particular being and the Being of beings in general works on this basis. The Being of beings provides the universal structure of what-being and being-so as distinct from the particular what-being and being-so of any given being, whereas the Being of a particular being incorporates these particular aspects. The Being of a tree incorporates both those features which constitute it *as* a tree (e.g., its root system, its branch structure, its photo-synthetic processes, etc.) and those features which are accidental (e.g., its height, the number of its leaves, the distribution

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(p. 202). This is discussed in section 3, part *ii*.

13 It should be noted here that Heidegger tends to talk about 'properties' only in relation to what he will call occurrent entities, and he conceives of the being-so of other kinds of entities (paradigmatically available entities) in different ways. This is a more narrow use of the word 'property' than we are using here, which is simply meant to distinguish between the way that the characteristics of entities have been conceived in the tradition from the way Heidegger views the characteristics of other kinds of entities. Precisely what occurrent entities are, and what this difference consists in is explained in chapter 2.

14 *BPP*, pp. 204-205.

of its branches, etc.), and although it may or may not share some of these features with other beings, it at the very least shares the basic structure of having such features – Being as such.

We can also make some sense of the idea of modes of Being on this basis. The difference between beings that belong to different modes of Being is not analogous to the differences between beings that belong to different species of the same genus, such as the difference between dogs and cats (which are both species of mammals). They are not distinguished by the possession of different properties. Rather, it is differences in the way the aspects of Being (what-being, being-so, that-being, etc.) are articulated which distinguish between modes. This means that what constitutes a property between different modes of Being can be quite different.[15] Moreover, as we will see later on, the ordinary way that we understand the relation between what-being and that-being, the classical account of essence and existence, does not hold in the case of human Being (*Dasein*). This is a very rough explanation of the difference between modes of Being, but it does point to the possibility of differences between beings which are more than differences in the properties they possess. As such, it is adequate for our purposes.

We can now highlight Heidegger's second persistent criticism of the metaphysical tradition. He takes it that not only does the tradition think Being as beingness, and thus in terms of the *properties* of beings, but that it thinks Being in terms of *beings themselves*. It thinks Being in terms of a *highest being* which either functions as the exemplary being, in relation to which all other beings must be understood, as the cause of the existence of all beings, or both. The most classic example of this is obviously the role of God in both Aristotelian and Scholastic metaphysics, which is both the ultimate

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15 This is evident in the threefold distinction between beings with the character of *Dasein*, equipment, whose mode of Being is *availability*, and beings whose mode of Being is *occurrence*. Dasein's being-so is articulated in terms of its possibilities for action, equipment's being-so is articulated in terms of the possibilities for action it offers to Dasein, and occurrent entities' being-so is articulated in terms of properties more classically understood, which are both actual and independent of Dasein. This will be discussed in chapter 2.

cause of all things and that being in relation to which the Being of all other beings must be understood (as *ens increatum* to *ens creatum*, respectively). Taken together, these two features of traditional metaphysics – thinking Being in terms of beingness and the highest being – constitute it as what Heidegger calls *onto-theology*.[16]

This allows us to introduce another concept of Heidegger's which is present within *Being and Time*, albeit without the name he comes to give it – the *ontological difference*.[17] This is the difference between Being and beings. The most primitive statement of this difference is Heidegger's claim that "The Being of entities 'is' not itself an entity."[18] There are a number of different ways in which this difference can be interpreted. At the very least, it names the fact that the Being of beings in general is not *itself* an entity, and that the Being of a particular being is not itself an entity. We will call this *weak* ontological difference. A good example of a position that is excluded by this interpretation is Spinoza's metaphysics, which takes Being to be *a* being, namely, God or substance.[19] We will call *strong* ontological difference the interpretation which also holds that Being cannot be understood in terms of *particular* beings. A good example of a position that is excluded by this interpretation is Leibniz's metaphysics, which understands the Being of every being (or monad) in terms of a special being, namely, God.[20] We will then call *hyper*-ontological difference the interpretation which adds to the strong interpretation the claim that Being cannot be understood in terms of *properties* of beings, and thus can't be understood as beingness. Although the way

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16 Heidegger's most direct treatment of this is to be found in *OCM*. We will further discuss the significance of this conception of metaphysics in chapter 5.
17 *BPP*, p. 17; part II.
18 *B&T*, p. 26.
19 There are a number of interpreters of Spinoza who would disagree with this claim, as many have retroactively interpreted Spinoza's distinction between substance and modes as encompassing the distinction between Being and beings (cf. Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza: An Introduction*, p. 48). However, this interpretation cannot hold up to scrutiny of the initial definitions provided in the Ethics, which clearly state that God is an infinite *being* (*Ethics*, def. 5). Substance is a being in a very minimal sense, but it is nonetheless sufficient to distinguish it from Heidegger's understanding of Being, which is explicitly *not* an existent.
20 Cf. G.W. Leibniz, *Monadology*.

Heidegger describes the ontological difference across his work is sometimes ambiguous as to which interpretation he endorses, it is clear from his criticisms of metaphysics as onto-theology that he endorses the strongest form of the principle.[21]

Leaving aside the question of whether all of the metaphysical tradition can be fit within this schema, and thus the accuracy of Heidegger's account of the history of philosophy, we can distil the central message of Heidegger's opposition to the tradition: Being must not be understood in any of the ways we understand beings, either as a being, or as a property of beings, because it is the very basis of such understanding. For Heidegger, we must endeavour to think Being on its own terms – a task which is as difficult as it is essential. The only way in which to perform this difficult task is to pose it explicitly as a question. Heidegger recognised this fact, and devoted most of his work to the attempt to do so, initially with the aim of *reorienting* metaphysics, but ultimately with the aim of *overcoming* it. We will examine this change of direction in subsequent chapters, but we must first address Heidegger's initial attempt to formulate the question. Having cleared up some of the preliminary issues, we will now turn to the way this plays out in *Being and Time*.

2. The Question of the Structure of Questioning

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger begins his attempt to formulate the question of Being by laying down a condition necessary for this formulation. This is the requirement that, in order to properly formulate the question of the meaning of Being, we must first lay out the structure of questioning in general, so as to reveal the special status of this question

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21 Heidegger's earlier statements of the principle (cf. *BPP*, p. 17 and part II) tend to be weaker than his later interpretations (cf. *CP*, §266; *OCM*), but this should not be seen as a major shift in position so much as the concept of ontological difference coming into its own.

in relation to other questions.[22] This supplements the requirement (put forward later) that we must have *some* such understanding of the structure of questioning in order to formulate *any* question, as opposed to entering into it "just casually".[23] In effect, this amounts to taking up *the question of the structure of questioning* as a condition of taking up the question of the meaning of Being. As we will show, that this question is taken up, and the way it is taken up, will go on to provide the structure of the inquiry laid out in *Being and Time*. It is important to note that Heidegger does not here demand a complete answer to this question prior to formulating the question of the meaning of Being. Instead, he provides a preliminary account of the basic structure of questioning on the basis of which the formulation proceeds. However, the inquiry into the meaning of Being thus formulated dovetails with the continuation of the inquiry into the structure of questioning. The significance of this will be examined in the course of detailing Heidegger's preliminary account of questioning and its consequences.

Heidegger initially defines questioning as "a cognizant seeking for an entity both with regard to the fact that it is and with regard to its Being as it is."[24] This means that questioning is always *about* or *of* something, and that its questioning is concerned both with its that-being and being-so. Heidegger then specifies this structure further, positing several fundamental features of questioning:-

1) A question always involves *that which is asked about*, or what we will call its *object.*[25]

2) A question always involves *that which is interrogated* in this asking.

3) A question always involves *that which is to be found out* by this asking.

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22 *B&T*, p. 24-25.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., p. 24.
25 What must be emphasised is that the use of 'object' here is entirely assimilated to its use in the phrase 'the object of a question', and does not yet imply any of the connotations associated with its technical use in either Kantian transcendental philosophy, Husserlian phenomenology, or philosophical logic.

4) A question always involves *that which asks the question*, the questioning being, or what we will call the *inquirer*.

5) A question always involves some *prior understanding* of the object on the part of the inquirer, in order to guide the inquiry.

From these preliminary claims about the structure of questioning Heidegger derives several conclusions which provide the basis of his inquiry into the meaning of Being.

Heidegger first builds on the above claims by arguing that questioning belongs to the Being of the inquirer. This implies that the question of the structure of questioning must become the question of the Being of this inquirer. Thus, it is by proceeding with an inquiry into the Being of the inquirer that Heidegger will extend the preliminary account of questioning he has just given into a complete answer to the question of the structure of questioning. The formulation of the question will thus proceed by means of this new inquiry. Interestingly, Heidegger does not take such an inquiry as a condition of formulating all questions, for which he takes his preliminary account of the structure of questioning to be adequate[26]. The second implication that Heidegger draws is that *what must be interrogated* in the inquiry into the meaning of Being are *beings* in general. Unfortunately, this insight leaves us with no idea where to start the inquiry, as it seems to posit that all beings are equal in the eyes of the inquirer. Given this problem, Heidegger asks whether there is a particular being which has some priority in relation to the question, such that it alone might function as what is interrogated. Heidegger goes on to show that the inquirer itself possesses such a priority, and that, as such, the inquiry into the meaning of Being must begin with an inquiry into the Being of the inquirer. It is in this way that the question of the structure of questioning dovetails with the question

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26 *B&T*, p. 24-25.

of the meaning of Being.[27] How exactly Heidegger demonstrates this priority of the inquirer, and thus the confluence of these questions in the question of the Being of the inquirer, will be examined below.

i) Phenomenology and Discourse

To explain this priority it will be helpful to skip forward in the text somewhat and first look at Heidegger's understanding of the method to be deployed in the inquiry, namely, *phenomenology*. Although Heidegger inherits this method from his teacher Husserl, he does not introduce it by way of an exegesis of Husserl's work. Instead he breaks down the word 'phenomenology' into the terms 'phenomenon' and 'logos' and then proceeds to uncover the original Greek meanings of the terms, and in doing so to differentiate them from the various ways in which they have been interpreted in the philosophical tradition. In doing this he clarifies what he means by 'phenomenology'. We shall rehearse his analysis briefly, in order that we can pick out the relevant points.

Heidegger distinguishes four distinct senses of 'phenomenon': "that which shows itself"[28] (or what we will call *manifestation*), *seeming*, *appearance*, and the Kantian understanding of 'phenomenon' as *mere appearance*. The first sense of 'phenomenon' is the manifestation of something *as* something. This understanding of phenomena is the advance of Husserlian phenomenology over the crude sense datum accounts of perception provided by empiricism (which are taken up by Kant). Husserl, following Brentano, claimed that we are not conscious of sense data, out of which we might construct objects, but rather that we are always already conscious of objects, and moreover that we are conscious of these objects *as* being a certain way. When I stroll

27 Ibid., p. 35.
28 Ibid., p. 51.

through the park and encounter a tree, it is manifest *as a tree*. This object-directedness of consciousness is named *intentionality*. On the other hand, we also have encounters in which what a thing *seems to be* is other than it really is, e.g. what seems to be an elm is really an elder. This is the second sense of phenomenon as seeming. There can also be experiences in which what is encountered presents something else indirectly. This kind of phenomenon, which Heidegger calls an appearance, is that which shows itself in something else (rather than in itself), such as a disease which reveals its presence through a symptom, rather than being directly present. Lastly, the Kantian sense of phenomenon is understood as a mere appearance, in that what it presents (the *noumenon*) can never be encountered (i.e., it can never show itself other than through appearances).

Heidegger's important claim is that the latter three senses of the word 'phenomenon': seeming, appearance, and mere appearance, are parasitic upon manifestation. Something cannot seem to be other than it is without being encountered *as* something it is not. Similarly, something must be encountered directly in order that it can indirectly point beyond itself, and the same holds of a mere appearance in which what is pointed to is itself unencounterable. Thus, seeming, appearance and even mere appearance are dependent upon manifestation. This notion of manifestation becomes the proper "*formal* conception of "phenomenon""[29] when we do not restrict it to the manifestation of beings as *kinds* of beings, but also allow it to cover the manifestation of other aspects of the Being of these beings, e.g., when we do not make a distinction between the manifestation of the tree as tree and its manifestation as green, tall, or any of its other characteristics. Heidegger claims that this formal sense provides the ordinary sense of the word 'phenomenon' when it is restricted to sensuous intuition.[30]

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29 Ibid., p. 54.
30 It is important to note that Husserl had argued that there are non-sensuous forms of intuition, such as the intuition of mathematical objects, and Heidegger seems to follow Husserl on this point. The broad

However, this formal sense is still not the sense of 'phenomenon' deployed in the word 'phenomenology'. Rather, Heidegger characterises the phenomena which phenomenology deals with as what show themselves *within* all (formal) phenomena, but show themselves as prior to them, as the very conditions of their manifestation. The example which Heidegger provides of such phenomena are the Kantian forms of intuition (space and time), which show themselves in every manifestation, despite being covered over by the specific content of this manifestation. Heidegger characterises this kind of showing as *unthematic*, not only to indicate how what is shown is covered over by manifestation, but also the possibility of uncovering it, i.e., of it being *thematically* revealed, or *thematized.* Heidegger interprets this sense of 'phenomenon' as that of the original Greek word, taking it to mean "*that which shows itself in itself*".[31] Heidegger also identifies the totality of such phenomenological 'phenomena' with the structure of Being itself. It is this move which ultimately allows him to identify phenomenology and ontology. This identification will become important later.[32]

Turning to Heidegger's analysis of 'logos', he initially interprets it as 'discourse', but he takes this to be an incomplete specification of the meaning of the term, because discourse itself is understood in many ways. This has lead to the rendering of 'logos' variously as ""reason", "judgment", "concept", "definition", "ground", or "relationship"".[33] The most important of these interpretations is that of 'logos' as judgment, positing, or assertion. This is because, since Aristotle, philosophy has characteristically understood the other variations (reason, concept, definition, etc.) in terms of some theory of judgment. Heidegger's claim is that the proper sense of 'logos' as discourse is not only distinct from judgment, but that it is a condition of

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character of Husserl's notion of intuition and it's application to mathematics is explained well by Jaakko Hintikka in 'The Phenomenological Dimension', §V-VI.
31 *B&T*, p. 51.
32 See chapter 2, section 4.
33 *B&T*, p. 55.

judgment, and thus that judgment and the other interpretations of 'logos' must be understood in terms of it. Heidegger claims that this proper sense is the original Greek sense of the word, which he translates as "[making] manifest what one is 'talking about' in one's discourse"[34], or as *letting* something be seen. This places his interpretation of 'logos' very close to the ordinary sense of 'phenomenon' he has just defined. They are nonetheless distinct, albeit closely related.

Discourse is the activity through which a phenomenon is *allowed* to show itself. Importantly, Heidegger thinks that discourse occurs in various forms, including, but not limited to: "assenting or refusing," "demanding or warning," "pronouncing, consulting, or interceding"[35] and requesting[36]. All of these forms of discourse let something be seen, but they do so indirectly in the course of doing something else. For instance, requesting lets the requested thing be seen, but only in order that it can be given. However, *apophantic* discourse makes what is talked about manifest directly, by pointing it out. It is as such the form of discourse which Heidegger is specifically concerned with here. The final point to make is that Heidegger conceives of the apophantic mode of discourse as *assertion*.[37] This should not be taken to mean that we can only let something be seen *as* something by asserting that it *is* something. We can talk about something so that it is brought to light *as* something, but, importantly, this need not be the same as asserting that this thing *is* something. This is the first point at which Heidegger introduces the elements of his reworking of the notion of truth as *aletheia* or *disclosedness*.

We will not discuss this reworking in great detail here[38], as doing it justice would involve straying much further into the text than we wish to for the moment. What needs

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34 Ibid., p. 56.
35 Ibid., p. 204.
36 Ibid., p. 56.
37 For all intents and purposes assertion can be treated as the act of expressing a judgment, and judgment as the internalisation of assertion. The tradition tends to give primacy to judgment, and treat assertion as derivative, whereas Heidegger takes the opposite tack. Which way is correct is not especially important here however.
38 See chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of Heidegger's account of truth.

to be understood is that Heidegger, following Husserl and in contrast to Kant, does not take experience to have the structure of judgment (e.g., my encountering the tree as a tree is not a matter of my judging that it is a tree). Judgments are the minimal unit that can be taken to be either true or false, that can be either affirmed or denied. This kind of truth, usually understood in terms of correspondence (or agreement with their object[39]), is only possible on the basis of the prior encountering of phenomena, in which the manifestation of something as something functions as the basis for making a judgment (what Husserl would call *evidence*[40]). This account applies quite well to the somewhat pedestrian examples of perceptual judgment, but it becomes a more complicated matter when we consider how it is that manifestation would underpin the truth (or falsity) of claims indirectly inferred from observation, or, even more importantly, claims about the phenomenological 'phenomena' that underlie all ordinary experience.

This is where Heidegger's interpretation of discourse comes in. His point is that our talk about things can play the role of *eliciting* the kinds of manifestation which underlie our affirmation or denial of particular assertions, and that, importantly, this talk is not always the same as making those assertions. What this means is that our talk about things can open up a space for genuine *discovery*, and that although this discovery is not always a *perceptual* experience it is nonetheless a genuine encounter, a *showing* of something as something. This means that the discourse surrounding a particular scientific theory does not just take place on the basis of disclosures which are prior to or independent of the discourse itself, but that the very process of discussion can "let something be seen"[41] in such a way that it feeds back into discourse itself (by, for instance, grounding further claims). As such, for Heidegger, inference holds no special position in discourse. In fact, he barely mentions it in *Being and Time* at all. The way in

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39 *B&T*, p. 56.
40 Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, §5.
41 *B&T*, p. 56.

which inferential or reason deploying discourse proceeds to ground its assertions is merely one type of elicitation among others. This fact will become very important in later chapters.[42]

Heidegger brings together these interpretations of 'phenomenon' and 'logos' to provide the sense of what he means by 'phenomenology': "[letting] that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself".[43] What this means is that phenomenology is the discourse through which what shows itself in all manifestation (but is covered over) is allowed to show itself (or is uncovered). We can also characterise this in the terms given above as the *thematization* of the unthematized content belonging to all ordinary experience. For Heidegger, this differentiates phenomenology from all other discourses, because it has no specific subject matter. This is to say that it does not concern itself with a particular domain of beings (e.g. the physical, the biological, the historical, etc.), but rather with all beings, and how they manifest as such *qua* beings. We can as such see Heidegger's motivation for equating phenomenology with ontology (the discourse upon, or science of Being), because, in taking as its object what is covered over in every manifestation of a being, he takes it that phenomenology concerns itself with the Being of beings in general. Phenomenology is thus the discourse of ontology, and in opposition to this all other disciplines (including the sciences) are *ontic* discourses. This distinction between the ontological and the ontic amounts to two different ways of understanding beings, in terms of the Being of beings in general, or in terms of differences between kinds of beings, respectively.

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42 See chapter 4, section 3, part *ii*.
43 *B&T*, p. 58.

ii) The Priority and Nature of Dasein

Having clarified Heidegger's understanding of 'phenomenon' we can now explain his initial account of the Being of the inquirer, the being which, in marked contrast to Husserl's 'consciousness', he dubs *Dasein*. On this basis, we can lay out Heidegger's argument for the priority of this being as that which must be interrogated in the inquiry into the meaning of Being. Reiterating what we laid out above, Heidegger has argued that the possibility of questioning belongs to the very Being of the inquirer, and it follows from this that Dasein's Being should be initially understood in terms of the preliminary account of the structure of questioning Heidegger has already provided. The most important aspect of this account is the prior understanding of the object required to ask any question. This means that in order to ask about any given being, Dasein must have some prior understanding of the Being of that being. Although it appears only after this insight is fully established, it is helpful to appeal to Heidegger's analysis of phenomena to understand this. For Heidegger, in each case, this prior understanding of the Being of a being is just that provided by an encounter with it, i.e., through its manifestation as something.[44] Indeed, this same grasp of a being's Being is the condition of any kind of comportment toward it, be it questioning or otherwise (e.g., desiring it). However, a questioning comportment also anticipates a further manifestation in response to it, i.e., an encounter or discovery which answers it (or forms the basis for the articulation of an answer in the form of a judgment).

Heidegger argues that in order for Dasein to have some understanding of the

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[44] This prior understanding of the Being of a being is later articulated more clearly as the *essence* of the being (c.f. *BQP*, ch. 2). However, it is important to point out that this is a very phenomenological conception of essence, because although it might be opposed to the notion of *accidents*, it is not opposed to the notion of *appearance* or *seeming*. For Heidegger, the essence is not what lies behind the being's manifestation, but rather is the core part of that manifestation itself. Although not articulated in terms of essence, Heidegger's thoughts on this are present in his discussion of the *as-structure* of understanding in the existential analytic. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

Being of any being it comports itself towards, it must have some understanding of the Being of beings in general. This understanding of Being is not a theory about Being, or an *ontology*, but is rather a condition of developing any ontology whatsoever. Heidegger thus calls it the *pre-ontological understanding of Being*.[45] It is important to note here that there are two different kinds of ontology that Heidegger is concerned with, the *regional ontology* (or the development of basic concepts) underlying the ontic sciences, which deals with the mode of Being of a particular domain of beings (e.g., the physical, the social, the mathematical, etc.), and the *fundamental ontology* of his own project which deals with the Being of all beings.[46] The relation between these two types of ontology is one of grounding, insofar as fundamental ontology is supposed to ground the practice of regional ontology by providing a concept of Being in general. More will be said about this later, but for now it is important to note that the pre-ontological understanding of Being is a necessary condition of both. However, whereas in regional ontology the pre-ontological understanding functions much as it does as a condition of comportment in general (albeit as grasping the mode of Being of a whole domain of beings), in fundamental ontology it provides the prior understanding of the object required to explicitly question Being *as such*. It is important to remember here that Heidegger strongly denies that Being is itself *a* being. This means that although Being is

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45 *B&T,* p. 35.

46 The project of fundamental ontology is sometimes read as identical with the inquiry into the Being of Dasein. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger seems to deny this, explicitly stating that: "The analytic of Dasein... is to prepare the way for the problematic of fundamental ontology – *the question of the meaning of Being in general.*" (*B&T*, p. 227) However, in *BPP* he states: "We therefore call the preparatory ontological analytic of the Dasein *fundamental ontology*... It can only be preparatory because it aims to establish the foundation for a radical ontology." (*BPP*, p. 224) It thus appears that what Heidegger means by 'fundamental ontology' shifts between these two works. This confusion is exacerbated by the fact that, despite Heidegger's retaining the question of Being as his problematic after *B&T,* he explicitly distances himself from the term 'fundamental ontology', and does this exactly as he distances himself from the idea that Being must be approached through the preparatory analytic of Dasein's Being. From this one would be tempted to conclude that fundamental ontology is not the analytic of Dasein, but rather the name of the methodological approach to the question of Being which takes its starting point in Dasein, which is the projected project of *B&T* as a whole. We will return to some of these issues later (in chapters 3 and 4), but for now we must make a decision as to how to use the term 'fundamental ontology'. For the moment, I will deploy the term in the original usage indicated in *B&T*, namely, as the project of grounding regional ontology through attempting to provide a concept of Being in general.

still the *object* of the question, and thus that there must be a prior understanding of it, it does not have the character of the prior understanding of an entity. This reveals the special status that this question has among questions, in that not only is it not a comportment towards a being, but also that the only prior understanding required to ask it is that understanding required to ask questions in general. However, this does imply that the *object* of a question need not always be a *being*.

Heidegger's aim is to establish the priority of Dasein in relation to the question on the basis of this pre-ontological understanding. In virtue of this understanding, Heidegger takes Dasein to be "ontically distinctive in that it *is* ontological."[47] This means that the kind of being that Dasein *is* is differentiated from other kinds of beings through having a relation to Being. This relation consists both in its pre-ontological understanding of Being, and in the possibility of questioning Being that this understanding provides. As Heidegger says, Dasein as inquirer "gets its essential character from what is inquired about – namely, Being"[48]. This is the basis of what Heidegger calls the *ontico-ontological priority* of Dasein.[49] The very fact that all ontology is only possible as an activity of Dasein, i.e., that it is a possibility belonging to Dasein's Being, makes Dasein the distinctive being which should be interrogated in the inquiry into the meaning of Being. However, Heidegger has not properly demonstrated that this pre-ontological understanding is an essential feature of Dasein's Being. The ontico-ontological priority of Dasein can only be established by showing that this understanding belongs to Dasein's mode of Being.

Dasein's Being has so far been understood in terms of its possibility of questioning in general, and then, through its possibility for questioning beings with regard to their Being, in terms of the understanding of Being in general that this

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47 *B&T*, p. 32.
48 Ibid., p. 27.
49 Ibid., p. 32.

requires. But, because we must now inquire into the Being of Dasein, and *we ourselves are Dasein*, this possibility of questioning beings with regard to their Being must be divided into Dasein's possibility of questioning itself and its possibility of questioning beings other than itself. Heidegger uses this twofold structure of questioning as it belongs to the Being of Dasein to introduce a twofold distinction in Being itself: between *existent* beings and *extant* beings.[50] This distinction elaborates the difference between Dasein and other beings opened up by Dasein's exclusive relation to Being. Moreover, it is a difference in mode of Being, such that there must be the possibility of a regional ontology of the mode of Being that Dasein exhibits.

Only beings of the character of Dasein *exist* in Heidegger's sense of the word.[51] Existent beings are those that can question themselves, and whose very Being is fundamentally structured by this possibility of questioning themselves. What this means is that the possibilities of existent beings are understood in terms of their questioning relation to these very possibilities. Dasein's possibilities are its ways of being (or existing), and as such they are possible answers to questions about itself and how it is. In turn, Dasein can only answer such questions by existing. It thus answers a question by being one way rather than another – by realising one of its possibilities, or, by making a choice (even withholding choice is itself a possibility of Dasein, and thus itself a choice). Even when it does actualise a possibility, this actuality is still understood as a possible way to continue actualising or to abandon. As Heidegger puts it: "Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence – in terms of a possibility

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50 It is important to note that the word '*vorhanden*' is translated in various ways: as 'present-at-hand', 'extant' and 'occurrent'. However, whereas later in *Being and Time* Heidegger distinguishes between occurrent and available (*zuhanden*) entities (see chapter 2), he initially uses the term to indicate all entities that are not Dasein. This sharp distinction between Dasein and non-Dasein is drawn explicitly in the first chapter (*B&T*, p. 71). As such, we use 'extant' for this earlier more general use, and 'occurrent' for the more technical use developed later.

51 Heidegger's notion of *Existenz* is not to be confused with the classical notion of existence, or the notion of that-being (*Dass-sein*) correlative to it.

of itself: to be itself or not itself."[52]

However, this means that the choices Dasein makes do not define *what it is*, as it can always choose to be another way. Rather, Dasein's what-being is characterised by its *existence* (*Existenz*), or the fact that it is related to its own Being in this way. By contrast, extant beings simply *are what they are*. This difference can also be understood two further ways. First, it can be understood in terms of the relation between possibility and actuality. Whereas *what* extant things are is a matter of actuality, Dasein *is* nothing other than its possibilities for Being.[53] Secondly, the difference between the existent and the extant can be understood as the difference between the 'who' and the 'what', because although Dasein does not determine *what it is* through choosing, it does *individuate* itself as *who it is*.[54] We can now see more clearly what we noted in the last section – that the difference in mode of Being between existent and extant entities is at least in part a matter of how their what-being and being-so is articulated.

All of this amounts to the fact that existence is constituted by a distinctive kind of self-relation. Unlike other entities, Dasein is *concerned* with its own possibilities. Given that Dasein just is its possibilities, this means that Dasein is "distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it."[55] Heidegger calls this the *ontic priority* of Dasein. However, this concern with its own Being also means that Dasein must have some understanding of its own *mode* of Being. The fact that Dasein is concerned with the particular possibilities presented to it implies that it must have some grasp of the general structure of these possibilities and its relation to them. Therefore, an understanding of existence is a constitutive feature of existence itself. Heidegger calls this the *ontological priority* of Dasein. Now, Heidegger argues that this understanding

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52 *B&T*, p. 33.
53 In the analytic of Dasein, Heidegger thus inverts the classic Aristotelian notion of the priority of actuality over possibility. Dasein just is its possibilities, and even the possibilities it actualises (through choosing them) are understood as possible ways it could continue to be.
54 *B&T*, p. 71.
55 Ibid., p. 32.

of existence must presuppose some understanding of Being *as such*. Moreover, he argues that this understanding of Being cannot simply be restricted to existence, but must extend to the Being of extant beings. This is because "being in a world is something that belongs essentially"[56] to Dasein. What this means is that Dasein's possibilities essentially involve ways of comporting itself toward beings other than itself, such as questioning.[57] Dasein thus has a pre-ontological understanding of Being which incorporates an understanding of the modes of Being of both existent and extant beings. In demonstrating this, Heidegger has shown the ontico-ontological priority of Dasein, and thus also that Dasein is the being which is to be interrogated in the inquiry into the meaning of Being.[58]

Moving on, Heidegger applies the distinction between the ontological and the ontic to the distinction between the existent and the extant. This combination leads to a distinction between the *existential* and the *existentiell* structures of the existent Dasein's Being[59]. The former existential structures are the ontological aspects of the Being of existent Dasein, whereas the existentiell structures are the ontic aspects. Dasein's various choices or possibilities are thus understood as existentiell modes of its Being. Also, in opposition to the existential, the ontological aspects of extant beings are understood, following the tradition from Aristotle to Kant, as *categories.*[60] Thus, Heidegger can then specify that the inquiry into the meaning of Being must proceed via an *existential analytic of Dasein.*[61] This means an inquiry into the structures of existence *qua* existence, which is necessary because it is these structures which constitute

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56 Ibid., p. 33.
57 This point isn't really justified in the introduction, but it does become clear in the subsequent analysis of the existential structure of Dasein. See chapter 2 for a more in depth discussion of this.
58 It is interesting to note that the three different priorities that Dasein displays correspond to the three levelled account of Being provided earlier. Dasein is concerned with its own *particular* Being (ontic priority), it has an understanding of its *mode* of Being (ontological priority), and it has an understanding of Being *in general* (ontico-ontological priority).
59 *B&T*, p. 33.
60 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
61 Ibid., p. 33.

Dasein's pre-ontological understanding of the meaning of Being. This existential analytic is a kind of *regional ontology,* because it is a description of the mode of Being belonging to a certain domain of beings, namely, human Dasein.[62] However, Dasein's ontico-ontological priority means that this domain is not simply one among others. All other regions are domains of *extant* beings, whereas there can only be one domain of *existent* beings, and the regional ontology of this domain – the existential analytic – grounds the regional ontology of all other domains (including, as we shall see, itself), precisely through being the necessary preliminary to fundamental ontology. Moreover, just as fundamental ontology in general is made possible by Dasein's pre-ontological understanding of Being in general, so the existential analytic is made possible by Dasein's understanding of itself *qua* existent.

iii) The Direction of *Being and Time*

We will conclude this rehearsal of Heidegger's initial attempt to formulate the question by briefly sketching the direction in which it leads. Heidegger identifies that the resulting inquiry (the inquiry into the meaning of Being via the Being of Dasein) takes the form of a *hermeneutic circle*. This is opposed to a vicious circle, which, as Heidegger points out, the structure of the inquiry can be easily confused for.[63] This confusion is generated by the fact that we are trying to determine the Being of all beings on the basis of first determining the mode of Being belonging to a specific domain of

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62 This regional ontology of Dasein, as well as playing the role of preliminary to *fundamental ontology*, was also meant to play the role of grounding the *geisteswissenschaften* (which could loosely be translated as the human sciences). This aspect of the project is made more explicit in its earlier version, *History of the Concept of Time* (pp. 1-7). This is a goal that Heidegger inherited from Dilthey and Count Yorck, along with a conviction that the *geisteswissenschaften* are fundamentally distinct from the natural sciences. This is indicated in *B&T* (§77), and Theodore Kisiel has done admirable work further explicating this influence on the early Heidegger in his book *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*.

63 *B&T*, pp. 27-28.

beings, while the proper understanding of the latter seems to require a proper understanding of the former. However, Heidegger maintains that rather than being engaged in a process of deducing the former from the latter, which would entail vicious circularity and make the inquiry impossible, we are engaged in a hermeneutic process of allowing our provisional understanding of one to illuminate the other, and vice versa, thus progressively enhancing our understanding of each through a process of mutual revision.[64] As such, the existential analytic is only a preliminary account, which proceeds by way of our pre-ontological understanding of Being, and which must ultimately be revised on the basis of the account of Being it leads us to.[65] The analytic is founded upon the basic insight that Dasein's Being distinguishes itself as *Being-in-the-world*. We won't go into what this means in detail here[66], but it is important to note that, on the basis of this insight, Heidegger posits a second hermeneutic circle which is purely internal to the existential analytic itself. This is due to the fact that Being-in-the-world is a unitary phenomenon. As such, its individual parts (Being-in, world, and the who of Dasein) can only be understood in relation to their place within the whole structure, meaning that any attempt to elucidate these parts must be continually revised in light of their relations to one another as they appear.

As we have shown, the existential analytic of Dasein performs two complementary functions. The first of these is the elaboration of the structure of questioning as a possibility belonging to the Being of Dasein. This is not something which takes place after the formulation of the question of the meaning of Being, but rather is the continuation of this formulation. As we have seen, Heidegger claimed that

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64 See chapter 2, section 1, part *ii* for a more detailed discussion of Heidegger's account of hermeneutic understanding.

65 Heidegger makes this point explicitly in the second half of the introduction to *B&T* (p. 38). It is possible to read this statement as referring to the provisional status of Division I, and its repetition in Division II. However, the original projection of Division III includes as its third part the 'Thematic analysis of Dasein, or renewed repetition of the preparatory analysis of Dasein' (Thomas Sheehan, '"Time and Being" 1925-27', p. 188, in *Thinking about Being*).

66 See chapter 2.

the question could only be formulated by bringing out its special status in relation to other questions. Although this special status was provisionally indicated in relation to the preliminary understanding of questioning Heidegger laid out in his introduction, it can only be fully elaborated when the structure of questioning is understood completely. Thus, the complete formulation of the question of the meaning of Being is its delineation as an existentiell possibility of Dasein's Being, based upon the existential structures which ground questioning in general. The second of these is the beginning of the inquiry into the meaning of Being itself via interrogating that being which has priority in relation to the question, in virtue of the fact that its Being is structured in terms of its relation to Being in general. However, the aspects of Dasein which provide this relation are precisely just this existentiell possibility of asking the question of Being and the existential structures supplying the pre-ontological understanding of Being in which it is grounded. The two functions of the existential analytic coincide perfectly, and it is thus the case that for Heidegger the formulation of the question of the meaning of Being does not take place before the question is asked, as if it were separate from it, but is properly the beginning of asking the question itself.

Division I culminates in an interpretation of Dasein's Being as *care*. Heidegger attempts to give a new and very complex meaning to this word, which we cannot analyse without recapitulating the rest of the existential analytic that we have skipped over. However, this interpretation of Dasein as care is not a *primordial* interpretation.[67] This is because it does not grasp the Being of Dasein as a unified whole. Heidegger's important claim is that the only way to consider Dasein in such a way is in terms of its *being-towards-death*, which underlies its individuating self-relation and as such provides the unity of its existence. However, this being-towards-death can only be understood in terms of temporality, and as such the analysis needs to be recapitulated, so

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67 *B&T*, pp. 274-278.

as to reinterpret Dasein's existential structures in these terms, thus effectuating the hermeneutic circle internal to the analytic. This analysis of Dasein in terms of what Heidegger calls its *ecstatic temporality* (Division II) was then supposed to lay the ground for the inquiry into Being in general beyond the Being of Dasein, but the published version of the book ends before this is achieved. Although the existential analytic it contains provides a variety of additional resources for formulating the question of Being, and Heidegger hints repeatedly at the important role that time will play in the corresponding inquiry, it falls short of fulfilling either of its functions. However, there are several works which cover some of the ground originally projected to be tackled in the unpublished sections of the book.[68]

Heidegger's original intention was to demonstrate that temporality is the condition of the possibility of Dasein's pre-ontological understanding of Being, and on this basis to secure time as the *horizon* for the interpretation of the meaning of Being. The resulting interpretation would then locate the meaning of Being in the structure of *primordial temporality* (*Temporalität*), and settle many of the problems of classical ontology in temporal terms. *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* goes some way toward doing this[69], and as such provides the closest thing to the complete formulation of the question, and the beginning of the fundamental ontological inquiry itself, that Heidegger originally intended. Regardless, Heidegger's work proceeds scarcely any further along the path it outlines. The promise of an answer to the question of the meaning of Being interpreted in terms of time was never fulfilled, at least not in the way initially imagined.[70]

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68 Most important among these are *BPP* and *KPM*.

69 *BPP*, part II. See chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of this.

70 Heidegger's later work does not abandon this insight about the essential relation between Being and time, but it develops it in a way very different from his earlier approach. This is best evidenced by the symposium *Time and Being,* which shares the title of the projected Division III of Part I of *Being and Time* that was never published. However, this must be understood in the context of the shift in Heidegger's understanding of the question, which is discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

3. Unanswered Questions

Before moving beyond *Being and Time* to address the way that Heidegger tries to complete the formulation of the question he begins there, and the various changes that his approach to the question subsequently goes through, it is important to address an issue that the preliminary formulation is rather unclear about, namely, what Heidegger means by 'meaning' in his preliminary formulation of the question of the *meaning* of Being. We can break this down into three interrelated issues: what it is to ask the question of the meaning of Being as opposed to the more obvious question 'What is Being?', whether there must be some understanding of the nature of meaning as a condition of formulating the question correlative to that of the understanding of the structure of questioning, and what precisely it is to interpret the meaning of Being on this basis. Heidegger says several things about the first issue, albeit without making it entirely clear what his position is, he is strangely silent on the second, despite actually providing an in depth account of the nature of meaning in the existential analytic itself, and he is also unclear on the third, despite also providing a general account of interpretation in the existential analytic. If we are to have any hope of assessing the effectiveness of Heidegger's initial attempt to formulate the question, then we must first deal with these considerations.

i) The Question of Meaning

The first issue that concerns us is why Heidegger asks after the *meaning* of Being. On the face of it, such a question seems opposed to that regarding Being as it is *in itself*, *in truth*, or *in essence*. Given this, it is important to understand why Heidegger asks the

question of the meaning of Being rather than the question "What is Being?". Of course, the obvious answer to this is that the problem Heidegger diagnoses, and proposes to solve at the beginning of *Being and Time,* is that we do not know what this expression 'Being' means, not that we do not know what that which the expression refers to – Being – *is*. However, this is not an entirely satisfactory response. Importantly, it tells us nothing about the relation between these questions, such as whether the question of the meaning of Being is a necessary precursor to asking what Being is, or whether it precludes any such question.

Furthermore, Heidegger's approach to the question as a question of meaning seems to escape the ordinary logic of such questions. For instance, although Heidegger raises the problem by asking after the meaning of the expression 'Being', wreathed in quotation marks, he quickly disquotes the word, and his usage in the rest of the work suggests that he is talking about its referent – Being – directly.[71] More problematically though, as we have already noted, Heidegger explicitly interprets the question of the meaning of Being as taking Being itself as its object, rather than an expression, a meaning, or some other purely intentional object. When taken together with the fact that Heidegger for the most part disquotes 'Being', this would seem to indicate that Heidegger is really concerned with what Being *is*, rather than what 'Being' *means*. It seems like the only way to get a grip on the significance of the fact that the question is a question of meaning is to understand the relation between these two kinds of question: "What is **x**?" and "What does '**x**' mean?", or what we might call questions of *essence* and questions of *meaning*, respectively.[72]

Now, as we've already noted, Heidegger does provide his own theory of

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71 This is an interpretative problem that others have come up against, such as Herman Philipse in his book *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being* (p. 32), and Ernst Tugendhat in *Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination* (pp. 147-150).

72 It is important to note that we aren't proposing an account of what constitutes *essence* here. By essence we simply mean *whatness*, or *quiddity*, and this is simply to be understood in terms of the structure of "What is…?" questions, rather than the other way around.

meaning within the existential analytic. It would thus seem to be a sensible suggestion that we tackle this theory first, and then give an account of the significance of the question as a question of meaning on its basis. However, this approach is undesirable for a number of reasons. First and foremost, doing so would prevent us from providing a genuine answer to the second question we posed above, namely, whether we require some understanding of meaning in order to formulate the question (analogous to that of questioning), insofar as it would concede that the question only makes sense in relation to Heidegger's completed theory of meaning. Secondly, although we are indeed concerned with Heidegger's formulation of the question here, our aims are not strictly exegetical. We are attempting to get a grip on the question that will let us assess Heidegger's approach to it, and it is thus important to separate out the structural features of the question from other aspects of Heidegger's thought wherever possible. Finally, leaping straight in to a discussion of Heidegger's theory of meaning would obscure any reasons why the question of Being must be a question of meaning that are independent of the specific way Heidegger conceives the nature of meaning.

Given this, we will initially consider the question of Being in relation to the ordinary logic of questions of meaning and essence. Ultimately, we will need to supplement this with an account of Heidegger's theory of meaning, but in taking this approach the various issues will be laid out more clearly. Moreover, in attacking the problem this way, we will remain true to the original quandary through which Heidegger motivates his project, namely, that there is some familiar sense of the word 'meaning' in which we do not know what the word 'Being' means. It is all to easy to lose sight of this problem if we simply defer to the fact that Heidegger has his own, idiosyncratic notion of meaning. However, there are two difficulties confronting this approach. On the one hand, our analysis of the question should no more be dependent

on some alternative theory of meaning than it should be on Heidegger's account. On the other, we must be careful not to make any claims that are incompatible with Heidegger's account of meaning, lest we present the question as something wholly other than what Heidegger has in mind. We will thus try to restrict ourselves to claims about the way these different kinds of question are *used*, rather than trying to give an account of the nature of meaning itself.[73]

The first thing to get clear about is that, when we are talking about questions of meaning, we are talking about questions which ask after the meaning of an expression (e.g., 'dog', 'red', or 'Being'). We are thus unconcerned with questions about what complete sentences mean, be they individual sentences or sets of them (e.g., 'What does "The cat sat on the mat" *mean*?', or 'What does Joyce *mean* in the first paragraph of Ulysses?'). We are also unconcerned with a variety of other questions which are putatively about 'meaning', such as questions about the underlying intent or purpose of some action (e.g., 'What did he *mean* by doing that?'), or the wider significance and consequences of some fact or state of affairs (e.g., 'What does the selection of a new chancellor *mean* for the university?').

We can also exclude questions about the meaning of an expression that are relative to a given speaker (or group), such as "What does Hegel *mean* by 'Spirit'?", because neither does Heidegger offer any suggestion as to whose use of the expression 'Being' he is interested in, nor would it make any sense for him to do so, given the above discussion of his attempts to formulate the question. Now, when we talk about the meaning of an expression there is a group of speakers to whom the question is implicitly related, namely, the speakers of the language that the expression is part of (e.g., "What does 'dog' mean in English?"). This implicit reference is of course necessary to

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73 This does not mean that we will refrain from using technical vocabulary, such as logical and grammatical terms. These are necessary to describe the subtle features of our use of questions of meaning, but they need not imply anything about what meaning *is*.

disambiguate cases in which the same word means different things in different languages. However, this kind of relativity is different to that of the previous kind of question, insofar as we are not interested in what any given member of this group of speakers takes the expression to mean, but rather what they *should* take it to mean. Questions which are not relative to a particular speaker or group thus ask after the *ideal* or *proper* meaning of the expression.

The *prima facie* difference between questions of meaning and questions of essence is that the former demands less than the latter. If we ask "What does 'mitochondria' mean?" we will generally settle for a short explanation, something which is good enough to let us develop a grasp of what is talked about (e.g., 'Mytochondria are a part of animal cells'). On the other hand, it seems that if we already have such a grasp, we may still ask 'What *are* mytochondria?', and that in this case we are asking for something more, such as a detailed elaboration of the current theories surrounding the nature and origin of mytochondria. Now, the problem with this intuition is that the grasp we require of an expression can be more or less refined, often depending on the technicality of the discourse in which it is used (e.g., we might need to know *which* part of the cell is a mytochondria, in order to keep up with a presentation on cell structure). However, it seems as if, if there was a dispute over the real nature of mytochondria (e.g., over the way they function in relation to other parts of the cell), then asking 'What does 'mytochondria' mean?' should *at most* get us to the point where we can understand the dispute, and the answer should not settle it. In these cases, it seems like the dispute about what mytochondria *are* is distinct from a dispute about what 'mytochondria' *means*.

Now there are those that hold that there is in fact no distinction here, not because we have any authority over what things are, but rather because things have authority

over what we mean. Such *semantic externalists* effectively collapse questions of meaning into questions of essence (e.g., what 'mytochondria' *means* just is what mytochondria *are*).[74] I won't argue for or against this view here, as to do so would be to advocate precisely the kind of theory of meaning we are trying to avoid. Nonetheless, I think it is unimportant, because even if there are questions of meaning distinct from questions of essence, the question of Being cannot be one of them. We must now endeavour to demonstrate this.

To show this it is helpful to understand how the two kinds of question can overlap. The first way is in what we might call *casual* questions of essence. These are questions of the form 'What is x?' that are used in essentially the same way as questions of meaning. This is to say that they are used simply to get a grip on the use of an expression, rather than to push past this to more substantive issues where potential disagreements lurk. For example, if I have never heard the word turbulence before, I might ask 'What is turbulence?' in place of 'What does 'turbulence' mean?', and be quite willing to accept an answer which stops short of discussions of fluid mechanics. There is nothing strictly wrong with such casual questions, but it is important to note that they do not indicate a proper structural overlap between questions of essence and questions of meaning, as much as they indicate that there is a blurry line between the levels of understanding each kind of question seeks. On the other hand, there is a serious overlap in the case of terms with stipulated definitions. For example, it seems as if there can be no difference between the answer to the question 'What is a bachelor?' and 'What does 'bachelor' mean?' insofar as we accept that a bachelor is nothing more than an unmarried man. This is most definitely a more structural overlap between the two kind of question.

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74 Saul Kripke and Hilary Putnam are the most famous semantic externalists, although there are differences between their positions. Robert Brandom also holds to a variant of semantic externalism, although it is quite radically different from both Kripke and Putnam's positions.

Here we run into the traditional problems surrounding the analytic/synthetic distinction. This is the idea that there are some claims that are true in virtue of their meaning (e.g., 'All bachelors are unmarried') and some claims whose truth is independent of their meaning (e.g., 'Mytochondrial DNA is always inherited from the mother'), these claims being analytic and synthetic, respectively. Given the fact that the debate over Quine's famous critique of the distinction has still not yet settled, and that we still wish to refrain from advocating any particular theoretical account of meaning, we will not endeavour to take a stance on whether such a distinction can be drawn. However, we can see that these issues are present in our discussion of the difference between questions of meaning and questions of essence. It seems that the questions pull apart precisely insofar as the expression can be used to express true claims that are in excess of the true claims which constitute answers to the question of what the expression means (putatively *synthetic* truths), and they converge in those cases where there is no excess (where there are only putatively *analytic* ones).

The reason that the questions converge in the case of defined terms is that the authority underlying the term seems to be something that in some very loose sense 'we' have contributed. In some sense, *we* have defined bachelors as unmarried men, and, insofar as that definition is held firm, there is nothing more about what bachelors *are* that can be uncovered. On the other hand, regardless of how we have begun using the word 'mytochondria' to refer to mytochondria (whether through an originary act of naming or through a provisional definition), our continued experiments and the debates surrounding them may uncover what mytochondria *are* in excess of any grasp we have of them in using the term 'mytochondria' properly. In this latter case, mytochondria themselves are given some authority over what we should say about them, in a way that bachelors are not.

If, *contra* semantic externalism, questions of meaning can be given some independence from questions of essence, it is precisely insofar as there is some sense in which the proper meaning they seek is not determined by the things themselves. This means that if questions of meaning are to be distinct from questions of essence, that they must in some way appeal to an authority other than that of the things themselves. This appeal is indicated by the implicit reference that questions of meaning make to the community of language speakers. However, Heidegger does not relativise the question of the meaning of Being in any such way. He does indeed take it that all Dasein have a pre-ontological understanding of Being, which falls short of a proper understanding of Being, but all Dasein do not thereby constitute a linguistic community that uses the same word for Being. Moreover, even if we could read this pre-ontological understanding as analogous to a linguistic understanding of an expression, Heidegger does not present the question *simply* as a matter of making it explicit, but rather as a matter of trying to develop this preliminary understanding into a proper understanding of the thing in itself (a genuine *concept* of Being). As such, if we can separate questions of meaning from questions of essence in terms of some limit beyond which the former will not push, then the question of the meaning of Being cannot be an ordinary question of meaning, insofar as the fact that it takes Being itself as its object *could* always force it past such a limit.

Thus, either there is no substantive difference between questions of meaning and questions of essence, or there is a difference, but it is not one that can support an interpretation of the question of Being as a question of meaning. Given this, and the fact that Heidegger's own use of language is often ambiguous, it might seem reasonable to interpret Heidegger as simply asking the question "What is Being?", albeit in a slightly confused manner. However, in the introduction to *Being and Time,* Heidegger implicitly

differentiates his own question from the question "What is 'Being'?".[75] This textual evidence should not be abandoned, because it provides a good reason *why* we cannot ask what Being is. The reason is that in asking that question "we keep within an understanding of the 'is', though we are unable to fix conceptually what that 'is' signifies."[76] Essentially, what this means is that asking what Being *is* already presupposes some understanding of Being, as expressed here in the copula 'is'. Of course, there are already two other senses in which an understanding of Being is presupposed in asking this question: firstly, the sense in which any questioning comportment requires some understanding of Being; and secondly, the sense in which any question requires some understanding of its object, the object in this case being Being itself. However, this new sense is special, because the very form of the question is sensitive to the answer to be provided.

It might be objected to this that our pre-ontological grasp of the 'is' seems good enough for other claims we make, and so should be good enough for claims about Being. However, Being is manifestly an unusual case, and it is by no means obvious whether the 'is' functions in the same way in relation to it as it does with other things. Whether this is the case or not is thus to be determined by inquiring into Being, and it is for this reason that the question has a peculiarly reflexive structure. Although this is not technically a problem for a complete answer to the question (because it would fully specify both what Being *is* and thus also what the 'is' here signifies), it is very problematic for any partial answer. Given that answers do not spring fully formed from the ether, but are the culmination of processes of inquiry that proceed via such partial answers, this makes a genuine inquiry into 'what Being *is*' impossible in virtue of its own form[77].

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75 *B&T*, p. 25.
76 Ibid.
77 It is evident from the text that Heidegger's concern with this reflexivity stays constant, because in

We are thus left with an apparent paradox: the question of Being cannot be a question of meaning in any *ordinary* sense, nor can it be a disguised question of essence, and these are the only *apparent* options. If this was the case, then Heidegger's whole project, and our own attempt to rekindle it, would be doomed from the start. However, if we turn to some of the sources motivating Heidegger's taking up of the question of Being, we will find further resources to understand in what sense the question of Being is a question of meaning.

ii) The Origins of the Question

Heidegger famously stated that his interest in the question of the meaning of Being came about through his introduction to Brentano's book *On the Many Senses of Being in Aristotle.*[78] This book opened his eyes to the problem of the unity of the manifold ways in which 'Being' is said by Aristotle. However, whereas Brentano stands firmly in the tradition which reads Aristotle as binding the various senses of 'Being' together by means of the primary category of *substance*, Heidegger rejects this interpretation, and sees in Aristotle the beginnings of something far greater: "This sentence, [beings are said in many ways], is a constant refrain in Aristotle. But it is not just a formula. Rather, in this short sentence Aristotle formulates the wholly fundamental and new position that he worked out in philosophy in relation to all of his predecessors, including Plato; not in the sense of a system but in the sense of a task."[79] Heidegger takes it that Aristotle's positing of a manifold of senses of Being is not simply the analysis of the various

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talking about being directly (saying that Being 'is' this way or that way), he places quotation marks around the 'is' to stress the problematic character of such expressions. For example: "Being 'is' only in the understanding of those entities to whose Being something like an understanding of Being belongs." (*B&T*, p. 228).

78 In both 'My Way to Phenomenology', and his letter to William Richardson published as the preface to Richardson's *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought.*

79 *AM*, p. 10.

contingently related senses of a homonym, but rather that this manifold expression "implies a certain pervasive oneness of the understood significations".[80] To provide some further background, Heidegger follows Brentano in interpreting Aristotle as dividing the saying of 'Being' into four distinct senses: potential and actual being, being as being-true, accidental being, and the being of the categories. This fourfold division is further complicated by the tenfold multiplicity of the categories, substance being the primary category of which the other nine (quantity, quality, relation, place, time, action, affection, possession, and position) are attributes.

So, Heidegger acknowledges that, for Aristotle, substance plays the role of unifying the multiplicity of the categories, but denies that it unifies the fourfold multiplicity. He also denies that the fourfold is not unified at all, as if the various senses of 'Being' were entirely unrelated, and fell under the same word by accident. To justify this latter point he takes up Aristotle's claim that there is a unity of analogy between the four senses, and tries to elaborate what such a unity could mean.[81] He does this by taking the word 'healthy' as his example, and looking at several different ways it is used: as describing a state of an organism (e.g., 'being a healthy person'), as describing something that indicates health (e.g., 'having a healthy complexion'), and as describing something which promotes health (e.g., 'going for a walk is healthy'). These different senses of healthy are certainly not unrelated (as are for instance the 'bank' of a river and a 'bank' one can deposit money in), yet they are not unified by a single genus, of which they would be species. Rather, the latter two senses are related via the first and primary

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80 Ibid., p. 28.
81 Philipse attempts to provide an analysis of the relation between Heidegger's question of Being and the Aristotelian problematic in the second chapter of his book. Here he points out correctly that there is a confusion between analogy proper and the phenomenon of *paronymy*, and that Aristotle himself confuses the issue at at least one point (pp. 89-93). However, in the tradition following Aristotle this unity has come to be discussed under the title of the *analogia entis*, and Heidegger retains this practice. As such, we will follow both the tradition and Heidegger himself in referring to it as a unity of analogy. For an even more detailed discussion of the various ways the same word can be taken to mean different things and the relation of this to the Heideggerian problematic, see Kris McDaniel, 'Ways of Being' (*Metametaphysics*, pp. 290-319). However, I do not agree with McDaniel's conclusions about Heidegger's project, and will address them below.

sense of the word. It is this kind of interrelation of senses through a "sustaining and guiding basic meaning"[82], which characterises the unity of analogy.

Although Heidegger takes Aristotle to conceive of the unity of the fourfold sense of 'Being' in this way, he does not take Aristotle to have actually posited a primary sense of 'Being' (not even the being of the categories, itself unified by substance) let alone to have uncovered the structure linking the various senses via this primary sense.[83] It is important to note that locating the primary sense of 'Being' is not the same as unveiling the underlying structural unity of the manifold of senses, even though it is a necessary part of it.[84] Essentially, Heidegger sees in Aristotle's declaration of the manifold senses of 'Being' the original posing of the question of the meaning of Being, understood here as the question concerning the structural unity underlying this manifold. It is in this sense that Aristotle has set up a *task* rather than a system. Yet, after Aristotle this task was forgotten, and the unity of analogy ceased to indicate the promise of an underlying structure, and came simply to indicate an *aporia* – an insurmountable difference between the various senses of 'Being'.[85]

Despite the fact that Heidegger finds much inspiration in the work of Aristotle, it

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82 *AM*, p. 33.
83 Here Heidegger is in disagreement not only with Brentano but also with much of subsequent Aristotle scholarship. For instance, Philipse (pp. 87-98) constructs an interpretation of Aristotle at odds with Heidegger on precisely this point, although it is arguable that he doesn't seem to recognise how these differences undermine his own reading of Heidegger's relation to Aristotle. It should also be noted that Heidegger's reading of Aristotle on this particular point seems to shift, and that he at times characterises Aristotle as providing a direct, albeit inadequate, answer to the question as part of the metaphysical tradition. Regardless, we needn't take Heidegger's interpretation to be correct in order to recognise how his particular reading of Aristotle shaped his concern with the question of Being.
84 It is on precisely this point that Philipse (p. 6) falls into confusion. He equates the task of unifying the manifold of senses of 'Being' with the task of finding a primary sense. It is on this basis that he outright rejects the idea that the question of the meaning of Being can be interpreted in these Aristotelian terms, due to the fact that Heidegger nowhere sets up his inquiry as pursuing such a fundamental sense. We will discuss this in more detail below.
85 *AM*, p. 28. Heidegger also shows that this aporia did not only cover over the question of Being, but was effectively used by Christian theology to sustain the separation between man and God, in the scholastic doctrine of the equivocity of Being (Ibid., p. 38). On this account, God and his creations are not beings in the same sense, but only analogously, and all other predicates that can be said of God and his creations are split in the same way (e.g., God is not wise in the sense that a man can be wise, but only analogously). This kind of analogy doesn't set us up to determine the underlying relation between the different senses of these predicates, but is instead used to make the unknowability of God compatible with claims about his existence, perfection, goodness and the like.

is clear that he does not take up the question of the meaning of Being by attempting to unify the manifold of senses of 'Being' that Aristotle presents. Much can be said about Heidegger's inversion of Aristotle's privileging of actuality over potentiality, or indeed of his attempts to locate many of the themes that will come to make up *Being and Time* in his early work on Aristotle[86], but none of this amounts to taking up the problem exactly as he finds it in Aristotle. Nonetheless, that Heidegger does not take over verbatim Aristotle's own account of the manifold senses of 'Being' does not mean that he does not accept that there is such a manifold, nor that the task of the question of the meaning of Being is the uncovering of its underlying unity. Indeed, although Heidegger never lays out a definitive list of the manifold senses of 'Being', there is another indication that he pursued a unifying agenda. This can be found in his opposition to the neo-Kantian division of actuality, passed down from Lotze, through Windelbrand, Rickert and Lask (these latter three forming the major part of the Baden school of neo-Kantianism), by whom he was influenced significantly in his early philosophical development.[87]

Lotze initially divided actuality into four kinds: the being of things, the happening of events, the obtaining of relations, and the validity of sentences.[88] Following Lotze, this fourfold distinction was abandoned, but the distinction between Being and validity (*Sein* and *Geltung*) was retained as the defining feature of the so-called value philosophy of the neo-Kantians.[89] The fundamental upshot of this

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86 Cf. *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*; 'Being-there and Being-true in Aristotle' in *Becoming Heidegger* ed. Theodore Kisiel; *LQT*, Part I.

87 A very good account of Heidegger's relation to these thinkers, specifically with regard to the problem of truth, can be found in Daniel Dahlstrom's book *Heidegger's Concept of Truth*, and a treatment more based on the concept of meaning can be found in Steven Galt Crowell's *Husserl, Heidegger and the Space of Meaning*. The brief remarks on Heidegger's relation to neo-Kantianism here are based primarily on a reading of these works and on Heidegger's own comments of the philosophy of value in his early lectures, published in *TDP* and *LQT*.

88 *LQT*, p. 58.

89 It is important to note that the standard translation of the neo-Kantian concept of *Geltung* as validity does not imply much of what modern logic means by validity, namely, the truth preserving character of inferences. This kind of validity is simply one kind of correctness, whereas the neo-Kantian notions of validity and value are meant to be associated with the act of *evaluation* in general, meaning that

distinction is the severing of the relation between being and being-true, as truths are no longer understood to 'be' (as in "**p** *is* true" or "**p** *is* the case"), but rather to 'hold' ("**p** holds"). Despite being brought up in this philosophical climate, and undoubtedly being influenced by it[90], Heidegger rejects this division in both its forms. Heidegger specifically takes issue with the emptiness of this concept of *actuality*, which, as a stand in for Being proper, does nothing to unite the various things under consideration. More importantly, however, Heidegger rejects the separation of being-true from Being that the concept of validity engenders. This is significant, because a proper analysis of the concept of truth plays an absolutely central role in his inquiry into the meaning of Being, both in *Being and Time* and the work that leads up to it[91], and even more explicitly in the work that comes after, wherein it becomes the starting point for the inquiry into Being.[92] We will examine the role of truth in Heidegger's philosophy in more detail in later chapters.[93]

For now, it is very tempting to read Heidegger as attempting to uncover the unifying structure underlying the various senses of 'Being', by means of an inquiry into being-true as the primary sense which relates the others.[94] This becomes an even more attractive interpretation if we turn to Heidegger's early paper 'Being-there and Being-true in Aristotle', in which he attempts to reinterpret the significance of being-true in Aristotle in a way which leads to many of the structures put forward in his later

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they indicate correctness *per se*. Most contemporary discussion of these issues would instead use the concept of *normativity*, and it is interesting to note that this term (or a suitable German analog) is indeed deployed by Heidegger in his discussion of value philosophy (*TDP*, pp. 28-29, and 112).

90 Heidegger was a student of Rickert. However, it has been argued that Heidegger owes even more to Lask's thought, particularly in his early *Habilitationsschrift*, but also in the development of his thought up to and including *Being and Time* (Galt Crowell, ch. 3; Kisiel, 'Why students of Heidegger must read Emil Lask', in *Heidegger's Way of Thought*).

91 Cf. *B&T*, p. 228; § 44; *LQT* part II.

92 'On the Essence of Truth' indicates this crucial turning point in his philosophy, but the best account of how the question of the essence of truth plays this fundamental role leading up to his second major work, *Contributions to Philosophy*, can be found in *Basic Questions of Philosophy*.

93 See chapter 3.

94 This is a suggestion also made by William Vallicella in his paper 'Heidegger's Reduction of Being to Truth', *The New Scholasticism* 59 (1985), pp. 156-76.

existential analytic of Dasein, particularly those dealing with assertion, idle talk, and truth as disclosedness. Moreover, he also tries to give an account of how, despite this apparently advanced understanding of truth, Aristotle is led toward an erroneous understanding of Being as *presence* on its very basis. This latter fact underscores Heidegger's concern with the importance of the relation between being-true and the unifying problematic that Aristotle initiated. This is about as close as Heidegger comes to taking up the problem in Aristotle's own terms.[95]

Nonetheless, as we have already pointed out, Heidegger does not pursue this problem in Aristotle's own terms, nor does he provide anything like a definitive analysis of what he takes the various senses of 'Being' to be in distinction to Aristotle, from which his inquiry is meant to proceed. However, despite the lack of a definitive account, Heidegger does at different points talk about different senses of 'Being'. The closest Heidegger comes to discussing this in *Being and Time* is in the introduction:-

> But there are many things which we designate as 'being' ["*seiend*"], and we do so in various senses. Everything we talk about, everything we have in view, everything towards which we comport ourselves in any way, is being; what we are is being, and so is how we are. Being [*Sein*] lies in the fact that something is [*Dass-sein*], and in its Being as it is [*Sosein*]; in Reality; in presence-at-hand; in subsistence; in validity; in Dasein; in the 'there is'.[96]

Of course, Heidegger here is providing a breakdown of different senses of both 'Being' (*Sein*) and 'being' (s*eiend*), and, as we have already noted, these two terms should not be confused. Given the context of this passage, neither the elucidation of the manifold

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95 It is important to note that this paper was written prior to the publication of *Being and Time* in 1925, whereas the lectures on Aristotle from which we have taken Heidegger's interpretation of the problem of the manifold senses of 'Being' is after *Being and Time* in 1931. However, I do not feel that this detracts in any significant way from the point being made.
96 *B&T*, p. 26, german terms added.

sense of 'Being' nor of 'being' can be taken to provide a programmatic statement of the structure of the project. As such, they do not provide anything like an explicit reworking of the Aristotelian problem. Moreover, the multiple forms of Being that Heidegger addresses (that-being, being-so, Reality, presence-at-hand, subsistence, validity, Dasein, and the 'there is') are a mix of both what were earlier called *aspects* (e.g., that-being) and *modes* (e.g., subsistence) of Being. However, that Heidegger mentions these in the course of addressing the different ways in which we talk of beings indicates that these are different ways of talking about the Being of these beings, or different ways in which 'Being' is said.

In addition to these scant remarks in *Being and Time*, there are more in depth discussions of aspects of Being in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* and *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. It is in these texts that Heidegger comes to focus on the aspects of Being we outlined in the first section: what-being, being-so, that-being, and being-true.[97] Although some of these concepts were in play earlier (that-being and being-so), as we can see from the above quote from *Being and Time*, the four of them are tackled together in these later works. The reason for this is found in *Basic Problems*, where he traces them from the four characteristic uses of the copula ('is'):-

1. The "is", or its [B]eing, equals whatness, essentia.

2. The "is" equals existence, existentia.

3. The "is" equals truth, or as it is also called today, validity.

4. Being is a function of combination and thus an index of predication.[98]

From these four different senses in which the copula can be used (e.g., 'man *is* the

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97 They are also briefly mentioned together in *KPM* (pp. 154-155).
98 *BPP*, p. 202.

rational animal', 'God *is*', 'It *is* the case that snow is white', 'earth *is* the third planet from the sun') Heidegger draws the different senses of 'Being' listed above (what-being, that-being, being-true, and being-so, respectively). He takes the fact that the copula is ambiguous between these different senses not to be a defect, but rather to be "an expression of the *intrinsically manifold structure of the [B]eing of a being* – and consequently *of the overall understanding of [B]eing.*"[99] It should be noted that at this point he talks of how-being (*Wie-sein*) in place of that-being (*Dass-sein*), and being-something (*Etwas-sein*) in place of being-so (*Sosein*). He settles on the latter terms in *Fundamental Concepts*, where he explicitly equates all talk about beings with talk about one of these four aspects of Being.[100] It should also be noted that Heidegger's interest in the 'there is', mentioned in *Being and Time* is not present here, although it will resurface quite dramatically later in his work.[101] For the moment, the fact that each of these works presents Being as intrinsically manifold, and yet, in attempting to carry on the project of *Being and Time*, tries to locate the source of this manifold in something deeper (primordial temporality in *Basic Problems* and Dasein's world-forming in *Fundamental Concepts*), gives us the best evidence that the question driving them has its roots in the Aristotelian problem.[102]

There are alternative ways of conceiving Heidegger's relation to Aristotle. For instance, Herman Philipse proposes that the manifold senses of 'Being' which Heidegger is attempting to unify are the variety of ways in which 'Being' is said of the

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99 Ibid., p. 205.
100 *FCM*, p. 348.
101 See chapter 3, part 4.
102 There is a further list of senses of 'Being' in *OEG* (p. 133): "the idea of [B]eing in general (what-being, how-being, something, nothing and nothingness)." Although this list introduces some additional senses not considered in the above analyses, it is a passing reference and isn't significantly elaborated anywhere. Heidegger does discuss the notion of Nothing further in *WIM* and *IM* but it isn't addressed specifically in these terms. We will discuss this further in chapter 5. In addition, there is a quite different set of senses of Being laid out in *IM*, organised in terms of the traditional oppositions Being has been placed in to various other concepts: Being as opposed to *becoming*, Being as opposed to *seeming*, Being as opposed to *thinking*, and Being as opposed to *the ought* (p. 98). These are somewhat different from the list of senses derived from the copula, but they should be seen as replacing this set, but rather as a complementary part of the problem of the meaning of Being.

various regions or domains of beings (i.e., the various *modes* of Being). This proposal effectively equates the problem of unifying the different senses of 'Being' with the problem of developing a concept of Being *in general* that is adequate to ground the practice of regional ontology. This is a very tempting way of conceiving Heidegger's relation to Aristotle, because, although Heidegger does not explicitly subscribe to the Aristotelian problem of unification in *Being and Time* (for instance, by providing his own manifold of senses that must be unified), he does explicitly raise the problem of grounding regional ontology in a concept of Being in general.

However, if we understood the question in this way, we would effectively be treating Being as the common *genus* of which these modes were *species*, and the process of unification as a matter of abstraction from the *particular* regions of beings to Being in *general*. Approaching the question this way amounts to asking the question 'What are beings?' much as we would ask the question 'What are trees?', wherein we aim to find some *essence* common to trees as a whole.[103] We might call this *the question of the essence of beings*, as opposed to the question of the meaning of Being. This is most definitely not Heidegger's approach, given what we have already said regarding his denial that Being is genus and his rejection of the tradition's conflation of Being with beingness.

There is a similar, though more subtle, reading of Heidegger's revival of the Aristotelian question provided by Kris McDaniel, which avoids this problem.[104] McDaniel also holds that the goal of Heidegger's question of the meaning of Being is to unify the different senses of 'Being', but he understands this unification in a slightly different way from Philipse. Although he also takes the different senses of 'Being' to correspond to different modes of Being (or 'ways of being', as he prefers to say), what

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103*N*, pp. 156-157.
104See fn 78.

differentiates him from Philipse is that he takes the process of unifying these different ways not to be a matter of *abstraction*, but rather a matter of *construction*.

This is cashed out in terms of the notion of *quantifier variance*.[105] We won't explain this in too much detail, but the basic idea is that the domain of objects which a given quantifier term (e.g., 'for all...' or 'there is some...') ranges over can vary depending on the meaning ascribed to it. These meanings can thus be more or less restrictive, for instance, allowing us to quantify over just physical objects, just numbers, both, or even more things. Rather than taking the general concept of Being to be a genus of which all beings are instances (i.e., a sortal predicate), McDaniel takes it to indicate the *properly unrestricted* quantifier, or that which allows us to quantify over all beings. However, this does not mean that McDaniel thinks that the notion of Being is entirely without content, or rather, that it is equivalent to the purely formal or *completely unrestricted* interpretation of the quantifier.[106] Instead, McDaniel thinks that the domain of the proper quantifier – all and only things that have Being – is pieced together out of the domains of restricted quantifiers. This process of constructing the concept of Being is a difficult one because not all restricted quantifiers are appropriate, only those which "*carve nature at the joints*"[107], or those that indicate genuine modes of Being, are suitable.[108] Essentially, on this account, *to be* in general is just to be in one of the mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive modes of Being, and asking the question of the meaning of Being is just a matter of determining what these ways are and how they fit together.

105Cf. Eli Hirsh, 'Ontology and Alternative Languages', in *Metametaphysics*, pp. 231-259.
106The distinction between *proper* and *improper* unrestricted quantification will be discussed further in chapter *5*.
107McDaniel, p. 305.
108To put this in more technical terms, McDaniel is looking for the highest level predicates that are both *natural* and *sortal*. Both what it is for a predicate to count as natural (cf., Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, pp. 59-69) and what is for a predicate to count as a sortal (cf. David Wiggins, *Sameness and Substance Renewed*, ch. 3) are still controversial within analytic metaphysics and philosophy of logic. We'll discuss these issues more in chapter 5.

Although this interpretation avoids reading the question in an abstractive way, it has its own problem. This consists in the fact that the constructive reading eliminates the hermeneutic circle between the existential analytic of Dasein and the account of Being in general. If the general notion of Being is merely to be stitched together out of the particular modes of Being, then there is no reason for this process to demand the reinterpretation of one the ways of being (existence) on its basis. Given that this circle is clearly present in Heidegger's account, this cannot be the approach he has in mind. It is thus the case that neither an abstractive nor a constructive reading of the unification is viable.

However, there is a deeper problem with both of these interpretations. Although the project of *unifying* the various modes of Being by *grounding* them in a concept of Being in general is central to Heidegger's formulation of the question of Being, it cannot be the only dimension of the question. Although modes of Being are ways in which 'Being' is said, namely, of the beings belonging to different regions, not all ways of saying 'Being' are *modes* of Being. This is demonstrated by our earlier discussion of *aspects* of Being. Neither the senses of 'Being' Aristotle was concerned with (e.g., potential and actual being), nor the aspects of Being Heidegger identifies (e.g., being-so) can be limited to a given region of beings, but must be applicable to all beings. This means that, despite Heidegger's concern with grounding the practice of regional ontology in fundamental ontology, the question cannot simply be understood as a matter of unifying this multiplicity of modes without obscuring the very issues that Aristotle was concerned with.

We can thus distinguish two different unities that Heidegger brings together in his initial formulation of the question of Being: the unity of the various *aspects* of Being that belong to all beings, and the unity of the various *modes* of Being that belong to the

different regions of beings. This is not a distinction that Heidegger himself draws, but it is always implicit within his early work. As we noted earlier, the list of senses from *Being and Time* makes no distinction between aspect and mode, despite indicating a concern with both. As we have seen, his concern with the unity of modes is the more prominent at this point, under the guise of fundamental ontology. However, his concern with the unity of aspects and the distinction between them becomes steadily more explicit between *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, and *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*.[109] Importantly, although Heidegger does not distinguish between aspects and modes in drawing a line between his formulation of the question and its origin in Aristotle, we can see that it is the problem of the unity of aspects that most closely resembles the Aristotelian problematic. Regardless, it is clear that Heidegger takes the question of Being to be concerned with the underlying structure through which both aspects and modes are unified.

iii) Senses, Aspects, and Meaning

Returning to the paradox posed earlier, our interpretation of the question in terms of the Aristotelian problem of the manifold senses of 'Being' can provide us with some insight. If the question seeks to uncover the underlying structure which unifies the various senses of 'Being', then it can be an inquiry regarding the meaning of expressions, and yet, because the structure through which these terms are interrelated is not determined by us, it can also genuinely be concerned with this structure as that of

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109The former two texts explicitly pose the problem of the unity of modes, but don't explicitly oppose it to a unity of aspects, despite articulating specific questions regarding the relations between them. For instance, in *MFL* (pp. 151-152), Heidegger explicitly identifies the unity of modes as one aspect of the question, while dividing his concern with aspects between the "problem of *the basic articulation of [B]eing*" (what-being and that-being) and "the problem of *the veridical character of [B]eing*" (truth). These latter problems are explicitly combined in *FCM*, in his concern with the unity of the four aspects of Being discussed earlier.

Being in itself. However, it might be objected to this that what we have called *aspects* and *modes*, although they indeed correspond to ways in which 'Being' may be said, are not treated as *meanings* when we are engaged in uncovering their unifying structure, but, rather, that they are treated as the underlying phenomena to which the expressions refer. If this is the case then it would seem that our interpretation of the question could be reworked to avoid talk of meaning entirely.

There are two responses to this objection. Firstly, any such reworking would still be subject to the same reflexivity that undermines any attempt to directly ask "What is Being?". This is because any attempt to unify the various senses of 'Being' by appealing to established claims about these 'phenomena' (e.g., "that-being is...") would have to appeal to at least one of the senses (what-being) which it is meant to clarify. Secondly, the phenomenological conception of meaning that Heidegger inherits from Husserl holds that the meaning of expressions is fundamentally dependent upon the structures governing the primordial experience of meaning, and this holds even for expressions referring to various aspects and modes of Being (which Husserl would have classed as *categories*[110]). As such, Heidegger is concerned with these different senses not insofar as their meaning is tied to various contingent words that we use in ordinary discourse and philosophical speculation, but insofar as it is locatable within the various existential structures that constitute Dasein's pre-ontological understanding of Being. It is this fact which secures the connection between aspects of Being and senses of 'Being'. However, properly understanding this latter point requires an examination the account of meaning Heidegger develops within the existential analytic. We have thus reached the point at which we can no longer isolate Heidegger's preliminary formulation of the question from his own theory of meaning.

We have still yet to resolve the three issues laid out earlier: what it is to ask the

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110*Ideas I*, p. 20.

question of the *meaning* of Being as opposed to the that of the *essence* of Being, what kind of understanding of the *nature* of meaning we require to formulate the question, and what precisely the *interpretation* of the meaning of Being consists in. We now have a better idea of what we are looking for, but, as we indicated earlier, we must look for it within the account of meaning Heidegger provides in the existential analytic. However, Heidegger's notion of meaning is not easily isolatable from the various existential structures among which it is situated. Heidegger conceives of existence as consisting in the unitary structure of Being-in-the-world, each element of which cannot be apart from the others, and *a fortiori* cannot even be understood properly in isolation from the others. As we have already noted, this strong interdependence of the existential structures gives the analytic its characteristic hermeneutic circularity. It would of course be unwise of us to recapitulate the whole of the existential analytic in order to clarify Heidegger's conception of meaning, but we cannot avoid laying out in brief the basic existential structures with which it is intertwined.[111] Among these the notions of *understanding* and *truth* in particular bear a very close relationship to meaning, and we must take great care to situate meaning in relation to them. However, both of these notions have additional importance, for various reasons.

Understanding has additional importance because Heidegger has made the pre-ontological *understanding* of Being an essential constitutive element of any questioning of Being. Moreover, the possession of pre-ontological understanding is what provides Dasein with its ontico-ontological priority, and as such makes the existential analytic of Dasein the first step in the inquiry into Being. However, precisely what such pre-ontological understanding is can only be made clear in relation to the phenomena of understanding as such. A proper grasp of Heidegger's existential conception of

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[111] We will for the most part restrict ourselves to explicating Division I of *Being and Time,* and although we will mention the temporal structures discussed in detail in Division II, we will not elaborate upon them in any detail.

understanding is thus essential if we are to properly assess this crucial feature of his account of the question of Being. In addition, Heidegger's concept of interpretation is an integral part of the the account of understanding, and a proper analysis of this is essential if we are to understand the sense in which answering the question of the meaning of Being is a matter of interpretation, and how this is related to the idea of the unification of the different senses in which 'Being' is said.

Truth, on the other hand, is important in two ways. First, we have already proposed an account of Heidegger's initial approach to the question which locates truth as one of the senses of 'Being' that the question is itself concerned with unifying. Moreover, we have suggested that truth plays the role of the primary sense which guides the inquiry into the unity of the others. Secondly, as we have also noted, the notion of truth takes on additional importance in the work following *Being and Time*. On the one hand, the inquiry into the essence of truth comes to play a central role in the inquiry into Being. On the other, Heidegger famously reorients the question of Being during the 1930's, precisely changing its concern from the *meaning* of Being to the *truth* of Being.[112] As such, a proper analysis of Heidegger's account of truth will help us to better understand both Heidegger's initial approach to the question and how it changes.

The following two chapters will take up the task of expounding these various notions and answering the questions related to them.

112Cf. *CP*, *BQP*, 'Letter on Humanism'; Even later on he renounces this shift, at least insofar as he takes the phrase 'the truth of Being' to be misleading, in that this truth cannot be identified in any way with the phenomenon of truth as *correctness*, but only with the more primordial phenomenon of truth as *aletheia* or unconcealment ('The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking', pp. 446-448).

Chapter 2: Meaning and Understanding

The last chapter has left us with a number of unresolved issues regarding the significance of the question of Being as a question of meaning, and the role that Heidegger's theory of meaning plays within his initial attempt to formulate the question. In order to resolve these, we must now provide an account of existential structures of meaning and understanding as Heidegger lays them out in the existential analytic of Dasein. However, we can only do this if we situate them amongst the other existential structures that make up Being-in-the-world as Heidegger sees it. To keep this as brief as possible, we will abandon the peculiar (hermeneutically circular) order of exposition that Heidegger follows in the analytic, and attempt to present these various structures from the outset as an ordered whole. We will begin by outlining the principal features that distinguish Heidegger's phenomenology of Dasein from Husserl's phenomenology of consciousness.

The most obvious departure from Husserl is methodological. This is his commitment to pursue a *hermeneutic* phenomenology, rather than the *scientific* phenomenology espoused by Husserl. This methodological shift has already been glimpsed in our presentation of the two different hermeneutic circles that Heidegger identifies in the structure of the inquiry, namely, the circularity of inquiring into Being in general via a specific being (Dasein), and the circularity internal to the existential analytic, owing to the unitary structure of Being-in-the-world. However, beyond the specifically historical significance of this shift[1], the real substance of it can only be understood on the basis of Heidegger's development of a rigorous concept of interpretation. As this is part of the existential analysis of understanding, we can say no

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[1] I am referring here both to Heidegger's critical stance toward Husserl's 'scientific' ambitions, and to his relation to the hermeneutical tradition of Dilthey and Count Yorck (See chapter 1, fn. 58).

more about it for the moment.

Moving beyond the methodological, there are three exemplary differences in the content of Heidegger's analysis of Dasein.[2] The first of these is his abandonment of Husserl's concern with *perception*, and its theoretical orientation, as the paradigm case of intentionality, replacing it with the *concern* that we have for things in our everyday practical dealings with them. The second of these is that Heidegger abandons the correlative primacy of the concept of *intuition* in Husserl's conception of consciousness in favour of the concept of *understanding*.[3] The third difference is the eminently social character of Dasein as *Being-with*, which is not isolated from the other fundamental existential structures, but is rather constitutive for them.[4] As indicated, these three features of Heidegger's account are not properly separable, but they provide us with the essential clues to the three structural elements of Being-in-the-world as Heidegger identifies them: the *world* (in its worldhood), *Being-in* as such, and the '*who*' of Dasein in-the-world, respectively. We will examine each of these differences in turn, along with the structural elements they correspond to, before addressing Heidegger's theory of meaning and its relation to the question of Being directly.

1. World: Environmentality and Pure Significance

For Heidegger, the world is the totality of beings, but it is also more than simply this totality. It is not a totality understood as the grouping of some accidental set of beings, as if we picked out a grouping of entities and by happenstance they were all the entities

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2   There are of course many more ways in which Heidegger differs from Husserl, but these exemplary differences provide us with a way to uncover the central themes of the existential analytic in their interrelation.

3   Theodore Kisiel's article 'From Intuition to Understanding' (*Heidegger's Way of Thought*, ch. 8) is a good account of this shift.

4   We are not of course denying the presence of an analysis of sociality in Husserl's thought, but rather claiming that the role that sociality plays in Heidegger's account of Dasein is far more essential and central than anything in Husserl's work. The central character of sociality will be elucidated shortly.

there are. Indeed, the world is no grouping of particular beings, accidental or not. Rather, the world is the 'how' of beings as a totality, which is to say that it is the very structure of totality as independent from whatever beings there are.[5] Heidegger takes the world to be a phenomenological structure which is prior to any of our encounters with beings. The world is in fact the *horizon* within which beings can appear and be encountered as such.[6] The function of the world as horizon is to organise the totality of beings and their relations in advance. It does this precisely by organising our possibilities for *comporting* ourselves toward beings. This is where the first deviation from Husserl we pointed out becomes pertinent. Heidegger conceives of the mainstay of intentionality to be our relation to beings within our everyday practical use of them. As such, the horizon of possibilities for comportment, which are prior to and a necessary condition of comportment as such, are first and foremost the possibilities for *action* they open up (as well as those they close off). The paradigm case of this is the use of *equipment.*[7] For instance, an everyday encounter with a hammer is oriented by a prior understanding of the possible ways in which the hammer could be used. Moreover, these possibilities are structured in terms of the possible activities the hammer can become part of, and the possibilities of the other entities that these may involve. So my understanding of hammers is bound up with my understanding of repairing furniture, putting up shelves, etc. and the nails, pieces of wood and other equipment these involve.[8]

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5 Heidegger is most clear on this point in his essay *OEG* (p. 121), and in *FCM*, where he contrasts his notion of world with the 'naive' concept of world (pp. 284-285).

6 It is important to note here that although extant beings appear within the world, they are not in it in the way which Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, is. The way in which we encounter Other Dasein will be touched on shortly.

7 It is important to recognise that Heidegger does not think that everything we encounter is a tool for use. Things first appear to us in terms of the way they affect our practical possibilities for action, but these can be affected in various ways. Importantly, things within the world can function as obstacles, limiting what we can do, rather than simply expanding it. Some things can do both, such as the walls of a house, which limit our possibilities of movement, while simultaneously providing shelter from the elements.

8 Heidegger has a very detailed terminology for describing possible activities, the relations between equipment within them, and the goals pursued in them (e.g., the with-which, towards-which, in-which,

The kind of Being that entities encountered in this way present is what Heidegger calls readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*), which is also translated as *availability*. The ordinary form of awareness we have of such entities in our concern with them Heidegger calls *circumspection* (*Umsicht*), as opposed to perception. Circumspection is characterised by the fact that the available entity fades into the background, and we remain only peripherally aware of the features of it that are salient for its involvement in our activity. So, for instance, we are circumspectively aware of the size and shape of the screwdriver and that it fits a certain task, but we switch between it and another, more appropriate implement to deal with a task that it is unsuited for, without stopping to actively look at the sizes and shapes of the tools and compare them to the screws they are to be used on. It is this peripheral, circumspective awareness that lets us navigate our *environment* (*Umwelt*). Heidegger thinks that circumspection is not a form of perception, but rather that they are both forms of *sight* (*Sicht*). Sight is not exclusively visual, it is just Dasein's understanding of what is manifest to it, regardless of what is manifest and how it manifests.

It is also important to talk about a particular, deficient mode of perception: merely looking at something. We might also call this theoretically oriented perception. Things which are encountered in this way have a kind of Being different to availability, called presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*) or *occurrence*. A merely occurrent thing has distinct *properties* that are abstracted from their involvement in our practical dealings. For instance, the screwdrivers are of a definite geometric size and shape, our grasp of which is not immediately referred to actions those features are appropriate for, or the hammer has an exact measurable weight, rather than being 'too heavy' or 'heavy enough' for a given kind of task. Occurrence and availability are the two principle

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etc.). I am not going to explain or deploy this terminology, because I feel it is unnecessary in providing this kind of brief overview.

categories of extant beings that Heidegger posits, of which availability has priority, occurrence being derived from it just as theoretical perception is derived from practical, concernful circumspection.

It is important to note that there are two different sides to the structure of the world.[9] There is the *environment*, which we have briefly touched on (the existential character of which we call *environmentality*), and what we will call *pure significance*. Taken together, these constitute the worldhood of the world as *significance* as such.[10] The relation between these has to do roughly with the relation between *particularlity* and *generality*, respectively. The best way to elaborate this is by means of another example. When I sit down in my study to write a letter to a friend, I am circumspectively aware of the equipment to be deployed toward this end: the paper, the pens, the desk, the lamp, envelopes, stamps, etc., but this circumspective awareness is not for that matter a direct awareness of *all* the possibilities of this equipment. I do not see the paper first as something with which I could write a letter, draw or doodle, or make a paper plane. I do not even see it in the full *generality* of the possible relations it could enter into in any one of these tasks, e.g., I do not see it as something that could be written on with *any* pen, pencil, etc. Rather, I encounter it primarily in terms of the *particular* possible relations it bears to the equipment in the context in which I'm situated, i.e., I see the paper as something that can be written on with *this* pen, or *this*

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9 Although, I would note, Heidegger does not present this clearly. He does not distinguish between the general forms of possibility and particular environmental possibilities very well within his elaboration of the structure of worldhood.

10 The distinction between *pure* significance and significance *as such* is one which is not present within Heidegger's own writing. I have drawn this distinction in order to bring out a structure which is present but under-emphasized in Heidegger's exposition of the existential analytic. This is a distinction between kinds of what Heidegger calls *assignment relations*. Although Heidegger does have a complex account of the different kinds of assignment relations (which we have avoided discussing in detail), one feature which he is not explicit about is the difference between *general* and *particular* assignments. I take this to be an oversight on his part, rather than a structural flaw in his approach. Heidegger discusses these issues in a more explicit way in *BPP* (pp. 292-294) in talking about the difference between *equipmental character* and *equipmental contexture*. Regardless, the value of drawing the distinction in the above terms will hopefully become apparent in the subsequent reading.

pencil. However, this does not mean that our grasp of these particular relations is prior to our grasp of the general relations that equipment can enter into. Encountering the equipment as situated within a network of particular possible relations still depends upon a prior understanding of the general possibilities for action that the given *types* of equipment open up, i.e., I need to understand that paper in general stands in a certain relation to pens in general, before I can encounter *this* paper as standing in a possible relation to *this* pen. Nonetheless, for the most part, we circumspectively navigate our environment in terms of the particular possibilities that equipment *immediately* presents to us, rather than actively working out what particular possibilities are open to us on the basis of our general understanding.

However, there is an additional level of mediation between our general understanding of types of equipment and our encounter with an instance of this type in terms of the particular possibilities it provides. In order for a particular thing (this paper) to appear within a network of possible relations to other particular things (this desk, this lamp, this pen, etc.) there must be some grasp of the network in advance. It is the fact that I have a certain familiarity with my office that enables me to sit down and start writing a letter *immediately*, circumspectively navigating the various bits of equipment while focusing on the content of my letter. The *environment* is the existential structure in which this familiarity consists. It is spatial, but not in the sense that it is an extended and measurable metric space within which extended occurrent things are to be found. Just as occurrence is derivative upon availability, Heidegger takes our metric grasp of space to be dependent upon our prior practical grasp of it. We first understand distances not in terms of metric units, but rather in terms of the way it fits into our activities. For instance, I may grasp the distance between my home and my workplace in terms of, to use Heidegger's example, the time it takes to smoke a pipe, or rather, how many songs I

can listen to on my mp3 player. This existential grasp of distance is only part of the matter though: we divide up our environment into *regions*, and organise these in terms of the networks of possible equipment that orient our activity both within and between them.

The fundamental principle of this organisation is provided by the totality of ends (or goals) that our actions aim at, and the various relations of subordination between them. I will call this our *purposive orientation*.[11] For example, the prior grasp of my study, which makes possible my circumspectively guided action within it, is organised in terms of the various ends that I habitually pursue there, one of which is letter writing. Although writing a letter can be an end in relation to other activities, it is also a means towards other ends, such as applying for a job or maintaining a relationship with a distant friend. These can of course themselves be means in relation to further ends. Fundamentally, Heidegger thinks that all of our various activities are united through being subordinated to an ultimate end, namely, Dasein itself (ourselves) as that "for-the-sake-of-which" all our actions are performed. This is to say that, ultimately, all of our action is guided by *who* we want to be. This is just what it is to say that Dasein individuates itself through the choices it makes. In relation to this ultimate end we see various possible means, which may be projected as subordinate ends, in relation to which there are further possible means which may become projected ends and so on. As such, it is important to see that our awareness of possible means is not unconstrained by our projection of ends. We see possible means only in relation to the ends that we have projected. We thus navigate our environment in terms of a prior grasp of the possible

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11 This is another term that is not present in Heidegger's own writing, but its introduction should perhaps be less controversial. This is simply a way of articulating Heidegger's understanding of the way the 'for-the-sake-of-which' (cf. *B&T*, pp. 160 and 182) is bound up with significance in constituting the world. Of course, Heidegger's conception of the way in which Dasein projects ends for itself is developed in much greater detail when the initial existential analytic of division one is recapitulated in terms of temporality in division two. However, it isn't necessary to examine this more detailed account in order to make the points we wish to make here.

means that its various regions and their resident equipment present for our ongoing life projects, united by the fundamental aim of individuating ourselves.

To summarise, pure significance makes a grasp of the environment possible by providing the general forms of possibility, but the environment and the circumspective awareness correlative to it necessarily mediates between pure significance and particular encounters with entities, by turning abstract possibilities into concrete possible choices for how to be. Taken together, they make up *significance* as such, which is the totality of all possible relations, both general (abstract possibilities) and particular (concrete possibilities). As such, pure significance and environmentality make up the two fundamental features of the *worldhood* of the world, independently of the specific types of equipment and regions that make up the world of this or that Dasein. Moreover, because, for Heidegger, Dasein *consists* in its possibilities, it also consists in its orientation within its environment. This is what Heidegger means when he says that Dasein "is in every case its 'there'."[12] Dasein *just is* its purposive orientation within its given situation, along with the existential structures which make this orientation possible.

2. Being-In: Disposedness, Understanding, and Interpretation

This brings us to the second shift away from Husserl, and the existential structure it heralds: *Being-in*. This is Heidegger's abandonment of the concept of intuition in favour of understanding.[13] This runs in tandem with the already discussed reorientation of intentionality from the theoretical to the practical, and can already be seen in our description of worldhood in terms of the *prior* understanding or grasp involved in both

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12 *B&T*, p. 171.
13 Heidegger talks about this shift explicitly within the section on understanding (Ibid., p. 187).

pure significance and environment. It is precisely the fact that understanding precedes encounters with entities that differentiates it from intuition in the relevant way. This is not to say that *all* understanding is prior to experience. If no understanding were gained in experience, this would eliminate the point of experience altogether. Rather, it is simply the case that what is encountered in experience can only be made sense of by being fitted into the complex framework of understanding which constitutes the *world* as an existential structure. This framework is by no means exhaustive, and experience can thus provide new understanding that fills it out.[14] There is even the possibility of the very understanding which constitutes the framework being revised on this basis. *Being-in* names this way that Dasein constitutes and revises its world, *through* encountering beings in terms of it, or rather *within it.*

However, there is more to Being-in than understanding – it is made up of three equiprimordial existentialia: *disposedness* (*Befindlichkeit*)[15], *understanding* (*Verstand*), and *discourse* (*Rede*). We will only be able to understand Heidegger's account of meaning once we have grasped the ways in which these three structures relate to one another, as none can be properly understood in the absence of the others. However, despite the fact that discourse plays a role in constituting the other two, it can only be effectively elucidated after them (as Heidegger himself did). Our presentation of the existential structure of discourse will also have to wait until we have given an effective account of sociality and *Being-with*.

Disposedness has an important relation to what Heidegger calls Dasein's *thrownness*. This is the fact that Dasein is always in a world that is constituted in a

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14 We are not thereby implying that experience is *required* to revise our understanding. Indeed, as we will see, the possibility of revising our understanding through interpretation is something which belongs to understanding as such.

15 This term is standardly translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as 'state-of-mind', but this does not really capture the meaning of the term adequately. Indeed, as with many of Heidegger's terms, it is impossible to find a completely suitable cognate in English. In the absence of such a cognate, I have opted for Dreyfus's later translation of the term as 'disposedness', as it at least does not have the awkward English connotations of 'state-of-mind' that can confuse what Heidegger means.

certain way. Despite the fact that the existentiell structure of the world may be revised, and our orientation within it can change, this always happens on the basis of the structure and orientation that are already there. The pure significance in terms of which Dasein understands the entities it encounters in the world is not something Dasein chooses, but is something Dasein is given over to. The same holds true of Dasein's purposive orientation in its environment: it is given over to this orientation insofar as it *just is* its 'there'. Disposedness has the distinction of being able to disclose the fact of Dasein's thrownness. This is because disposedness is not, like understanding, primarily oriented toward the specific entities we encounter in the world. As we noted earlier, the world, as horizon, is the totality of beings, albeit not as a fixed set of specific beings. Disposedness is the aspect of Being-in that is correlative to this totalising character of the world: it is oriented toward our situation as a whole.[16]

The best way to elaborate this is by examining the original German term 'Befindlichkeit', which like many of Heidegger's terms is a construction out of more ordinary German vocabulary. The verb 'befinden' in German is used in a way similar to the reflexive use of the verb 'find' in English, as in "to find oneself in a situation". In this case it indicates the 'where', or the character of the situation itself. However, this reflexive form is deployed in a slightly different way in the casual greeting "Wie befinden Sie sich?", which means roughly "How are you doing?" or more literally "*How* do you find yourself?".[17] This 'how' indicates how one is *disposed* to the situation one finds oneself in. We are always disposed to our situation in some way, but the precise way in which we are disposed may change. A given disposition is thus an existentiell modification of disposedness as such, and is what Heidegger calls a *mood*

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16 It's important to point out that by the word 'situation' we do not mean something restricted to a *part* of the world. Our situation is the way things stand in the world *as a whole* at any given moment. Our situation changes either as things in the world change, or our place within it does.

17 It should be noted that this phrase has actually fallen out of common German usage.

(*Stimmung*). Mood is the primary way in which our world is disclosed to us, insofar as it discloses the world as a whole. What this means is that the specific way we are disposed toward the world at any given time reflects its current state, and thus reveals it in a way that is different from the way we encounter particular entities within the world. As such, the 'how' of a mood reveals the 'where' of our situation as we are oriented within it, which is just to say that it reveals our 'there'. Moreover, moods disclose the fact of our thrownness into the 'there' simply by way of disclosing the 'there' itself in our dispositions. This means that although the way in which different moods disclose our situation changes, the disclosure of thrownness is a consistent feature of disposedness as such.

It is important to note that the existentiell modification of disposedness by moods is not something which happens occasionally. Dasein is always in some particular mood, but whichever mood it is in, this mood discloses the world as a whole, and in doing so discloses Dasein's thrownness into the world. Moreover, although Dasein's mood may change, it only has one mood at a time.[18] However, it remains unclear what this disclosure of the world consists in, and how exactly it varies between moods. Heidegger makes it clear that although there is a sense in which mood reveals something about Dasein, insofar as it is related to Dasein's dispositions toward the world, this is not its primary function.[19] It is not the case that mood discloses the world by disclosing our dispositions toward it. It is rather the case that our dispositions toward the world are *effectuated* by the way mood discloses the world. Mood is directed at the world, not at Dasein and its dispositions. However, we still need to establish how mood discloses world, how this is related to our dispositions, and how it varies between moods. The key to this is the connection Heidegger draws between mood and the way

18 This is a feature of Heidegger's account that seems to change after *B&T*. See fn. 25.
19 *B&T*, pp. 175-176.

things 'matter' to us. He claims that without disposedness nothing could matter to Dasein. Furthermore, he holds that "Being-in-the-World [submits itself] to having entities in the world "matter" to it in a way which its moods have outlined in advance."[20] The implication here is that moods structure the way we encounter entities as mattering to us, and that what distinguishes between moods are differences in this structure.

In order to explain this, it is necessary to think through the picture we have painted of Dasein's environment and its purposive orientation within it. In any given situation, Dasein is presented with multiple possibilities for what it may do, and these possibilities are structured by its prior understanding of its environment, which is in turn structured by its ongoing life goals, united by its obligation to itself as that for-the-sake-of-which it does anything. This picture presents the fact that Dasein is given options to choose, and that it must choose between them, but it tells us nothing about how Dasein does in fact choose. As far as we can tell, all possibilities appear in the same way – as equally viable. If this is so, then in each case Dasein must either randomly select a possibility, or engage in explicit practical reasoning about which possible action best achieves its ends. Moods flesh out this picture by making our possibilities appear in different lights, so that we are *disposed* towards certain actions over others, narrowing down our choices, though not necessarily determining them. Different possibilities may thus appear as *mattering* in different ways, as attractive or repellent, important or unimportant, and so on, all to differing degrees. It is by disclosing our possibilities in these ways that mood effectuates our dispositions. This does not mean that a mood cannot be rationally overridden (i.e., that we can't choose something we are not disposed toward), or even that we can't rationally affect our moods. Our moods work in tandem with practical reasoning, and can indeed be overridden and modified. It is simply the case that there is no rational choice independent of mood. Even our attempts

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20 Ibid., p. 177.

to rationally take hold of and control our moods always take place from within a given mood.[21]

Nor are moods completely distinct from the purposive orientation that structures our possibilities. This is best indicated by returning to disposedness as the existential ground of mood. Dreyfus insightfully characterises disposedness as "*being found in a situation where things and options already matter.*"[22] The important point is that this fact that things already matter to us is not identical with the fact that we are always already in some given mood. Of course, things and options matter to us in different ways in different moods, they show up in different lights. For instance, simple everyday possibilities such as getting out of bed and having breakfast matter differently when we have a sunny disposition to when we are in the midst of a deep depression. However, what matters to us is not completely open to variation between moods. If this were the case, moods would be as free-wheeling as the random selection between possibilities we opposed above. We must have certain things that matter to us (e.g., companionship, privacy, avoiding certain kinds of embarrassment, etc.) in a way that, although not necessarily unchanging, can at least be invariant between different moods, and which functions as the basis of the way moods disclose the world to us. For example, the possibility of embarrassing myself weighs on me differently depending on the mood I am in, but *that* it weighs on me in some way does not vary with my mood, because it is a distinct existentiell facit of disposedness as such.

Moods do not primarily direct themselves toward particular beings or the possibilities they present us. Rather, a mood orders the way *general* possibilities matter to us, and how the ways they matter are interconnected. For instance, in my depressive mood certain activities (e.g., sleeping and watching television) become prioritised over

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21 Ibid., p. 175.
22 Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, p. 168.

other activities (e.g., eating well and spending time with friends). The *particular* possibilities encountered in experience are then disclosed as mattering to us in a certain way, insofar as they are derived from these general possibilities.[23] This is why moods disclose the world *as a whole*, as it means that they essentially disclose *all* of our possibilities in some way. As such, it is in virtue of having a mood (e.g., fearfulness or apprehension), which orients me to my situation as a whole in a certain way, that I can have *affects* which are directed at particular things and possibilities that show up in that situation (e.g., fearing my neighbour's dog).[24] We thus have a three level structure: disposedness (which includes general non-purposive motivations), moods (which order these motivations into proper dispositions), then intentional affects (which instantiate these in particular encounters).[25]

This brings us to the link between disposedness and purposive orientation. Dasein is always given over to a network of particular ends which organise the possibilities that are encountered in its environment. However, this network of ends cannot be static. In order for there to be the possibility of extending and revising this network, for expanding and adapting one's ongoing life projects, there must be

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23 Heidegger never provides a detailed account of the way that mood makes possible particular affects, but it would be possible to provide an account in which environmentality and purposive orientation play a role in mediating between the mood's structuring of our dispositions toward general possibilities and the particular affects that are based on it, in a similar fashion to the way they mediate between pure significance and the particular possibilities we encounter in experience. This would go some way to explaining how we can have affects which relate us to specific people, things and places that are fairly stable, such as a fear of a specific doctor that is not based upon some general disposition toward doctors.

24 Heidegger is very explicit that moods are not directed at anything specific, but that they do make possible affects which are so directed (*B&T*, pp. 176-177).

25 This is not an entirely uncontroversial reading of Heidegger. In particular, the idea of there being motivations which are independent of mood, even if they are never unmodified by mood, is unusual. However, I think the way this lets us explain the interconnectedness of disposedness and purposive orientation justifies the reading. Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that Heidegger later moves away from this picture, adopting a more nuanced account of mood, which dispenses with disposedness as an invariant existential ground (cf. *FCM*, *BQP*). This reincorporates mood-invariant motivating factors into moods by abandoning the idea that we are only ever in one mood and replacing it with a multi-layered account of moods. So, for instance, we may be consistently within a wider cultural mood, despite this being modified by the more localised moods of depression, elation, or listlessness. Heidegger does not develop this picture in a great deal of detail, but his introduction of a variety of cultural moods, along with the structural mood of being-free-for (See chapter 3), indicates this multi-layered picture.

something beyond the network which can potentially conflict with it. It is the fact that there are always things and possibilities which matter to Dasein in a way not reducible to its particular goals which provides this. For example, being well disposed toward children can motivate the development of my goal of becoming a parent. Conversely, as we have already noted, the motivating factors that disposedness provides are themselves open to expansion and revision, and, crucially, the particular ends that make up our purposive orientation may play a part in this. Continuing the previous example, my goal of becoming a parent can itself affect my dispositions, making me become ill disposed towards things I think unfit for parents, such as excessive drinking and other irresponsible activities. It is also the case that moods, as specific orderings of these general motivating factors which dispose us to our current situation, are sensitive to our goals. This is obvious to anyone for whom the achievement of a goal has heightened their feeling of what else they may achieve, or for whom the corresponding failure has narrowed the range of what they *feel* they may do (as opposed to what they *understand* they could do).

Disposedness is in truth the *ground* of our purposive orientation in the world. However, as the above discussion shows, this is not a straightforward relationship of grounding. The network of ends that makes up our purposive orientation is unified by our obligation to ourselves as that for-the-sake-of-which we act. This is to say that all of our goals are subordinated to the ultimate goal of individuating ourselves – becoming *who* we aim to be.[26] This ultimate goal is non-negotiable, but all goals beneath it are. However, although we have suggested that this process of revision *can* involve non-purposive motivating factors, and the moods that arrange these into our current

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26 It is important to note that the sense in which individuation is a goal is unusual. Individuating oneself is not a task as such, because *whatever* one does one individuates oneself. It is individuating oneself *in a certain way* - becoming who one aims to be - which is the ultimate goal of every Dasein. One cannot fail to individuate oneself, but one can fail to individuate oneself as one aims to.

dispositions, alongside practical means ends reasoning, we have not shown that it *must* involve disposedness in this way. However, the precise content of the 'who' that we wish to be is not something that can be determined by, or changed in light of, any of our goals, because all of these are in principle subordinated to it. This is not to say that we form our picture of who it is we wish to be in a purely irrational manner, Heidegger is still very much opposed to this kind of view. It is simply the case that the development of our ultimate end *necessarily* requires the kind of non-purposive motivations that disposedness provides. The specific existentiell make-up of our motivations, moods, and goals are always subject to revision in relation to one another in the ways discussed above, but the existential character of disposedness as ground of our purposiveness is constant.

We may now move on to a more detailed discussion of Heidegger's conception of understanding itself. As indicated, we have laid out much of the structure of understanding already. What remains for us to do is to make this explicit as the structure of understanding, and to outline the nature of the special possibility which belongs to understanding itself, namely, *interpretation* (*Auslegung*). Firstly, it is important to emphasise that, for Heidegger, the sense in which Dasein *is* its possibilities is just the sense in which Dasein *understands* its possibilities. For a being to be encountered by Dasein alongside it in the world is just for it to be understood, or for us to develop some grasp of it. Heidegger describes this as *projecting* a being *onto* its possibilities, or sometimes as *freeing* it *for* its possibilities. However, understanding is more than just the projection of possibilities for *particular* entities. The prior organisation of *general* possibilities within and between the various regions that make up the environment is also projective. These two aspects of projection are properly inseparable. The world, as horizon, is the projected totality of these possibilities, or, alternatively, the totality of

such projection. This means that Dasein's Being-in-the-world is just its projection of the world as this space of possibility, and all this involves.[27] However, it is important to emphasize that, for Heidegger, projection is not a matter of *representation*. Anything that we would ordinarily call representation is *dependent* upon projective understanding.

The basic structures on the basis of which projection functions have already been described: pure significance and environmentality. Projecting a being onto its possibilities is a matter of *presenting* to oneself a set of particular possibilities for action in which it is involved. This necessarily involves taking the particular entity as a *kind* of entity, the understanding of which provides the general possibilities for involvement of such entities. These general possibilities become particular by being mediated in two ways: firstly, they are narrowed down by our purposive orientation both within and between the given regions of the environment; secondly, these narrowed general possibilities are fixed by the projective grasp we have of other particular entities we have encountered within our environment. To recapitulate the earlier example: I walk into my study, I see the pen, and my understanding of all the things pens may be involved in is narrowed down to the possibilities pens are usually involved in within this study (in accordance with my multitude of ongoing projects); this is then particularised by my circumspective awareness of the paper, the desk, and the study's other equipment, which mutually fix one another's particular possibilities by limiting the possible relationships they can enter into in the given situation. I thus see the pen in terms of its particular possibilities for writing letters with this paper on this desk, but perhaps also for writing poems, or idly doodling. These possibilities are of course then shed in a certain light by my mood, a different one coming to the fore depending upon whether I feel fastidious, whimsical, or listless, respectively.

We are now in a position to examine the nature and function of the derivative

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27 Heidegger makes this very clear in *OEG* (p. 123).

mode of understanding Heidegger calls *interpretation*. Interpretation is a possibility which understanding itself provides, rather than one that it simply projects. It is the understanding's possibility of "developing itself".[28] Heidegger provides a distinctly *hermeneutic* account of interpretation. However, although the model for such a hermeneutic conception is provided by textual interpretation, Heidegger's account has a far broader scope than this. Indeed, for Heidegger, interpretation is not something we learn how to do (at least not something we cannot do without learning it). The principal form of interpretation is one that is *always* open to us: interpreting our possibilities for action. For the most part, we are given over to a certain understanding of the things we encounter in the world. As we have just described, we are presented with a certain set of options to choose from, and this set is a limitation of those possibilities supplied by our general understanding. Interpretation allows us to actively re-evaluate this delimited set of possibilities. However, it is important to note that the initial set of possibilities that we are immediately provided with in any instance is not arrived at through interpretation. The way in which our general understanding is filtered through our environmental orientation to produce a grasp of particular possibilities is just the work of understanding as such. Interpretation is the active re-working of what is already present in understanding, and is thus a different process to the way our possibilities are initially worked out. Nonetheless, it could not function without such prior understanding. It is for this reason that interpretation is a derivative mode of understanding.

It is helpful to give an everyday example of this kind of interpretation: If I come home from work and enter my kitchen with the intention of making dinner for my family, I obviously am familiar with the kitchen and the various cooking equipment it contains, but I am also constrained by the ingredients I have to cook with. When I

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28 *B&T*, p. 188.

survey the ingredients I have available, what I see first of all are the possibilities for recipes I am most familiar with, those I make often. I could pick one of these, and then get straight to the task of preparing it, my circumspective awareness of the kitchen and its equipment then guiding me through the task in the ordinary way. However, another possibility open to me is to re-evaluate my options: I can stop seeing my ingredients merely as resources for recipes I am intimately familiar with, and actively consider the various other ways in which they could be used to make food. I can do this in several ways: by simply contemplating the possible ways of preparing and combining the various ingredients, by searching through recipe books for something which fits, or some combination of the two. Regardless, in each case I am actively reworking my understanding of my situation, through *interpreting* what lies within it and the possibilities it presents.

This possibility of interpretation is an existential feature of Dasein. This means that, as already noted, Dasein may always reinterpret its possibilities. This applies on all levels, from reinterpreting what one can do with one's life as a whole (e.g., I could become a chef), through reinterpreting the possibilities a given situation provides (e.g., I could make risotto instead of pasta), to reinterpreting the specific ways one can execute a particular portion of a larger task (e.g., I could add the cheese at a different time). The process through which we change and develop our purposive orientation, by reconfiguring our network of means and ends, is thus an interpretative one. Similarly, the projected understanding of the environment, which structures the way in which particular entities and their possibilities are encountered within a given region, is itself not static, but developed through a process of interpretation. Importantly, although interpretation is indeed active, it is not necessarily a matter of detached reflection or contemplation. Interpretation may be carried out this way, but most ordinary

interpretation is *circumspective interpretation*. This means that it is something we do in the course of performing circumspectively guided activities, rather than something we do prior to them. In fact, Heidegger thinks that we are *always* engaged in some form of interpretation. This is not to say that there is no circumspection without interpretation. Heidegger maintains that interpretation is not a matter of "acquiring [further] information about what is understood".[29] Without prior understanding out of which to interpret there could be no interpretation, and without pre-interpretative circumspection supplying this understanding, there could be no interpretative revision of our projection of the world on the basis of experience.

Now that we know roughly what interpretation is, we have to give an account of how it functions. To do this we have to situate our earlier account of the concept of phenomenon within the picture of Being-in-the-world we have so far provided. Earlier, we claimed that the minimal structure of the formal conception of phenomenon was that of something manifesting *as* something. Importantly, this formal notion was not limited to the manifestation of something as a *kind* of entity (e.g., as pens, knives, onions, etc.). Although this means that there can be manifestation in ways beyond manifesting as an instance of a kind (e.g., as low on ink, dangerously sharp, or moldy, respectively), it does not settle the issue as to whether this is nonetheless dependent upon manifesting as a kind. The structure of understanding and interpretation provide the answer to this problem. As has been noted, beings are encountered in terms of their particular possibilities. They are not encountered in terms of the general possibilities that are common to a kind of thing. However, as has been shown, the particular possibilities of an entity are only projected on the basis of a prior grasp of general possibilities. This implies that any entity must always be taken as a kind of entity, in order that the general understanding of this kind (provided by pure significance) may be distilled into the

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29 Ibid., pp. 188-189.

particular understanding of that entity as it fits into our possibilities for action.

However, despite making our immediate grasp of an entity possible, our understanding of it as a kind of entity is hidden by this very immediate grasp. Our grasp of entities as instances of kinds is for the most part *implicit*. To elaborate, our grasp of particular beings is bound up in the projection of the set of possible actions open to us. These include *all* of the relevant ways in which our actions could involve *any* of the entities within our current context. For example, I don't primarily see a knife, I see that I could start chopping onions, among other things. The knife is of course *involved* in this, but only as a peripheral element of the possible activity. Interpretation is the activity through which we take apart the various elements of the possibilities we project, making *explicit* our implicit grasp of these entities *as kinds of entities*, at least in part. Heidegger calls this the *as-structure* of interpretation. It is through making explicit general possibilities belonging to the particular beings we encounter that it is possible to reassemble a different set of possibilities for action. Thus, interpretation has roughly three stages: we start with an initial understanding, which is *disarticulated* into its various elements, the general possibilities of these are then *explicated*, and out of these a new understanding is *articulated*. There are three further aspects of Heidegger's account that remain to be discussed: the *fore-structure* of interpretation, the circular character of interpretation, and the more complex forms of interpretation that are also characterised by these structures.

What Heidegger calls the fore-structure of interpretation is a threefold set of conditions which are necessary for interpretation to take place: *fore-having* (*vorhaben*), *fore-sight* (*vorsicht*), and *fore-conception* (*vorgriff*). The fore-having required by interpretation is just the understanding constituted by significance as the totality of involvements, made up of both the general understanding of involvements between

kinds of equipment (pure significance), and the more particular understanding of involvements within the environment. This fore-having provides the content which is made explicit in interpretation. In Heidegger's words: "fore-sight 'takes the first cut' out of what has been taken into our fore-having, and does so with a view to a definite way in which this can be interpreted."[30] When we disarticulate our initial understanding, we do not make explicit the general character of every element of it, nor do we even make explicit every general possibility of those we do select. Effectively, we require some perspective, or point of view, which limits the vast selection of general possibilities provided by pure significance. For instance, in circumspective interpretation this mediating role is played by our purposive orientation within our environment, in the same way it does in ordinary circumspective understanding. As Taylor Carman points out, these two elements are already present in understanding as such, and are not peculiar to interpretation, whereas the final aspect – fore-conception – is unique to interpretation.[31]

Heidegger takes fore-conception to be an expectation or anticipation of the outcome of interpretation which guides it. This is not a matter of having a complete conception of the result prior to the interpretation itself. Rather, it may be more or less well conceived, but it guides the activity of interpretation by providing something for it to aim at. Moreover, fore-conceptions can either be drawn from our understanding of the matter as we proceed, or can be supplied in advance by concepts and ideas we have had independently or taken over from others. Bringing these aspects together, we can continue our earlier example: in reinterpreting what dishes I can prepare with my ingredients, I have an understanding of these kinds of ingredients in advance (*fore-having*), which enables me to grasp them explicitly *as* onions, celery, cheese, etc. My

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30 Ibid., p. 191.
31 Taylor Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic*, pp. 213-214.

understanding of what I can do with these various ingredients in relation to one another is delimited (*fore-sight)* by my purposive orientation (e.g., by the need to cook for four, within a short space of time) and my environmental grasp of my kitchen (e.g., its limited hob space, its lack of a deep fryer). Finally, I have watched a lot of TV cooking shows, giving me various pre-conceived ideas about the kinds of things one can make (even though I do not *know* how to make them). I thus articulate a viable set of possibilities (in this case rough recipes) out of a general understanding, narrowed by my situational perspective, guided by a certain pre-conceived notion of semi-professional TV food.

Moving on, it is important to recognise that all interpretation involves a certain circularity. However, this shows up differently in different forms of interpretation. In general, it consists in the fact that the development of a new understanding is always dependent upon an existing understanding out of which it is developed. On the face of it, this does not look like circularity, because the same might be said of distinctly non-circular reasoning, namely, that a conclusion is always dependent upon the premise it is inferred from. The important difference here is that interpretation is not a mere *extension* of our understanding by working out its implications (indeed, Heidegger thinks that reasoning is a derivative form of interpretation), but also involves the possibility of the *revision* of that initial understanding. A revised understanding need not necessarily be broader than the corresponding initial understanding. Moreover, revision need not require 'new information', but can take place in a fashion entirely internal to the existing understanding. Its specifically circular structure is manifest in the way in which different elements of our understanding may be related. We may reinterpret our grasp of one element of our understanding on the basis of an explicit grasp of some other related element, and then reinterpret our grasp of the second element in light of

this very reinterpretation of the first. Here we have a process through which revisions may feed into one another successively. Successive interpretations are thus not straightforwardly linear developments of what came before, but always involve an uprooting of the understanding produced by the previous interpretation. Nor do successive interpretations function like different interpretations of the same initial understanding, but are always guided by their antecedent interpretation. However, as we noted in relation to the particular hermeneutic circles found in the inquiry into the meaning of Being, this circularity is not equivalent to *vicious* circularity, or circular reasoning. This is because developing one's understanding is not a matter of *justification*, and it is circular justification which gives circular reasoning its specifically vicious character.

This circularity, which characterises interpretation in general, is what makes Heidegger's account a specifically hermeneutic account of interpretation. We are thus in a good position to tackle the final aspect of Heidegger's account, namely, that it extends beyond the development of our possibilities for action to include more complex forms of interpretation, including the case of textual interpretation which provided it its model. As we have already noted, interpretation need not just be the reworking of our understanding of our immediate possibilities for action, but it is also the process through which we develop and revise both our purposive orientation and our projection of the structure of our environment. These kinds of interpretation are already more than the primary form we originally outlined. However, there are further variants of interpretation. Indeed, *any* form of understanding is open to interpretation. This means that the general understanding which constitutes pure significance is open to development through interpretation. It also means that the special modes of understanding that belong to Being-with, namely, understanding other Dasein, and the

understanding that is deployed within discourse, are both open to interpretation. We cannot say much about this, as we have yet to delve into the structure of Being-with or discourse (the final aspect of Being-in), but we can note that textual interpretation is a variant of discursive interpretation. It is important to mention the other derivative form of interpretation that Heidegger takes time to discuss: *assertion*. As we have seen from his interpretation of 'logos' in the introduction, Heidegger parts ways with the traditional understanding of discourse as he sees it, and the primacy it gives to assertion. Nonetheless, he recognises the importance of assertion, and that he must give an account of it. Despite the fact that Heidegger himself gives his account prior to discussing the existential structure of discourse, we will be able to understand the significance of his account better if we examine it after we have presented his account of discourse in general.

Finally, we can now examine the significance of Heidegger's methodological shift away from Husserl. Heidegger's hermeneutic conception of phenomenology treats it as another complex form of interpretation. This differentiates it from the more Cartesian approach recommended by Husserl, in that it ceases to see itself as a matter of aiming at a pure intuition of the structures of consciousness (regardless of whether such pure intuition is practically achievable), and instead sees itself as an incremental process of explicating and revising an understanding that we already possess. There are obviously further methodological constraints which differentiate phenomenology from other kinds of interpretation, but we need not go into these in detail here. Instead, we are interested in how this sheds light on the method of both the existential analytic and the project of fundamental ontology in general.

As noted earlier, Dasein not only has a pre-ontological understanding of Being in general, which makes possible comportment toward beings in general, but it also has

an understanding of its own mode of Being, which makes possible comportment toward itself. This pre-ontological understanding of existence just consists in its implicit grasp of the fact that it is confronted with possibilities from which it must choose. It thus becomes clear that the existential analytic is a hermeneutic inquiry through which the pre-ontological understanding of existence is interpreted, whereas the project of fundamental ontology proper is a hermeneutic inquiry through which the more general pre-ontological understanding of Being is interpreted. This puts into context both Heidegger's claim that fundamental ontology must be pursued by way of an existential analytic of Dasein and his claim that ontology and phenomenology are identical. In developing our pre-ontological understanding of our own existence into a full blooded account, the existential analytic makes explicit the character of our pre-ontological understanding of Being in general, given that this understanding is constitutive for existence. The inquiry into the meaning of Being proper is then a matter of interpreting the pre-ontological understanding of Being so explicated. This is what Heidegger means when he talks of 'interpreting' the meaning of Being. Whether this can only be performed by phenomenology, and thus whether phenomenology and ontology are identical, depends upon the necessity of the additional methodological constraints that phenomenology places upon these hermeneutic inquiries.

3. Sociality: Being-with, the One, and Discourse

We can now turn to Heidegger's final substantive shift away from Husserl: his conception of Dasein as an essentially social being. The essential character of this sociality, which distinguishes it from Husserl's account of intersubjectivity, is the way it is intertwined with the other existential structures, such that they are impossible without

it. In Heidegger's terms: "Dasein's Being-in-the-world is essentially constituted by Being-with".[32] The goal of this section is to give a brief account of what Being-with consists in, and on this basis to show precisely how it is constitutive for Being-in-the-world as such. There are two closely related aspects to this: the way Being-with is constitutive for worldhood, and the way that Being-with is constitutive for discourse, which is itself indispensable for disposedness and understanding. It is through inquiring into the first of these aspects that we will uncover the existential structure Heidegger calls 'the One' (*das Man*)[33], and through this complete our understanding of Heidegger's conception of the 'who' of Dasein. It is by inquiring into the second that we will be able to understand Heidegger's account of meaning.

Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of the way we encounter Other Dasein within the world strongly differentiates it from the way we encounter extant entities. As has been noted, Heidegger takes our relation to extant entities to be one of *concern*, whereas he takes our relation to Others to be one of *solicitude*. He takes both of these to be forms of *sight*, which is just the general existential structure of encountering entities as such. Heidegger's account of encounters with Others completely bypasses any of the classic Cartesian problems regarding other minds. As far as Heidegger is concerned, we no more merely look at an occurrent human body and infer that it is another Dasein than we merely look at an occurrent hammer and infer that it may be used for hammering. We simply encounter Others *as* Others directly. However, we do not encounter Others as if they were equipment for our use, their mode of Being is not availability, but rather Dasein-with (*Mitdasein*). The important difference here is that whereas we encounter equipment solely in terms of how it fits into our own possibilities for action, we

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32 *B&T*, p. 156.
33 Here I am choosing Dreyfus' translation of *das Man* as 'the One' over the Macquarrie and Robinson translation of 'the They'. The latter translation tends to disguise the fact that we are not opposed to Other Dasein, but that we are all equally subjected to what 'one' does.

encounter Other Dasein in terms of their own possibilities for action. This isn't to say that we aren't presented with certain specific possibilities for action in relation to Others, as they most definitely do affect the possibilities for action presented to us. For instance, I may encounter a shopkeeper in terms of the possibilities they present for acquiring the items I am seeking, just as I may encounter fellow passengers on a bus in terms of the way they restrict where I can sit or stand. Indeed, Others even present me with possibilities for *co-ordinated action*, wherein the action in relation to one another is mutual, such as is involved in something as simple as passing the salt at the request of a fellow diner. We may even encounter Others in terms of possibilities for *joint action*, in which we co-ordinate our actions so as to pursue some shared goal. What is important is that all of these possibilities that Others present for our own action are grounded in our understanding of their own possibilities for action. We will see the reason why this is the case shortly.

Heidegger thus thinks that the world, and the things we encounter within it, is shot through with references to Other Dasein. However, there are several distinct senses in which these references are constitutive for significance, and thus the worldhood of the world as such. First, references to particular Others can be part of the existential structure of the environment. For instance, when I encounter my neighbour's house, even in their absence I encounter it *as* theirs. Even in passing a house whose owner I do not know, I encounter it as the home of some Other, and I understand it in terms of the possibilities for living it offers to them. Similarly, the environment can be structured by references to *kinds* of Others. In the case when I encounter a school, even if I do not know of any particular children who attend it, I understand it in terms of its relation to school children as such. Secondly, precisely insofar as we do understand kinds of Others, the relationships among these and their relationships to kinds of equipment, this

understanding is an aspect of pure significance. For example, my grasp of school children as such contains reference to parents and teachers, as well as the kinds of actions they engage in (both individually and collectively) and the networks of equipment these involve. The social world, along with the various roles that people take up within it, is thus an integral part of the world as such.

However, there is a more fundamental sense in which Being-with is constitutive for worldhood, which grounds all of the others. This is indicated by Heidegger's claim that "[t]he world of Dasein is a *with-world* [*Mitwelt*]".[34] The social does not just make up an essential part of the world, but it is constitutive for worldhood as such. This is because of the very way in which pure significance is articulated. Our understanding of the general possible relations between types of equipment is not essentially restricted to the ways in which they could be deployed within our own action, but is always already an understanding of how they could be deployed in action by *anyone*. As such, when I encounter a hammer, although I encounter it in terms of the possibilities it presents for my current projects, I also implicitly encounter it as something that could be used by someone else. This implicit reference to Others is entirely independent of the presence of actual Others, and it is what the possibility of encountering Others as playing more concrete roles within the social world is grounded upon. In essence, because we understand ourselves in terms of our possibilities, and our understanding of our possibilities is based upon an understanding of general possibilities that belong to *no one in particular*, there is the necessary possibility of encountering Others who are understood in terms of their own possibilities. The possibility of Other Dasein is thus guaranteed, even if factually there happen to be none.

This is only part of the story however. It gains an extra dimension when we consider it in relation to Dasein's *thrownness*. This is the fact that although Dasein

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34 *B&T*, p. 155.

chooses between its possibilities, it does not choose which possibilities are presented to it, nor its disposition toward them (its mood). The salient fact here is that Dasein is not just given over to the particular possibilities that are presented by its environment, but also to the general possibilities provided by pure significance. Dasein is thrown into a world in which there are already types of ends that anyone can pursue and types of means by which to pursue them. This means that Dasein does not just understand Others in terms of its own possibilities for action, but that conversely it understands its own possibilities for action in terms of the actions of Others. It is through finding itself in a world where there are already various kinds of activities that people engage in that Dasein makes sense of the activities it can perform, and thus also of the goals it can undertake.

We are now beginning to see that the structure of Dasein's understanding is intrinsically social, but there is a further layer to the picture. So far we have provided a picture of how it is that Dasein encounters available entities within the world in terms of the particular possibilities they present to it, by way of its understanding of the general possibilities that types of equipment offer in relation to one another, and the structures which mediate between the general and the particular. However, there is an additional fact about these general possibilities which needs to be understood. This is that Heidegger takes our understanding of types of equipment to be a fundamentally *normative* matter.[35] What this means is that our understanding of a type of equipment consists in a practical grasp of how it is *appropriately* used as a part of different activities in a various circumstances. To take an illustrative example, just as it is possible to pick up a pen in my study and use it to write a letter on the paper before me,

35 This interpretation of Heidegger is most famously espoused by Hubert Dreyfus (p. 151-155). Heidegger never explicitly formulates his position in terms of normativity (and it is quite possible he would be opposed to such formulations, given his antipathy to Baden school neo-Kantianism), but this is the best way to make sense of his account of equipment and sociality as a whole.

it is equally possible for me to use the pen to pick my nose, or eat the paper, but the latter uses of the pen and paper would not be appropriate uses of them. This is not necessarily because these uses are taboo (although they might be, especially in company), but rather because they are not uses of the pen and paper *as* pen and paper. Moreover, within those activities that constitute using a pen as a pen, there are *norms* governing their proper performance. For instance, one writes a letter in a certain orientation, with a certain regimentation of lines of text, with a certain amount of spacing. There are obviously various ways to do so acceptably, but there are most definitely certain ways one could write that are inappropriate in the ordinary context of letter writing.

So, our understanding of a type of equipment consists in our grasp of the *functional roles* that it plays within a variety of activities, and such functional roles are intrinsically normative. Thus, the particular possibilities that we are presented with in our encounters with particular entities within the world are in fact a selection of the appropriate ways of acting given the equipment present in the environment and the purposive orientation we occupy. This throws a new light upon the fact that we understand our own possibilities for action in terms of the actions of Others. The functional norms which constitute significance apply to anyone and everyone, but they are determined by no one in particular. Dasein thus encounters things within the world in a way that implicitly refers to some indeterminate authority, one that all Others are similarly subject to. This indeterminate authority constitutes an additional existential facet of Dasein's constitution, which Heidegger calls *the One*. The One is not any particular Other or any group of Others, but is an aspect of Dasein's existence. Each individual Dasein primarily sees its possibilities for acting within the world in terms of *what one does*. A paper and pen can be used as *one* would use them. A letter can be

written as *one* would write it. The One is the existential structure through which we grasp the impersonal authority underlying these functional norms.

The upshot of this is that, although we get our grasp of appropriate behaviour from the behaviour of the particular Others we encounter, and thus also what possibilities for action are open to us, at no point can any particular Other be identified as the ultimate authority underlying these norms. This means that although we must by necessity take over such norms from the social world that we are born into, we must not for that matter see the actions of every Other as licensing the appropriateness of the kind of action they are performing. We must take our cues from Others, but not from every Other and not all of the time. This means that Dasein is always concerned with the difference between its own behaviour at that of Others. This is what Heidegger calls *distantiality* (*Abständigkeit*). It is this constant concern that enables us to adjust our grasp of what one does, taking cues from the behaviour of some and ignoring (or even correcting) that of others. However, the One does have some additional effects beyond its constitutive role. Heidegger takes it that although we need not necessarily take the behaviour of any given Other as more correct than our own, that we nonetheless tend to see the behaviour of the majority of Others as that which is appropriate. This produces an overall averageness of behaviour, in which we tend towards the mean. Heidegger calls this a ""levelling down" [*Einebung*] of possibilities of Being."[36] He takes this to produce a social situation in which the innovative and exceptional are suppressed.

We needn't concern ourselves too much with the more value-laden comments Heidegger makes about the One and the averageness that it produces. However, it is important to recognise that Heidegger's answer to the question of the 'who' of Dasein is tied up with these analyses to some extent. For the most part, which is to say in its everydayness, Dasein is what Heidegger dubs the *one-self* (*das Man-selbst*). As the one-

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36 *B&T*, p. 185.

self, Dasein sees its possibilities for action purely in terms of those provided by the One. This everyday character of Dasein is what Heidegger calls its *inauthentic* (*uneigentlich*) way of Being. However, Heidegger thinks that it is possible for Dasein to become *authentic* (*eigentlich*), in which case it is able to reinterpret the possibilities that it is given over to, so as to make them its own, opening up ways of acting that potentially differ from what one does. The best way to get a grip on this is to consider the way in which Dasein individuates itself. As we've already explained, the ultimate goal to which all of Dasein's actions are subordinated is individuating itself as *who* it wants to be. However, as inauthentic, Dasein can only individuate itself in the terms presented to it by the One. This means that Dasein can only see itself in terms of the variety of social roles through which it understands Others – as a teacher, a lawyer, a farmer, a father, a drunk, etc. – and must approach this role in the way Others do. In contrast, an authentic Dasein can appropriate one of these social roles, so as to redefine its significance.

Of course, Dasein can also be authentic in other ways. It can reinterpret possibilities for all different kinds of action in innovative ways. However, it is important to note that Dasein is never wholly authentic. As Heidegger notes, authentic being-one's-self is "*an existentiell modification of [the One] – of [the One] as an essential existentiale*".[37] What this means is that the One plays an essential role in the constitution of significance, because we always require possibilities to authentically appropriate. As we noted above, interpretation must always function on the basis of some prior understanding, and as such, although it is possible to reinterpret one's possibilities in a way that makes them authentically one's own, this can only be done on the basis of possibilities that have already been provided by the One. As such, authenticity is not a state that is opposed to inauthenticity, but is something that arises out of it, as a development of specific inauthentic potentials. All of this reveals an additional

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37 Ibid., p. 168, translation modified.

existential feature of Dasein, which Heidegger calls *falling* (*Verfallen*). This is not a fixed state that Dasein is in, but a "movement"[38] that results from the fact that Dasein is always already thrown into a socially articulated world. It indicates the fact that Dasein tends to become *absorbed* in the world, which means that it tends to focus on the possibilities that are immediately presented to it by the entities it encounters in the world, as they are articulated by the One, in such a way that it ignores its authentic possibilities for being itself. In essence, Dasein is not only inauthentic by default, but this inauthenticity tends to obscure the very possibility of authenticity. Moreover, even when it achieves some form of authentic self-relation, Dasein is always drawn or 'tempted' back towards inauthenticity. Heidegger's account of falling is more detailed than this, involving several distinct ways in which it becomes manifest, but these details are superfluous for our purposes.

Now that we have given an overview of the structure of Being-with, and shown exactly how it is constitutive for worldhood, we are in a position to lay out the final existentiale which makes up Being-in, namely, *discourse*. It is first important to point out that Heidegger uses the term 'discourse' in two distinct but intimately related senses. As we noted in the last chapter, Heidegger uses the word 'discourse' to translate the Greek '*logos*', and he provides an interpretation of it as "letting something be seen". What Heidegger means by discourse in this sense is just talk, or better, *expression*. This is not restricted to making assertions and questioning, but extends to other modes of expression (requesting, commanding, assenting/refusing, warning, etc.) Indeed, it shouldn't even be restricted to linguistic expression, but should include non-linguistic forms of communication (gestures, facial expressions, demonstration, etc.). This first sense of 'discourse' treats it as an activity, one that comes in many different forms. The second sense in which Heidegger uses the term indicates the existential structure which

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38 Ibid., p. 221.

underpins this activity. This is what he is referring to when he calls discourse the third existentiale of Being-in – the existential structure of expression as such.

Of this existentiale Heidegger says the following: "*Discourse is existentially equiprimordial with [disposedness] and understanding. The intelligibility of something has always been articulated [gegliedert], even before there is any appropriative interpretation of it. Discourse is the Articulation [Artikulation] of intelligibility.*"[39] Discourse is equiprimordial with disposedness and understanding insofar as it plays an essential role in structuring them, and this role consists in its "Articulation of intelligibility". Now, owing to its role as the existential structure of communication, Being-with is constitutive for discourse. If we can understand precisely what discourse's articulation of intelligibility consists in, we can thus complete our analysis of the way that Being-with is essentially bound up in Being-in-the-world. Unfortunately, Heidegger does not go into a great deal of detail about the existential structure of discourse. Moreover, he tends to switch between talking of discourse as activity and talking of the existentiale without explicitly acknowledging the subtle shift in sense. This makes interpreting precisely what he means by the "Articulation of intelligibility" quite difficult. We will endeavour to overcome these difficulties and reconstruct Heidegger's account of discourse out of the scant passages he dedicates to it.

Heidegger claims that there are four distinct existential features of any discourse: *what is talked about* (*das Geredete*), *what is said* (*das Beredete*), the *communication*, and the *making-known*.[40] The distinction between what is talked about and what is said is fairly straightforward. If I assert that "the hammer is heavy" we can obviously draw a distinction between what the assertion is about (the hammer) and what is said about it

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39 Ibid., pp. 203-204, translation altered. It is helpful to point out that Heidegger uses two different words that are both translated as 'articulation' – *Gliederung* and *Artikulation* – although the latter is generally capitalised to acknowledge the distinction.
40 Ibid., pp. 204-206.

(that it is heavy). Similarly, if I offer the hammer to someone else (either by saying "here, have a hammer", or by making an appropriate gesture), what is talked about is the hammer, and the offering is what is said. Heidegger takes this distinction to apply to all the various forms of expression. With regard to the communicative aspect of the discourse, Heidegger is quite explicit that it is nothing like a "conveying of experiences, such as opinions or wishes, from the interior of one subject to another".[41] Rather, he takes it to be a matter of developing shared moods and understanding. Given our earlier discussion of Being-with as constitutive for worldhood, we can see that there is already some sense in which understanding is shared. The significance which Dasein is given over to in its thrownness is always taken up as something socially articulated. However, Heidegger takes it that although understanding is always already shared to some extent, that it is so *implicitly*, and that communication is that through which this is taken up and developed *explicitly*. Making-known is not really a separate aspect of discourse, but is rather just that feature of communication through which we indicate and share our moods, in contrast to understanding, through such things as "intonation, modulation, the tempo of talk, 'the way of speaking'."[42] We might speculate that Heidegger would say something similar about disposedness to what he says about understanding, namely, that it is always implicitly shared, and that it becomes explicitly shared in discourse. Heidegger never says anything about this explicitly in *Being and Time*, but his account of disposedness and mood does move in a more social direction in subsequent work.[43]

If we are to explain the way that discourse articulates intelligibility, we need to elaborate on Heidegger's account of communication. We showed above how Being-with structures our possibilities for action generally, but we also showed that it provides specifically social possibilities, such as co-ordinated action and joint action. In its most

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41 Ibid., p. 205.
42 Ibid.
43 See fn. 25.

basic form, communication is that existentiell possibility of Dasein through which such social actions get co-ordinated. This co-ordination is essential, because if we are to act in concert, even if we are not necessarily working towards the same goal, we must be able to *collectively interpret* the possibilities which are available to us. For instance, if we are engaged in the joint activity of building a shed, my offer of a hammer can signal to my building partner the appropriateness of this tool for the task he is performing, or simply draw his attention to the various other ways the tool could be used in the context of the larger project. Alternatively, if I am driving behind someone in traffic, even though we are not pursuing the same goal, if he signals a turn, this forces me to reinterpret my possibilities for action, just as he would be forced to reinterpret his possibilities if I were to indicate my intention to overtake him.[44] Communication allows us to develop and maintain a shared grasp of each other's possibilities for action in such a way that we can adequately respond to each other, either in the context of pursuing our individual ends or in the context of some larger shared task. Such a shared grasp of possibilities is the condition under which these forms of action are possible. This process of collective interpretation is precisely what discourse's function as "letting something be seen" consists in – what in the previous chapter we called the *eliciting of manifestation*.

Now, as well as claiming that discourse (the existentiale) is the Articulation of intelligibility, Heidegger also claims that the existentiell activity of discoursing "is the way in which we articulate 'significantly' the intelligibility of Being-in-the-world".[45] It is important to keep these claims distinct, as understanding the latter sheds light on the former. The salient fact here is that we don't just develop a shared grasp of our *particular* possibilities through the collective interpretation communication facilitates,

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44 This is of course the example that Heidegger famously uses to explain his notion of *signs* earlier in *B&T* (pp. 107-114).We will discuss this further below.
45 Ibid., p. 204.

but that it is also the principle way through which we develop, adjust and extend our grasp of the functional norms on which our understanding of *general* possibilities is based. Through co-ordinating our action with Others we correct one another's behaviour, adjusting our grasp of what is appropriate to the activities we are engaging in. For instance, if I am sensitive to the fact that my partner is a master builder, then the process of co-ordinating our joint action will also likely hone my appreciation of the intricate details of *proper* craftsmanship, and perhaps even open me up to possible appropriate uses of equipment that were heretofore unknown to me. This is just what it is for discoursing to articulate the intelligibility of Being-in-the-world.

Although discoursing is an activity that Dasein engages in, it is useful for us to distinguish the *expressive possibilities* it presents from Dasein's more ordinary *practical possibilities*. Just as Dasein's practical possibilities are governed by functional norms, expressive possibilities are governed by their own norms.[46] Although Heidegger would most likely argue that the various modes of expression discussed above (questioning, asserting, assenting/refusing, suggesting, etc.) are existential features of the structure of discourse itself, the various forms of communication in which these are realised are existentiell modifications of them, and are governed by a variety of contingent norms. Everything from complete languages (e.g., English) to small sets of gestures adapted to a particular purpose (e.g., the hand signs soldiers use to co-ordinate their movements in combat) are structured by a particular set of expressive norms. However, we should note that this doesn't exclude the possibility of primitive or improvised forms of communication which are not based on a received set of norms.

Putting these points together, we can reveal a special relationship between practical possibilities and expressive possibilities. The pure significance in which our grasp of the general possibilities pertaining to types of equipment consists is structured

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46 Taylor Carman makes this point in his extended discussion of discourse (p. 215).

in such a way as to enable that equipment to be involved in expression. For instance, we encounter hammers as things that can be requested, offered, suggested, etc. We encounter them as things that we can *talk about*, that we can *say something* about, that we can *communicate* with others about, and that we can *make known* our dispositions toward. In essence, the existential structure of our understanding is such that the possibility of our entering into the kind of collective interpretation which adjusts and extends it is guaranteed. It is not only an existential feature of Dasein that its understanding is implicitly shared, but also that this sharing can become explicit, that it can expressively articulate it in discoursing. The sense in which the existential structure of discourse Articulates intelligibility is just this: that the various general and particular possible relations between types and individual pieces of equipment that make up significance are structured so that they can be expressively brought to light and reconfigured.

Thus, when Heidegger says that the "intelligibility of something has always been articulated, even before there is any appropriative interpretation of it"[47], he is in fact indicating that interpretation is dependent on the expressive structure of discourse. What this means is that our ability to explicitly interpret our own understanding is somehow derived from our ability to share our understanding explicitly in the kind of collective interpretation that co-ordinates social activity. This might sound strange, but Carman, who agrees on this point, alleviates this worry through analogy: "We can talk to ourselves, of course, but doing so is like paying oneself a salary: It is perfectly possible, but only by being parasitic on a social practice involving more than just one agent. Soliloquy is parasitic on dialogue, just as self-employment is parasitic on exchange."[48] Interpretation is an existential possibility of Dasein because expression is also such a

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47 *B&T*, p. 203.
48 Carman, pp. 248-249.

possibility, and this means that the additional expressive resources acquired through the development of expressive norms can at the same time open up new possibilities for interpretation, but only because our understanding is structured in a way that makes it expressible in principle.

It is useful here to consider the idea that expression is a practice, one that can be governed by its own norms, and thus which can also have its own equipment. This is what underwrites Heidegger's conception of language in *Being and Time* (a conception which famously changes quite drastically in the subsequent work[49]). Discourse provides the existential structure of language. In Articulating significance, it guarantees the possibility that both the various types of equipment, the relations they bear to one another, and the particular ways these are instantiated within the environment, can be expressively brought to light in collective interpretation. However, what this does is to provide for the possibility of specific kinds of equipment that can be used in this activity in regular ways, namely, *words* and *signs*.[50]

Heidegger's account of signs comes much earlier in *Being and Time*, where he uses them to help explain his account of significance.[51] The function of signs is to draw one's attention to the structure of one's environmental context in such a way that one can reinterpret one's possibilities for action appropriately. The main example Heidegger uses is one we considered earlier – the use of indicator signals in cars. Although signs like indicators have an expressive role, this role is part of the larger set of practices that make up the social activity of driving around others. All signs play roles within the context of some activity or set of activities, though they needn't be restricted to communication *between* individuals. In all cases, signs do not directly affect our

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49 Cf. Heidegger, 'On the Way to Language'. The fundamental change is that Heidegger ceases to see language as something that is derivative upon a prior realm of practical significance, and comes to see it as constitutive for our understanding.
50 Taylor Carman provides a good account of signs along these lines as "*interpretative* tools" (p. 234).
51 *B&T*, pp. 107-114.

possibilities, but indicate things which do, forcing us to reinterpret the actions open to us. There are artificial signs such as clock faces, fuel gages, and even natural signs such as a cow lying down, which indicate different things within particular contexts (e.g., that it is time for bed, that we need to refuel soon, or that it is about to rain, respectively). Heidegger notes that there can even be very simple, improvised signs, such as a knot tied in a handkerchief, which can serve as a reminder of almost anything. However, even such a simple sign has a specific purpose to fulfil.

Words are similar to signs, but whereas signs play specific expressive roles within the context of other activities, words play more general expressive roles. For Heidegger, words are not occurrent sounds or symbols to which a 'meaning' gets attached. Words are bits of equipment, but their proper use is not determined by their role in any ordinary practical activity. Rather, words correspond to particular parts of the structure of significance, or *significations* (*Bedeutungen*), and their proper use within expressive activities is derived from these significations. For instance, the word 'hammer', does not get its proper use from any fixed role it plays in the activity of hammering, but from the relations that constitute that type of equipment within the structure of pure significance, whereas the phrase 'my hammer' would have its use further determined by the relations that constitute one's environment and purposive orientation. This derivation is what Heidegger means when he says: "To significations, words accrue. But word-Things do not get supplied with significations."[52] This is the basic feature of Heidegger's theory of meaning.

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52 Ibid., p. 204.

4. Meaning: Intelligibility and Conditions of Possibility

We are at last in a position to consider Heidegger's theory of meaning in detail. Obviously, Heidegger's account of linguistic meaning gives primacy to the meaning of words, as opposed to theories of meaning that take sentences or propositions as primary. However, although Heidegger's theory of meaning does provide an account of the meaning of words and other linguistic expressions, it is more than just this. There are two distinct but intimately related terms that Heidegger uses in his account: meaning (*Sinn*) and signification (*Bedeutung*). To quote Heidegger:-

> That which can be Articulated in interpretation, and thus even more primordially in discourse, is what we have called "meaning". That which gets articulated as such in discursive Articulation, we call the "totality-of-significations" [*Bedeutungsganze*]. This can be dissolved or broken up into significations. Significations, as what has been Articulated from that which can be Articulated, always carry meaning [...*sind... sinnhaft*].[53]

Meaning is thus essentially synonymous with intelligibility, as that which is articulated by discourse. Significations are similarly articulated by discourse, and they 'carry' meaning. However, this should not be taken to imply that meaning and signification are effectively synonymous. Signification is in fact a *species* of meaning, or a form of intelligibility, but there are potentially forms of intelligibility that are not structured in the manner of significations. This can be better understood if we examine the way Heidegger defines the notion of meaning in relation to understanding:-

> That which can be Articulated in a disclosure by which we understand, we

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53 Ibid.

call "meaning". The *concept of meaning* embraces the formal existential framework of what necessarily belongs to that which an understanding interpretation Articulates. *Meaning is the "upon-which" of a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something; it gets its structure from a fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception*. Insofar as understanding and interpretation make up the existential state of Being of the "there", "meaning" must be conceived as the formal existential framework of the disclosedness which belongs to understanding.[54]

In effect, for Heidegger, meaning is just *what is understood* in understanding anything. The meaning of words is primary for Heidegger because words simply take their meaning from our understanding of the things they refer to. Indeed, words are only able to refer to things because we have some understanding of them, in terms of which we encounter them *in the world*. We have already explained above that this understanding takes the form of *projection*, but in order to explain what it is for meaning to be the "upon-which" of projection, we must examine the structure of projection further.

In *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger describes the structure of understanding as consisting in a "stratification of projections".[55] This stratification corresponds to the various layers of understanding involved in grasping any given entity in experience. When I encounter the paper in my study, my understanding of it has various facets that are all bound up together. I initially see it in terms of the particular possibilities it presents me within the environmental region that it occupies (my office), in relation to the other pieces of equipment that make up its context and my purposive orientation within it (writing a letter). The paper is *projected* upon these as that which provide its possibilities. The paper's various features are projected upon particular

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54 Ibid., p. 193.
55 *BPP*, p. 280.

aspects of this context. For instance, my understanding of it as oversize is projected upon the relation it bears to the envelopes I keep within my drawer, which are too small to fit it neatly. However, this situated understanding is in turn projected upon the general relations which constitute pure significance. I understand the paper *as* paper, and it is as such projected upon the set of relations that constitute paper as the type of equipment it is. Similarly, the particular features of the paper are projected upon the general relations underlying the particular ones they were projected upon. This stratification can potentially proceed further still, insofar as we project the general type 'paper' on something even more general, such as 'stationary'. All of these various layers are implicit in our encounter with the paper, and it is only in the process of interpretation that we can make them explicit and deal with them separately.

Meaning and signification pull apart precisely insofar as there are aspects of our understanding which don't correspond to anything *within the world* at all. Everything that is encountered within the world is projected upon the significations which make up the world, but there are more general forms of understanding that underlie the very structure of these significations, and although these forms of understanding are projections, they are no longer projecting upon significations. So, continuing the above example, the paper is eventually projected upon *availability* as the mode of Being it possesses.[56] Our understanding of availability is constitutive for signification as such, but is not itself a signification. Similarly, in theoretically oriented perception we project what we encounter upon occurrence, and in solicitude we project Other Dasein upon Dasein-with. Indeed, Heidegger thinks that we project ourselves upon existence (*Existenz*). Ultimately, everything is projected upon Being, and this is just what our pre-ontological understanding of Being consists in.[57]

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56 Heidegger makes this point in *BPP* (p. 293), although he talks about functionality or involvement (*Bewandtnis*) rather than availability (*Zuhandenheit*).

57 *B&T*, p. 371; *BPP*, pp. 280-281, 308. "We understand a being only as we project it upon [B]eing."

We are now left to ask about the consequences of this distinction between meaning and significance. The real issue is that whereas we have an adequate grasp of how word meaning and interpretation function with regard to entities within the world, namely, in terms of significations, we are somewhat at a loss as to how these are to be understood with regard to the meaning that underlies the world itself.

This leads us back to the problems we posed at the end of the last chapter, and to the interpretative paradox that spawned them. We are now in a position to claim that our grasp of the various aspects of Being (what-being, that-being, etc.), and of the various modes of Being (existence, occurrence, etc.) is grounded in our pre-ontological grasp of Being as such, insofar as they are projected upon Being. Our grasp of the meaning of the words that correspond to them is derived not from intra-worldly significations, but from the very existential structures which make up this pre-ontological understanding. However, properly understanding the underlying structure which unifies both these aspects and modes of Being involves more than this recognition, it involves *interpreting* the meaning of Being as such – developing our pre-ontological understanding into a properly conceptual understanding of Being. This means making explicit the horizon upon-which Being itself is projected.[58] This projection of Being upon its meaning is the *ultimate* projection in the hierarchy of stratified projections.

Why, though, is this projection ultimate? Why is there not a further stratum of projection upon which the meaning of Being is itself projected? This is because Being is not something *other* than its meaning. Heidegger sometimes seems to contradict himself on this point. On the one hand, in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* he claims that in interpreting the meaning of Being we are in a certain sense thinking *beyond* Being to whatever it is that it is projected upon.[59] On the other hand, in *Being and Time* he claims

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(Ibid., p. 280).
58 *BPP*, p. 280.
59 Ibid., p. 282.

that:-

> if we are inquiring about the meaning of Being, our investigation does not thereby become a "deep" one [*tiefsinnig*], *nor does it puzzle out what stands behind Being*. It asks about *Being itself* insofar as Being enters into the intelligibility of Dasein. *The meaning of Being can never be contrasted with entities, or with Being as the 'ground' which gives entities support*; for a 'ground' becomes accessible only as meaning, even if it is itself the abyss of meaninglessness.[60]

These claims are not contradictory because the sense in which the meaning of Being is beyond Being has nothing to do with it functioning as a ground of entities, but simply with providing the underlying structure of Being itself. This is 'beyond' Being only in the sense that there must be something beyond our *pre-ontological* understanding in which the unifying structure of the various aspects and modes of Being consists. It is something in terms of which that which defines beings as beings is to be explained, but in explaining this, it simply *is* what defines beings as beings.

   We can now venture a solution to the paradox posed in the last chapter. The question of the meaning of Being is not an ordinary question of meaning, insofar as it inquires into Being itself, but neither is it a question of essence ('What is Being?'), because the reflexive structure of that question makes it impossible to approach in principle. However, the reflexive character of this subject matter implies that the inquiry into Being has a *hermeneutically circular* structure. This hermeneutic circle is distinct from the other two we have identified so far – the circle internal to the existential analytic, and the circle between the analytic as inquiry into a mode of Being and the inquiry into Being as such. It consists in the fact that the very way in which we are to

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60 *B&T*, p. 193-194, italics added.

understand what Being 'is' is itself dependent upon this understanding. On this basis, we can see that the sense in which the question of Being is a question of *meaning* is just the sense in which it consists in an *interpretation* of the meaning of Being. Such a hermeneutically circular inquiry can only proceed by way of interpretation. This underscores what was said at the end of the last section: the inquiry into the meaning of Being consists in a process of interpretation which develops our pre-ontological understanding of Being into a genuine concept of Being.

However, we do not yet entirely understand what such an interpretation would consist in. This is because, although we have already provided a fairly detailed account of interpretation, this has mostly been restricted to the way interpretation develops the kind of understanding that is articulated in significations. Obviously, this is not applicable to the case of the interpretation of the meaning of Being. However, the requisite kind of interpretation is already underway within the existential analytic, both when Heidegger interprets the meaning of Dasein's Being as *care* (*Sorge*), and when he subsequently interprets the meaning of care as *temporality* (*Zeitlichkeit*). In the course of the latter he provides a more general account of what meaning and interpretation consists in. His crucial point is that: "Projecting discloses possibilities – that is to say, it discloses the sort of thing that makes possible... To lay bear the "upon-which" of a projection, amounts to disclosing that which makes possible what has been projected."[61] In essence, all interpretation at least consists in making explicit that which makes possible what is interpreted, with regard to the way in which it makes it possible. So, returning to the example from the last section, when I interpret the possibilities for action initially presented to me by the ingredients and cooking equipment available in my kitchen, I progressively make explicit the various significations that provide these possibilities. It is not a matter of uncovering the socio-economic conditions that 'make

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61 Ibid., p. 371.

possible' my possession of a reasonably well stocked kitchen, but rather of uncovering the elements of my understanding upon which my initial grasp of the situation is grounded.

This account of meaning in terms of *conditions of possibility* lets us flesh out the account of the existential analytic and the wider project of fundamental ontology we provided earlier: as hermeneutic inquiries which develop our pre-ontological understanding of our own mode of Being and of Being in general, respectively. We can now grasp the fundamental feature of each interpretation, namely, the explicit projection of each upon its meaning, or its condition of possibility. In the former case, after unpacking the various basic structures of Being-in-the-world (worldhood, Being-in, etc.), and naming their unity care, Heidegger poses the question of the condition of the possibility of this unity.[62] As already noted, this turns out to be temporality. The interpretation then proceeds to uncover the specific ways in which the features of Being-in-the-world are grounded in the structure of temporality, and this is the principle focus of Division II of *Being and Time*.

Finally, we may return to the projected structure of fundamental ontology proper. As we have already explained, the interpretation of the meaning of Being as such was not carried out in *Being and Time*, but its essential features were laid out in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Without going into too much detail about the structure of Dasein's temporality, Heidegger's intention was to use the results of the existential analytic to show that because pre-ontological understanding belongs to Dasein's Being, and the meaning of Dasein's Being is temporality, that temporality is the condition for the possibility of the understanding of Being.[63] This makes temporality the horizon for the interpretation of the meaning of Being, and this interpretation then takes the form of

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62 Ibid.
63 *BPP*, p. 280.

working out the specific ways in which the various aspects and modes of Being are grounded upon it. However, the precise way that temporality functions as the meaning of Dasein's Being and the way it functions as the meaning of Being as such are distinct. Heidegger calls the latter primordial temporality (*Temporalität*) to distinguish it from the former.[64] The difference between the two is simply the temporal interpretation of the difference between Dasein and the world. Just as there can be no Dasein without world, there is no temporality without primordial temporality, or vice versa. Nonetheless, whereas the former provides the structure of all comportment toward beings, the latter is the horizon within which beings can appear as such. Moreover, this horizon is not restricted to the appearance of beings in the present, but is in fact the unity of what Heidegger calls the horizonal schemata of past, present and future. In essence, Heidegger's aim was to locate the unity of the various aspects and modes of Being within the structure of primordial time as the horizon within which beings are encountered, and he believed that this would lead to temporal solutions to all of the problems of classical ontology. Indeed, at the end of *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, he proclaims that ontology is *temporal science*.[65]

This basic outline is the closest Heidegger comes to fulfilling the two functions of the existential analytic laid out in the last chapter, and thus completing the formulation of the question of Being begun in *Being and Time*. On the one hand, the question has been identified as a matter of interpreting our pre-ontological understanding of Being in terms of its condition of possibility. On the other, the first step in this interpretation has been taken, insofar as this condition has been identified as time, and its structure has been described in a preliminary fashion (Division II of *Being and Time*). Heidegger never proceeds beyond this basic outline, but it is interesting to

64 Ibid., p. 274.
65 Ibid., p. 323.

note that even as the concept of temporality becomes less important after *Basic Problems*, slowly being replaced with a renewed concern with the concept of truth, the essential elements of this formulation remain intact, at least for a while. This is evident in *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, where Heidegger repeats the same basic strategy, locating the meaning of Dasein's Being in *world-forming*, and the meaning of Being as such within the *prevailing of world* that corresponds to it.[66] Although this is arguably even briefer and less developed than *Basic Problems*, it displays the same essential structure – the location of the meaning of Being within the structure of the horizon within which beings can be encountered as such, or the essence of the "world as manifestness of beings as such as a whole".[67]

This way of formulating the question has an important consequence. As we have already explained, the horizon within which beings can be encountered is projected by Dasein. The structure of this horizon must therefore be understood in terms of Dasein's own existential structure. This means that the meaning of Being is ultimately located within Dasein itself, and thus in some sense dependent upon it. The multiplicity of regions of beings, the modes that characterise them, and the way the various aspects of Being are articulated within them are contained in advance in the way that Dasein opens up a world for itself. The development of our pre-ontological understanding of Being into a proper concept of Being is thus a matter of making *explicit* what was already *implicit* within this understanding, albeit by way of a complicated analysis of our own existential structure.[68] The consequence of this is that there is nothing more to Being than the way in which entities are made intelligible to Dasein. This creates a certain

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66 *FCM*, pp. 349-366.
67 Ibid., p. 349.
68 This might appear to contradict the claim made in the first chapter (section 3, part *i*), that Heidegger does not present the question as a matter of simply making explicit our pre-ontological understanding. However, the point is that Heidegger does not start out by *assuming* that the question is simply a matter of explication, but rather tries to demonstrate this point. The reasons for this are the same as those for the claim that Heidegger does not *define* Being as intelligibility given below.

proximity between Heidegger and Kant, insofar as it means that the inquiry into Being is a matter of inquiring into the conditions of the possibility of *intelligibility*, in a manner analogous to Kant's inquiry into the conditions of the possibility of *experience*.[69] Indeed, although there is nothing comparable to modes of Being in Kant's system, his account of the *categories* does amount to an account of the aspects of Being, the inquiry into the underlying structure of which does correspond to Kant's notion of metaphysics.

However, it is important to interpret this connection between Being and intelligibility correctly. There are a number of commentators who hold that it is not the result of an argument, but rather a matter of *definition*.[70] This position is perhaps expressed most succinctly by Taylor Carman: "Being is the intelligibility, or more precisely the condition of the intelligibility, of entities as entities."[71] On this interpretation, what Heidegger means when he talks about the Being of a particular entity is nothing more than its meaning, and what Heidegger means when he talks about Being in general is simply the conditions under which entities can be meaningful in this way. This means that in raising the question of the meaning of Being Heidegger is *directly* inquiring into the conditions of the possibility of intelligibility. There are a

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69 Of course, how one articulates this proximity will depend upon one's reading of Kant. Heidegger's own reading of Kant is highly idiosyncratic, although he retracts much of it later on. The reading presented *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* draws very explicit parallels between the projects of *Being and Time* and the *Critique of Pure Reason*, claiming that Kant's synthetic *a priori* knowledge is equivalent to the understanding of Being, and that his transcendental inquiry is thereby equivalent to the scholastic *metaphysica generalis* or ontology proper (*KPM*, pp. 9-11). Heidegger nonetheless criticises Kant for failing to take up the question in a sufficiently originary fashion (*KPM*, Part 4). Despite engaging with the metaphysical tradition coming out of Aristotle, Kant essentially *redefines* metaphysics as transcendental inquiry. By contrast, Heidegger *reorients* metaphysics by uncovering the original problem that the tradition is concerned with, and showing how this makes metaphysics something other than the tradition takes it to be. This distinguishes Heidegger from Kant both on his own reading and on any less metaphysical reading of him. We'll discuss Heidegger's account of metaphysics in more detail in chapters 3 and 4.

70 This interpretation is adopted most famously by Hubert Dreyfus (*Being-in-the-World*, p. 10) and many of those influenced by his reading of Heidegger. It is also adopted by Thomas Sheehan in his essay 'A Paradigm Shift in Heidegger Research' (section 2). This interpretation is explicitly rejected by William Blattner ('Is Heidegger a Kantian Idealist?', *Heidegger Reexamined, Vol. 2: Truth, Realism and the History of Being*, p. 186), although he argues against it on slightly different grounds.

71 Carman, p. 15.

number of things which recommend this reading. First, there is a very close relationship between the meaning of entities and their Being within the existential analytic: "If we say that entities 'have meaning', this signifies that they have become accessible *in their Being;* and this Being, as projected upon its "upon-which", is what 'really' 'has meaning' first of all."[72] Second, Heidegger's insistence that ontology must be phenomenology seems to indicate that he takes Being to inhere in the the way entities are given to us, or the conditions under which they are made intelligible to us.

However, there is a serious problem with this reading. If Heidegger had simply defined Being as intelligibility, then his inquiry into Being would be radically disconnected from the history of philosophy as he himself understood it. This is most easily demonstrated by considering his relationship to Aristotle. As we showed in the previous chapter, Heidegger takes the origin of the question of Being to lie in Aristotle's problem of the unity of the manifold senses of 'Being'. He does not take Aristotle to have correctly formulated the question, but he does at least take him to be concerned with the same topic. Yet it is clear that Aristotle does not take 'Being' to be synonymous with 'intelligibility', and despite his tendency to find phenomenological themes within Aristotle's work, Heidegger does not interpret Aristotle in this way. This means that Heidegger must see the claim that Being is intelligibility as a genuine improvement upon Aristotle's position, and this can only be the case if it is not a matter of definition. The same reasoning applies in relation to Heidegger's engagement with the ontological debates that appear in the metaphysical tradition following Aristotle.[73] Heidegger could hardly take himself to be providing solutions to the problems of classical ontology if he was not addressing the same issues as them. Although the early Heidegger is critical of the metaphysical tradition, he does not reject it outright, but takes himself to be in

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72 *B&T*, pp. 371-372.
73 Although Heidegger engages with traditional ontological debates in several places, the best examples are to be found in *BPP*, part I of which is given over to this task.

dialogue with it.[74] For this to be the case he must *demonstrate* that Being is intelligibility, rather than *stipulating* it.

This is precisely what the above formulation of the question is supposed to do. Heidegger's preliminary formulation of the question does not assume that Being is intelligibility, but the constraints he places upon completing this formulation ultimately lead to a position in which whatever the precise structure of Being is, it is to be located in the way in which entities are made intelligible to us. How then are we to account for the features of Heidegger's work which recommend the definitional reading? The answer to this lies in the fact that Heidegger does hold that Being is intelligibility at the beginning of *Being and Time*, much as he already holds that time is the horizon for interpreting it, even though he is committed to demonstrating both of these assumptions. He is thus at times tempted to foreshadow these results in ways that he is not strictly entitled to. This is relatively harmless in the case of the close relationship between the meaning of entities and their Being, as nothing in the argument hinges upon it. However, the identification of phenomenology and ontology is more complicated. Although the claim that *fundamental* ontology is an essentially phenomenological inquiry is not deployed in the argument that establishes the identity of Being and intelligibility, it nonetheless implicitly depends upon the claim that the *regional* ontology of Dasein, or the existential analytic, is an essentially phenomenological inquiry. This means that even if we see the identification of phenomenology and ontology in the introduction to *Being and Time* as an essentially harmless foreshadowing of a position he will ultimately justify, it is an open question as to whether Heidegger is justified in taking a phenomenological approach to the Being of the questioner. This is not a particularly serious issue, as it is possible to argue that the results Heidegger's phenomenological method produces are sufficient to justify it,

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74 We will discuss Heidegger's relation to the metaphysical tradition in more detail in chapters 4 and 5.

especially in the absence of a viable alternative approach. Nonetheless, this leaves open the possibility of alternative (i.e., non-phenomenological) methodologies.

We have now answered two of the questions we posed in the last chapter: we have provided a solution to the interpretative paradox and thereby established the sense in which the question of Being is a question of meaning, and we have given an account of what the interpretation of the meaning of Being consists in. However, we have not addressed the second question we posed in the last chapter, namely, what kind of understanding of the nature of meaning we require to formulate the question, and, in relation to this, to what extent Heidegger's formulation is dependent upon his own theory of meaning. We have established that the question must be a question of meaning insofar as the subject matter has a peculiarly reflexive structure. This means that the inquiry into the meaning of Being has a hermeneutically circular structure, and that it must therefore take the form of an interpretation of our pre-ontological understanding of Being. All of this fits neatly with Heidegger's hermeneutic theory of meaning and interpretation. The question is to what extent it is dependent upon Heidegger's theory, and if it can be separated from it, to what extent we would require an alternative theory.

Now, it is obvious that the basic insight into the question as a question of meaning is independent of Heidegger's theory of significance and the role it plays in constituting the meaning of most words. This is because Heidegger's account of the meaning of the word 'Being' appeals to the more general notion of meaning understood in terms of conditions of possibility. However, although this more general notion of meaning is essential to Heidegger's account of what it is to interpret the meaning of Being, and thus to *his* formulation of the question, its not clear that the basic insight is dependent upon it either. It seems possible that one could interpret our pre-ontological understanding in a way which did not proceed by inquiring into the conditions of the

possibility of this understanding. If this is the case, then Heidegger's theory of meaning could be abandoned entirely, without abandoning the basic insight, and thus the idea of the question of the *meaning* of Being as such.

However, to pursue such an alternative approach one would have to meet several conditions. First, although one would not necessarily have to provide a complete theory of meaning, one would definitely have to provide an alternative account of interpretation. This is because, as we have seen, Heidegger's own account of interpretation is intimately bound up with his theory of meaning and understanding. Secondly, this account of interpretation would have to allow for the kind of hermeneutically circular structure the basic insight indicates. Thirdly, in accordance with what we determined at the end of the last chapter, one would have to provide an account of the meaning of the various senses of Being, and the way our grasp of these senses is bound up with our pre-ontological understanding of meaning. In short, in order to formulate the question without using Heidegger's theory of meaning, one would require a theory of meaning and interpretation rich enough to give an alternative account of what the interpretation of our pre-ontological understanding of Being consists in.

Heidegger's initial formulation of the question establishes the identity of Being and intelligibility, and thus of ontology and phenomenology. In doing so it retrospectively legitimates Heidegger's phenomenological approach to the existential analytic. However, this essentially depends upon the phenomenological theory of meaning that Heidegger develops within the analytic. If there could be a non-phenomenological approach to the question of the structure of questioning, and a correlative non-phenomenological theory of meaning, it might also then be possible to adopt a non-phenomenological approach to the question of Being itself. This is to say

that an alternative methodology for addressing the two principle constraints placed upon the formulation of the question might lead to the denial of the identity of Being and intelligibility, and thus undercut the retrospective legitimation of phenomenology. For the moment, this can be nothing more than a possibility. We must now turn to the ways in which Heidegger departs from his initial formulation of the question in his subsequent work.

Chapter 3: Truth and Being

The notion of truth plays a central role in Heidegger's work, both early and late. As Heidegger points out: "In ontological problematics *Being and truth* have, from time immemorial, been brought together if not entirely identified... If we are to give an adequate preparation for the question of Being, the phenomenon of *truth* must be ontologically clarified."[1] Indeed, as we noted in the first chapter, Aristotle locates being-true as one of the senses of 'Being' that requires unification, and Heidegger not only follows him in this, but even tends to take being-true as the primary sense, through which the others are to be unified.[2] Moreover, the shift in Heidegger's work that occurs after *Being and Time* coincides with a reorientation of the question of Being from the 'meaning' to the 'truth' of Being. However, what Heidegger means by 'truth' here is very different to what we ordinarily mean by it. Rather, when he talks of truth as *aletheia*, *unconcealment* (*Unverborgenheit*), *disclosedness* (*Erschlossenheit*), or *clearing* (*Lichtung*), he is talking about the *ontological ground* of the ordinary notion of truth. The inquiry into being-true as the primary sense of 'Being' is meant to unify the other senses precisely insofar as it uncovers this primordial phenomenon of truth.

The aim of this chapter is to account for the central role of truth within Heidegger's thought, and to make sense of the shift away from the 'meaning' to the 'truth' of Being, by showing precisely what this primordial notion of truth consists in, and precisely how Heidegger takes it to ground the ordinary notion of truth. To do this, we will first examine Heidegger's initial account of truth in section 44 of *Being and Time*, and consider a well known objection to it made by Ernst Tugendhat.[3] We will then

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1 *B&T*, p. 228.
2 This is evident in the way he approaches the unity of the different aspects of Being he derives from the copula, both in *BPP* (p. 223) and *FCM* (p. 338).
3 Tugendhat, 'Heidegger's Idea of Truth'. This paper is in fact a *precis* of a larger work by Tugendhat on the notion of truth in both Husserl and Heidegger's work (*Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und*

explore how the account changes in *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 'On the Essence of Truth', and 'On the Origin of the Work of Art'. What we will see is that there are in fact two changes in Heidegger's account: a change in the argument through which the ordinary conception of truth is grounded in the primordial conception, and a substantive shift in the account of the primordial notion of truth itself. The first change has the effect of undermining Tugendhat's criticisms, but it is the more substantive change which underlies the fundamental shift between the earlier and later work.

1. Truth in *Being and Time*

Turning to the account of truth in *Being and Time*, the first thing that needs to be explained is precisely what the ordinary conception of truth that Heidegger is trying to ground consists in. The first subsection of section 44 lays out what Heidegger calls the 'traditional' conception of *truth as agreement* (*Übereinstimmung*). This is the classical view which takes truth to be a matter of correspondence between what is expressed in an assertion and the thing of which it is asserted (*adequatio intellectus et rei*). Although they are closely related, we must not confuse this *traditional* view of truth with what I have called the *ordinary* view.[4] The ordinary view takes truth to be a matter of the *correctness* (*Richtigkeit*) of assertions.[5] The traditional view is already a *philosophical interpretation* of the ordinary view, which takes correctness to consist in a relation of correspondence between the assertion (or the expressed content) and the thing. We will

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Heidegger), which unfortunately has not yet been translated into English.

4   This mistake is made by a number of commentators, including Wrathall ('Heidegger and Truth as Correspondence') and Carman (*Heidegger's Analytic*, ch. 5).

5   This is not talked about explicitly in section 44, but Heidegger explicitly identifies the ordinary view of truth as correctness in *OET* (p. 118) and *BQP* (p. 9), in ways that show that the latter is not being criticised, but merely grounded in a more primordial phenomenon. This very clearly shows that Heidegger distinguishes between truth as correctness, which he aims to ground, and truth as corresondence, which he criticises. This aspect of the later works should not be seen as a change from *Being and Time* as much as a refinement of the terminology and the structure of the explanation. Importing this refined terminology back into *Being and Time* lets us pinpoint more precisely where the genuine changes in the account occur.

examine Heidegger's criticisms of this interpretation shortly. Heidegger's strategy in section 44 is to provide an alternative interpretation of what truth as correctness consists in, in opposition to the traditional view, and then to show how the traditional view can be seen to arise out of this. On this basis, he can then reveal the more primordial ontological structure upon which this account of truth depends, which he will in turn name 'truth'.

i) Assertion

In order to present Heidegger's account of what truth as correctness consists in, it is first necessary to explain his account of assertion in more detail. We are now in a position to flesh out the basic account of assertion as *apophantic discourse* provided in the first chapter, on the basis of the account of understanding, interpretation and discourse given in the second chapter. The essential point made there was that, although all forms of discourse "let something be seen", they do so *indirectly*, whereas assertion does so in a *direct* fashion. What this means is that although other forms of discourse (such as requesting, assenting/refusing, suggesting, etc.) facilitate collective interpretations of our shared possibilities, they only bring to light and allow us to re-articulate aspects of our *fore-having* in the context of organising action towards some goal (even if the goal is not necessarily a shared one). For instance, the social activity of playing football (or soccer) involves a whole team of players working together to achieve a goal (in this case, literally 'goals'), and this involves various different sub-activities, such as passing the ball, manoeuvring into accessible positions, tackling, taking shots, etc., but it also involves the various communications between the players through which they work out and modify their roles within the wider activity at any given point. The acts of

expression through which the players communicate are not something other than the activity, but are a genuine part of the activity itself. Even in cases such as driving a car, where we must co-ordinate our actions with others, but without any shared goal, communication with other drivers is a part of the activity of driving itself. The point is thus that most types of discourse form *expressive parts* of other activities, whereas assertion can also take place outside of the context of other activities. Another way of putting this is to say that the kind of collective interpretation which most discourse enables is essentially *circumspective*. Assertion is an essentially decontextualised form of discourse, even if it is sometimes bound up within the context of some activity, and as such it enables a form of *non-circumspective* interpretation.

Heidegger claims that assertion is a derivative mode of interpretation.[6] Indeed, he claims that the as-structure found in assertion (the *apophantic* 'as') is a modification of that found in circumspective interpretation (the *hermeneutic* 'as'). However, he makes these claims before he introduces discourse as an existentiale. Given the way in which interpretation depends upon this existentiale, we can see that the way in which assertion modifies interpretation is actually a matter of the way it modifies the existential structure of discourse that ordinary *circumspective* interpretation depends upon. Heidegger claims that there are three different aspects of the structure of assertion: *pointing out* (*Aufzeigen*), *predication* and *communication*. Pointing out is the primary feature of assertion, upon which the other two are based, and it corresponds to *what is talked about* in discourse. Precisely what distinguishes assertion's function of pointing out from the way in which other forms of discourse pick out what is talked about in them is basically what we discussed in the last paragraph. In circumspective interpretation, even though we are rearticulating our understanding of our possibilities for action, we nonetheless encounter entities as bound up in the role they occupy in the

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6 *B&T*, p. 154.

context of some wider activity. This means that even when *we talk about* the entity in a non-assertoric fashion (requesting it, suggesting it, etc.) what is primarily in view is not the entity, but the larger context of which the entity is a part. By contrast, it is the fact that assertion focuses attention upon the entity itself which makes something like a *decontextualised* understanding of it possible.

Predication is the aspect of assertion which corresponds to *what is said* about what is talked about in discourse. Predication is made possible by pointing out, but it is what effectively carries out the decontextualisation discussed above. Importantly, Heidegger thinks that in predicating some determinate character of an entity (or the *subject* of the predicate) we are not adding something on top of the grasp we already have of it. Rather, he takes it that predication is a matter of *restricting* our view so as to focus on a particular aspect of our understanding of it.[7] The understanding we have of the entities we encounter is initially a *unitary* one. It is constituted by our grasp of all of the various possible relations it stands in within its environmental context. The primary function of predication is to pick this unitary understanding apart so that we can focus upon some aspect of it in *isolation* from others. Heidegger's example is the assertion "the hammer is too heavy", in which the predicate 'too heavy' makes explicit some of the features of the equipmental context the hammer is bound up in (e.g., the specific way it is inappropriate for my current task), while ignoring others (e.g., its appropriateness or inappropriateness for others).

This leads us to the specific way in which communication is modified in assertion. Heidegger takes assertion's communicative function to be "letting someone see with us what we have pointed out by way of giving it a definite character"[8], which enables us to engage *collectively* in non-circumspective interpretation. However,

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7 Ibid., p. 197.
8 Ibid.

Heidegger also points out that "As something communicated, that which has been put forward in the assertion is something that Others can 'share' with the person making the assertion, even though the entity which he has pointed out and to which he has given a definite character is not close enough for them to grasp and see it."[9] What Heidegger means here by 'not close enough' should not necessarily be understood in spatial terms, but indicates that assertion enables us to indicate aspects of the entity even to those who lack the prior understanding of it out of which these are isolated. We noted earlier that words are bits of equipment governed by expressive norms, and the same applies to the assertions that are constructed out of them. This is what enables assertions to be 'shared' and used by those who lack a prior understanding of that which they talk about. The prior understanding of what is talked about is filled in for by the practical ability to use the relevant words, which itself refers to an understanding of the more general relations between types of equipment. This highlights the second function of predication, namely, its *abstraction* of the relevant determination from the specific details of the way it is manifest in the given entity. To take up the earlier example, the fact that the hammer is 'too heavy' can be communicated independently of a grasp of the specific way in which it is too heavy for the task at hand, whether it is a matter of overall weight or weight distribution, and the particular way in which this affects the task.

The fact that assertions can be easily shared in this way also enables a derivative form of assertoric discourse that Heidegger calls *idle talk* (*Gerede*). This is what happens when assertions become entirely detached from the prior understanding in which they are grounded, and become like free floating counters that can be traded within conversation. We might say that idle talk is what one does when 'one doesn't know what one is talking about'. However, this must be understood not to mean that one

9 Ibid.

can't *justify* what one is saying, but rather that one doesn't *understand* what it is one is referring to.[10] In essence, what goes on in idle talk is that our practical ability to deploy words and assertions within conversation outruns our understanding of the things they talk about. This is possible because we can simply copy the usage of Others, rather than deriving an understanding of word use from an understanding of things. For example, we can imagine a conversation at a dinner party in which the host raises the topic of economic policy, say, whether central banks should engage in 'quantitative easing', because it is a topic that 'everyone is talking about'. In this situation, it is quite possible that there could be a rudimentary conversation, in which several of the guests each repeats various assertions (and even more fully formed arguments) that they have heard others make about the topic, even when none of them have any real grasp of what 'quantitative easing' actually involves. This example demonstrates Heidegger's claim that idle talk is an *inauthentic* form of discourse. This is because it shows that precisely what idle talk consists in is making assertions on the basis of the impersonal authority of the One, i.e., saying *what one says*, rather than a matter of engaging in any genuine interpretation of some prior understanding.[11] Because of this, idle talk is one of the features of Dasein's falling we mentioned earlier.

There is one final aspect of Heidegger's account of assertion that must be addressed. This is the special relationship between assertion and *occurrence*. As we've noted, assertion has the ability to provide decontextualised interpretations of entities, such that what is said about them can potentially be shared and understood outside of the context of a particular activity, or even outside of a particular environmental context

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10 John Haugeland describes idle talk this way in his response to Brandom's account of idle talk ('Reading Brandom Reading Heidegger').

11 It should be noted that, just as Heidegger has a nuanced conception of the relationship between authenticity and inauthenticity more generally, his conception of the relationship between assertion and idle talk is more complex. In truth, for Heidegger, there are various degrees to which the understanding underlying our use of language can be deficient, and thus much of our everyday language use is idle in some form, often by necessity.

within which it is situated. It does this through *pointing out* the entity directly, in such a way that particular aspects of it can be *isolated* from the totality of its involvements and *abstracted* from the particular ways they are instantiated in this totality. Now, assertion needn't provide an entirely decontextualised interpretation of an entity. This can be seen in Heidegger's example, where what is predicated of the hammer is still a matter of the functional norms governing the use of hammers within a certain activity (i.e., that it is 'too heavy' for them). Heidegger claims that there are many possible layers of decontextualisation: "assertions about the happenings in the environment, accounts of the [available], 'reports on the Situation', the recording and fixing of 'facts of the case', the description of a state of affairs, the narration of a state that has befallen."[12] All of these retain something of the purposive character of our ordinary experience. However, at the limit point we reach *theoretical* assertions, such as "this hammer has a mass of 0.6 kilograms", which are entirely decontextualised. Theoretical notions such as mass are interpretatively derived from our practical understanding of features such as heaviness, but become independent precisely insofar as our grasp of the use of the corresponding words ('mass') within assertions pulls apart from our practical understanding of available equipment. It is this process of decontextualisation in which the derivation of the occurrent from the available consists.[13] For Heidegger, our understanding of occurrent entities is thus based upon our capacity for assertion.

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12 *B&T*, p. 201.

13 Brandom, in his paper 'Heidegger's Categories in *Sein und Zeit*' (*Tales of the Mighty Dead*, ch. 10), provides a nuanced account of this process of derivation that is certainly more detailed than anything Heidegger ever explicitly provided. Regardless of the independent interest of Brandom's account, it is difficult to see it as what Heidegger had in mind. This is due to the central role that *inference* plays in it. Brandom agrees that it is the the fact that our grasp of the use of words within assertion pulls apart from our practical grasp of equipment that enables theoretical understanding, and thus grasp of entities as occurrent. However, he sees this as a grasp of the inferential roles that assertions play within discourse and the way these words systematically contribute to them. Heidegger says almost nothing about inference in *Being and Time* and his other work, and explicitly criticises conceptions of discourse that focus upon reasoning. This makes it very hard to think that it could play the important role Brandom ascribes to it. We will discuss these issues further in chapter 4, part 3, section *ii*.

ii) Truth: Being-uncovering, Uncoveredness, and Disclosedness

Now that we've gone over Heidegger's account of assertion, we're in a position to explain the account of truth provided in section 44. We will start by addressing Heidegger's criticism of the traditional view. The traditional view tries to interpret the truth of an assertion as consisting in a relation between the assertion, or the *ideal* content it expresses, and the *real* object which it represents. The character of this relation is described as a matter of agreement, correspondence or similarity. The problem Heidegger has with this view is that it gives us no adequate way of understanding what this relation itself consists in. We can make sense of various ordinary forms of correspondence, such as the equality of two numbers, or the similarity of two objects, but, in the case of truth, we do not know what it is about either relata that is meant to correspond to the other. The split between the ideal Being of the content and the real Being of the object leaves us at a loss as to what kind of Being the relation exhibits. This criticism isn't really elaborated on very well, but it functions as a springboard for Heidegger's own approach.

Heidegger opens his account by offering a phenomenological analysis of the process of confirmation (or demonstration) of the truth of an assertion. He begins by way of an example: "Let us suppose that someone with his back turned to the wall makes the true assertion that 'the picture on the wall is hanging askew.' This assertion demonstrates itself when the person who makes it, turns around and perceives the picture hanging askew on the wall."[14] Heidegger takes it that the truth of the assertion is manifest in this moment of demonstration, wherein we encounter the object as being the way the assertion claims it to be. However, this phenomenon must be interpreted in a very particular way. First, Heidegger maintains that when we assert something we are

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14 *B&T*, p. 260.

related to the entity that is thereby pointed out. Even if the person in the example never turns around, and so never has the perceptual experience which confirms their assertion, the assertion nonetheless relates them to the picture *itself*, and not to anything like a 'representation' of the picture. As Heidegger explained in the introduction, an assertion *allows* an entity to manifest itself, which is to say that it lets us encounter an entity, or grasp it, even though this encounter is not a perceptual one. Second, Heidegger holds that the moment of confirmation is not thereby a comparison of a representation with what is represented, nor is it "an agreement between the 'contents of consciousness' among themselves."[15] Rather, the assertion "is confirmed, when that which is put forward in [it] (namely, the entity itself) shows itself *as that very same thing*. "*Confirmation*" signifies *the entity's showing itself in its selfsameness*."[16] What this means is that both the assertion and the perceptual encounter with the picture involve the picture manifesting itself in some way, and the confirmation of the assertion is the *coincidence* of these manifestations.

This idea is derived from Husserl's account of truth in the sixth of his *Logical Investigations*. Husserl takes it that both the assertion (or judgement) and the correlative perception are *intentional acts* directed at the same thing, and that truth is revealed in a secondary or *founded* act, in which the objects of primary intentions are *identified*.[17] Heidegger's account is very similar – both the 'letting be seen' of the assertion and the more straightforward perceptual encounter are ways of Being toward the entity in question, i.e., *comportments* of Dasein, and 'the entity's showing itself in its selfsameness' is a relation these comportments stand in to one another. However, Heidegger rejects the notion that truth is equivalent to an *identity relation*. For Husserl,

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15 Ibid., p. 261.
16 Ibid.
17 Heidegger provides an in depth analysis of Husserl's concept of truth in *HCT* (pp. 50-55), although it is not yet particularly critical. He also discusses it in *LQT*. Dahlstrom provides a good summary of the latter (pp. 104-108).

the founded act is an act of identification, and the identity relation is its *object*. For Heidegger, this makes truth something like a state of affairs which is encountered within the world, as if it were a relation between two extant things. Thus, instead of taking truth to consist in a *static* relation at which comportment aims, he takes it to be a *dynamic* relation between comportments.[18]

This point is hard to appreciate, given the simplicity of the example Heidegger provides. Moreover, the example can easily be read as indicating that this relation can only hold between assertions and the direct encounters we have with entities in experience, such as circumspective concern. This would severely limit the scope of demonstration. If nothing else, it would preclude inferential justification as a means of demonstrating assertions. The answer to both problems is to consider the role that *interpretation* plays here. First of all, our encounters with entities within the world are not simply a matter of immediate understanding, but involve the active development of this understanding in interpretation (principally in circumspective interpretation). Secondly, we can engage in collective interpretation, through which we develop our shared understanding by communicating with one another, and assertion is a particular form of such communication – one which facilitates non-circumspective collective interpretation. This means that assertoric discourse can do more than merely be confirmed by understanding garnered in concern and circumspective interpretation – it can actually engender the very understanding through which its assertions are confirmed.

This is a more detailed version of the point made when we discussed Heidegger's preliminary account of discourse in the first chapter, namely, that discourse can open up the possibility of genuine discovery that is not for that matter perceptual

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18 This is a point made by Tugendhat ('Heidegger's Idea of Truth', p. 253), but is discussed in more detail by Dahlstrom (pp. 104-108).

discovery. For example, if myself and a friend were searching my house for my car keys, and in the course of searching we made assertions, communicating to one another where the keys are not (e.g., "the keys aren't in the kitchen", "they aren't in the living room", etc.), this would constitute a process of collective interpretation through which we narrowed down the possibilities for locating the keys. Through this process of interpretation it is possible for us to discover that the keys are in the bedroom, without having directly encountered the keys there, in virtue of having systematically eliminated the other viable options, or having uncovered additional clues to their whereabouts. Our understanding of the environment has been reconfigured by this process, such that when I say "the keys are in the bedroom", the assertion coincides with it. The demonstration of the truth of an assertion through explicitly drawing inferences between assertions is just one particular form of this kind of interpretation.

For Heidegger, interpretation is an ongoing process through which we develop some understanding, and, as in the above example, this can involve the *integration* of understanding garnered through various different comportments, both perceptual and communicative. The salient point here is that the relation of coincidence between an assertion and another comportment is not something fixed, but is an aspect of this *dynamic* process of interpretation. Moreover, it is something revealed within the process of interpretation itself. Returning to the previous example, when we actually search the bedroom, the understanding on the basis of which my assertion was confirmed continues to be elaborated, possibly culminating in a direct encounter with the keys, but also possibly involving the uncovering of things incompatible with the understanding just established (e.g., the keys' absence, or the keychain without the keys). In the former case, the confirmation is in a certain sense deepened. In the latter case, the integration of this understanding results in the *disconfirmation* of the assertion. In essence, the relation

between the assertion and the wider interpretation shifts, changing as our current understanding of the situation develops. What it is for us to demonstrate the truth of an assertion is to make explicit the accord between the assertion and our *current* understanding.

On the basis of this analysis, Heidegger makes a bolder claim. He contends that the "*Being-true* (*truth*) of the assertion must be understood as *Being-uncovering*."[19] What Heidegger means by this is that what is demonstrated in the confirmation of the assertion is nothing other than its eliciting of a manifestation. Heidegger is claiming that there is nothing *added* to a confirmed assertion, it is simply the case that we explicitly grasp the role a genuine assertion already plays. What is this role though? It is nothing other than the contribution the assertion makes to the kind of interpretation outlined above. The assertion uncovers just insofar as it is *used* as equipment within this process of interpretation. Referring back to the above example, each of the assertions that myself and my friend make in searching for the car keys plays a part in the collective interpretation through which the search is organised. Their truth does not need to be demonstrated for them to play such a role, rather, the demonstration merely makes this role explicit. If, in the course of our search, we encounter things that are at odds with these assertions, then, in the process of integration, the assertions are disconfirmed, and are thus *discarded*, ceasing to play a part in the ongoing process of interpretation.

On the basis of the above, we can see that Heidegger's example provides a *limit-case* of Being-uncovering. This is because the only use to which the assertion is being put is in the process of interpretation that demonstrates its accord with our understanding. In effect, what is thereby demonstrated is that it is *available for use* in the process of collective interpretation through which we develop our understanding further. We must be clear that this is not a kind of availability that *all* assertions present.

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19 *B&T*, p. 261.

It is always possible for us to use assertions that have been disconfirmed in various ways, for example, by using them to lie. As such, there is some sense in which all assertions are available for use, but it is not the case that all assertions are *appropriate* for use in interpretation. When an assertion is confirmed we grasp its appropriateness *explicitly*, but we nonetheless *implicitly* grasp the appropriateness of those assertions that we are already using, just as we have a circumspective grasp of the appropriateness of the tools we are using in a given activity. This means that those assertions that are disconfirmed are like broken tools that we discard after their *inappropriateness* for the task becomes evident.

Heidegger's account of the truth of assertions is thus a kind of *pragmatist coherentism*. It is initially pragmatist because the truth of an assertion consists in its appropriateness within the context of a particular kind of *practical activity*, namely, interpretation. It is coherentist because this appropriateness is a matter of how the assertion fits within the activity of interpretation. It is then doubly pragmatist because the activity of interpretation is ultimately grounded in Dasein's practical engagement with entities in the world. The collective interpretation facilitated by assertion is still principally a matter of organising action, and this means that such interpretations are directly sensitive to the success or failure of action. In this case, the truth of an assertion is thus sensitive to its impact upon action. Even strictly *theoretical* interpretation, which is completely decontextualised, is still derived from ordinary practical understanding. As such, the truth of theoretical assertions is still sensitive, albeit to a much lesser degree.

Nonetheless, there is still more to Heidegger's account of truth. Although he has now provided an alternative account of what truth as correctness consists in, he claims that: "Being-true as Being-uncovering, is a way of Being for Dasein. What makes this

very uncovering possible must necessarily be called 'true' in a still more primordial sense. *The most primordial phenomenon of truth is first shown by the existential-ontological foundations of uncovering.*"[20] He thus locates two successively more primordial senses of 'truth' by uncovering the existential structures which make possible the Being-uncovering of assertions. The second sense of 'truth' he establishes is what he calls the *Being-uncovered*, or *uncoveredness* (*Entdecktheit*), of entities in contrast to the Being-uncovering of assertions. In essence, whereas Being-uncovering refers to the way in which assertions *elicit* manifestation, Being-uncovered refers to the *manifestation* which is thereby elicited. However, Heidegger takes uncoveredness to refer not just to the manifestations elicited by assertion, but to manifestation *as such*. His claim is that the specific form of manifestation that is evidenced in assertion is dependent upon the structure of manifestation as such, and so, that this deserves to be called 'true' in a more primordial sense. There is thus a sense in which all comportments 'uncover' that subsumes the Being-uncovering of assertions.

Heidegger reaches the most primordial level of truth in Dasein's *disclosedness*. This is nothing other than the existential structure of Dasein as Being-in-the-world as we have already laid it out, namely, as: "[disposedness], understanding, and discourse... [pertaining] equiprimordially to the world, Being-in, and to the Self".[21] As we have already explained, Dasein is its 'there', and disclosedness names the way in which Dasein is revealed to itself *as* its 'there'.[22] However, this is equivalent to the projection or opening up of the world as such, as the horizon within which beings can be encountered. Disclosedness is the condition of the possibility of uncoveredness, because it provides the framework within which there can be anything like a comportment that

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20 Ibid., p. 263.

21 Ibid.

22 Heidegger is a bit more clear about the terminology in *BPP*, where he uses the more general term 'unveiling' (*Enthüllen*) to indicate the understanding grasp of something, and treats uncovering and disclosing as species of this, corresponding to the unveiling of extant entities and Dasein, respectively (p. 215).

uncovers an entity. It is on this basis that Heidegger takes disclosedness to be the most primordial form of truth. Furthermore, Heidegger claims that truth fundamentally *belongs* to Dasein. He explains this by way of a now infamous example:-

> *'There is' truth only in so far as Dasein is and so long as Dasein is.* Entities are uncovered only *when* Dasein *is*; and only so long as Dasein *is*, are they disclosed. Newton's laws, the principle of non-contradiction, any truth whatever – these are true only as long as Dasein *is*. Before there was any Dasein, there was no truth, nor will there be any after Dasein is no more. For in such a case truth as disclosedness, uncovering, and uncoveredness, *cannot* be. Before Newton's laws were discovered, they were not 'true'; it does not follow that they were false, or even that they would become false if ontically no discoveredness were any longer possible. Just as little does this restriction imply that the Being-true of 'truths' has in any way been diminished.[23]

Truth and falsity as ordinarily understood are statuses that assertions have in the context of practices of collective interpretation that are not only carried out by Dasein, but are only possible on the basis of Dasein's existential constitution. If there is no Dasein, there can be no such interpretation, and thus, neither can there be truth or falsity.

We have now presented the essential elements of Heidegger's account of truth in *Being and Time*, but there are two final aspects of it to address: the account of how the traditional conception of truth emerges, and Heidegger's conception of 'untruth'. Taking the former first, Heidegger's account of the way truth comes to be interpreted as correspondence depends upon his account of assertions as equipment deployed in

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23 *B&T*, p. 269.

interpretation.[24] As already noted, we have a *practical* grasp of assertions as equipment to be used in interpretation, and of their status as appropriate for interpretation (i.e., truth). We also have a practical grasp of the thing the assertion points out, and the relation of pointing out, in virtue of our understanding of the expressive possibilities the thing presents us with. Heidegger's claim is that, when we try to understand truth in a *theoretical* fashion, we convert the assertion into something *occurrent*, and truth into a property this occurrent thing possesses. We then understand this property as consisting in a relation between two occurrent entities – the assertion and the thing pointed out. For Heidegger, this automatically confuses the issue, as the status of true assertions is something they have precisely in virtue of their *available* character.

Moving on to the latter issue, Heidegger's account of truth incorporates a notion of *untruth* that is not synonymous with falsity. It is important to examine how this stands in *Being and Time*, as the way it changes signals the more substantial shift in Heidegger's account we mentioned earlier. The important section is the following:-

> In its full existential-ontological meaning, the proposition that 'Dasein is in the truth' states equiprimordially that 'Dasein is in untruth'. But only in so far as Dasein has been disclosed has it also been closed off; and only in so far as entities within-the-world have been uncovered along with Dasein, have such entities, as possibly encounterable within-the-world, been covered up (hidden) or disguised.[25]

The fact that Dasein is in untruth thus does not indicate that Dasein is prone to any particular falsity, but rather something about its existential structure, namely, that it makes possible *covering up* just as much as *uncovering*. The issue is what this covering

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24 Ibid., p. 267.
25 Ibid., p. 265.

up consists in. Although Heidegger talks of Being-uncovering as something specific to assertion, he nonetheless takes it that uncovering *as such* is something that is common to all kinds of comportments, including non-assertoric forms of discourse and circumspective concern. However, in the introduction he claims that only assertoric discourse can cover up.[26] He also seems to indicate that such covering up is simply the opposite of the truth of assertions. This would tend to indicate that covering up was equivalent to false (or incorrect) assertion, which would mean that only those assertions which are discarded from the process of discursive interpretation cover up.

However, Heidegger provides a more expansive account of what it is for an entity to be covered up further on:-

> There are various ways in which a phenomena can be covered up. In the first place, a phenomenon can be covered up in the sense that it is still quite *undiscovered*. It is neither known nor unknown. Moreover, a phenomenon can be *burried over* [*verschuttet*]. This means that it has at some time been discovered but has deteriorated [verfiel] to the point of getting covered up again. This covering-up can become complete; or rather – and as a rule – what has been discovered earlier may still be visible, though only as a semblance... This covering-up as a 'disguising' is both the most frequent and the most dangerous, for here possibilities of deceiving and misleading are especially stubborn.[27]

It is important to note that what Heidegger is principally discussing here is not covering up, but rather *coveredness*. This distinction is analogous to that between uncovering and uncoveredness discussed earlier. The first form of coveredness here discussed is

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26 Ibid., p. 57.
27 Ibid., p. 60.

undiscoveredness. It makes sense to introduce Heidegger's interpretation of the Greek word for truth – *aletheia* – in relation to this. He reads *aletheia* as a privative construction (*a-letheia*), that thus translates as 'unhiddenness'.[28] On this basis he takes it that, for the Greeks, truth is the removal of something from its original hiddenness. The notion of undiscoveredness corresponds to this original hiddenness that our uncovering comportments (not limited to assertion) remove entities from. We can thus see how Heidegger lends support for his account of truth from his interpretation of the Greek notion.

What is important about undiscoveredness as *original* hiddenness is that it is not something brought about by Dasein. As such, there is nothing like an *act* of covering up involved here. However, the other two forms of coveredness discussed – *burriedness* and *disguisedness* – are engendered by Dasein. The salient point here is that covering up can only be performed upon something that was previously uncovered. Moreover, covering seems to come in degrees: burrying over is only a *partial* covering up, whereas disguising is *complete*. Indeed, disguising results in the conversion of an ordinary manifestation into a *semblance*, wherein the entity appears as something wholly other than it is. What exactly then does this covering up consists in? The key to this is provided by the specific existentiale which Heidegger claims makes covering up possible: Dasein's falling.[29]

When Heidegger claims that Dasein is in untruth, he does not simply mean that it is possible for Dasein to make false assertions, but something broader. As noted earlier, falling indicates Dasein's tendency to be absorbed within the public world of the One. The specific aspect of this that we have discussed is idle talk, wherein Dasein uses

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28 Ibid., p. 262. Heidegger's etymology of *aletheia* and the corresponding reading of the significance of the word for the Greeks have been definitively debunked (Friedlander, *Plato*, Vol. 1, ch. XI), but we need not accept their historical accuracy to understand their significance for his own account of truth.
29 Ibid., p. 264.

assertions that it takes over from Others without entirely understanding them. Now, we claimed earlier that Heidegger thinks that inauthenticity is for the most part unavoidable. This fact extends to the practice of assertion, meaning that most assertoric discourse is idle to some extent. This might initially seem like a bold claim, but it is lessened when we realise that assertoric discourse can be idle to different degrees, depending upon how well the assertions are grasped. There can be discussions in which someone only just overreaches their understanding of what they are talking about, just as there can be those in which someone is simply parroting what they have heard without any understanding of it whatsoever. In essence, what happens in idle talk is that we use assertions taken on from Others in interpretation, but we do not use them *properly*. Our lack of understanding prevents them from playing the role that they should to some degree. This means that the entities that were initially uncovered by these assertions are now *covered up* to some degree. We can thus see that in this case the degree to which an entity is covered up is the same as the degree to which assertions about it are used *improperly*. In essence, burrying over and disguising are ways in which our understanding, and our ability to interpret it, are degraded or mutated by our tendency to take over one another's claims without genuinely engaging with them.

We can now identify the common thread characteristic of covering up in general. It is the fact that all assertoric discourse that covers up involves some level of *improper* usage of assertions. In the case of straightforwardly false assertions, their inappropriateness for use is contextually dependent upon the state of the current interpretation. Although there are ways such assertions could be used properly within different contexts, it is improper to use them *at all* within the current one.[30] In the case of burrying over, it is not that it is improper to use the relevant assertions within the

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30 There are some obvious apparent counter examples to this, such as hypothetical reasoning, but it must be recognised that such counter examples involve something which modifies the context in relation to which the usage is inappropriate, so as to make it appropriate.

context of the current interpretation *at all*, but rather that particular ways in which they are being used are improper, i.e., that they are being *misused* to some extent. This is what constitutes the fact that burrying over is a *partial* covering up. In disguising, assertions are used in a way that is *completely* inappropriate, but this can be either a matter of a total misunderstanding of the appropriate use of the assertion (the limit-case of burrying over) or a matter of deliberate misuse, which includes the use of straightforwardly false assertions in deception.

2. Tugendhat's Criticism of Heidegger on Truth

Now we have finished presenting Heidegger's account of truth in *Being and Time*, we can turn to Tugendhat's criticism of it. There are really two distinct objections that Tugendhat proposes. First, Tugendhat criticises Heidegger's account of the truth of assertions as Being-uncovering, by arguing that the way Heidegger alters Husserl's account of truth is problematic. Secondly, Tugendhat argues that Heidegger's transposition of the word 'truth' from the correctness of assertions to uncovering and disclosedness is fundamentally illegitimate.[31] In addressing the first criticism, we must make clear that Tugendhat's own presentation of Heidegger's account of Being-uncovering is not as nuanced as the one we have provided here. This is evident in the fact that he can't make any sense of Heidegger's notion of covering up.[32] Nonetheless, the central thrust of this criticism is still successful. It consists in the claim that Heidegger makes an unwarranted move from the idea that the truth of an assertion

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31 In his paper 'Why Tugendhat's Critique of Heidegger's Concept of Truth Remains a Critical Problem', William H. Smith does a good job of summarising most of the attempts by Heidegger interpreters to address Tugendhat's critique. However, he fails to distinguish the two distinct objections I've outlined here, tending to focus on the latter one. This is problematic, because, as I will show, Heidegger's account of truth changes in a way that makes it immune to the first criticism, while remaining susceptible to the latter.

32 Tugendhat, 'Heidegger's Idea of Truth', pp. 254-255.

consists in uncovering an entity *as it is in itself* to the idea that it consists in uncovering an entity *as such*. Heidegger does indeed make this move, almost unnoticeably: "To say that an assertion "is true" signifies that it uncovers the entity as it is in itself. Such an assertion asserts, points out, 'lets' the entity 'be seen' ([*apophansis*]) in its uncoveredness. The *Being-true* (*truth*) of the assertion must be understood as *Being-uncovering*."[33]

Tugendhat claims that this move is the essence of Heidegger's alteration of Husserl's account of truth. We can confirm this if we recall Heidegger's rejection of Husserl's conception of truth as consisting in a static identity relation between the objects of two intentional acts that itself constitutes the object of the founded act which identifies them. Heidegger's objection to this was that it makes truth into a state of affairs within the world. However, regardless of how problematic this is, it also makes the truth of the assertion independent of the act of identification itself. The act of identification is the only way in which the truth of an assertion can be given, but the identity, and thus the truth, is something other than its givenness. When, in opposition to this, Heidegger takes the truth of an assertion to consist in a dynamic role that it occupies within interpretation, he collapses the distinction between truth and its appearance. Put in a different way, what is true becomes equivalent to our current understanding. An assertion that is *currently* uncovering is true, rather than an assertion that uncovers the thing *as it is in itself*.

On this basis, Tugendhat claims that Heidegger can't properly distinguish between truth and falsity. If this were the case, then Heidegger could not claim to be providing an interpretation of truth as the correctness of assertions, as there could be no correctness without the corresponding possibility of incorrectness. Tugendhat reaches this conclusion in the following way. He takes it that Heidegger equivocates between

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33 *B&T*, p. 261.

two different senses of 'uncovering', namely, a sense in which all assertions uncover, and a sense in which only true assertions uncover.[34] This leads to a situation in which a false assertion is said both to uncover and cover up at the same time, implying that covering up is something that comes in degrees. Tugendhat then claims that this makes no sense. Ultimately, he holds that the only way that falsity could be described as covering up is if it were a matter of covering up the entity as it is in itself.[35] Now, given the interpretation we have already provided, we can see that Tugendhat is wrong on this point. Although Heidegger is far from clear in his use of the word 'uncovering', his account can be reconstructed without equivocation.

We have already noted that there is a very general sense in which all comportments uncover, and a more restricted sense in which only assertions uncover. This restricted sense refers to the function of assertion as *pointing out*, or as letting an entity be seen. As we have also noted, it is only at the level of assertion that anything like covering up occurs. The difficulty emerges in making sense of Heidegger's claim that true assertions *do nothing more than* uncover (in the sense of pointing out) while false assertions (as well as idle, misleading and outright deceptive assertions) cover up *in addition to this*. We can make sense of this if we recognise that covering up is not really something additional but is in fact *privative*. We can understand this by making an analogy with other forms of equipment. If in the process of building a bookcase I require a hammer, but I select the a hammer that is inappropriate for the task at hand, I am not doing something *other* than hammering, I am simply doing it *wrong*. In this case, I am doing it wrong because the tool is inappropriate in the context of the particular activity I am engaged in, but it is equally possible for me to pick an appropriate hammer and use it improperly. In both cases, what I am doing is a *privative*

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34 Tugendhat, 'Heidegger's Idea of Truth', pp. 253-255.
35 Ibid., p. 255.

form of the correct action. The same holds for assertion. Covering up is not something entirely *other* than uncovering, it is simply a matter of uncovering *incorrectly*. Heidegger thus has provided a distinction between truth and falsity, by making it a matter of correctness (and incorrectness) within a certain kind of interpretational activity.

Nonetheless, Tugendhat's first objection still has teeth. Although Heidegger can draw a line between truth and falsity, it is not a fixed line, but a dynamic one that shifts as our understanding develops. Truth is always indexed to our current understanding. This makes sense of the claim that there is no truth or falsity without Dasein, as they cannot be without understanding, and there is no understanding without Dasein's disclosedness. This is the real significance of his abandonment of uncovering the in itself in favour of uncovering as such. The problem is that when Heidegger modifies Husserl's account, making truth a dynamic status that assertions have in virtue of their place within interpretation, he collapses the distinction between the truth of an assertion and the fact that we treat it as true. This needs to be qualified slightly, because Heidegger holds that assertions can be true without being demonstrated. This means that there can be a distinction between the truth of an assertion and our *explicitly* treating it as true, but this is only because it is a species of treating an assertion as true, alongside *implicitly* treating it so. It is worth pointing out that it is perfectly legitimate to try and give an account of truth in terms of what it is for us to treat an assertion as true.[36] However, this is not what Heidegger does, rather, his account precludes us from making sense of the notion of *taking* something to be true (or false) at all.

It is perfectly possible for Heidegger to make a distinction between the appropriateness of something and our taking it to be appropriate. His whole account of significance as constituted by functional norms is dependent upon it. The difference

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36 Cf. *Making It Explicit*, ch. 5.

consists in the fact that our actions are subject to assessment and correction in accordance with the impersonal authority of the One. It is thus entirely possible for Heidegger to make *some* form of distinction between us taking the way we use assertions to be appropriate and their actual appropriateness. This is manifest in the kind of covering up that takes place in idle talk, wherein it is entirely possible to think one is using assertions one has taken over from Others properly while nonetheless failing to. However, this can't be extended to the kind of covering up we find in straightforwardly false assertions. Whether a given assertion is appropriate (true) or inappropriate (false) in the context of a given interpretation is determined by norms about which we can be mistaken. There is thus a distinction between how any given person treats an assertion and how *one* treats the assertion. However, Heidegger cannot draw any distinction between how *one* treats an assertion and the assertion's *truth-value*.

This might seem innocuous, insofar as it seems that one should treat assertions in certain ways depending upon their truth and falsity. For instance, if nothing else, there is a good sense in which one shouldn't make or assent to false assertions.[37] The problem here is that Heidegger seems to gave gotten the order of explanation wrong. Instead of taking the falsity of an assertion as the *reason* why we shouldn't assert it, Heidegger takes its falsity to *consist* in the fact that we shouldn't assert it. He then gives us an independent account of why we shouldn't assert it and takes falsity to consist in this. However, this strategy precludes Heidegger from making sense of the notion of taking something to be true or false. This can be demonstrated by taking a further look at disconfirmation. If we take an assertion to be true (e.g., 'the car keys are in the bedroom'), but then disconfirm it in the process of interpretation, then it would ordinarily make sense for us to say that we were incorrect in taking it to be true.

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37 There is an excellent discussion of this norm of falsity in Daniel Whiting's paper 'Should I Believe the Truth?'.

However, we can't make sense of this on Heidegger's account, because it is perfectly possible that, at the time, we were correctly following the norms governing interpretation, i.e., that we were treating it as *one should* treat it. The assertion may be inappropriate for us in interpretation *now*, but it was entirely appropriate *then*. Heidegger has no way of making disconfirmed assertions *retroactively* inappropriate.[38] This means that whether or not we are correct in taking something to be true is not relative to our *current* understanding. But, given that truth *is* relative to our current understanding, this means that there is no correlation between correctly taking an assertion to be true and the truth of the assertion. This is patently absurd.[39] The only way around this would be to let all assertions have different truth-values at different times.[40] However, this is even more absurd. Heidegger's account of the truth of assertions thus fails, precisely because of the illegitimate move Tugendhat identifies.

This leaves us with Tugendhat's second objection. There is an obvious sense in which this follows from the first objection. If Heidegger's account of the truth of assertions as Being-uncovering is inadequate, then his argument that disclosedness is the condition of the possibility of Being-uncovering does not justify the claim that it is a condition of the possibility of such truth. However, the objection really runs deeper than this. It amounts to a criticism of the very idea that the condition of possibility of truth

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38 There is one way that Heidegger could potentially respond to this, by drawing a distinction between the ways in which a piece of equipment can be revealed as inappropriate in a given context. In the first case, a piece of equipment can become inappropriate when the context of the activity changes, such as the pan I intended to use becoming too small when two additional guests arrive at my dinner party. In the second case, a piece of equipment can be revealed to have always been inappropriate, in virtue of some aspect of the context that I had not initially grasped. This would be the case if I invited a friend and their family, thinking they had two fewer family members than they in fact did. Heidegger would seem to be able to respond to the objection if disconfirmation were the latter kind of case. However, an activity of interpretation can't work in this way, because interpretation acts upon our *current* understanding. This understanding thus forms the context of interpretation. A change in our understanding is therefore a change in context.

39 It is important to point out that being correct in taking an assertion to be true is not a matter of being *justified*. One can take oneself or others to be justified in holding an assertion true without thereby actually committing oneself to its truth.

40 It is not absurd to think that some kind of relativity might hold for some types of assertion, such as epistemic modal claims (cf., John MacFarlane, 'Epistemic Modals Are Assessment-Sensitive'), but it is absurd to think it holds for all claims.

can be named 'truth' in a more primordial sense. Even if Heidegger can develop an independent argument for disclosedness as the condition of the possibility of truth, this deeper objection would still be a problem. However, although the deeper objection is legitimate, it has nothing more than a terminological impact on Heidegger's philosophy. The question regarding the conditions of the possibility of truth is independent of what we are permitted to name them. Indeed, towards the end of his work Heidegger seems to accept the objection, and dissociates what he calls *aletheia*, disclosedness, or clearing, from truth as it is ordinarily understood.[41] As such, we needn't worry about the second objection in spelling out Heidegger's conception of these conditions.[42] We will nevertheless continue to refer to Heidegger's primordial sense of 'truth' for the sake of convenience.

3. Truth After *Being and Time*

Having set the scene by considering Tugendhat's objections to Heidegger's account in section 44, we can now elaborate the two distinct ways in which Heidegger's conception of truth shifts after *Being and Time*. The first shift occurs in *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, and has the effect of undercutting Tugendhat's first objection, even in the strengthened form we presented above. The second shift occurs in 'On the Essence of Truth', and it heralds a change in Heidegger's approach to the question of Being as such. Although this second change occurs in 'On the Essence of Truth', its significance is not always appreciated. To make this clearer we will also consider the way that the same insight is presented in 'On the Origin of the Work of Art', which develops a more accessible way of presenting the idea.

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41 'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking', pp. 446-448.
42 I am thus in disagreement with Smith's assessment of the importance of this objection (cf. fn. 32).

i) Bindingness, Openness, and Freedom

The first change in Heidegger's conception of truth after *Being and Time* is precipitated by his recognition that he had previously placed too much emphasis on the analysis of the true positive assertion, treating false and negative assertions as derivative.[43] Whereas his previous strategy was to give an account of what the truth of assertions consists in (Being-uncovering), and then to demonstrate the conditions of its possibility (uncoveredness and disclosedness), his new strategy is to give an account of the conditions of the possibility of assertions being *either* true of false, or what we will call *truth-aptness*. Ultimately, he reaches the same conclusion as he did in section 44: disclosedness (understood as *freedom*) is the condition of the possibility of truth. However, the argument that produces this conclusion is different, and this is principally because his account of the truth of assertions has changed. He retains the idea that assertions are characterised by pointing out, but the truth and falsity of assertions is now understood as their possibility of pointing *toward* and pointing *away from* entities, and thus as *revealing* or *concealing* them, respectively.[44] This does mean that the falsity of an assertion (concealing or covering up) can still be understood as a matter of pointing out *incorrectly*. However, the salient point is that this correctness is no longer determined by the dynamic role it occupies in interpretation, but by the entity which is pointed out. This is indicated by the fact that Heidegger takes us to be *bound* by an entity in making assertions about it.[45] This binding character of the entity reintroduces the idea that revealing the entity is a matter of revealing it *as it is in itself*, and in doing so it voids Tugendhat's first objection.

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43 *FCM*, pp. 336-337. It should be noted that Heidegger addresses the topic of truth in the course of giving an account of the *logos*, rather than by addressing it directly, as he did in section 44 of *B&T*.
44 Ibid., pp. 309-312.
45 Ibid., p 339.

The binding character of entities is a kind of *authority* that those entities exercise over whether the assertions we make about them are correct (or true). However, this binding character is something that is *conferred* on entities by Dasein. We bind ourselves to entities in making assertions about them – we undertake a *responsibility* to speak of them as they are. Whether we have fulfilled this responsibility is something that can be assessed, and the entity itself provides the standard for such assessment. The truth-aptness of assertions is thus dependent upon our ability to bind ourselves to entities in this way. Heidegger's strategy is thus to locate the condition of the possibility of truth in the condition of the possibility of this binding. Heidegger employs this strategy in both *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* and in 'On the Essence of Truth'. He provides essentially the same argument in each, although it is presented slightly differently. For the sake of convenience, we will present a reconstructed form of the argument found in both, and will only point out differences between the two if they are relevant to the way that the latter expands upon the argument.

The argument begins by noting that the possibility of being bound by an entity in making assertions about it is itself dependent upon the possibility of being able to assess the *conformity* of the assertion to the entity, i.e., of being able to *compare* them in a way which reveals either *accord* or *discord* between them.[46] Without the possibility of assessment, there can be no corresponding responsibility. This is because without it there is no meaningful sense in which the responsibility has a *determinate* content, insofar as this involves drawing a distinct boundary between successful and unsuccessful attempts to fulfil it. The second main point is that the possibility of assessment is conditional upon being able to encounter the entity in question, or that entity's being manifest. It is then only a small step from this to the claim that truth-aptness is dependent upon the manifestness of entities as such – what Heidegger

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46 *FCM*, p. 339; *OET*, pp. 120-122.

previously called *uncoveredness*, but here names *openness* (*Offenheit*). We can thus see this argument beginning to converge with the approach Heidegger took in section 44. However, Heidegger does not take the straightforward route of grounding openness in Dasein's disclosedness that he did there.

Instead, he argues that this openness must essentially grant Dasein a certain amount of *leeway* (*Spielraum*) in its relation to entities, in order for the kind of comparison that assessment presupposes to take place.[47] He also phrases this as the claim that Dasein must be free *for* entities in order that it can bind itself to them.[48] Both texts see this being free for as the basic structure of Dasein's *freedom*, but they describe it in different ways. It can be quite difficult to understand what Heidegger means by this, but, in this case, the different ways that the two texts describe this being free for entities are complementary. We will address the description provided in 'On the Essence of Truth' first, as it is somewhat more in depth than that of the other work. Here, Heidegger identifies *being free for* with *letting beings be*, but this notion of 'letting-be' (*Gelassenheit*) is to be understood in a very specific way:-

> Freedom for what is opened up in an open region lets beings be the beings they are. Freedom now reveals itself as letting beings be... However, the phrase required now – to let beings be – does not refer to neglect or indifference but rather the opposite. To let be is to engage oneself with beings.[49]

The leeway we must have in order to perform the comparison of our comportment with the entity, which is thus a condition of being bound by the entity, does not consist in anything like an indifference toward it. It rather requires that we engage the entity in

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47 *FCM*, p. 339.
48 Ibid.; *OET*, p. 123.
49 *OET*, p. 125.

some way. However, the form of this engagement must also be understood in a specific way:-

> To engage oneself with the disclosedness of beings is not to lose oneself in them; rather, such engagement withdraws in the face of beings in order that they might reveal themselves with respect to what and how they are, and in order that presentative correspondence might take its standard from them.[50]

Letting-be thus involves a balance between *engagement* with entities and *withdrawal* from them, a balance which makes possible the manifestation of entities *as* they are. However, precisely what this balance is and why it is required is hard to discern from within the text. This is where the account provided in *Fundamental Concepts* provides a useful supplement:-

> Being open for... is from the very outset a *free holding oneself toward* whatever beings are given there *in letting oneself be bound*. The possibility, which can become binding, of tuning in to beings, this relating to them in comporting oneself in such and such a way, *is characteristic in general of every ability and comportment as distinct from capacity and behaviour*. In the latter we never find any letting oneself be bound by something binding, but merely a sphere of instinctual drives becoming disinhibited while remaining captivated.[51]

What becomes clear when we read the two texts together is that the notion of *freedom*, as the condition of the possibility of truth-aptness, is being opposed to the mode of Being of *animals* that he lays out in *Fundamental Concepts*.[52] On this account, animals

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50 Ibid.
51 *FCM*, p. 342, emphasis added.
52 Ibid., ch. 3-5. It must be noted that we are not endorsing Heidegger's account of animals. He famously

do encounter entities, but they are *captivated* by them in such a way that they simply respond to them. In this sense, animals are thoroughly *lost* in entities in the way that Heidegger claims the engagement which constitutes letting-be must avoid. Animals have no freedom in the sense that entities do not confront them with *choices* between possible actions, but simply activate their drives, triggering instinctual responses. The salient point here is that although animals do encounter entities, they do not encounter entities *as* entities. A lizard sitting on a rock encounters the rock, but does not encounter it *as* a rock.[53] For Heidegger, animals do not exhibit the *as-structure* that characterises Dasein's encounters with beings.[54] Moreover, this is precisely because animals are not confronted with choices between possible actions.

As we explained in the previous chapter, the *pure significance* in terms of which Dasein encounters any entity as the *type* of entity it is is constituted by Dasein's grasp of the *general* possible relations that such entities could enter into with other types of entities in the context of different types of activities. These general possibilities are *mediated* by Dasein's grasp of its environment and its purposive orientation, resulting in a certain set of *particular* possible actions that it is immediately presented with. Dasein's understanding of the possibilities for action it is immediately presented with in any situation is thus based upon an *implicit* grasp of the entities within that situation *as* the type of entities they are. In addition, the specific ways these particular entities are manifest (e.g., as too heavy, as the right colour, etc.) are dependent upon this grasp of them as a given kind of entity – the revelation of *how* an entity is is dependent upon the revelation of *what* the entity is. The fact that animals lack anything like pure significance, which is to say a pre-given set of normatively structured ways of dealing

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abandons it after *Fundamental Concepts*, at least insofar as he never again tries to delineate the mode of Being of animals in distinction from that of Dasein. Nonetheless, it provides a real insight into the precise positive features of Dasein's Being that Heidegger takes to make truth-aptness possible.

53 Ibid., pp. 196-198.
54 For a full explanation of the as-structure and worldhood, see chapter 2.

things that present them with a variety of particular possibilities for action in any given situation, means that entities cannot "reveal themselves with respect to what and how they are" to them. Heidegger calls this the animal's *poverty in world*, insofar as worldhood *is* significance.[55]

On this basis, we can begin to see what the balance between engagement and withdrawal consists in. Dasein must be engaged with entities insofar as it is only through its practical *concern* for them that they can appear *as* entities at all, but this engagement must at least be detached enough that entities can display the variety of possibilities in which our understanding of them as *what* and *how* they are consists. We can thus see that *openness* – the manifestness of entities as such – is dependent upon *freedom* as so construed. However, there is more to the idea of leeway than this. In order for entities to show up *as* entities, Dasein must not be lost in entities in the way that animals are, but this is only a *necessary* and not yet *sufficient* condition of the possibility of truth-aptness. As the whole discussion of falling in *Being and Time* shows, there are plenty of ways for Dasein to lose itself in entities that do not thereby amount to animality. It is entirely possible for Dasein to become *absorbed* in its practical dealings with things to such an extent that, although it is not thereby *captivated* by them, it is in no position to take them as an authoritative standard by which its or others' statements are bound. Comparison is itself a possible way of comporting to an entity, and it requires us to *let the entity be* what it is in respects which exceed its immediate involvement in our practical dealings. Even though our grasp of entities is always grounded in a practical *engagement* with them, it must exceed any particular engagement; we must be able to *withdraw* from engagement enough to let various aspects of an entity manifest themselves to us. We will consider this in greater detail further on.

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55 *FCM*, Part II, ch. 4.

We have thus located two distinct senses in which freedom is a condition of the possibility of truth-aptness, corresponding to two different ways in which freedom is to be understood. On the one hand, freedom names the fact that Dasein encounters beings in terms of the way they provide it possibilities for action. In this sense, freedom is a necessary condition of openness, or of the manifestness of entities as such. On the other hand, freedom names the possibility of withdrawing from our immediate dealings with entities so as to let them manifest in different ways. In this sense, freedom underlies a particular kind of openness that is necessary for comparison, and thus for truth-aptness. However, there is a third sense in which freedom is a condition of the possibility of truth-aptness. This is hinted at, albeit briefly, in *Fundamental Concepts*:-

> The provision of, and subjection to, something binding is in turn only possible where there is *freedom*. Only where there is this possibility of transferring our being bound from one thing to another are we given the leeway to decide concerning the conformity or non-conformity of our comportment toward whatever is binding.

This third sense of freedom is better outlined in the earlier essay 'On the Essence of Ground':-

> Yet whatever, in accordance with its essence, casts something like the "for the sake of" projectively before it, rather than simply producing it as an occasional and additional accomplishment, is that which we call *freedom*. Surpassing in the direction of world is freedom itself... In this transcending that holds the "for the sake of" toward itself there occurs the Dasein in human beings, such that in the essence of their existence they can be obligated to themselves, i.e., be free selves. In this, however, freedom

simultaneously unveils itself as making possible something binding, indeed obligation in general.

Here Heidegger identifies freedom with the projection of world, but singles out an essential structure which underlies this, namely, Dasein's understanding of itself as the ultimate end of all of its actions. He claims that the projection of world is genuinely called freedom insofar as it makes it possible for one to be obligated to oneself. Dasein is only a 'free self' insofar as it can be obligated to itself.[56] Moreover, he argues that this self-obligation is the condition of the possibility of all other forms of obligation, or *binding*. The implication here is that we are only bound by anything insofar as we bind ourselves to it, and the ground of this is the possibility of self-obligation.[57] As such, freedom in this sense is a condition of the possibility of binding ourselves to an entity in making assertions about it, and thus of the truth-aptness of those claims.

Finally, we must recognise that these three different senses of freedom are not really distinct, but are all aspects of the same structure. In essence, freedom is just another word for Dasein's mode of Being and the various existential structures which make it up. In other words, as we hinted at earlier, freedom *is* disclosedness. This is made very explicit in 'On the Essence of Truth':-

> Freedom is not merely what common sense is content to let pass under this
> name: the caprice, turning up occasionally in our choosing, of inclining in
> this or that direction. Freedom is not mere absence of constraint with respect
> to what we can or cannot do. Nor is it on the other hand mere readiness for
> what is required and necessary (and somehow a being). Prior to all this

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56 This connects up with Heidegger's analysis of the Kantian conception of subjects as ends in themselves (*BPP*, Part I, ch. 3) and as self-responsible (*EHF*, Part II, ch. 2), but a full analysis of this connection would distract us from the relevant point here.

57 As such, it appears that Heidegger endorses something like the Kantian conception of autonomy. This is something he makes explicit in *EHF* (p. 205). However, he does not really expand upon it enough to make a detailed analysis of how he differs from Kant and others worthwhile.

("negative" and "positive" freedom), freedom is engagement in the disclosure of beings as such. Disclosedness itself is conserved in ek-sistent engagement, through which the openness of the open region, i.e., the "there" [*"Da"*] is what it is.[58]

We can now see the extent to which this argument recapitulates the basic result of the argument of section 44. It is thus somewhat understandable that the two arguments are not usually differentiated by commentators.[59]

However, we have to be careful not to ignore differences in Heidegger's account of the specific structure of freedom, disclosedness or existence between the various texts under consideration. As was explained in the last chapter, in *Fundamental Concepts* Heidegger exchanges his analysis of Dasein's mode of Being in terms of the temporalisation of time for an analysis of Dasein (or man) as essentially *world-forming*. Although this is not really a rejection of his earlier temporal analysis, it does contain some ideas that are in the very least novel in relation to *Being and Time*. He takes world-forming to be a unitary phenomenon which is nonetheless composed of three moments: "[1.] holding the binding character of things toward us; [2.] completion; [3.] unveiling the [B]eing of beings."[60] The first of these is what he was discussing under the heading of 'being free for' earlier. The second is "the *prior forming of the 'as a whole' already prevailing*".[61] As we described in the last chapter, the world is the totality of beings, or beings *as a whole*, but it is not for that matter a definite set of entities. Rather, it is the 'how' of beings as a whole as projected *in advance* of any of our encounters with beings – a *horizon* within which all beings are encountered. Completion is the

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58 *OET*, p. 126.
59 Cf. John Sallis, *Double Truth*; Mark Wrathall, 'Heidegger on Truth as Correspondence'; Ernst Tugendhat, 'Heidegger's Idea of Truth' (as explained in section 2 above). This list is by no means exhaustive, but is fairly representative on this point.
60 *FCM*, p. 348.
61 Ibid.

aspect of world-forming which constitutes this horizon. The third moment is the pre-ontological understanding of Being which underlies any encounter with a being *as* a being. The unitary phenomenon of which these are aspects is the same projection of world described in *Being and Time* and *Basic Problems*, but the three moments do not map easily onto the various existentialia described therein.

Now, in and of itself this is not especially problematic. We don't need to map the account of Dasein's mode of Being given in *Fundamental Concepts* onto that given in *Being and Time* exactly. Nonetheless, it is important to understand the threefold structure of world-forming provided in the former. The reason for this is that, although, as we have seen, the arguments given in *Fundamental Concepts* and 'On the Essence of Truth' are commensurate up to a point, the latter extends the argument further, and this involves modifying the picture of freedom given in the former slightly.

ii) Concealing, Mystery, and Earth

We can now turn to the second change in Heidegger's conception of truth after *Being and Time*, which occurs in 'On the Essence of Truth', and which arises from the essay's extension of the argument developed in *Fundamental Concepts*. As just noted, this rests on a slight modification of the notion of freedom deployed in the latter. As such, we will begin our exposition by explaining this modification. In essence, it consists in conceiving letting beings be as a form of *mood* or *attunement* (*Stimmung*), albeit in a very special sense: "As engagement in the disclosure of being as a whole as such, freedom has already attuned all comportment to being as a whole... Letting beings be, which is an attuning, a bringing into accord, prevails throughout and anticipates all the open comportment that flourishes in it".[62] This may initially seem fairly problematic,

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62 *OET*, p. 128. Although being free for is at times described as a matter of "tuning in" to beings in *FCM*

given the account of mood given in *Being and Time*, because this only allows us to be in one mood at any given time. Given that letting beings be is supposed to be some kind of structural element of Dasein's Being, this would preclude us from being in any other moods. However, as was hinted in chapter 2[63], Heidegger's account of mood changes after *Being and Time*, so that we exhibit different *levels* of mood. This means that two people can share a wider mood that is characteristic of their cultural epoch (e.g., the wonder of the Greeks, the progressive attitude of the enlightenment, postmodern malaise, etc.), while nonetheless having higher level moods which modify this in different ways (e.g., excitement, depression, listlessness, etc.). Nonetheless, taken together these moods disclose the individual's world *as a whole*, in precisely the way that the unitary mood of *Being and Time* does.

The important point to recognise then is that letting beings be is not one mood among others, but is a kind of *structural* mood common to all Dasein. It lies at the basis of mood as such, much as disposedness did in *Being and Time*. This is not to be confused with the so called fundamental moods (*Grundstimmungen*), such as anxiety and boredom, that Heidegger deals with in various places.[64] These fundamental moods are essential possibilities of Dasein, grounded in its existential structure, but they are not for that matter always in effect. We may be able to enter into anxiety or boredom simply in virtue of our existential structure, but doing so is an extreme and occasional event, one that many individuals will never experience. In distinction, letting beings be is both common to all Dasein in virtue of their existential structure and always in effect, as that mood on top of which others added. This is an important change from *Fundamental Concepts* insofar as it collapses the distinction between the first and second moments of

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(p. 342) it isn't elaborated upon in connection to attunement in the way it is in *OET*. The difference between them on this point should perhaps be seen as less of a change of opinion than the explicit development of a pre-existing theme.

63 See chapter 2, fn. 25.

64 Cf. *B&T*, § 40 ; *FCM*, Part I.

world-forming. By providing the basic structure of mood letting-be thereby provides the basic structure through which the world is disclosed 'as a whole' in advance. This means that *being free for* and *completion* are not properly distinct. This is not a drastic change from *Fundamental Concepts*, but it is essential to the argument that Heidegger proceeds to give.

Before we can give this argument, we need to explain one further aspect of letting beings be. This is introduced best by quoting the relevant passage:-

> However, because truth is in essence freedom, historical man can, in letting beings be, also *not* let beings be the beings which they are and as they are. Then beings are covered up and distorted. Semblance comes to power. In it the nonessence of truth comes to the fore. However, because ek-sistent freedom as the essence of truth is not a property of man; because on the contrary man ek-sists and so becomes capable of history only as the property of this freedom; the nonessence of truth cannot first arise subsequently from mere human incapacity and negligence. Rather, untruth must derive from the essence of truth. Only because truth and untruth are, *in essence, not* irrelevant to one another, but rather belong together, is it possible for a true proposition to enter into pointed opposition to the corresponding untrue proposition.[65]

The crucial point here is that it is possible to *not* let beings be. This might seem to undermine our interpretation of letting beings be as a structural mood. However, it is important to note that one does not let beings be to some extent *in* letting them be. What this indicates is that not letting beings be is actually a *modification* of letting them be, rather than something opposed to it. Nonetheless, it is an important fact that this

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65 *OET*, pp. 127-128.

structural mood can be so modified. Luckily, we need not look far to understand how this modification functions. This is because it is explicitly related to *covering-up*.

As already explained, in *Being and Time*, covering-up has its existential ground in falling, and falling is the existential structure underlying Dasein's *absorption* in the world. This connects to our discussion of the second sense of freedom in the last section, wherein freedom consisted in the possibility of withdrawing from beings *in contrast* to being absorbed in them. There it was established that we must be able to withdraw from entities in order to enable them to manifest in such a way that a genuine comparison becomes possible. However, we did not elaborate on this contrast between withdrawal and absorption. This contrast becomes much clearer when we relate it to the account of covering-up provided in *Being and Time*.

As explained earlier, covering-up is not primarily a matter of making false assertions, but involves burrying over and disguising, which are activities through which Dasein 'distorts' the manifestation of beings and thus brings 'semblance' to power. Absorption makes this possible, because it involves becoming lost not only in our practical dealings with entities, but also in the public world of the One, insofar as the One articulates the significance of these dealings. This underlies our tendency to take over and deploy assertions made by Others, insofar as we tend to say 'what one says'. This tendency then makes possible systematic *misuse* of assertions, which is broader than incorrectness in the sense of falsity, and this misuse is the basis of covering-up. Now, we cannot retain the account of covering-up as the misuse of assertions *exactly* as it is given above, because the account of the truth of assertions that it was based on has changed, but its essential features can be transferred to the new account of truth.[66] The salient point is that our tendency to take over Others' assertions

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66 We will not attempt to give an updated account of covering-up, principally because it is not necessary for the task at hand. However, it is also the case that Heidegger does not examine covering-up in any serious detail here or elsewhere in his work. The account of covering-up presented in our

as true is dependent on the possibility of *substituting* the authority of the entities to which we are *bound* in talking about them for the authority of Others under the guise of the One. It is in encouraging this substitution that absorption facilitates covering-up.

This gives us a deeper insight into the nature of the withdrawal. Just as we must be able to *refrain* from immediately dealing with entities *as one deals with them*, we must also refrain from simply talking about entities *as one talks about them*. Talking about entities is just another kind of dealing with them, and we must be able to hold back from the kind of immediate *absorbed* talk about them that we are accustomed to. In essence, in order to confer upon entities authority over how we talk about them, and thereby bind ourselves to them, *we must withdraw our own authority, and by extension the impersonal communal authority of the One, over how it is correct to talk about them.* However, it is important to note that this withdrawal of authority is never absolute. We are always in a position of having to defer to the authority of Others in some way, and we will always require shared norms governing the use of words, without which discourse would be impossible. As we noted in the last section, most of our talk is *idle* to some extent, and necessarily so. Authenticity can only ever emerge out of inauthenticity, as we cannot comport ourselves to anything without the pre-given significance articulated by the One. Put another way, withdrawal is always based upon engagement, and engagement is always structured by the One.

We can thus delineate two interrelated senses of withdrawal. First, as initially suggested earlier, there is a withdrawal from beings as immediately involved in our practical dealings with them. This allows for the possibility of beings manifesting in a variety of aspects which exceed our immediate concerns with them. This corresponds

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interpretation of *Being and Time* is very much a reconstruction on the basis of the role it would have to play within his account of Dasein and the scant remarks he makes about it. There is even less in the later work on which we could base such a reconstruction. As such, giving a definitive account of how Heidegger's conception of covering-up changes would be very difficult. In truth, it is likely that Heidegger did not have a fully worked out conception, but simply appealed to that which he had roughly worked out in *Being and Time*.

roughly to the decontextualising power of assertion discussed earlier, which enables us to develop a grasp of entities in various degrees of isolation from the practical contexts in which they are found. Secondly, there is the withdrawal of authority discussed above. This allows the variety of aspects the entity manifests not just to exceed our immediate concerns, but also to go against the ways of talking about it provided by the One. Taken together these constitute a variety of possible combinations of withdrawal from and engagement with beings. These are the various ways that the basic structural mood of letting beings be can be modified.[67]

We can thus see that *not* letting beings be is neither a state opposed to letting beings be, nor is it something that we do absolutely, but is in fact something that we can do to different extents with regard to different beings. For example, a research scientist might be very careful to allow the particular kind of entities (e.g., family units, fungus, electrons, etc.) they are studying to manifest themselves as they are, so that his and others' conjectures about them may genuinely be confirmed or disconfirmed by the object. In doing so he can be very careful not to take over unconfirmed assumptions about the entities, and to allow the entities to manifest themselves beyond the limited contexts of our usual engagements with them. Nonetheless, it is entirely possible that the rest of his life is given over to pure idle talk about entities, and other forms of absorption wherein he does not let them be for the most part. Moreover, even his careful attention to the entities in question would still depend upon certain pre-given experimental practices and theoretical assumptions to which he has a more or less critical attitude.[68]

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67 We might also conjecture that this modification is not something distinct from the way other moods which are layered on top of letting-be modify it. The extent to which we let various different entities be would then be determined by the various overlapping moods that we are in at a given time, even though this would not be the only effect those moods have. If this reading is correct then *letting beings be* is what replaces the notion of *disposedness* in *Being and Time*, as the *existential* structure which is modified by the various *existentiell* moods.

68 We can see a certain affinity here between Heidegger and philosophers of science who put forward a two-levelled account of science, in which the ordinary experimental work done by scientists, and the

As such, Heidegger has recapitulated the account of untruth he gave in *Being and Time*, once again showing how it is grounded in the same basic structure which makes truth possible, namely, freedom. However, it is at this point that he begins to extend the argument of *Fundamental Concepts*, by further developing the notion of untruth found in *Being and Time*. The basis of this is as follows:-

> The question concerning the essence of truth thus first reaches the original domain of what is at issue when, on the basis of a prior glimpse of the full essence of truth, it has included a consideration of untruth in its unveiling of that essence. Discussion of the nonessence of truth is not the subsequent filling of a gap but rather the decisive step toward an adequate posing of the *question* concerning the essence of truth.[69]

The whole account of the essence of truth as freedom provided up until this point (and originally expounded in *Fundamental Concepts*) is only a preliminary *glimpse* of the real essence of truth. This preliminary account is necessary so that we can get a proper grip on untruth, or the *nonessence* of truth. This nonessence must then be grounded in the proper essence of truth, just as untruth was grounded in disclosedness in *Being and Time*. The difference is that this move will not simply return us to freedom (or disclosedness) as it did there, but will take us deeper to the genuine essence of truth.

The first move of this extended argument is thus to locate some deeper form of untruth, distinct from the kind of covering-up described in *Being and Time*. Heidegger does this by leveraging his account of letting beings be as the basic structure underlying the disclosure of the world as a whole. To quote the relevant sections at some length:-

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claims it produces, are dependent upon a theoretical (and practical) framework which makes it possible. Cf. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, and the work of Imre Lakatos, Paul Feyerabend, and Larry Laudan, among others.

69 *OET*, p. 128.

Letting beings be, which is an attuning, a bringing into accord, prevails throughout and anticipates all the open comportment that flourishes in it. Man's comportment is brought into definite accord throughout by the openedness of being as a whole. However, from the point of view of everyday calculations and preoccupations this "as a whole" appears to be incalculable and incomprehensible. It cannot be understood on the basis of the beings opened up in any given case, whether they belong to nature or to history.[70]

The disclosure of beings *as a whole* is the projection of world as a *horizon* within which absolutely any particular entities we encounter can be situated. This horizon organises all of our possible encounters with entities in advance. Nonetheless, the 'as a whole' itself cannot be comprehended either as a definite set of entities, or in terms of any of the entities we encounter within it at all. Continuing the quote:-

However, what brings into accord is not nothing, but rather a concealing of beings as a whole. Precisely because letting be always lets beings be in a particular comportment that relates to them and thus discloses them, it conceals beings as a whole. Letting-be is intrinsically at the same time a concealing. In the ek-sistent freedom of Da-sein a concealing of being as a whole propriates [*ereignet sich*] Here there *is* concealment.[71]

Dasein encounters entities in terms of its possibilities for engaging with them. It immediately encounters particular possibilities thrown up by particular entities that it encounters, but this is possible because those entities appear within a horizon which organises their general possibilities in advance (along with structures which mediate

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70 Ibid., p. 129.
71 Ibid., pp. 129-130.

between general and particular). As we discussed in the last chapter, understanding has the structure of projection, and projection is always the projection of possibilities. The projection of world is the totality of all such projection, and it is as such the projection of the *totality of possibilities*. It is to some extent indifferent to what *actual* entities will be encountered, but it organises *all* of the possible actual situations that we could find ourselves in in advance.[72] Nonetheless, despite its *totality*, there is an important sense in which the world is *not* exhaustive. Letting-be *conceals* beings as a whole as well as *disclosing* them insofar as there is a tension between the *completeness* of its disclosure and its *non-exhaustiveness*.

To understand this, we must remember that the understanding which constitutes the world is entirely revisable, and that to some extent this revision takes place on the basis of the encounters with particular entities that it makes possible. It is obvious that it does not provide us with a prior understanding of all kinds of entities with regard to every aspect they could manifest. There is thus a good sense in which the world does not constitute the totality of what is *really* possible. Nevertheless, the world presents itself as *complete* in virtue of its horizonal structure, which is to say in virtue of the prior disclosure of the 'as a whole' which underlies it. This means that the world is projected as the space of all that is possible, the complete structure in terms of which all particular entities are made manifest, despite the fact that it is in fact *deficient*, and thereby always revisable. It is important to understand that this deficiency does not amount to a simple difference between *what we take to be true*, and *what is really true*. It is rather an *essential deficit* present in the structure which makes possible anything like propositional truth (i.e., freedom/disclosedness). The process through which the

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72 The best statement of this is found in *MFL* (p. 192), where Heidegger says that "World, as the totality of the essential intrinsic possibilities of Dasein as transcending, surpasses all actual beings. Whenever and however they are encountered, actual beings always reveal themselves... only as a restriction, as one possible realization of the possible, as the insufficient out of an excess of possibilities, within which Dasein always maintains itself as free projection."

world is revised and expanded is also the process through which we become able to make and assess the truth of claims about new entities and new aspects of entities. It is through this process that new forms of explicit theoretical understanding are made possible, and old forms are adapted and developed.

Moving on, we have to be very careful to interpret this part of the text correctly. This is because it might initially seem that concealing, like covering-up, is something performed exclusively by Dasein. That this is not the case is the real innovation of the essay:-

> Concealment deprives *aletheia* of disclosure yet does not render it *steresis* (privation); rather, concealment preserves what is most proper to *aletheia* as its own. Considered with respect to truth as disclosedness, concealment is then undisclosedness and accordingly the untruth that is most proper to the essence of truth. The concealment of beings as a whole does not first show up subsequently as a consequence of the fact that knowledge of beings is always fragmentary. The concealment of beings as a whole, untruth proper, is older than every openedness of this or that being. It is also older than letting-be itself, which in disclosing already holds concealed and comports itself toward concealing.[73]

When Heidegger says that here there *is* concealment, he is not talking about a concealment that is produced by letting-be. Rather, concealment corresponds to what was called *undiscoveredness* in *Being and Time*, but is here termed *undisclosedness*. It is that original hiddenness out of which entities are brought by disclosedness, or Dasein's projection of world. It is thus 'older' than letting-be, and prior to Dasein itself. In *Being and Time* Heidegger mentioned this kind of concealment as a form of *coveredness*, but

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73 Ibid., p. 130.

did not thematise it, instead focusing upon those forms of coveredness that were engendered by Dasein's covering-up. The innovation of the present essay is to extend his account of untruth by properly thematising concealment.

Just as there were several different senses of 'uncovering' in section 44 that had to be disentangled, we find a plurality of different senses of 'concealing' in play in this text. First, there is the sense in which letting-be is concealing. This is revealed to be a matter of *holding* concealed, or of comporting towards a more originary form of concealing. This second, more original sense corresponds to 'concealment' as outlined above. It is not to be construed negatively, as a *deficit* in Dasein, but positively, as an *excess* of beings over our ability to disclose them. Heidegger takes the first sense of 'concealing', wherein Dasein's projection of world effaces what is in excess of it, to depend upon the second sense, which names this excess. However, there is a third sense of 'concealing' that follows from the second:-

> What conserves letting-be in this relatedness to concealing? Nothing less than the concealing of what is concealed as a whole, of beings as such, i.e., the mystery; not a particular mystery – that, in general, mystery (the concealing of what is concealed) as such holds sway throughout man's Da-sein.[74]

There are various entities which are in excess of our disclosedness, either completely or in some particular respect, and these are things that are *concealed*, or *mysteries*. However, the world is subject to revision, and through this it is possible for us to bring what is concealed into unconcealment, at least to some extent. The third sense of concealing, which underlies or *conserves* letting-be in its relation to concealment, is the concealing of what is concealed *as a whole*. It is not a matter of any particular entity or

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74 Ibid.

group of entities being in excess of our projection of world, but of a constitutive excess of the whole of beings *as such* over our projection of world. It is thus not any particular mystery, but the basis of mystery *as such*. Heidegger calls this third form of concealing *the mystery,* which thereby names the *constitutive excess* of beings as a whole over our projection of world.

Heidegger has thus found a much deeper sense of untruth – the mystery – which he calls "the proper nonessence of truth".[75] However, the argument is not yet finished. Heidegger reveals a fourth sense of 'concealing', which he calls "the forgottenness of the mystery".[76] To explain this properly it helps to recapitulate the three forms of concealing we have already introduced. Each conceals 'what is concealed', but in a different way.[77] The second sense of 'concealing' we discussed is the most primitive. It conceals 'what is concealed' in the sense that it is what *brings about* its concealment. Importantly, 'what is concealed' is not yet taken *as a whole,* and so we are talking about the concealing that underlies distinct mysteries. The first sense we discussed, the way in which letting-be 'conceals', is not a matter of bringing about concealment, but of concealing concealment itself. Letting-be conceals insofar as it tends to *obscure* the presence of mysteries. The third sense, the mystery, is again a matter of bringing concealment about, rather than obscuring it, but this time with respect to beings *as a whole*. The new fourth sense of 'concealing' is the concealing of concealment *as a whole*, the obscuring (or forgetting) of the mystery itself. The difference between this and the first sense of 'concealing' is that the first names the concealing of whatever

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75 Ibid.
76 Ibid., p. 131.
77 Here we must disagree with William Richardson, whose interpretation of the essay is admirable in its detail but flawed in its execution (*Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, Part II, ch. 1). Richardson is not careful enough in distinguishing the different ways in which 'what is concealed' is concealed. For instance, he takes *the mystery*, as the concealing of what is concealed, to be a matter of disguising the fact that there is concealment, which could be read as equivalent to either the first or the fourth sense outlined above, either of which would be incorrect. This is an understandable error, given the maddening plurality of Heidegger's use of the word 'concealing' here, but it is an error nonetheless.

mysteries there happen to be, whereas the former names the concealing of the constitutive excess that grounds all such mysteries. Our four senses of 'concealing' are thus organised along two axes: the distinction between *bringing about* and *obscuring* concealment, and the distinction between concealing *particular* beings and concealing beings *as a whole*.

The important fact is that the obscuring of *mysteries* (first sense) and the forgetting of *the mystery* (fourth sense) do not have a separate origin, but are both a matter of Dasein's freedom in letting-be.[78] Moreover, Heidegger takes it that they are both grounded in Dasein's tendency to become absorbed in its immediate dealings with beings in the world, or its tendency to turn itself "toward the most readily available beings."[79] The turning toward the readily available and the turning away from the mystery constitute the same movement, which Heidegger calls *erring*. This movement is a tendency inherent in the very structure of Dasein's mode of Being, which Dasein is always bound up in to some extent. He names this structural feature of Dasein *errancy*.[80] He explains it as follows:-

> Errancy is the essential counter-essence to the primordial essence of truth. Errancy opens itself up as the open region for every opposite to essential truth. Errancy is the open site for and ground of *error*. Error is not merely an isolated mistake but the realm (the domain) of the history of those entanglements in which all kinds of erring get interwoven.[81]

So, in searching for the essence of truth in the essence of untruth, Heidegger has

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78 *OET*, p. 131.
79 Ibid., p. 132; see also p. 129.
80 He also describes erring as *insisting*, and errancy by claiming that "*As ek-sistent, Dasein is insistent*" (Ibid, p. 132), but these terms do not really add to the description. They simply serve to tie the notion of errancy to Dasein's existential structure more deeply through the affinity between the words 'ek-sistence' and 'insistence'.
81 Ibid., p. 133.

uncovered the mystery as the proper *nonessence* of truth, and errancy as the *counter-essence* of truth. Moreover, errancy is conceived not simply as the basis of the forgottenness of the mystery, but as the ground of a whole variety of types of *error*:-

> Error extends from the most ordinary wasting of time, making a mistake, and miscalculating, to going astray and venturing too far in one's essential attitudes and decisions. However, what is ordinarily and even according to the teachings of philosophy recognised as error, incorrectness of judgements and falsity of knowledge, is only one mode of erring and, moreover, the most superficial one.[82]

Errancy is the ground of *falsity* in the sense of incorrectness, but it extends beyond this to other forms of error. It is also what makes possible the absorption through which we *fail* to let beings be to different degrees. As such, errancy is that which unifies the various forms of covering-up we have taken over from *Being and Time*, from ordinary falsity to burrying over and disguisedness. Insofar as errancy provides the ontological ground of these phenomena, we can see which existential structure from *Being and Time* that it corresponds to. The movement of erring is Heidegger's reformulation of the movement wherein Dasein's thrownness causes it to become *absorbed* in the world, and the errancy which grounds it is his reformulation of the corresponding notion of *falling*.

The correspondence between falling and errancy helps us understand the way that errancy ties together covering-up and the various ways concealment is obscured. Errancy is a tendency of Dasein – a tendency to be *led astray*. The most basic forms of this leading astray are those through which concealment is obscured, through which letting-be conceals concealment, and brings about a forgottenness of the mystery. After this, there are the various ways that Dasein can *not* let being be, which undermine the

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82 Ibid., pp. 133-134.

possibility of truth-aptness within our various discourses upon entities. However, insofar as errancy is a tendency, there is also the possibility of resisting it, and not being led astray.[83] Just as it is possible to *withdraw* from beings in genuine forms of letting-be, so it is also possible to turn back toward the mystery. This possibility of turning to the mystery is incredibly important, insofar as Heidegger identifies it with a question: "The glimpse into the mystery out of errancy is a question – in the sense of that unique question of what being is as such and as a whole. This questioning thinks the question of the *Being* of beings".[84] Errancy is a tendency to be lead astray by *beings*, to become absorbed in our dealings with them within the world, as articulated by the impersonal authority of the One. This absorption takes a whole variety of forms in relation to the variety of beings that can be encountered in the world, but insofar as we are absorbed, we forget Being in favour of beings. There are thus a variety of possibilities for withdrawing from our absorption in beings, but only in the limit-case where we fully withdraw do we approach Being itself. This approach is the question of Being.[85]

Leaving the question of the connection between the mystery and Being for now, Heidegger is finally in a position to lay out the essence of truth:-

> The disclosure of beings as such is simultaneously and intrinsically the concealing of being as a whole. In the simultaneity of disclosure and concealing, errancy holds sway. Errancy and the concealing of what is concealed belong to the primordial essence of truth. Freedom, conceived on

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83 Ibid., p. 134.
84 Ibid., p. 135.
85 On this basis we can extend the reinterpretation of the notion of mood suggested in fn 67 above. Letting-be is the existential structure which is modified by various existentiell moods. These moods engender different combinations of withdrawal and engagement in relation to different entities within the world. The variety of moods thus constitutes the variety of degrees of not letting-be. Given this, those moods wherein we withdraw from beings completely, in which the possibility of asking the question of Being consists, are the *fundamental moods*. This fits in well with the way Heidegger connects anxiety and the question of Being in *B&T* (§40) and the general philosophical significance he gives to the other fundamental moods he writes about at different points (*FCM*, Part II; *BQP*, ch. 5).

the basis of the in-sistent ek-sistence of Dasein, is the essence of truth (in the sense of the correctness of presenting) only because freedom itself originates from the primordial essence of truth, the rule of mystery in errancy.

Now, it seems here that Heidegger is claiming that the relation between the mystery (the nonessence of truth) and errancy (the counter-essence of truth) is the primordial essence of truth. However, if we interpret this to mean that the possibility of turning toward and away from the mystery is somehow prior to freedom, then we will have gone astray. That the text suggests this reading is problematic, and why we will supplement it with the account of the essence of truth provided in 'On the Origin of the Work of Art', which does a better job of outlining the structure which Heidegger is trying to uncover.

The aim of the essay 'On the Origin of the Work of Art' is to uncover the essence of *art* itself, as that which makes possible given works of art. Heidegger takes a long and circuitous route to get to this essence, which we will not endeavour to retread here. What is important is that the account of art he provides is intimately connected to an account of truth. This account is presented in terms that differ substantially from those in 'On the Essence of Truth', but it shares its essential features. Examining the essence of truth as it is presented here will make clear the structure that Heidegger is aiming at in the latter essay. The two most important terms in this account are *world* and *earth*. Heidegger spends quite a lot of time in the essay re-explaining the notion of world, but it is essentially the same as the notion of world developed in *Being and Time* and carried forth in the works we have been considering. It is the horizon within which beings can appear, and it is fundamentally structured in terms of equipment, or the practical possibilities that things offer to Dasein.[86] The notion of earth is far more interesting:-

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86 *OWA*, p. 171.

Earth is that which comes forth and shelters. Earth, irreducibly spontaneous, is effortless and untiring. Upon the earth and in it, historical man grounds his dwelling in the world... The earth appears openly cleared as itself only when it is perceived and preserved as that which is essentially undisclosable, that which shrinks from every disclosure and constantly keeps itself closed up.

If Dasein projects or opens up a world, it does so *upon* the earth. If the world is the original *unconcealing* of beings as a whole, out of which particular beings can become manifest, then earth is that upon which this unconcealing works. However, this does not mean that it becomes unconcealed, but that it is that which *resists* unconcealing. It is the original *concealing* of beings as a whole which constitutes the *excess* of beings over Dasein's disclosure. It is 'irreducibly spontaneous', 'effortless' and 'untiring' precisely insofar as this is a *perpetual* excess of beings over Dasein's projection of world. As such, for the earth to appear *as* earth is not for it to be *exhausted* by unconcealing, but for it to be revealed in its *inexhaustibility*. In short, earth is the new name Heidegger gives to *the mystery*.

For Heidegger, "World and earth are essentially different but are never separated."[87] This essential character of the relation between the two is very important, and it is equally important that it is not a static relation, but a *dynamic* one. Earth and world exist in a constant to and fro, a play of concealing and unconcealing. We have already seen this to some extent. The world can be revised, and its revision can open up new domains and aspects of entities that were previously concealed. However, this process of revision is not necessarily a smooth process of expansion, wherein the world comes to encompass ever more of the earth at a steady rate, even if it can never exhaust

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87 Ibid., p. 174.

it. We are thrown into a world which is already culturally articulated, but it can just as easily contract as it can expand. There are many tales throughout history of the collapse of whole cultures and the corresponding collapse of the intricate practices and systems of understanding that were bound up with them. This is a fairly dramatic example, but the loss of practical mastery and understanding through which a world decays need not be so drastic. Moreover, there are points at which the earth *thrusts* up into the world, where mysteries or previously un-encountered problems make themselves felt, where the reliable ways of dealing with or thinking about entities fail us. Indeed, such events often precipitate the expansion of world, as we adapt to the problems they pose by developing new ways of dealing and thinking.[88] There is thus a dynamic interplay between world and earth that takes a variety of forms.

Heidegger names this dynamic interplay the *strife* between earth and world.[89] It is this primal strife which constitutes the essence of truth for Heidegger: "The essence of truth is, in itself, the primal strife in which that open center is won within which beings stand and from which they set themselves back in themselves."[90] This relates to art insofar as Heidegger takes it that the work of art is one of the various forms which strife takes, or one of the ways in which it can *happen*. The work of art *instigates* strife between earth and world.[91] We don't want to engage in a detailed analysis of Heidegger's account of the work of art, but elaborating on this claim will prove useful. What it means is that the work of art is a being within the world that nonetheless plays some role in *setting up* the world, while also *setting forth* the earth in relation to it.

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88 Connecting this back to the parallels we drew between Heidegger's account of truth and two-levelled approaches in the philosophy of science, the scientific anomalies which bring about crisis within a given scientific paradigm that Kuhn describes in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (ch. 6-9) are perfect examples of points at which the earth announces itself, manifesting the inadequacy of world, thought here as the inability of the basic assumptions, terminology and practices of the paradigm to cope with them. Moreover, these periods of crisis lead to precisely the kinds of reconfiguration of the world suggested, wherein new paradigms emerge to deal with the relevant anomalies.

89 *OWA*, p. 174.

90 Ibid., p. 180.

91 Ibid., pp. 180-181.

Crucially, this is something which all forms of art do, regardless of whether they *represent* anything. The Greek temple instigates strife just as much as Van Gogh's painting of a pair of shoes. The work sets up the world insofar as it makes present the culturally articulated significance that constitutes it, or insofar as it makes the world present *as* world. This can be done in a variety of ways. For Heidegger, the Van Gogh painting makes present the world of the peasant whose shoes they are, which is to say their culturally articulated way of life. The peasant's world is different from our own, but it nonetheless illuminates our world *as* world. In contrast, the temple did not simply present their world to the Greeks, but it actively *organised* it. The temple embodied and established the religious practices around which Greek life revolved. Even if it no longer organises our world in the same way, it presents the world of the Greeks and in doing so illuminates *our* world.

This function of the work of art in setting up a world is more clearly articulated by Levinas, who appropriates Heidegger's conception of world:-

The assembling of being which illuminates objects and makes them meaningful is not just an accumulation of objects. It amounts to the production of those non-natural beings of a new type which are cultural objects – paintings, poems, melodies – but also to the affects of any linguistic or manual gesture of the most ordinary activity, which are creative in their evocation of former cultural creations. These cultural "objects" assemble into totalities the dispersion or accumulation of beings; they shine forth and illuminate, they express or illuminate an epoch, as we were indeed accustomed to say. To collect into a whole, that is, to express, that is, to make meaning possible is the function of the "object – the work or cultural

gesture."[92]

What Levinas is talking about here in terms of 'assembling' or 'collecting into a whole' is the production of a world in the Heideggerian sense – the construction of a horizon which organises all of our encounters with entities in advance. His claim is that the production of cultural artifacts such as artworks plays a part within the constitution of a world. It is a form of social 'expression' through which we constitute a common cultural world within which things take on significance. In essence, works of art play a special role in the social process through which the world is articulated, and although they may be more or less relevant to the world as it is *currently* articulated (as with both of Heidegger's examples), as artworks, they nonetheless still present the world in its worldhood.

In setting up the world, the artwork also sets forth the earth. To understand this it is important to recognise that the way in which we encounter the artwork is different from the way we encounter equipment, occurrent entities or other Dasein. Although it shares a thingly character with occurrent entities, and a workly character with at least some equipment, it has a mode of Being all its own. When we encounter the artwork *as* artwork, we do not encounter it in terms of our possible ways of dealing with it. This allows us to encounter the material that composes the artwork in a way which escapes whatever practical significance it may have. As Heidegger says, in setting forth, the various colours, shapes, textures, sounds, and the various matters that make up the artwork are allowed to "shine forth".[93] However, this shining forth does not correspond to us merely looking at the artwork as an occurrent thing, noting the various properties it has in abstraction from their practical significance. Instead, these features of the artwork are made manifest *as* escaping our ways of dealing with and talking about

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92 Emanuel Levinas, 'Meaning and Sense', in *Collected Philosophical Papers* (p. 81).
93 *OWA*, p. 173.

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them. In the same way the artwork makes present the world *as* world, which means as something projected *upon* the earth. It presents itself as our cultural articulation of a horizon of significance *in the face of mystery*, and thereby lets that mystery be present. Heidegger also describes this more enigmatically as allowing a god to become present, not as an additional being that becomes present behind the artwork, but as the face of the mystery which it presents.[94] The artwork instigates strife insofar as it presents a dual tension, between the cultural articulation of world and the earth which lies in excess of it on the one hand, and the intentions of the artist/spectator and the matter which lies in excess of them on the other.

We can now see that the essence of art, that which grounds the possibility of works of art, is itself nothing created by man. As Heidegger notes:-

> Because it is in the essence of truth to establish itself within beings, in order thus first to become truth, the *impulse toward the work* lies in the essence of truth as one of truth's distinctive possibilities, by which it can itself occur as being in the midst of beings.[95]

The possibility of the artwork is something derived from the very essence of truth itself. This helps us to relate the account of the essence of truth Heidegger provides here with that tentatively presented at the end of 'On the Essence of Truth'. When Heidegger says that the essence of truth is the rule of mystery in errancy, he does not mean that it is the

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94 Ibid., pp. 167-169. This is much more literally the case with the temple, and with his other example of statues of gods. When our practices have yet to tame the sea, to make it something reliable which we can ignore, the statue of Poseidon incarnates its mysterious untameable excess. It lets us present to ourselves a mystery that can then be incorporated to some extent within our dealings *as* a mystery. However, Heidegger's 'gods' should not be interpreted as requiring anything like explicitly *religious* practices to evoke. Poetry, conceptual art, and even science fiction can let us enter into relations to aspects of our lives and the broader universe that seem irredeemably mysterious or uncontrollable, without thereby *deifying* them. More generally, it is reasonable to interpret Heidegger as taking gods to be present whenever the earth disrupts the world, regardless of whether we engender this disruption or not. This broader notion of the godly seems to be what is at play in Heidegger's account of the fourfold, which is discussed at the end of section 4 of this chapter.
95 Ibid., p. 187.

possibility of turning toward and away from the mystery which makes possible freedom. Rather, he is simply elaborating the same structure – the strife between earth and world – by showing that in and of itself it provides all the various possibilities of being led astray, and not being so led, up to and including asking the question of Being. The essence of truth makes possible the question of Being just as it makes possible the creation of artworks, as an essential and abiding possibility of Dasein's freedom.[96]

4. From the Meaning to the Truth of Being

We have now provided a comprehensive interpretation of Heidegger's theory of truth and the changes that it undergoes after *Being and Time*. Our task is now to explain the shift Heidegger undergoes in the 1930's from understanding the question of Being in terms of *meaning* to understanding it in terms of *truth*[97], and the significance this has for his formulation of the question. To do this it's important to understand how the notion of truth fits into the initial formulation of the question laid out in the last chapter. What we showed there was that the question is supposed to proceed by locating the dual unity of aspects and modes in the structure of the horizon within which entities are encountered, or the world. The structure of this horizon was originally understood in terms of Dasein's temporality (in *Being and Time* and *Basic Problems*), but this emphasis waned in subsequent works (e.g., *Fundamental Concepts*). The intimate relationship between Being and truth that Heidegger posits in *Being and Time* derives from the fact that truth

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96 The idea that Heidegger takes the essence of truth to be the same play between clearing and concealing is held out by the fact that this is the way he tends to articulate it after *OWA* (Cf. *BQP*, pp. 177-180).

97 It's difficult to delineate the contours of this shift, as the changes in Heidegger's view in the early 30's are not made particularly explicit. For our purposes, I'll define the shift as beginning after *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* and culminating in *Contributions to Philosophy*, where Heidegger explicitly announces his concern with the truth of Being. I'm also going to treat much of Heidegger's work after *Contributions* as endorsing the same fundamental position laid out below. We will address the transitional period in the early 30's in more detail in chapters 4 and 5.

as disclosedness is another name for the process through which this horizon is projected, and thus that in which its structure consists. This means that, for Heidegger, the inquiry into the unity of the manifold senses of Being by way of being-true as the primary sense is effectively equivalent to locating this unity in the structure of the world. There is thus an important sense in which the meaning of Being *is* truth, even if this is not initially emphasised.

It is this fact that connects Heidegger's earlier concern with the meaning of Being and and his later concern with the truth of Being.[98] In both cases he is concerned with truth understood as the process through which the horizon within which entities appear is produced – truth as *aletheia*. This means that we cannot interpret the shift between them as a matter of moving from understanding Being in terms of time to understanding it in terms of truth, insofar as the concern with truth is already implicit in his initial formulation of the question of the meaning of Being. An alternative way of describing this shift in Heidegger's work, which comes from Richardson[99], is that it involves a change in focus from Dasein to Being itself. This is obviously false if it is understood to mean that Heidegger did not concern himself with Being itself in his early work.[100] Although this work is dominated by the existential analytic of Dasein, it is explicitly undertaken with the aim of properly formulating and then carrying out the inquiry into Being itself. However, correctly interpreted it indicates two distinct changes in Heidegger's position: a *methodological* change and a *substantive* change.

The methodological change it signals is his abandonment of the attempt to

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98 There are several points where Heidegger indicates that the question of the meaning of Being and the question of the truth of Being seek the same thing. Cf. 'Letter on Humanism', pp. 240-241; *CP*, p. 8; *FS*, pp. 46-47. However, it should be noted that Heidegger tends to overstate the continuity of his project, and there are real discontinuities here, as we will see shortly.

99 Richardson, p. 238.

100 As Hans Ruin has pointed out ('Contributions to Philosophy', p. 367), this claim is equally false if taken to indicate that Heidegger is no longer concerned with Dasein in his later work. Indeed, we will see both that Dasein retains an essential role within the later work, and that his way of approaching it changes to some degree. What is at issue here is the precise methodological structure and role of the inquiry into Dasein within Heidegger's project.

formulate the question by way of an existential analytic of Dasein. This does not mean that Heidegger abandons all of the results of the existential analytic. As we've seen above, he continues to deploy these and to revise them in his subsequent work, even if this never amounts to the kind of systematic analysis found in *Being and Time*. Rather, it means that the inquiry into the Being of Dasein ceases to play the dual role we identified in the first chapter. The real significance of the rejection of meaning is that Heidegger ceases to understand the question as a matter of interpreting our pre-ontological understanding, and he ceases to take Dasein as that which must be interrogated in order to determine the horizon of this interpretation. In short, the whole attempt to *argue* that Being must be understood in terms of the process through which the world is opened up (i.e., truth) is abandoned, and this process is taken as the object of the question *directly*.

Heidegger achieves this through a subtle redefinition of what he means by 'Being', which he sometimes makes explicit by distinguishing between the Being of beings (*das Sein des Seienden*) and Being as such (*das Sein als Solche*), Being (*Sein*) and Beyng (*Seyn*), or Being and *Ereignis*.[101] The former term in each case retains the original sense of Being, namely, that which determines beings as beings, whereas the latter term is synonymous with the process through which the world is opened up. As such, when Heidegger discusses the truth of Being he is really talking about the truth of Beyng, and by this he equally just means truth itself: "The truth of [Beyng] is the [Beyng] of truth".[102] This has the effect of splitting Heidegger's original question in two:

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101 For the equivalence of the first two distinctions see Heidegger's letter to Richardson (Richardson, pp. XIV-XVI), and for the equivalence of the latter see *CP* (p. 22). I have chosen to leave the word 'Ereignis' untranslated as none of the standard translations (e.g., 'appropriation', 'event of appropriation', 'enowning', etc.) manage to make the notion any more intelligible, and I have chosen to translate 'Seyn' as 'Beyng' rather than 'be-ing' as it more closely corresponds to Heidegger's own lexical distinction. Finally, it is important to note that not only does Heidegger change his terms for expressing this distinction, but that he is not especially consistent in deploying it. He often uses the word 'Being' to refer to either side of the distinction, which causes many interpretative problems.

102 *CP*, p. 66.

into what he calls *the guiding question* and *the grounding question*.[103] The former is the central topic of the metaphysical tradition as Heidegger understands it, the question concerning beings as beings, or Being in its original sense, and the latter is the question of the truth of Being/Beyng, or the question which inquires into Ereignis. What this means is that Heidegger reformulates the question of Being in such a way that he exorcises its connection to Aristotle's problem of the many senses of 'Being' and the ontological problems of the metaphysical tradition that follows him, in precisely the way that he avoids in the early work, as we argued in the last chapter. However, it's important to understand the shape this takes, as it amounts to a reconfiguration of Heidegger's relation to the tradition, rather than an outright rejection of it.

Heidegger originally thought that the metaphysical tradition that followed Aristotle failed to raise the question of Being *explicitly*, but that it was nevertheless concerned with Being *implicitly*. Moreover, in doing so it tended to misunderstand Being by thinking it in terms of beings (e.g., in terms of beingness, a highest being, or both). Heidegger's own attempt to raise the question explicitly (and to formulate it properly) was meant to be concerned with the same thing as Aristotle and the tradition, but in a way that avoided this pervasive misunderstanding. He thus thought that the metaphysical tradition was defined by a problem to which there was a genuine solution, albeit one that was unachievable within its scope. It is for this reason that we can talk of Heidegger's initial project as a matter of *reorienting* metaphysics.

However, in splitting the question of Being into the guiding and grounding questions, he abandons this position. He now thinks that there is no such solution. There is no account of beings as beings that is not articulated in terms of beings themselves. There is no single way of dividing Being into its various aspects and modes, or a single unifying structure that relates them. There is only the variety of ways that the guiding

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103*CP*, §34

question has been answered in the history of metaphysics: "It is still infinitely more impossible to represent "Being" as the general characteristic of particular beings. There is Being only in this or that particular historic character: [*Physis*], [*Logos*], [*Hen*], [*Idea*], [*Energia*], Substantiality, Objectivity, Subjectivity, the Will, the Will to Power, the Will to Will."[104] In essence, Being *is* beingness, and it takes on different forms in different historical epochs. Heidegger calls this succession of epochs the history of Being. However, although he thinks that there is no solution to the question concerning beings as beings, he still thinks that it is important insofar as it directs us to ask after that which makes this history possible, namely, truth or Ereignis. This is why they are called the guiding question and the grounding question, respectively. Heidegger's project is now that of *overcoming* metaphysics, not in the sense of rejecting it, but rather of moving beyond it towards its very ground.[105]

The final aspect of the methodological change is a matter of the way that Heidegger approaches the formulation of the question. Previously, the structure of the question and the constraints upon its proper formulation were derived from the structure of the questioner, independently of any detailed account of the nature of the object of the question. This is to say that even if some pre-theoretical understanding of Being was presupposed by the question, one needed no additional theoretical grasp of Being in order to formulate the question of the meaning of Being. However, in moving to the question of the truth of Being Heidegger comes to understand the structure of the question in terms of a prior account of its object, i.e., in terms of his theory of truth. The interpretation of the question from 'On the Essence of Truth' discussed above is representative. There the question is principally understood in relation to the structure of

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104*OCM*, p. 66.
105Heidegger also calls this "the step back out of metaphysics into its essential nature" (Ibid., p. 51). It should also be noted that Heidegger explicitly denies that turning our concern towards Ereignis itself constitutes an epoch, even a final epoch (*FS*, p. 61). The overcoming of metaphysics is not the end of the history of Being, but the point at which it "appears *as* history of Being" (Ibid.).

strife itself (and the relation between mystery and errancy that it involves), in terms of a kind of fundamental mood counterposed to erring. From this point on, Heidegger increasingly formulates the question in terms of such fundamental moods (e.g., terror/distress, restraint/reservedness, mindfulness, etc.) and their relation to Being itself (e.g., the abandonment by Being, the withdrawal of Being, etc.).[106] This presupposes not only his revised theory of truth, but also the elements of the analytic of Dasein upon which it is based (which we have shown to be quite extensive). This means that the formulation of the question is still dependent upon the existential analytic, but that this dependence is no longer circumscribed by the strict methodological roles it was assigned in *Being and Time*. All of this indicates a definite methodological laxity in comparison with the earlier approach to the question of Being.

The substantive change that Richardson's characterisation indicates is a consequence of the move from truth as *disclosedness* to truth as *strife*. This move consists in the fact that the process through which the world is produced is no longer understood solely in terms of Dasein's projection (unconcealing), but in terms of the relation between this projection and that which is constitutively in excess of it, namely, the earth (concealing). As we've already noted, the other name that Heidegger comes to give this relation is Ereignis. The consequence of this move is that whereas truth (and thus the meaning of Being) was previously understood to be dependent upon Dasein, Dasein is now seen as dependent upon truth (or Ereignis). To understand this reversal we must further unpack the structure of Ereignis, the essential features of which follow from the structure of the strife relation as we've explained it above. First, it is important

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106Cf. *CP*, pp. 9-17; *BQT*, pp. 170-179; *M*, Part III. There is obviously much more that could be said here about the various ways in which Heidegger attempts to articulate the character of the grounding question, of which the passages just referenced are merely examples. However, not only would this take up precious space, but it would also be unlikely to contribute much to the current enterprise. Heidegger is notoriously obscure on the topic of what asking the grounding question consists in and the precise nature of the 'second beginning' that it supposedly heralds. This problem will be addressed to some extent in chapter 4, part 2.

to understand that the earth is not in excess of any *particular* projection of a world, but is that which is in excess of *every* such projection. There are many culturally articulated ways of grasping beings as a whole, but they all aim to grasp the *same* whole. The earth is the *singular* locus of resistance in relation to all projections. Second, it is important to understand that Ereignis is similarly not the relation between any *particular* projection and the earth, but is the relation between it and *every* such projection. This means that insofar as the earth is singular, so too is Ereignis.[107]

However, although Ereignis is singular, it is not for that matter a being, anymore than the earth is a being. It is nothing like a highest being that would ground the existence of all other beings. Moreover, although the word 'Ereignis' can also be translated as 'event' (and is often so translated), it is not an event in the sense of something that occurs within time.[108] It is not this or that happening of strife, but that *through which* all strife happens. Rather, insofar as it is the process through which the world is (or worlds are) constituted, Ereignis is the condition under which anything can be encountered *as a being* or *within time*.[109] This is what Heidegger is getting at in the lecture 'Time and Being' when he claims that instead of saying that 'Being is' or that 'time is', we must say that 'there is Being' and 'there is time'.[110] The phrase 'there is' is translated from the german '*es gibt*', which in this case is more aptly translated as 'it gives'. Heidegger claims that Ereignis is the 'it' in 'it gives Being/time', which emphasises its bare singularity. He also holds that man (or Dasein) is that to which the

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107"The term [*Ereignis*] here no longer means what we would otherwise call a happening, an occurrence. It now is used as a *singulare tantum*. What it indicates happens only in the singular, no, not in any number, uniquely." ('The Principle of Identity', p. 36).

108"One should bear in mind, however, that "event" is not simply an occurrence, but that which makes any occurrence possible." (*TB*, p. 19).

109It is important to remember that Heidegger never abandoned the idea that the horizon within which entities are encountered should be understood temporally, he simply de-emphasised the concept of time in favour of that of truth. His account of the opening up of the world as involving the temporalisation of time persists in an altered form in various works, including *CP* (in the account of time-space or *Zeit-Raum* (Part V, Section *d*)) and *TB* (in the four-dimensional account of time (pp. 10-16)).

110*TB*, pp. 4-5.

gift is given, and that Ereignis is nothing other than the process through which it is given to man. All this fits with the account of strife given earlier, but the last point might be seen to contradict the reversal of dependence we've just indicated. If Ereignis is nothing other than the process of giving Being/time to man, surely it must thereby be dependent upon man?

This must be true in some sense, insofar as the process through which the world is opened up essentially involves Dasein's projection. We thus cannot understand Ereignis without understanding the role that Dasein plays within it. However, the reverse is also true. Heidegger claims that "If man were not the constant receiver of the gift... Man would not be man."[111] This means that there is no Dasein independently of Ereignis, because what Dasein is (or the essence of man) is determined solely by the role it plays within the process through which the world is opened up. As Heidegger also puts it: "man belongs to [Ereignis]."[112] This would seem to indicate a kind of reciprocal dependence between Dasein and Ereignis, which does not yet amount to the promised reversal. The reversal is only apparent once we see the asymmetry between the ways in which Dasein and Ereignis depend on one another. The crucial point is that whereas particular Dasein are dependent upon Ereignis in order to be Dasein, as they are Dasein only insofar as they are involved in the strife process, Ereignis is not dependent upon any of these involvements. Ereignis may be nothing other than the process through which Dasein's world is constituted (through which Being/time is given to Dasein), but this does not mean that there is no Ereignis without particular instances of Dasein. Ereignis is the relation between the earth and whatever Dasein there happen to be, even if there happen to be none.

It is perhaps better to articulate this point in terms of the relation between

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111Ibid., p. 12.
112Ibid., p. 23; cf. *CP*, §128.

Ereignis and earth. If the world is our *understanding* of beings as a whole, then earth is the whole *in itself*. This means that the earth is intrinsically indifferent to whether there are any Dasein, or what we would commonly call their *existence* (not to be confused with the mode of Being of Dasein (*Existenz*), which we would commonly call its *essence*). Whatever there is in itself may or may not include entities capable of projecting open a world. However, the earth is still characterised by its resistance to such possible projection even in its absence. The fact that the earth is in excess of any projection of world is something which is independent of the fact that there is such projection, i.e., whether there are Dasein. But this just names the relation between the earth and the possibility of Dasein, and this is all that Ereignis is. It is the relation between the singular earth and the plurality of projections of world, *as* the relation between it and the role of Dasein, or the essence of man. Ereignis thus derives its independence from the existence of Dasein from that of the earth, in precisely the way that it derives its singularity from that of the earth.

In essence, Ereignis is nothing other than the *structure* of the earth, or, to think of it in more colloquial terms, the structure of *reality* itself.[113] This lets us understand the issue of dependence in a different way, perhaps best summarised by Miguel de Beistegui:-

> "This, then, is how we need to understand the fact that [B]eyng "needs" man: not as a relation of dependency born of a structural lack, but as a relation of generosity born of an irreducible plenitude... [the] "need" of man is a need made possible by its essence alone, a need which, furthermore, does not so much presuppose the space of the human as it makes it

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113The word 'world' would probably be even more familiar than 'reality' here, but this already has a technical sense in Heidegger's philosophy. One might use the words 'universe' or 'cosmos' instead, but these have certain scientific connotations, and so I have opted for the more neutral 'reality'. Precisely how we are to understand this expression will be an important topic of chapter 5.

possible."[114]

What this means is that the structure of reality essentially *incorporates* the possibility of an entity that can open up a horizon within which entities can be encountered. That there could be something like man is not negotiable. Just as the possibility of the artwork is something contained in the very essence of truth, so it is with the possibility of Dasein.[115]

The final aspect of Ereignis that must be understood is its relation to the history of Being discussed above. As we've already noted, Heidegger takes it that Ereignis is what makes the succession of metaphysical epochs that constitutes the history of Being possible. This aspect of Ereignis is what Heidegger calls *sending*, or the way in which 'it' *gives* Being to man.[116] Precisely how this works is fairly easy to articulate if we contrast it to Heidegger's earlier position. As we've already explained, Heidegger always understood the significances that constitute the world to be revisable. However, he originally thought that Being (the structure of beings as such) consisted in features of the world that were not subject to this process of revision. Heidegger's abandonment of the idea of a historically invariant structure of Being consists in acknowledging that these features of the world are revisable after all. Whereas he originally took there to be a set distribution of aspects and modes of Being, and a fixed way in which they were interrelated, he now takes these to be flexible.[117]

114De Beistegui, pp. 138-139.

115This makes sense of Heidegger's claim that man does not possess freedom, but that freedom possesses man (*OET*, p. 127), at least once we recognise that freedom is grounded in the deeper essence of truth as strife, or Ereignis. This reversal is developed further in Heidegger's critique of anthropomorphism in his reading of Schelling (*Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, pp. 162-164). He suggests there that freedom, as the essence of man, cannot be simply abstracted from him, but that "every essential determination of man overreach[es] him".

116*TB*, p. 8.

117It is nonetheless up for debate precisely *how* flexible he takes them to be. For instance, Heidegger thinks that the way that the notions of essence (what-being) and existence (that-being) have been understood and the way their relation has been articulated is a central feature of the progression that constitutes the history of Being (cf. 'Metaphysics as History of Being'), but it is not clear whether he thinks that some such understanding of these notions and their relation is an *essential* feature of any epoch, or that they could be replaced altogether.

However, that they are flexible does not mean that they are readily revised. The conception of Being that these features constitute is *the* central feature of any given culturally articulated world, and it is for this reason that Heidegger takes its revision to quite literally *define* historical epochs. Heidegger's claim that such revisions are 'gifts' on behalf of Ereignis follows from his account of the process of revision in terms of the strife between earth and world. It is the fact that the earth's disruption of the world *engenders* its revision that licenses the ascription of a certain *activity* to Ereignis. This need not imply that we are simply *passive* receivers of this gift, but simply means that we are involved in a process that is beyond our own control. Taken as a whole, this process through which our culturally articulated worlds are revised is nothing other than the unfolding of *history* itself, within which the history of Being is simply the central, defining narrative.[118] It is this fact which licenses the parallel claim that Ereignis gives time as well as Being, insofar as Heidegger principally understands time *as* history.[119]

We've now provided a fairly comprehensive account of the substantive shift involved in Heidegger's transition to the truth of Being. Although his terminology and way of presenting his position undergoes further changes, even to the extent that he ultimately abandons the word 'truth' as a name for his topic of concern[120], his account of it remains essentially the same. This is not to say that there aren't any further changes in the account, but simply that these are not principally revisions of it. Even when Heidegger turns to his famously obscure *fourfold* (*das Geviert*) of earth (*Erde*), sky (*Himmel*), gods (*Göttlichen*) and mortals (*Sterblichen*), the same structure is ultimately

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118 The idea that the history of Being is the central feature of history as such helps to explain Heidegger's various claims to the effect that history (considered specifically as Western history) begins with the original raising of the question of Being, or the 'first beginning' in relation to the 'second beginning' that the overcoming of metaphysics heralds (cf. *OET*, pp. 126-127; *BQP*, §31-33 ; *CP*, p. §85, §87, §91).

119 For an excellent discussion of the relation between temporality and history across Heidegger's work, see Charles Guignon's essay 'The History of Being'.

120 See fn 41.

at work.[121] The mirror-play between the four, which opens up a space (or *open region*) within which beings can appear, is merely the reworking of the notion of strife and its essential consequences. Mortals stand for Dasein, or the freedom which projects world, sky is the world as the horizon within which beings appear, earth remains the concealing which resists and refuses world, and the gods are just those mysteries made present described in the account of art above, whose incarnation is made possible by the essential structure of strife. Mortals open up a world, and the earth, in its never-ending war with world, pokes through into the world in places, coming face to face with mortals in the form of the gods.[122] This constant interplay is simply the perpetual and dynamic reconstruction of the horizon within which beings can appear as beings.

Having adequately cashed out both the methodological and substantive dimensions of the shift between the early and later work, we're now in a position to make some comparisons which address both dimensions. In the last chapter we saw that Heidegger's initial formulation of the question of Being puts him in close proximity to Kant's project, insofar as it makes of it an inquiry into the conditions of the possibility of *intelligibility* analogous to Kant's inquiry into the conditions of the possibility of *experience*. In both cases they appeal to certain historically invariant

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121Cf. 'The Thing'. Here I am very much in disagreement both with Graham Harman's interpretation of the fourfold (*Tool-Being*, ch. 2, §19) and with that of Julian Young ('The Fourfold'). Although they are both to be commended for attempting to provide a clear account of what the fourfold consists in, their interpretations go astray in several ways. Harman fails to recognise the significance of the notion of beings *as a whole*, and so treats concealing as something which is restricted to each being individually, thereby failing to see the innovations introduced in *OET* and *OWA*. He also explicitly denies that the world is a horizon projected by Dasein, and thus is very strangely unable to claim that mortals correspond to Dasein. This leads him to interpret the fourfold not as the structure through which such a horizon is produced, but as the intersection of two distinctions found within each being, between its revealed (sky, mortals) and concealed (earth, gods) aspects on the one hand, and its properties (gods, sky) and its bare particularity (earth, mortals) on the other. Young also ignores the correspondence between the fourfold and the twofold strife of earth and world. On this basis, he interprets earth and sky too literally, taking them to compose the domain of *nature*. He then interprets gods and mortals as composing the domain of *culture* over against this. This division fails to do justice to the complexity of the fourfold structure. However, his suggestion that the gods should be read as playing a similar role to the 'heroes' of *B&T* does deserve closer scrutiny than I can devote to it here.

122I am indebted to Miguel de Beistegui's analysis of the fourfold in his book *Truth and Genesis* (ch. 4-5) for underlining the essential continuity between the fourfold and the twofold structure of earth and world.

(existential/transcendental) features of the structure of the inquirer (Dasein/subject) in a way meant to provide definitive solutions to (at least some of) the problems of classical ontology and metaphysics. The crucial difference between them is that Heidegger *reorients* metaphysics by demonstrating that the original problem with which the tradition is concerned leads to this kind of inquiry, whereas Kant *redefines* metaphysics by rearticulating its subject matter in essentially epistemological terms.[123] We can now usefully contrast Heidegger's later attempt to *overcome* metaphysics with both of these.

Principally, it has a renewed similarity to Kant's project insofar as it is now directly concerned with conditions of the possibility of intelligibility (truth/Ereignis), but no longer directly motivated by the question of Being as originally understood. However, it breaks with both Kant and the earlier project in two ways. On the one hand, it rejects the possibility of definitive solutions to the problems of classical ontology, insofar as the relevant aspects of the structure of intelligibility are taken to be historically variable (i.e., anything like Kantian categories are taken to be mutable). On the other, it substantially modifies Kant's account of the relation between these conditions and the thing in itself. This latter move is the most interesting, and it hinges upon his shift from considering *individual* entities in themselves (noumena) to the *whole* of entities in themselves (earth). It amounts to locating the conditions of intelligibility of entities in the *singular structure* of the whole without identifying them with the *general structure* of these entities themselves. It thus avoids anything like Hegel's identification of thought and Being. Instead, it constitutes a peculiar radicalisation of Kantianism that suspends the inaccessibility of the in itself only to inscribe within it the very structure of this inaccessibility. This means inscribing within

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123There are of course many other important differences between Heidegger and Kant, the most prominent of which being that Kant did not understand the transcendental structure of the subject as special mode of Being. Heidegger saw this as Kant's failure to thematise the Being of subjectivity in the way he had thematised that of nature (*B&T*, p. 45).

it the possibility of the confrontation between it and man, through which history is produced.

Of course, there are legitimate questions as to whether Heidegger can consistently articulate this kind of liminal claim, let alone whether he can adequately justify it. However, leaving these concerns to one side, this highlights a way in which Heidegger's later position has more in common with metaphysics ordinarily construed than with either of its predecessors. The fact that it is a claim about beings understood *as a singular whole*, rather than a claim about beings *in general*, enables Heidegger to deny that it is a metaphysical claim at all, given his own account of what metaphysics is. However, as we noted above, we might more colloquially describe this concern with the *whole* as it is *in itself* as a concern with the nature of *reality*. This kind of concern is precisely what is usually classified as *metaphysical*, and it is precisely the kind of claim that is abjured by Kant and the earlier project. We will not endeavour to define the notion of 'reality' here, or to expand upon this basic construal of metaphysics.[124] However, this indicates that there may be a certain residue of the ordinary notion of metaphysics sufficient to differentiate between Heidegger's later position and Kantianism that is nonetheless not incorporated within his own definition of metaphysics. For the moment, this will have to remain an intriguing possibility. We have now adequately circumscribed Heidegger's attempts to formulate the question of Being and the relations between them. We must now turn to assessing them, in order that we might see where and how Heidegger goes wrong.

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[124]We will return to these themes in chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Heidegger's Failure

So far, we have done our best to explicate Heidegger's attempts at formulating the question of Being. Even though at times we have ventured beyond Heidegger's explicit claims about the question, what we have said has emerged out of those explicit remarks, as a reading of what is implicit within them. However, it was claimed in the introduction that, despite his (mostly) rigorous approach to the question, Heidegger failed to ever give a satisfactory *formulation* of it, let alone a satisfactory *answer* to it. In order to show this we must demonstrate that Heidegger identifies important *methodological constraints* upon the formulation of the question that his own attempts to formulate it fail to meet. However, this task is complicated by the shift in focus in Heidegger's work that we identified at the end of the last chapter. As we showed there, there are significant changes in both Heidegger's account of what the question aims at (his differentiation of the *guiding* and *grounding* questions) and in his account of the way in which it is to be approached (his de-prioritisation of the existential analytic). What is most problematic about this is that, although he abandons most of the methodological insights of his early work, he does not replace them with anything comparable. It is thus very difficult to determine precisely what standards his later account of the question should be assessed in accordance with.

To account for this difficulty, we will approach things in a slightly unusual order. We will begin by providing a summary of the historical themes motivating Heidegger's original attempt to formulate the question and the methodological constraints governing it. We will then address the ways in which his later formulation of the question abandons or modifies these, and identify the problems this causes for his project. We will then turn back to Heidegger's original formulation, and assess it in accordance with

the criteria we've identified. We will present this in the form of a series of problems for the original formulation, each of which will reveal an additional constraint upon any adequate formulation of the question.

1. The Original Formulation

Over the course of the first two chapters, we located three distinct historical themes that Heidegger unites in his original formulation of the question:-

1) The Kantian Theme: This is the project of describing the conditions of intelligibility. This is something that he inherits from Kant by way of Husserl, who articulates the project as describing the structure of givenness, rather than the conditions of the possibility of experience.[1] The confluence of this theme and the inquiry into Being is signalled by Heidegger's identification of phenomenology and ontology at the beginning of *Being and Time.* However, as we showed at the end of the second chapter, this claim is only really justified by the complete formulation of the question, which does not appear within the book itself.

2) The Husserlian Theme: This is found in the project of grounding the *regional ontology* of the various discourses about beings (including both the natural sciences and the *Geisteswissenschaften*) in a *fundamental ontology*, by unifying the various *modes* of Being (e.g., occurrence, availability, existence, subsistence, life, etc.) in a concept of Being as such. The concern with providing a unifying ground for the various domains of knowledge is inherited from Heidegger's neo-

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1 This distinction is important insofar as, as we showed in chapter 1, Heidegger's account of givenness in terms of *understanding* has more in common with Husserl's account of *intuition* than it does with Kant's account of experience as *judgment*.

Kantian forebears (such as Rickert and Lask) and Dilthey, but the reformulation of this concern as an ontological problem is due to Husserl, from whom Heidegger took the concept of regional ontology.

3) The Aristotelian Theme: This is the project of unifying the different senses in which Being is said (for Aristotle: potential and actual Being, the Being of the categories, accidental Being, and Being-true). The notion of a 'sense' of Being can be extended to include *modes* of Being (connecting the Aristotelian and Husserlian themes), but must at minimum include what we have called *aspects* of Being (e.g., what-being, that-being, being-so, being-true, etc.). Unifying these senses is explicitly not a matter of reducing them all to one primary sense, or of finding a single genus of which they are species, but rather of uncovering the underlying structure through which they are unified. It is this theme that unites the others. As we saw at the end of the second chapter, it is the fact that this theme secures the sense of 'ontology' that allows Heidegger's identification of phenomenology and ontology to be genuinely informative, rather than mere definition.

We also uncovered three important facts about the question of Being, which place methodological constraints upon its formulation:-

1) The Priority of Questioning: This is the fact that the question cannot be properly formulated without a proper understanding of questioning itself, or without first asking the question of the structure of questioning. Although Heidegger made some preliminary remarks about the structure of questioning, his proper inquiry into questioning is coextensive with the existential analytic of Dasein as the

inquiry into the Being of the inquirer.

2) <u>The Necessity of Pre-Ontological Understanding:</u> This is the fact, derived from Heidegger's preliminary account of questioning, that, as with any question, there must be some prior understanding of the object of the question of Being, in order to ask the question. This is to say that we must possess some *pre-ontological understanding* of Being in order to ask the question. It is the fact that Dasein has such pre-ontological understanding which makes the existential analytic of its particular kind of Being the beginning of the inquiry into Being as such.

3) <u>The Significance of Meaning:</u> This is the fact that the question of Being must be the question of the *meaning* of Being, in virtue of the *hermeneutically circular* structure of the inquiry into Being. This fact determines the inquiry into Being as a hermeneutic process of *developing* our pre-ontological understanding of Being into an explicit concept of Being itself. The implication of this is that the inquiry into Being proceeds in two stages: the explication of the structure of our pre-ontological understanding, as carried out by the existential analytic, followed by the hermeneutic elaboration of this understanding into a genuine concept of Being, projected to be carried out in the unpublished Division III of Part One of *Being and Time*. However, as we demonstrated at the end of the second chapter, Heidegger ultimately argues for a continuity between these two stages. The first stage reveals that time is the horizon on the basis of which the second stage can be carried out, and this gives way to a deeper explication of the structure of our pre-ontological understanding insofar as this consists in our projection of a temporally structured horizon within which entities appear (primordial time).[2]

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2 As noted in chapter 2 (fn. 68), this is does not lead to contradiction. There is nothing that prevents the hermeneutic process of elaborating our pre-ontological understanding from being entirely a matter of explication, as long as this fact is demonstrated in the initial explication itself. Indeed, the move to a further level of explication is indicative of the hermeneutic circle structuring the inquiry.

In addition to these constraints there is a fourth that we have not yet discussed: *ontological neutrality*. This will require some explaining.

As we noted in the first chapter, Heidegger holds that every question always involves *that which is to be found out* in asking it. This is to say that every question leaves something indeterminate about its object, which is to be determined by the answer. However, he also holds that we must have some *prior understanding* of the object in order to ask the question. This is to say that we must not leave the object of the question entirely indeterminate, lest the question be about nothing in particular at all. Now, of course, this is not to say that in asking a question our prior understanding remains *fixed*, or that it cannot be forced to change in the process of questioning itself. As we showed in the second chapter, the significance of Heidegger's hermeneutic conception of understanding is that it allows questioning to be more than simply an *additive* matter, but to involve a genuine progressive *revision* of our understanding of what is questioned. Nonetheless, it is important to note that, even in inquiries that have such a hermeneutic structure, there must be something left indeterminate, the inquiry into which motivates this process of progressive revision.

As we showed in the second chapter, the question of Being is just such a hermeneutic inquiry. There are three distinct hermeneutic circles involved in it. We will present these in terms of their priority:-

1) The Primary Circle: This is the circle indicated by the discussion of *the significance of meaning* above. It names the fact that inquiring into 'what Being is' must proceed within some understanding of the 'is' that may be revised in the course of the inquiry itself, in virtue of the fact that the sense of the 'is' is precisely what is to be determined by the inquiry. This is the most fundamental

of the circles, in that it arises from the very basic structure of the question itself.

2) <u>The Secondary Circle:</u> This is the circle between the existential analytic of Dasein and the inquiry into Being itself. It names the fact that the inquiry into Being *as such* must proceed via an inquiry into a particular *mode* of Being, and that the understanding of that mode of Being may be revised in relation to the understanding of Being as such that develops out of it. This is less fundamental than the last circle, insofar as it arises from Heidegger's claim that the inquiry into Being must proceed via an existential analytic of Dasein.

3) <u>The Tertiary Circle:</u> This is the circle within the existential analytic itself. It consists in the unitary character of Dasein as Being-in-the-world, and the fact that the understanding of any given existential structure within the unitary whole may be revised in relation to those existential structures that are understood on its basis. This is the least fundamental circle insofar as it does not extend outside of the existential analytic at all.

Because of its restricted character, we will not concern ourselves with the tertiary circle, but only with the primary and secondary circles.

As noted above, the question of Being is to be approached in two stages, first by explicating our pre-ontological understanding of Being, and then by developing it into a genuine concept of Being. The primary and secondary circles respectively indicate that, on the one hand, our very understanding of what the question aims at (*that which is to be found out*) is subject to revision in the course of the inquiry itself, and that, on the other hand, the explication of our pre-ontological understanding from which we proceed (the *prior understanding* of the object) is also subject to revision on the basis of what is uncovered in the inquiry. Neither of these facts are problematic in themselves. However,

the question that concerns us is whether Heidegger has made any illegitimate *ontological assumptions*, i.e., assumptions about *that which is to be found out* in asking the question, namely, Being. At the beginning of *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger states: "It is therefore precluded from the start that phenomenology [the proper method of ontology] should pronounce any theses about [B]eing which have specific content, thus adopting a so-called standpoint."[3] Heidegger thus agrees that any approach which started with such assumptions would be insufficiently rigorous.

Now, it might be possible to maintain that it is necessary to make some ontological assumptions in order to begin the inquiry at all, such as part of a preliminary explication of our pre-ontological understanding, because these assumptions can be subsequently revised in the process of the inquiry. However, if these assumptions play a role in setting up the very structure of this projected inquiry, then they cannot thereby be subject to such revision. Such assumptions could not be treated as provisional, but would instead be constitutive for Heidegger's whole approach, in virtue of establishing its very hermeneutic structure. If Heidegger has made such ontological assumptions in setting up the structure of the inquiry, then we can state categorically that his formulation of the question is not ontologically neutral. Later on we will endeavour to show that Heidegger has indeed made such ontological assumptions, and thus that his formulation is insufficiently rigorous.

2. The Later Formulation and its Problems

Now that we've summarised the historical themes and methodological constraints that structure Heidegger's original formulation of the question of Being, we're in a position to articulate the ways in which his later formulation of the question modifies these, and

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3   *BPP*, p. 20.

the problems this generates. However, before we discuss specific modifications it is helpful to frame our discussion by briefly considering the motivation underlying the shift between formulations. There are of course numerous philosophical and biographical factors that we could address here, but there is one that is worth special mention. This is the fact that Heidegger's original project failed to deliver what it promised. This is not a claim about flaws within the framework of the project, but a claim about Heidegger's ability to produce something resembling the results he aimed for within that framework. For all his discussions of the ontological problems that his project was aimed at solving (e.g., the better part of *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*), he failed to produce many enlightening solutions. He failed to draw any novel conclusions from his preliminary analyses of the aspects of Being corresponding to the senses of the copula, and he never managed to extend his analysis of modes of Being and their relations beyond the categories of existence, availability, and occurrence in a way that isn't noticeably *ad hoc*.[4] This lack of progress, of which the failure to complete *Being and Time* is emblematic, undoubtedly played an important role in Heidegger's reformulation of the question in the 1930's. The important question is whether it plays an implicit role in *justifying* it. If this is the case, then it is a serious problem for the viability of Heidegger's later project.

It is thus legitimate to ask what grounds Heidegger has for claiming that metaphysics is impossible other than the failure of his own (reoriented) metaphysical project. Obviously, his original objections (e.g, ignorance of the ontological difference) against the metaphysical tradition still hold, but his own metaphysical project was

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4 The most famous such attempt is the analysis of life and its different forms in *FCM* (Part II, ch. 1-5), mentioned briefly in chapter 3. The claim that this analysis is *ad hoc* amounts to the claim that Heidegger fails to derive it from the (temporal) structure of the world as it is projected by Dasein. This is controversial, and there is no space to debate the issue here. However, we can point to a related problem that Heidegger sets for himself that he clearly makes no progress on: understanding the status of *subsistent* entities (e.g., mathematical objects and other 'supra-temporal' entities) in terms of his account of primordial time (*B&T*, pp. 39-40).

constructed to avoid these criticisms, and there could be others similarly constructed. He thus needs a stronger argument against the possibility of such metaphysical projects. Heidegger does not *explicitly* present us with any such argument, but it is possible to reconstruct something like an argument for the impossibility of metaphysics *implicit* within his work. It goes as follows:-

1) According to Heidegger's account of truth, reality *in itself* (earth) will always exceed our *understanding* of it (world), such that we can always be forced to revise this understanding. The only features of our understanding not subject to such revision are *invariant* features of the process through which we establish and revise it (truth). If a feature of our understanding of the world has been subject to revision at some time, then it is not invariant.

2) According to Heidegger's account of the history of metaphysics, the different accounts of *beingness* presented by the metaphysical tradition have supplied numerous different ways of dividing up and then unifying the aspects and modes of Being. Our understanding of beingness and our understanding of Being have thus been revised throughout the history of the tradition.

3) Consequently, there cannot be a historically invariant account of beingness (the essence of beings), nor a historically invariant account of Being (the unifying structure of aspects and modes) more generally. This makes both the traditional metaphysical project (which attempts to think Being *as* beingness) and Heidegger's reoriented metaphysical project (which attempts to think Being *without* beingness) impossible.

We can see that it is this implicit argument which underlies Heidegger's later

identification of Being (*Sein*) and beingness (*Seiendheit*), as the single topic of the guiding question. Where once he saw a difference between the two concepts great enough to support a new direction for metaphysics, now he sees none.

There are a number of serious problems with this argument. First, it fails to take account of the difference between revisions in our account of beingness that simply *happen* and those that reality *forces* upon us. The constitutive excess invoked in the first premise implies that there will always be points at which we *should* revise our picture of the world, not merely that there will always be points at which we *may* do so.[5] Second, it fails to take account of the possibility that our *explicit* accounts of beingness/Being might contradict the *implicit* structure of our understanding of the world. For instance, that there is a logical structure *constraining* our use of the copula 'is' (e.g., predication, identity, existential commitment, etc.) does not imply that we cannot *misunderstand* this structure.[6] Taken together, these show that the simple *fact* of historical variation in our understanding of something is not enough to demonstrate that it does not correspond to some historical invariant. This means that even if Heidegger's history of the actual historical progression of the metaphysical tradition is correct (which is questionable[7]), it is not enough to support the inference from the first premise to the conclusion.

Furthermore, not only is the argument based on his account of truth (and thus upon some modified version of the results of the existential analytic), but the idea that only historically invariant features of truth (the process through which the world is projected and revised) could provide answers to the questions of metaphysics is based upon the argument for the identity of Being and intelligibility that forms the centrepiece

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5   Some might object to the choice of the *deontic* formulation of this claim, as opposed to the *alethic* formulation: 'there will always be points at which we *must* (or *will*) revise our picture of the world, not merely that there will always be points at which we *can* (or *might*)'. I think this is justified given the way that Heidegger's later account of truth grows out of his concern with undertaking *responsibility* to speak the truth of beings as the condition of the possibility of truth.
6   This is because the constraint is *normative* rather than *causal*. This connects up with the point made in fn 5, insofar as these correspond to *deontic* and *alethic* modals, respectively.
7   Cf. Bernd Magnus, 'Heidegger's Metahistory of Philosophy Revisited'.

of his original interpretation (which is itself dependent upon the results of the existential analytic). What this indicates is that Heidegger's abandonment of metaphysics is based upon a conjunction of his earlier theoretical results and an implicit *inductive* inference from the failure of his original project. It is thus not possible to motivate his later project of grounding metaphysics in the structure of Ereignis by appeal to an analysis of metaphysics that is independent of the theoretical framework in which he articulates the notion of Ereignis.

Heidegger's later work is notorious for being self-contained. It is often very difficult to translate either its substantive concerns or its positive theses into terms that can be independently assessed. The above analysis demonstrates that this reputation for self-containment is warranted to some extent, and it is in this respect that it does a good job of framing our discussion of the ways the later work modifies the motivating themes and methodological constraints of the original project. This should become clear if we examine the most significant modification: the division of the historical themes united in Heidegger's original project between the guiding and the grounding questions. On the one hand, the Aristotelian and Husserlian themes, concerned as they are with developing a unified and *ahistorical* account of the various aspects and modes of Being, are taken over by the guiding question. On the other hand, as we saw at the end of the last chapter, the Kantian theme is retained and *radicalised* under the guise of the grounding question. This has the effect of disconnecting Heidegger's project from the dialog it maintained with the metaphysical tradition in its earlier form. This is not to say that Heidegger ceases to be concerned with the tradition, as this is manifestly not the case. His later work is, if anything, even more steeped in analyses of the historical development of the metaphysical tradition. Rather, what this means is that Heidegger abandons the attempt to formulate his project in terms that the metaphysical tradition

would find either familiar or acceptable. He is no longer *arguing* with metaphysics from within its own framework, in order to *reorient* it, but *commenting* upon it from within his own framework, so as to *overcome* it. The problem that this creates is that the framework within which he comments upon metaphysics must be *justified* in some other way. We will now see that this problem is exacerbated by the ways in which the later work modifies the methodological constraints of the original project.

Beginning with *the priority of questioning*, Heidegger does not abandon the requirement that the question of Being must be formulated before it can be asked. This is clear given the sheer amount of writing Heidegger devotes to thinking through the conditions under which anything like a proper thinking of Ereignis could take place (e.g., inceptual thinking, Being-historical-thinking, mindfulness, thinking *simpliciter*, waiting, etc.).[8] However, as we pointed out at the end of the last chapter, the way in which Heidegger approaches the task of formulation changes quite drastically. The initial account of questioning provided at the beginning of *Being and Time* is abandoned (or at least no longer appealed to). A consequence of this is that, insofar as the question of Being is still understood as a special case of questioning, it is now understood in terms of the way it invokes a fundamental mood that is a special case of the moods involved in questioning.[9] Moreover, the question is also understood in terms of the relation between Dasein and Ereignis, as a special case of this relation.[10] This means

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8 Cf. *BQP*, ch. 5; *CP*, Parts I, IV and V; *M*, Parts II, III, XXVII, XXVIII; *WCT*; *DT*.
9 As we showed in chapter 3 (part 3), this is precisely how the analysis of the question of Being works in *OET*, where it is viewed as a limit-case of letting-be. Letting-be provides the condition under which Dasein can undertake a responsibility to speak the truth about something, and thus the condition under which it can genuinely take up a question.
10 We saw an example of this in chapter 3 (part 3) – the turning into the mystery out of errancy – wherein the question was delineated as a special possibility of the relation Dasein stands in to the mystery (earth), which later develops into Dasein's involvement in (or *appropriation* by) Ereignis. This was also described in relation to the notion of the forgetting of the mystery (the concealing of concealing), which corresponds to what Heidegger later calls the *withdrawal* of Being (read as Beyng or Ereignis), it's *self-concealing*, or *hesitant refusal* (cf., *BQP*, pp. 177-179; *CP*, Part V, section *e*). The relation between inquiring into Ereignis and the withdrawal of Ereignis is a theme that repeats itself in different ways in the later work, insofar as Heidegger takes it that the very fact of its withdrawal is what makes inquiry into it possible. This is why its self-concealing is described as *vacillating*, and its self-refusal is described as *hesitant* (*BQP*, pp 178-179) – it gives itself in refusing itself. Another

that the formulation of the question is doubly dependent upon the results of the existential analytic of Dasein, insofar as it requires both a *complete* account of mood and questioning and a *preliminary* account of Ereignis, each of which is derived from its results (or some modified version thereof).[11]

Another consequence of this is that *the necessity of pre-ontological understanding* is abandoned. This is not to say that Heidegger gets rid of the basic structural feature of Dasein that constitutes its pre-ontological understanding (i.e., its projection of a world), but rather that this is no longer treated as something which is to be developed (or explicated) into a concept of Ereignis. What this means is that the prior understanding of the object that fixes what the question is about isn't provided by a *pre-theoretical* structural feature of Dasein, but by the *theoretical*, if preliminary, account of the nature of Ereignis alluded to above. As was also pointed out in the last chapter, this account of Ereignis is dependent upon Heidegger's revised account of truth and thus is also dependent upon the results of the existential analytic (as suitably modified).

The move from the *meaning* to the *truth* of Being also modifies *the significance of meaning*. The fact that the question is no longer concerned with the unity of the senses of 'Being', but rather with that which underlies the various ways they are articulated in the history of Being, means that the question is no longer reflexive in the same way as 'What *is* Being?'. However, this does not eliminate the hermeneutic circle that the significance of meaning signals, because this historical variability of the sense of the copula poses a problem for how it is to be understood in the question 'What is Ereignis?' and claims of the form 'Ereignis is...'. In *Contributions*, Heidegger employs a number of linguistic devices in order to indicate this problem, most famously using

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formulation of this theme, articulated in the opposite direction, is Heidegger's claim that "*Most thought-provoking is that we are not yet thinking*" (*WCT*, p. 4).

11 The modifications to the account of mood in *B&T* necessary to make this analysis of the question work were explained chapter 3 (part 3), along with the modifications to the account of truth required to derive the preliminary account of Ereignis (presented in part 4).

various forms of the words '*Wesen*' and '*Wesung*' (e.g., '*das Seyn west*', '*Wesung des Seyns*', etc.) to talk about Ereignis.[12] These devices are related to the 'It gives...' ('*Es gibt...*') constructions through which Heidegger makes sense of the fact that Being is not itself *a* being and time is not itself *in* time. The phrase 'It gives Being' bypasses the reflexivity of constructions like 'Being *is...*', but only insofar as it shifts the problem onto the interpretation of Ereignis as that which corresponds to the 'It'. The linguistic devices discussed above are ways of indicating the problem with attempting constructions such as 'It gives Ereignis', namely, that we have to understand how 'It' could *give itself*. The question of the truth of Being is thus equally reflexive, and the corresponding inquiry equally hermeneutically circular.

However, there is a good sense in which this circularity is not *progressive* but *degenerate*.[13] This is because the goal that the inquiry is directed at, which provides it with its circular structure, comes to be seen not as the production of a theoretical account of Ereignis (hermeneutically developed out of the preliminary account), but as a more fundamental kind of transformation. It becomes less a matter of *understanding* how Ereignis gives itself than it is of *engendering* the conditions under which it gives itself. This amounts to establishing a new relation between Dasein and Ereignis, which Heidegger describes as *crossing* out of the history of metaphysics (begun by the first beginning) and over into a new history (the other beginning).[14] All of this seems to indicate a new self-consciousness of the way in which we are perpetually constructing

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12 There are many issues regarding the proper translation of these words and the phrases they're found in (*CP*, pp. xxiv-xxvii). I have chosen to avoid translating them at all, as I take it their essential point is simply to contrast with ordinary ways of talking about entities and thereby to indicate the problem at issue.

13 This degeneracy is not equivalent to *viciousness*, because it is still not a matter of circular *justification*. Rather, as we'll see, its degeneracy largely consists in the fact that the aim of producing a theoretical account of the topic that is subject to justification seems to have been abandoned.

14 Cf. *BQP*, ch. 5; *CP*, §85-94; *M*, §24, §133. This theme is developed further in Heidegger's accounts of nihilism (cf. 'On the Question of Being') and the essence of technology (cf. 'The Question Concerning Technology'), which analyse our current place within the history of the first beginning and the dangers it poses. These essentially articulate Heidegger's case for the necessity of engaging with the truth of Being (Ereignis) and crossing over into a new history.

the horizon of intelligibility, through which things appear to us, in a struggle with reality itself. However, it is hard to piece together what precisely Heidegger thinks the consequences of this would be.[15] Instead, Heidegger focuses on the question itself, which he increasingly describes as a special kind of *practical stance* that must be undertaken (be it in more active terms as a kind of fundamental *decision*, or more passive terms as a kind of *waiting*)[16]. This goes hand in hand with the increasing importance of mood, as the modulation or cultivation of the appropriate moods are the conditions under which this stance can be adopted.[17]

The problem with this whole approach to the question is that it strips it of any of the features that might identify it *as a question*. If it does not seek an *answer*, then any features this practical stance shares with a genuine *inquiry* are simply *means* toward an *end*. This is simply disguised by the fact that the end in question is not completely specified at the beginning of the activity, but is progressively determined by means of the practice itself. It is this progressive determination of the goal of the practical stance in which the real hermeneutic circularity of the grounding question consists. So, the stance begins as a questioning, insofar as it is an activity whose goal is a *complete* account of Ereignis, initially understood in terms of Heidegger's *preliminary* account of Ereignis. However, it is not only this preliminary account of Ereignis that is open to revision, but the initial understanding of the very aim of the activity itself. This is a genuine hermeneutic circle, because even though it involves a form of *practical reasoning* (an inquiry regarding the aim of the practice) it does not involve circular

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15 This may of course simply be the point at which the self-containment of Heidegger's work discussed above gets the better of me, in which case it is a problem of understanding on my part (enabled by a problem of expression on Heidegger's). However, it is worth saying that I have yet to encounter anything resembling a concrete reconstruction of this aspect of Heidegger's thought that is anything other than disguised negative theology, eschatology, or both. This means that, while there is more to Heidegger's later work than accusations of mysticism suggest, they nonetheless harbour a substantial kernel of truth.

16 The former way of describing the question is most prevalent in *CP* (cf. §43-39), but gradually gives way to the latter in the subsequent work, of which *WCT* and *DT* are emblematic.

17 Cf. *M*, Part III.

justification, and thus isn't vicious. However, the grounding question is nonetheless hermeneutically *degenerate* because its aim need not *ultimately* be an answer. Indeed, Heidegger can maintain that it is strictly *impossible* to answer the question[18], and still retain its essential hermeneutic structure *qua* practical stance. In doing this, he allows that we can take up the question without really *seeking* an answer, and in doing so he undermines its status as a question.[19] In essence, the grounding question is hermeneutically degenerate because *it is no longer really a question*, but some form of *foundational praxis*.

All of this serves to bolster the charge of self-containment, insofar as it indicates that Heidegger is beckoning us to follow him down the rabbit hole, so to speak. However, it does not preclude Heidegger from providing good reasons for us to follow him down there. Heidegger might be entirely justified in calling us to undertake this transformational task. The fundamental problem is that, as we've taken pains to show, all aspects of his formulation of this question/task are thoroughly dependent upon the results of his early work. If he is to justify his later project, he needs to be able to justify the existential analytic of Dasein or some successor thereof. This is where the methodological laxity we indicated in the last chapter proves fatal. It is not simply that Heidegger *does not* provide an adequate justification of the existential analytic within his revised methodological framework, but that he *cannot* do so. It is not just that he provides *no account* of the methodological status of the existential analytic within his later work, but that no such status is *available* within the context of this work. This is because it can no longer be a regional ontology of Dasein's mode of Being, insofar as the preliminary account of Ereignis Heidegger derives from it is supposed to rule out

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18 There are a number of places where Heidegger does explicitly endorse this idea (*CP*, §28, §37, §38, §42, §265; *DT*).

19 In this respect Heidegger has completely parted ways with his preliminary analysis of questioning in *B&T*.

the possibility of regional ontology. On this account, there simply cannot be ahistorically articulated modes of Being from which we could draw more general consequences. However, neither can he characterise it as an inquiry into the role man plays within Ereignis, or the relation he bares to it, because this would require assuming the account of Ereignis upon which it is based. Heidegger is torn between the Scylla of inconsistency and the Charbidis of vicious circularity. This leaves his position, at best, internally consistent but hopelessly self-contained.

The only way out of this dilemma is to find a viable alternative methodological status implicit within Heidegger's theoretical framework. There are two possible candidates: *phenomenological* inquiry, and *ontic* inquiry. The former option amounts to retreating into something resembling Husserlian phenomenology ordinarily understood. This seems most appropriate given Heidegger's retention of the Kantian theme, articulated in its phenomenological form as the inquiry into the conditions of the possibility of *givenness*. However, Heidegger's own criticism of Husserl's phenomenological method was precisely that it wasn't intelligible independently of an interpretation of the mode of Being of consciousness.[20] This criticism provided the fundamental motivation for *Being and Time*, the project of which was to make intelligible *both* this specific mode of Being (the existential analytic) *and* to make intelligible the very notion of modes of Being by providing a concept of Being in general (fundamental ontology). The real force of this criticism is that insofar as we are inquiring into the conditions of the possibility of intelligibility – the *transcendental* – we must have some way of distinguishing between them and ordinary *empirical* constraints. Heidegger did this through drawing his distinction between the *ontological* (transcendental) and the *ontic* (empirical). His abandonment of the ontological thereby leaves him only with the second option discussed above. The problem with this is

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20 *HCT*, §12

twofold. First, there is nothing resembling an empirical methodology in Heidegger's work that would allow us to assess the empirical adequacy of his account of the human, and even if we can import such a methodology, it is likely that many of his results will be refuted.[21] Second, even if there were, it is hard to see how such an account would license the kind of general claims about the structure of reality that Heidegger's later work attempts to make (albeit elliptically). Thus, neither of the two options are viable, and the dilemma is intractable.

We have thus seen *how* Heidegger's later formulation of the question of Being grows out of his earlier project. This explains *why* Heidegger comes to the position he does, and why many contemporary Heideggerians follow the same trajectory of thought. It is easy to find the account of Dasein in *Being and Time* so intuitive that one slides into the position of the later work without resistance. However, this is a matter of *explanation* rather than *justification*. There simply is no good way to independently motivate Heidegger's later project. We cannot follow Heidegger down the rabbit hole.

3. The Problems of the Original Formulation

We can now see that if we are to renew the question of Being, it must be by engaging with the constraints Heidegger originally placed upon its formulation, rather than the way in which he modified these constraints in his later work. Our task is now to show that Heidegger's original formulation failed to meet these constraints, and thereby to derive additional constraints which any proper formulation must meet. We will do this by identifying three specific problems with Heidegger's original approach: one

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21 Of course, this kind of methodological transplant has been performed on Heidegger's work by some (Cf. Martin Gessman, '*Being and Time* and the Future. Phenomenology meets Neuroscience'). However, even those engaged in this project must admit that although some very interesting insights can be drawn from Heidegger's analyses (e.g., into the psychology of mood, practical engagement, and social interaction), this is far from a validation of the whole of the existential analytic.

concerning his account of *modes of Being*, one concerning his account of *questioning*, and one concerning his account of *aspects of Being*.

i) Modes of Being

The first problem we will diagnose addresses the Husserlian theme we identified in Heidegger's work and the idea of modes of Being it deploys. In order to properly pose it we first need to understand what motivates Heidegger's appeal to the idea of regional ontology, and how the notion responds to this motivation. Heidegger addresses this in the first part of the introduction to *Being and Time*.[22] It is rooted in his conception of what he calls positive science, which is broader than our ordinary notion of science, including disciplines like history and mathematics as well as the empirical sciences. His initial idea is that the totality of beings can be divided up into different domains of beings, which specific sciences concern themselves with. These domains of beings constitute the subject-matter of the relevant sciences (e.g., living beings constitute the domain of biology). However, although we have certain pre-scientific ways of demarcating these domains, this demarcation must be refined, and indeed is refined by the actual process of scientific research itself. This takes the form of a concern with the *basic concepts* of that science. Moreover, Heidegger takes it that "the real 'movement' of the sciences takes place when their basic concepts undergo a more or less radical revision which is transparent to itself."[23] In essence, Heidegger presents a two levelled account of progress in the sciences: on the one hand, each science is constituted by the ordinary process of inquiry into the beings within its domain, made possible by certain fundamental concepts which structure that inquiry, and, on the other, by the process

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22 *B&T*, p. 29-30, italics added.
23 Ibid., p. 29.

through which these foundational conceptual structures are themselves revised. This model is not particularly controversial, and displays a certain basic similarity to the two-levelled models of empirical science put forward much later by Thomas Kuhn and those influenced by him.[24]

There are two pertinent features of this account. First, Heidegger distinguishes between the demarcation of domains that both belongs to our pre-scientific understanding, and to some extent to ordinary scientific research, and that demarcation that is 'transparent to itself'. We might think of this as the distinction between an *implicit* working out of basic concepts which is not properly separated from the positive scientific inquiry itself, and an *explicit* discourse on regional ontology which can potentially take place apart from, or even before, positive science. The fact that this explicit regional ontology is often carried out by the sciences themselves is of no matter[25], as the regional ontology of each science's domain can in principle be separated out from it. Now, it seems obvious that if this working out of basic concepts *can* be made explicit then it *should* be made explicit. However, this raises the issue of precisely what it is to engage in regional ontology *properly*. It is this issue which motivates the project of grounding regional ontology in fundamental ontology. This connects up with the second pertinent feature of the account: Heidegger cashes out regional ontology's concern with basic concepts as a concern with the Being of the entities in that domain. We went over what this means to some extent in the first chapter. Essentially, he takes it that each domain is characterised by a specific *mode* of Being particular to the beings that belong to it. Fundamental ontology thus grounds regional ontology by providing a concept of Being *in general*, in terms of which each *particular* mode of Being is to be

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24 This links up with the comparison we made between Heidegger's more mature account of truth and the Kuhnian approach given in chapter 3 (fn. 68 and 88).

25 However, it should be noted that Heidegger takes up this point about the incorporation of regional ontology into the sciences in a different context in 'The End of Philosophy and the Task for Thinking' (p., 434-436).

understood. Moreover, this concept of Being in general is not only meant to provide us with an understanding of modes *qua* modes, but also with an understanding of the very fact of their multiplicity, and the way they are related to one another.

Now that we have better understood the role played by the notion of regional ontology, we can proceed to uncover the problem that stems from it. The salient fact here is that the division of Being into a variety of modes plays a very important role in *Being and Time*, and in the initial formulation of the question it lays out. This is in virtue of the importance of the distinction between the mode of Being of Dasein – *existence* – and the modes of Being of other beings (paradigmatically *occurrence*). As has been noted, the regional ontology of Dasein's mode of Being – the existential analytic – plays two distinct fundamental roles. On the one hand, it is the inquiry into the structure of questioning, through which the question is to receive its adequate formulation, and on the other, it is the first step in asking the question, insofar as it explicates our pre-ontological understanding of Being. Regardless of what other modes of Being Heidegger posits, this distinction between existence and other modes is fundamental for setting up the structure of the inquiry itself. The secondary circle posited above is dependent upon this distinction. It is the fact that regional ontology in general is to be grounded by an inquiry (fundamental ontology) that is itself dependent upon a particular regional ontology (the existential analytic) which sets up the circle. In short, that Being is divided into the Being of Dasein and the Being of other beings is constitutive for the explication of our pre-ontological understanding on Heidegger's account, and thus not something which is open to revision within it, or the inquiry into Being that proceeds from it.

If this difference between the mode of Being of Dasein and the modes of Being of other beings is not to be counted as the kind of illegitimate ontological assumption

we discussed in the previous section, then Heidegger must provide some thorough justification of it. Given that Heidegger takes this to be one of his major advances over the philosophical tradition, he does endeavour to justify it in some depth. We have already outlined Heidegger's initial argument for positing the distinction in the first chapter, but he has further arguments aimed at vindicating the distinction retrospectively. The most important of these are made in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, where he carries out at least part of the deconstruction of the history of ontology which was to make up Part Two of *Being and Time*. Here Heidegger analyses four different fundamental ontological theses from the philosophical tradition in an attempt to uncover their flaws, but also to reawaken the problems to which they are addressed, so as to point towards the possibility of a genuine solution to each of them. Three of these – the Kantian thesis that Being is not a real predicate, the scholastic thesis that Being is articulated into *essencia* and *existentia*, and the logical thesis that all beings are understood through the copula – are analysed in great detail, such that in each case the root of the problem is found to lie within the existential structures of Dasein as laid out in *Being and Time* (in the intentional structure of perception, the intentional structure of production, and the existential structure of truth as disclosedness, respectively). These arguments provide some vindication for Heidegger's distinction through demonstrating its ontological efficacy, both for interpreting the classical problems of ontology and for potentially solving them.

However, the remaining thesis (which is in fact third in order) is most interesting, insofar as it deals explicitly with the question of the multiplicity of the modes of Being. This is the modern thesis that "the basic ways of [B]eing are the [B]eing of nature (*res extensa*) and the [B]eing of mind (*res cogitans*)."[26] It is enlightening here to look at Heidegger's summary of the problem that this thesis raises:-

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26 *BPP*, p. 24.

"Every being has a way-of-being. The question is whether this way-of-being

has the same character in every being – as ancient ontology believed and

subsequent periods have basically had to maintain even down to the present

– or whether individual ways-of-being are mutually distinct. Which are the

basic ways of being? Is there a multiplicity? How is the variety of ways-of-

being possible and how is it at all intelligible, given the meaning of [B]eing?

How can we speak at all of a unitary concept of [B]eing despite the variety

of ways-of-being? These questions can be consolidated into *the problem of

the possible modifications of [B]eing and the unity of [B]eing's variety*."[27]

What is interesting here is the gap between what this paragraph promises and what

Heidegger actually does. Over the course of the book Heidegger argues that all previous

ways of conceiving the Being of the subject, understood as that being which thinks and

questions, are inadequate, and that the only way to overcome their inadequacies is to

understand this being as *existing* in his peculiar sense of the term. He criticises ancient

and medieval philosophy insofar as it does not draw any distinction between the Being

of the subject and that of the object, but treats both as merely extant (as equally *ens

creatum,* in opposition to God as *ens increatum*), and he criticises modern philosophy

for failing to draw the distinction correctly, insofar as it treats both mental substance and

extended substance as extant, despite making some distinction between them. However,

Heidegger never directly addresses the question 'Is there a multiplicity?' which he

seems to raise in the above paragraph. This isn't to say he provides no answer, he

obviously takes there to be such a multiplicity of modes. However, he provides us with

no reason for thinking that there is such a multiplicity, other than his critiques of the

specific ways that the tradition has conceived specific modes of Being.

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27 Ibid., p. 18.

We can now see the problem with Heidegger's appropriation of the Husserlian theme in full: it assumes that there is a multiplicity of modes of Being in order to provide its conception of positive science, and this assumption underlies the fundamental claim that there is a mode of Being unique to Dasein. Any claims about how this mode of Being must be or must not be understood are dependent upon this assumption, and thus also any of the analyses of traditional ontological problems in terms of Dasein's Being. In essence, Heidegger takes it that the inquiry into Being will account for the *fact* of this multiplicity, by letting us understand how such a variety of modes can nonetheless be unified without appeal to a merely 'average' concept of Being. However, he does not leave open the possibility that *there is no such multiplicity*, as the very structure of the inquiry is built upon the assumption of this fact. We have thus identified a properly illegitimate ontological assumption on Heidegger's part. Moreover, it is important to note that this criticism does not depend upon the dogmatic assumption of the contrary thesis (that there is no multiplicity of modes of Being), but only upon the claim that any inquiry into Being should not determine this issue in advance, or, at the very least, should not assume it in a way that precludes its revision.

This criticism is closely related to the main criticism of Heidegger's later work given earlier: that it cannot account for the methodological status of the existential analytic, and that this makes it impossible to justify in any adequate manner. This consisted of two parts: that the later position precludes Heidegger from understanding the existential analytic as a form of regional ontology, and that he has no alternative way of articulating its methodological status. We have now shown that however one approaches the inquiry into the structure of questioning (and the corresponding explication of our pre-ontological understanding) it *cannot* be as a form of regional ontology. This creates the same problem for us that it does for the later Heidegger: if not

regional ontology then what? Whatever terms the inquiry is initially understood in, they may subsequently be *reinterpreted* in ontological terms, but they must at the very least be *independently intelligible*, such that the resulting analysis would remain good in the absence of an ontological interpretation. We can thus rule out phenomenology as a methodological framework within which to formulate the question of Being. This completely undermines the possibility of rehabilitating the existential analytic using the remaining resources within Heidegger's work.

However, as we saw at the end of the second chapter, it is theoretically possible to formulate the question within a *non*-phenomenological framework. What is required is a way of articulating an account of the nature of meaning, understanding, and interpretation that is intelligible independently of ontology without thereby collapsing into empirical investigation. To do this is to provide an account of the conditions of the possibility of intelligibility that does not reduce them to mere empirical constraints. This is just to give a proper account of the status of the *transcendental*. In essence, what is required is a new form of *transcendental philosophy*, but precisely how this is to be articulated is not yet clear. Regardless, it is important to remember that whatever this new framework is, it is not prohibited from rehabilitating specific insights of the existential analytic. It has simply been shown that we cannot accept the existential analytic as it stands.

ii) Questioning and Truth

The second problem we will identify addresses the *priority of questioning* constraint, and its relation to Heidegger's account of truth. Heidegger was concerned with the topics of questioning and truth throughout his whole career, beginning with the material

he presented at Rickert's seminars and extending all the way to his latest publications. However, as we've seen, his positions on both of these crucial notions changed considerably over time. By the end of his work, both notions were warped to the point at which they were incomparable with their *ordinary* forms. In the case of Heidegger's notion of truth, he ultimately admitted this, and ceased to call *aletheia* (or Ereignis) – the *condition of the possibility* of the ordinary notion of truth – by the name of truth.[28] However, in the case of his account of questioning, he continued to identify the question of Being (the grounding question) as a special case of questioning ordinarily understood, despite stripping it of the features that make ordinary questions recognisable *as* questions. There is an important connection here, because the feature that Heidegger stripped from the grounding question was precisely its connection to truth as ordinarily understood, namely, truth as the *correctness* of assertions. This is because he denies that the seeking of an *answer*, which is understood precisely as a *true assertion*, is a defining feature of the practical stance the grounding question instantiates. The grounding question is instead defined in terms of its relationship to the more fundamental form of truth, namely, *aletheia*, or Ereignis. We can thus see a twofold link between the ordinary notions of questioning and truth on the one hand, and their fundamental reinterpretations on the other. We can also see that the problems with Heidegger's notion of questioning emerge out of problems with the way in which he understands truth. The aim of the present section is to show that, although the account of questioning presented in *Being and Time* is less problematic than this later account, it nonetheless shares an essential deficit with it, in virtue of an inadequacy present in Heidegger's account of truth as correctness.

We will begin by examining the constraints upon an adequate account of questioning that Heidegger lays down in his presentation for Rickert's seminar. These

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28 See chapter 1, fn. 110.

will provide a frame of reference for our discussion of the relation between Heidegger's accounts of questioning and truth as correctness. First of all, it is important to note that Heidegger's concerns in this presentation are framed from within the perspective of Rickert's value-philosophy, tinged with his reading of Husserl's theory of intentionality. As such, he discusses his topic – the relation between *questions* and *judgments* – in terms of the relation between their character as *acts* and their relations to their *contents*.[29] This allows him to articulate a *pragmatic* methodology for inquiring into the structure of questioning, insofar as he claims that whereas the character of a judgment as an act is to be understood principally in terms of its relation to its content, a questioning's relation to its content is to be understood in terms of its character as an act.[30] It will be helpful here to divide this act of questioning into the act of *asking* a question and the activity of *inquiry* which seeks an answer to the question. We may then say that the question which is asked or pursued in these activities is the content they are related to. Now, in contrast to the later position just discussed, Heidegger here posits a very strong link between questions and judgments. He holds that "the ideal essence "question in general" can only be understood by way of the ideal essence "answer in general", and vice versa"[31], and that the latter is to be understood as a true (or valid) judgment. This is because questioning *aims* at at an answer as that which it *intends*.[32] However, he also holds that this intending must be distinguished from any kind of *willing*, *wanting*, or *wishing* for an answer. Put in different terms, questions are not to be understood as *intentions*, *desires*, or derivative attitudes. One can be in all of these states with respect to an answer without thereby *asking* or *inquiring*. This is an essential insight that all accounts of questioning must abide by.[33]

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29 *QJ*, p. 53.
30 Ibid., p. 56.
31 Ibid., p. 53.
32 Ibid.
33 There is evidence that Heidegger abandons this insight later on (*IM*, pp. 22-23), which is consistent with the general way in which his account of questioning in general, and the question of Being in

However, this insight is *negative*. It is necessary but not sufficient for an adequate account of questioning. Heidegger does not provide a complete account of questioning in the presentation, but he does put forward a tentative *positive* thesis, which extends the pragmatic methodological claim sketched above. His claim is that not only must the content of questions *in general* be understood in terms of the structure of acts of questioning in general (the methodological thesis), but that the contents of *particular* questions must be understood in terms of the structure of the particular acts of questioning they correspond to (the substantive thesis).[34] Not only does the question involve a "creative moment" in which the content of a possible answer is prepared, but it also involves a progressive determination of the *criteria* on the basis of which this possible answer is prepared. This does not mean that some of these criteria cannot be more or less fixed (e.g., those which constitute the *prior understanding* of the object of the question or *that which is asked about* it), but it does characterise questioning as a properly *hermeneutic* process with an open-ended *teleological* structure.[35] As Heidegger also puts it, the question is "a reflexive construction instigated by the subjectivity."[36] This idea that "the question in its inherent essence is rooted in subjectivity"[37], is ultimately what vitiates Heidegger's account of questioning in all of its forms.

The problem takes a different form depending upon the precise way in which Heidegger articulates his account of truth and questioning. In order to formulate it properly, we need to make explicit what these criteria governing the production of an answer are: they are *success conditions*. This is to say that they determine whether or not an attempt to produce the end the activity aims at (in this case, the production of a

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particular, regresses.

34 *QJ*, p. 58.

35 Ibid. This shows how short a step it is from Heidegger's early account of questioning to his account of the grounding question as a practical stance. All one must do is drop the requirement that this process aim at a true judgment of *some* form, and one ends up with the grounding question.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

correct answer) is successful. There are different types of success conditions, including those provided by intentions, desires, and wishes (or other derivative attitudes), but Heidegger has ruled these out as candidates. Success conditions that are not of these kinds are properly called *norms*.[38] This lets us pose the problem, as it emerges for this early account of questioning, in the following way: if an *individual* subject is the one that sets the *norms* governing its process of inquiry, how can these criteria have any *binding force* for it? This is a specific case of the *paradox of autonomy*, the general form of which is: if an individual subject is the one that determines which norms it is bound by in *every* case, then how can *any* norm have binding force for it? Of course, one needn't accept the antecedent implicit in the last question: one can deny the *principal of autonomy*, or the idea that we are only bound by those norms we bind ourselves to.[39] However, Heidegger's account of questioning is based upon a restricted form of the principle, and thus the paradox holds in that specific case. Brandom's account of the solution to the general form of the paradox is very enlightening here.[40] His point is that any account of autonomy (restricted or not) needs to distinguish between the *force* of a norm and its *content*. The principle (or its restricted form) is then taken to hold that subjects have a special form of authority over *which* norms have force for them, but no corresponding authority over the *what* the content of these norms is. This means that subjects have authority over which responsibilities they undertake, but not over whether they have fulfilled them: there can be no retrospective redefinition of the success conditions that determine one's responsibilities.

This general solution is not straightforwardly available in Heidegger's early position, because he makes the content of the question, which would supply this kind of

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38 Brandom provides an innovative account of the relations between intentions, desires and norms in chapter 4 of *MIE*, which explains the sense in which they are all species of a single genus.

39 We did suggest that Heidegger does accept some form of the principle authority in chapter 3 (fn. 56), but as we noted there, it is not developed enough for us to draw any relevant conclusions for the matter at hand.

40 *RIP*, ch. 2-3.

external normative constraint, dependent upon the act of an *individual* subject. However, an analogous solution does appear within *Being and Time*. As we saw in the second chapter, Heidegger there provides an account of the individual as essential *social*, which grounds his account of understanding as based upon functional norms governing practical activity. Specifically, we saw how his account of the One allows him to maintain a distinction between the way in which given individuals behave and the way "one behaves", or between *regularities* of behaviour and *norms* of practice. This allows for the possibility of norms governing inquiry that no one individual has any special form of authority over, insofar as they are governed by the impersonal authority of the One. As we then saw in the third chapter, Heidegger's account of apophantic discourse allows for the possibility of non-circumspective interpretation, of which questioning is a form. This allows us to understand inquiry as a *collective* rather than individual endeavour, governed by norms whose content need not be determined by those engaged in the activity. However, we also demonstrated that, in accordance with a reconstructed version of Tugendhat's objection, this account was insufficient to underwrite the ordinary notion of truth as correctness. The crucial point was that Heidegger's account of the status of truth in terms of the role assertions play within such collective activities (truth as Being-uncovering) can't make sense of the idea that we are bound to talk about things as they are *in themselves*, insofar as this status is relativised to the current state of the activity (or the attitudes of those involved in it). What this means is that although Heidegger has managed to account for how individuals (and groups) can be bound by *norms of questioning*, his account of these norms is insufficient to underwrite a *norm of truth*. Consequently, given that questioning is supposed to aim at truth, they cannot be genuine norms of questioning. The account of questioning given in *Being and Time* is thus inadequate.

Now, Heidegger's account of truth as correctness changes around the time of *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. This change overcomes the Tugendhat objection by explicitly defining the responsibility we undertake in making assertions about an entity as a responsibility to talk about the entity as it is *in itself*. In effect, he *stipulates* the norm of truth. This marks the abandonment of his earlier strategy of explaining the *status* of truth in terms the *role* assertions play within discourse. It also marks a distinct break with the account of questioning in *Being and Time*, insofar as ordinary questions must now be understood directly in terms of a particular relation to the entities they are *about*, namely, *binding*. From this point on, Heidegger's account of truth takes the form of an account of the conditions of the possibility of this binding, and his account of questioning is thus to be located within these conditions.

Before examining these conditions further, it is important to point out that this picture gives us an idea of *why* Heidegger's account of the question of Being starts to diverge from our ordinary understanding of questions. This is because Being is not an entity, and thus the way in which we describe the responsibility we undertake in asking questions about Being cannot be defined in the terms that ordinary questions are. Given that Heidegger comes to account for the binding involved in ordinary questions in terms of an elaborate account of moods, it is thus understandable that, insofar as he sees the question of Being as a limit-case of binding, he would also see it as a limit-case of mood. This is precisely what we see from 'On the Essence of Truth' onward. As we showed in the previous chapter, the question takes the form of the limit-case of letting beings be, wherein we *completely* suspend the impersonal authority of the One. This has the effect of completely *disengaging* us from beings[41], insofar as it suspends the norms in terms of which they have significance for us, and of completely *bracketing* all of our

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41 It is from this that Heidegger derives his idea that philosophy (understood at this point as that which inquires into Being) is the most useless of all activities (*BQP*, ch 1).

ordinary assumptions[42], insofar as it suspends the norms of discourse that make all ordinary discussions idle to some degree. This means that if we view the grounding question as a matter of engendering this limit-mood, it becomes precisely a matter of suspending the conditions which make ordinary discourse possible. The grounding question is a limit-case of questioning only in the sense that it stands on the border beyond which ordinary questioning (as a form of discourse) becomes impossible.

Returning to the nascent account of questioning in *Fundamental Concepts*, the crucial claim Heidegger makes is that it is a condition of the possibility of binding oneself to an entity (specifically in making *assertions* about it, but equally in asking *questions* about it) that it be possible to *assess* the extent to which one's talk about the entity accords with it. The fundamental idea here is that if it is impossible to assess whether an action accords with the norm motivating it, then the content of the norm cannot be *determinate*. This is another essential insight that all accounts of questioning must abide by. The problem emerges when Heidegger identifies the condition of the possibility of assessment as the *manifestness* of the entity in question, and more generally the manifestness of entities *as such* (openness). This is because manifestness, as it is explained in *Being and Time,* is not *sufficient* to establish the possibility of this kind of assessment.[43] This remains true even when it is supplemented by the other dimensions of the account of freedom found in *Fundamental Concepts* and 'On the Essence of Truth'. To understand this it's necessary to revisit the arguments of the latter works, focusing upon the account of *withdrawal* we reconstructed in the previous

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42 Of course, this is entirely consonant with Husserl's idea of the phenomenological *epoche*, in which we suspend the natural attitude (*Ideas I*, §32), but it also motivates Heidegger's increasing hostility to philosophy as an academic discipline, and his remarks upon how the inquiry into Being is to relate to it (cf. *M*, Part III).

43 Following Brandom (*MIE*, ch. 4), it is also possible to argue that Wilfrid Sellars' attack on 'the myth of the given' shows that it is not *necessary* either. However, there is a certain amount of controversy here, insofar as the position McDowell defends against Brandom ('No Experience Necessary: Empiricism, Noninferential Knowledge, and Secondary Qualities') would defend something like manifestness (his idea of conceptually articulated yet unendorsed experiential contents) as a necessary condition of having conceptual content (and thus of assertion and questioning). As it is unimportant for the objection against Heidegger, I will remain neutral on this point.

chapter.

As was explained in there, binding oneself to an entity is a matter of undertaking a certain kind of *responsibility*. This involves granting the entity a correlative *authority* over whether one has fulfilled that responsibility.[44] The entity as it is in itself is somehow allowed to determine whether one's talk about it is *correct*.[45] The additional crucial insight that we reconstructed from Heidegger's account is that in order to grant this authority to the entity it is necessary to *withdraw* our authority over how it is correct to talk about it. This is because the correctness of our talk about an entity is only determined by the way it is *in itself* if it is not dependent upon anyone's *attitudes* about it, be they understood specifically (our own and Others') or generically (in terms of the One). This *attitude-independence* is precisely what distinguishes the entity as it is *in itself* from the entity as it is *for us*.[46] The problem with Heidegger's dependence upon the notion of manifestness is precisely that it undermines the idea that we withdraw our own authority over the correctness of our claims, and thereby the idea that we are bound by the entity as it is in-itself.

To demonstrate this it is necessary to introduce the notion of *perspective*.[47] To take an assertion to be true of something is to view it from a certain perspective, and to assess someone else's assertion in accordance with the entity it is about is to compare it with one's own perspective on that entity. Perspectives can be both *individual* and *collective*, insofar as multiple individuals can share a common point of view on something. Moreover, differences in perspective can be *intrapersonal* as well as *interpersonal*, insofar as one may change which assertions one takes to be true. One can

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44 This interplay of authority and responsibility involved in *intentional representation* is a major theme of Brandom's work (Cf. *BSD*, ch. 6; *RIP*, ch. 1-3).

45 This could be described as letting the entity determine whether the *truth conditions* of an asserted sentence are *satisfied*, but it could also be described as letting the entity determine the *success conditions* of the assertion (or questioning) viewed as an action.

46 This is a crucial feature of the account of *objectivity* Brandom provides in *MIE* (ch. 3 and 8).

47 This discussion owes a lot to the account of deontic scorekeeping perspectives Brandom presents in chapter 8 of *MIE*.

then assess one's previous commitments from the perspective of one's current ones.[48]

This notion of perspective maps perfectly well onto Heidegger's account of manifestation in terms of understanding and interpretation. First, he takes manifestation to be *corrigible* (as evidenced by the fact that *seeming* is a species of manifestation), which subjects the corresponding understanding to assessment from other perspectives. Second, he takes it that we can engage in processes of collective interpretation (discourse) that explicitly articulate *shared* understanding, thereby *eliciting* collective manifestation. Finally, he takes it that our understanding can be *revised* (through interpretation and otherwise), allowing things to manifest to us differently at different times.

On this basis, we can re-articulate the problem with the account of discourse in *Being and Time* as a problem of *co-ordinating* different perspectives on the same thing. The problem was that, even assuming different *social* perspectives could be co-ordinated by means of involvement in a single discourse[49], this was not true of the different *temporal* perspectives that each discourse constitutes across time. The reason for this was that Heidegger couldn't differentiate between the *correctness* of an interpretation of some initial understanding (e.g., perceptually acquired understanding) and the *truth* of the results of that interpretation (i.e., assertions). This is effectively an inability to distinguish between the normative statuses of *justification* and *truth*, the latter being essentially defined as justification *within* the current discourse, or justification *given* the initial understanding. This amounts to a problem of co-ordination insofar as it undermines the sense in which the different perspectives are perspectives on the *same entity*, as opposed to perspectives on *distinct manifestations* of that entity.

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48 Although Brandom's account in *MIE* does not make explicit the possibility of temporal difference in perspective, he does make this possibility explicit in his reply to Gibbard's criticism of his account ('Reply to Gibbard', pp. 297-300).

49 As we will show, this assumption can itself be challenged once we articulate the problem of co-ordination in general terms.

Given that manifestations are essentially relative to the perspective to which they manifest, this effectively undermines the distinction between *reality* and *appearance*. Here, truth is not merely relativised to *some* perspective (the authority of some Other), or to perspectives *in general* (the authority of the One), but to the perspective from which it is assessed (our own authority). This definition of truth essentially precludes the possibility of withdrawing authority *from* perspectives entirely.

Looking at it in these terms, we can trace the real root of the problem with the account of truth in *Being and Time* to Heidegger's account of discourse. The problem is to be located in the distinction we've drawn between the initial understanding taken up by a discourse and the process of (collective) interpretation in which it is developed. This is because it is differences in this pre-discursive understanding that prevent the co-ordination of different perspectives. Where two distinct discourses start with the same initial understanding and end up developing it in incompatible ways, it makes sense to say that at least one of them must have followed the norms of interpretation incorrectly, and thus that at least one of them is *wrong*. However, when the initial understanding differs between perspectives this inference does not hold – it is possible for both of them to be *right* – and this prevents them from being perspectives on the same thing. If these perspectives are to be co-ordinated, there needs to be some way of assessing the correctness of this initial understanding. Heidegger's account from *Fundamental Concepts* onward handles this by insisting that all understanding is assessed in accordance with the thing itself, effectively *stipulating* a difference between justification and truth. However, he neither provides any substantive revision of his account of discourse (i.e., the elicitation of manifestation) nor gives us an account of how the assessment of pre-discursive understanding (i.e., ordinary manifestation) works. He simply claims that manifestation as such is a *necessary* condition for this kind of

assessment. As we have already indicated, the problem is that it is not clear that it is a *sufficient* condition for the assessment of pre-discursive understanding.

It is easiest to explain this in terms of the paradigm case of perceptually acquired understanding. Although it is certainly the case that perceptual judgements made from one perspective can be contrasted with those made from a different perspective, the question is whether this actually underwrites co-ordination of these perspectives. Putting this in more concrete terms: what is it about my current perspective on something (e.g., my observation that a tree is an elm), that grants it the *authority* to assess my previous perspective upon it (e.g., my observation that it was an elder) as incorrect, other than the fact that it is my *current* perspective? If there is no basis for this authority, i.e., nothing that provides a *reason* for it, then truth remains perspective-relative. It is the fact that it is possible to *justify* taking my current perspective on something to be correct over a previous one by giving such reasons (e.g., by explaining *why* I originally mistook the tree for an elder) that enables them to be co-ordinated as perspectives on the same thing. This is not to say that all competition between perspectives involves this kind of reasoning. More often than not we are simply inclined to take our current perspective over a prior one. Similarly, when faced with differences between social perspectives, we are inclined to trust the judgements of some individuals or groups over others (e.g., trusting expert botanists over amateur tree spotters). The important point is that in doing so we are not treating the relevant perspectives as having the authority to *stipulate* whether the corresponding assertions are true. Rather, we treat them as having a *defeasible* authority, which means that although we accept it by default, it is still in principle open to challenge. This suggests that the flaw in Heidegger's account of discourse is his refusal to recognise the necessity of *inference*, insofar as one cannot make sense of this kind of defeasible authority without it.[50] In

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50 Specifically, one requires an account of *non-monotonic* inference in order to make sense of this notion

endorsing my perceptually acquired understanding, I am implicitly endorsing an inference from my status as an authoritative observer to the truth of my observations, and in picking some of my observations over others I am withdrawing endorsement of some of these inferences, on the basis of additional facts (e.g., that I was further away from the tree when I took it to be an elm, and distance negatively effects the reliability of my perceptual responses).[51]

This analysis lets us cash out the earlier claim that Heidegger's approach to questioning is vitiated by a persistent commitment to the importance of subjectivity. In essence, although Heidegger makes the ability to engage in discourse (discourse *qua* existentiale) a condition of the possibility of intelligibility, and despite the fact that he attempts to ground intelligibility in collectively articulated practices for dealing with things in the world, he nonetheless retains too much of Husserl's epistemology. At best, he retains a Husserlian distinction between two kinds of justification: *evidence* (i.e., manifestation) and *inference*. At worst, he eradicates inference entirely by treating it as a species of the former (i.e., as *elicited* manifestation). That his position stands in the murky middle ground between these two cases is indicated by the fact that his account of discourse underwrites something like a notion of correct interpretation, while nonetheless refusing to identify this with correct inference. Precisely what the non-inferential norm governed practices of collective interpretation necessary to underwrite this notion could be is never made clear. Putting further (and even more speculative) reconstruction of Heidegger's position to one side, we can nonetheless categorically

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of defeasibility (cf. *MIE*, ch. 3 and 4).

51 This is the essential aspect of Sellars' account of perception in *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, as reconstructed by Brandom in *MIE* (ch. 4). The status of being an authoritative observer is fundamentally a matter of possessing reliable dispositions to respond differentially to certain circumstances by producing the appropriate assertions. The disagreement between McDowell and Brandom alluded to earlier (fn. 43) is essentially a disagreement about how Sellars' account is to be interpreted and extended, specifically, over whether there must be an intermediary state between causal stimulus and the endorsement of observational judgments. This intermediary state is analogous to Husserial *evidence*, and thus this debate can be seen as a debate over whether something like *manifestation* is in fact a necessary condition of perceptual understanding.

state that Heidegger's account of discourse, and the accounts of truth and questioning based upon it, is fundamentally inadequate.[52] All of this concurs with Karl-Otto Apel's claim that Heidegger falls into an 'oblivion of the *logos*' (*Logosvergessenheit*) parallel to his own notion of the oblivion of Being (*Seinsvergessenheit*).[53]

Whatever the alternative to the existential analytic is, if it is to meet the priority of questioning constraint, then it must provide an account of discourse sufficient to ground the notion of truth as correctness. Meeting this constraint amounts to articulating a distinction between the *in itself* (attitude-independent) and the *for us* (attitude-dependent) capable of accounting for the difference between *reality* and *appearance*.[54] What we have shown here is that any account of discourse that is adequate to these constraints must treat the notion of inference as central. In essence, we have shown that any adequate successor to the existential analytic must give an account of discourse as a practice of giving and asking for reasons.

iii) Aspects of Being

The final problem we will raise addresses the Aristotelian theme, the notion of aspects of Being it deploys, and its relation to *the necessity of pre-ontological understanding*.

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52 Returning to the difference between my own reconstruction of Heidegger and Brandom's reconstruction discussed in chapter 3 (fn. 13), it is clear that we are mostly in agreement about what Heidegger *should* think. We simply differ on the matter of what Heidegger *did in fact* think. Brandom's reading is more charitable, but because of this does a very good job of picking out the useful insights from Heidegger that can be integrated into an adequate account of discourse. Mine is less charitable, but because of this it enables us to identify a certain lingering Cartesianism that Heidegger retains from Husserl, which will prove to be very important.

53 Apel, 'Meaning constitution and justification of validity: has Heidegger overcome transcendental philosophy by history of being?', p. 267. In this paper Apel is more specifically concerned with the way that Heidegger's inability to underwrite a notion of truth or validity reflexively undermines the seeming universality of his own philosophical claims, both early and late. I am very sympathetic to this line of criticism, though I have not pursued it myself. This is because it is a *global* problem with Heidegger's work, whereas I am more concerned with what we can learn from its *local* problems.

54 Brandom has suggested a tentative but poignant analysis of the appearance/reality distinction (*RIP*, p. 107, fn. 11) which hinges upon precisely the kind of differences between temporal (or historical) perspectives discussed earlier.

The importance of the Aristotelian theme is paramount for Heidegger's early project, and for any attempt to renew the question of Being along similar lines. This is because, as we've shown, it is the theme that defines the question of Being *as* the question of Being, and Heidegger's later abandonment of it marks a transition to a substantially different question. The criticisms of Heidegger's early formulation of the question already presented have only made the Aristotelian theme more important, because they have undermined the importance of the Husserlian and Kantian themes. The Husserlian theme has been undermined insofar as it has been shown that the inquiry into Being must not assume that there are different modes of Being, and the Kantian theme has been undermined insofar as it has been shown that the existential analytic, and thus the argument for the identity of Being and intelligibility that Heidegger bases upon it, isn't viable as it stands. The Aristotelian problem of the underlying unity of the different aspects of Being is all that remains to define the question. We will now show that there is a problem with Heidegger's appropriation of this Aristotelian theme, and the problem this poses for the project of renewing the question of Being.

In order to do this it will first be necessary to raise a problem with the original Aristotelian interpretation of the question that Heidegger's formulation successfully overcomes. We'll call this *the problem of diversity*, and it consists in the fact that the Aristotelian formulation of the question is articulated in terms of a fixed manifold of senses of 'Being', or a given distribution of aspects (i.e., potential and actual being, being as being-true, accidental being, and the being of the categories (substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, action, affection, possession, and position)). This makes the formulation of the question relative to some prior account of the aspects of Being, which violates the ontological neutrality constraint outlined above. Although it seems legitimate to assume that there *are* different aspects of Being, we cannot simply

take over an account of *which* aspects there are (e.g., Heidegger's various lists, or Kant's categories) without providing some methodologically sound reason to think it is the *correct* account. Moreover, there are at least two dimensions to its correctness: each of the aspects it posits must be *genuine*, and taken together they must be *exhaustive*. There are distinct questions about the relations between different subsets of the set of genuine aspects (e.g., the relation between what-being and that-being, or the relation being-true, being-so and nothingness, etc.), but only the inquiry into the unity of all of them can properly be called the question of Being. There thus needs to be a way of formulating the question so that it divides Being into its various aspects correctly.

Heidegger is able to overcome the problem of diversity by introducing the notion of pre-ontological understanding, which by definition includes our pre-theoretical understanding of *whichever* aspects Being is correctly divided into. By formulating the question as a matter of hermeneutically developing our pre-ontological understanding of Being into a genuine concept of Being, he thereby avoids the need to define the question in terms of some fixed distribution of aspects. This explains why Heidegger doesn't define the question by means of any one of the manifolds of senses he proposes, which in turn explains why the connection between Heidegger's early formulation of the question and Aristotle's is not always apparent. On top of freeing the formulation of the question from the need for a fixed distribution of aspects, the notion of pre-ontological understanding also provides a methodological basis for inquiring into this distribution. On this model, we uncover the correct distribution of aspects by *explicating* our pre-ontological understanding. For Heidegger, this was a matter of uncovering the conditions of the possibility of intelligibility, which was ultimately identical with the inquiry into their underlying unity, insofar as this unity is supposed to consist in their interconnection within the existential structure of understanding as such.

Although we have put the latter aspect of Heidegger's formulation into question, the idea that any proper formulation of the question involves an explication of our pre-ontological understanding is still sound. It simply remains open whether pursing the question involves *more* than this process of explication (and thus whether there is a crisp boundary between the *formulation* of the question and the *inquiry* into Being).

Now, although Heidegger's formulation of the question deals with the problem of diversity, there is a related problem that it can't overcome, which we will call *the problem of unity*. This can be phrased in the form of a challenge: why must we treat the various senses of the word 'Being' as corresponding to aspects of some underlying unitary structure? It seems possible that 'Being' could simply be a homonym, the various senses of which are only contingently related to one another. For instance, it's entirely coherent to claim that the linguistic devices corresponding to the various forms of the copula (e.g., existential commitment, identification, predication, etc.) might only be linked by the minimal formal relations between their symbolic logical equivalents (assuming that there even are unique equivalents, and not a plurality of incompatible logical formalisms). Quine's claim that "To be assumed as an entity is, purely and simply, to be reckoned as the value of a variable"[55] is perhaps the most famous example of this kind of position. Moreover, not only are there languages in which some of these devices are effectively separated out, but it's possible to argue that unifying them under a single word only serves to engender confusion. This latter position was famously espoused by Alfred Korzybski, and was subsequently used to motivate the construction of a variant of English (known as e-prime) in which the verb 'to be' is entirely absent.[56] In essence, all the various forms of this challenge boil down to one thing: it is questionable whether there is anything like Being in Heidegger's (early) sense of the

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55 'On What There Is', in *From a Logical Point of View*, pp. 13.
56 A very short introduction to e-prime can be found in Cullen Murphy's article '"To Be" in their Bonnets: A Matter of Semantics'.

word, and thus whether the question of Being makes any sense.

For the question to make sense, Heidegger must provide some initial definition of 'Being', or what our pre-ontological understanding is an understanding *of*, but to avoid challenges to the coherence of this description it must be minimal enough not to beg the question. His problem is that his original description of Being – as that which defines entities *as* entities – is inadequate to this task. The reason for this is that, while the *negative* part of his definition – the opposition between Being and beingness – excludes our ordinary understanding of what it would be to define something as something, the only *positive* part we have managed to reconstruct – the unity of aspects of Being in their application to entities – is undermined by the problem of unity. Heidegger's own solution to the problem of diversity thus makes him vulnerable to the problem of unity, because by formulating the question in terms of our pre-ontological understanding of Being, he implicitly assumes that his initial definition of 'Being' is adequate, and that it picks something out that we can then have a grasp of. The question is, how do we provide a positive definition of 'Being' that allows us to retain the proper Aristotelian sense of the question without begging the question by stipulating that it is a unitary structure composed of a variety of aspects. If we can't, then the whole attempt to renew the question of Being falters.

4. Heidegger's Lessons

We must now ask what lessons we can learn from Heidegger's mistakes. This is particularly pressing in light of the last problem we identified above, as this puts into question the whole project of renewing the question of Being. Before drawing conclusions, it will be helpful to briefly examine the relationship between the problems

we've discussed.

We've found three serious flaws in Heidegger's early formulation of the question. The relation between them can best be explained in relation to the two roles that the existential analytic plays in this formulation: explicating the structure of questioning in *general*, and explicating our pre-ontological understanding of Being. These two aspects of the analytic come together in the formulation of the question of Being, insofar as the latter is what enables us to derive the *specific* structure of the question of Being from the former. On this basis, we can see that we've uncovered a general problem with the existential analytic as a whole, and a specific problem with each of its aspects. The overarching problem is that although a *transcendental inquiry* into the conditions of the possibility of intelligibility should be able to fulfil both roles required of the existential analytic, the methodological framework (*phenomenology*) within which Heidegger approaches this inquiry is vitiated by its inability to articulate its own status in ontologically neutral terms. The issue with the analysis of questioning is that, in virtue of the derivative status it gives to reasoning, it fails to validate the crucial insight that questions aim at *truth.* The issue with the explication of our pre-ontological understanding of Being is then that precisely what this is an understanding *of* is not adequately defined. This opens the whole project of formulating the question of Being to the objection that it is essentially meaningless, or at the very least dependent upon assumptions that can be easily rejected.

We've also seen how these three problems are exacerbated in Heidegger's later formulation of the question. First, he retreats from the stricter methodological framework of the early work without formulating an adequate alternative. While his approach remains phenomenological to some degree, it is no longer phenomenological *ontology*, and this deficit is only compensated for with affective and pragmatic

descriptions of how to approach the question. Second, his understanding of the structure of questions degenerates further, to the point at which he abandons the notion that they seek an *answer*, let alone a *true* one. His earlier insistence that inferential discourse (*reason*) is derivative upon more a more fundamental *structure* of expression (discourse *qua* existentiale) evolves into an insistence that there are genuine *types* of expression (*poetry*) that enable us to think what is foreclosed to mere reasoning.[57] Finally, he overcomes the problem with the Aristotelian formulation of the question by abandoning the Aristotelian approach entirely. This is why he no longer emphasises the pre-ontological understanding of Being, insofar as it no longer plays the role in formulating the question it did in the early work. However, as we've shown, this only serves to make him more vulnerable to the objection that his project is either meaningless or overly presumptive. In essence, the small cracks we have uncovered in the early work grow into the deep fissures that run throughout the later work.

All of this reinforces the earlier claim that if we are to provide an alternative formulation of the question of Being, we must begin with Heidegger's early approach to the question. Moreover, it supplies us with some concrete insights regarding how we must modify this approach. Most importantly, the idea that any formulation of the question must be begun by a transcendental inquiry into the conditions of the possibility of intelligibility that makes explicit both the structure of questioning and the structure of our pre-ontological understanding remains sound. We have simply established that phenomenology is not an adequate transcendental methodology for this purpose (and one would suspect, *simpliciter*). We have also shown that the identification of Being and intelligibility, and thus also that of the question of Being and transcendental philosophy, is far from guaranteed. There is still the promise of an inquiry into Being as it is *in itself*.

These insights are very promising, but they are for naught if we cannot solve the

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57 Cf. 'On the Way to Language' and *PLT*.

problems of unity and diversity. What we require is some positive definition of 'Being' as a unitary structure composed of different aspects that neither presupposes any given division of aspects, nor violates the ontological difference. Our pre-ontological understanding of this structure will *ipso facto* be an understanding of this diversity of aspects and their relations, which may then be explicated in a transcendental manner, but we cannot delimit the requisite transcendental methodology without this definition. The concluding chapter will be dedicated to providing it.

Chapter 5: Beyond Heidegger

We have now demonstrated the failure of Heidegger's attempts to formulate the question of Being. It is thus left to us to provide a formulation of the question that avoids Heidegger's mistakes. Following the early Heidegger, this is a matter of delimiting the inquiry into that which defines beings *as* beings. This requires explicating the pre-ontological understanding on the basis of which the inquiry proceeds, along with the structure of inquiry in general. This reveals the diversity of aspects of each being *qua* being, along with the specific structure of the inquiry into their essential unity. We face two principal difficulties in following this path: the *problem of unity*, and the *problem of transcendental method*. The former names the fact that the explication of our pre-ontological understanding and therefore the inquiry into Being proper cannot proceed without a positive definition of 'Being' that gives us some purchase on this understanding. We need to be able to locate those features of our understanding in which our grasp of Being consists if we are to describe them and the question they delimit. The latter names the fact that it cannot proceed without the provision of an alternative to Heidegger's phenomenological method. The dual role of the existential analytic in formulating the question must be filled by a comparable transcendental inquiry that avoids its various pitfalls.

The goal of this concluding chapter is to solve the problem of unity, and thereby to provide the *outline* of an alternative formulation of the question of Being. Unfortunately, this will not be a *complete* formulation of the question. That would require not just a solution to the problem of transcendental method, but also the fully fleshed out replacement for the existential analytic it would legislate for, and we are in no position to provide this. Finding a positive definition of 'Being' will thus be our

principal focus. If we recognise that in seeking such a definition we are essentially trying to make explicit the structure of Aristotle's question regarding the unity of the manifold senses of 'Being', then the logical step is to return to Aristotle and the tradition that he founds, namely, *metaphysics*. This brings into focus a certain tension in Heidegger's claims about Aristotle's legacy. This is the tension between his claim that the metaphysical tradition is essentially *concerned* with Being, and his claim that it nonetheless *forgets* Being. It indicates that the fact that Aristotle was both the one who defined the essence of metaphysics and the first to raise the question of Being is not a coincidence. We will therefore begin our search for a positive definition of 'Being' by examining a part of Heidegger's philosophy we have not considered in depth – his account of metaphysics.

1. The Return to Metaphysics

At the beginning of *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger traces the genealogy of metaphysics from Aristotle's definition of *first philosophy* (*prote philosophia*), as that inquiry concerned with beings *as such* (beings *qua* beings), on the one hand, and beings *as a whole*, on the other.[1] Although Aristotle also defined first philosophy as *theology*, or that which concerns itself with the divine first cause, this characterisation is derivative, insofar as the first cause (God – *theos*) is supposed to be that *through which* we think beings as such and as a whole. In tracing the lineage of metaphysics, Heidegger shows the way in which first philosophy was taken up in the tradition under the accidental title of 'metaphysics', which although it was initially

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1   *FCM*, p. 33. Heidegger also shows the way in which these two different inquiries emerge out of a single concern with *physis*, which is interpreted as both beings as such and beings as a whole. This develops into Heidegger's later analyses of *physis* as the initial form that Being takes at the beginning of the history of metaphysics (cf. *IM*, pp. 14-19; *CP*, Part III; *OCM*, p. 66).

unrelated to the subject matter of the inquiry, came to be interpreted as an inquiry into what lies beyond the physical – the *supra*sensuous, and even the *un*sensuous.[2] This neatly converged with the scholastic appropriation of Aristotelian theology, insofar as God is taken to be a suprasensuous being (*ens increatum*) through which we think beings as such (in terms of their unsensuous features as *ens creatum*) and as a whole (as the world – *mundus*). Heidegger's chief historical insight is that these themes continued to define the metaphysical tradition even after the transition from scholasticism to modern philosophy.[3] Two criticisms of the tradition emerge from this.[4]

Heidegger's first criticism is that the tradition fails to genuinely account for the unity of the two halves of the task of metaphysics – the necessary connection between the inquiry into beings as such and the inquiry into beings as a whole. Indeed, he takes it that this is a further legacy of Aristotle:-

> Aristotle says nothing, or we have nothing handed down, about how he
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> thinks these two orientations of questioning in their unity, to what extent
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> precisely this questioning in its dual orientation constitutes philosophising
>
> proper in a unitary way. The question is open and is open to this day, or
>
> rather is not even posed any more today.[5]

In essence, the tradition either ignores the problem of unity entirely by uncritically inheriting problems previously identified as 'metaphysical', or forges *extrinsic* connections between the two halves, by appealing to *ad hoc* devices such as God or the suprasensuous/unsensuous. There is thus a persistent problem regarding the essential

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2 Ibid., pp. 38-45. It should also be noted that although Heidegger criticises the tradition here for appropriating an accidental determination of the meaning of metaphysics, he performs a similar appropriation himself on more than one occasion, identifying metaphysics as the inquiry in which Dasein *transcends*, or transposes itself *beyond beings* (*WIM*, p. 91; *IM*, pp. 18-19).

3 Ibid., pp. 46-55.

4 This is not all elaborated in *FCM*. In particular, the second criticism is developed in detail in subsequent works (cf. *WIM*; *IM*; *OCM*; *N*).

5 *FCM*, p. 33.

unity of metaphysics.[6]

Heidegger's second criticism concerns the specific way in which each half of the task is carried out. This is articulated in terms of what Heidegger calls the *fundamental questions of metaphysics*, which, taken together, encompass the whole of metaphysical inquiry as traditionally understood:-

1) 'What are beings?' – This is the question concerning beings *as such*, which inquires into their *essence*.

2) 'Why is there something rather than nothing?' – This is the question concerning beings *as a whole*, which inquires into their *existence*.

By means of the former question, the tradition aims to *abstract* what is common to beings in much the way that one would abstract the common features of some particular kind of beings. This is to inquire after a *property* which we earlier called *beingness*. By means of the latter question, it aims to *ground* the existence of beings within a particular being in much the way that one would locate the ground of one particular being within another. This is to inquire after a *highest being*, which is paradigmatically understood as God. These are the features of traditional metaphysics that identify it as *onto-theology*, which we briefly characterised in the first chapter.

We can now resolve the apparent tension between Heidegger's early claim that

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6 I think a good case can be made that this problem persists in contemporary philosophy. Most contemporary metaphysics (both 'analytic' and 'continental') either simply inherits its problems from the tradition without attempting to define a unified goal of metaphysical inquiry (e.g., Deleuze and Whitehead's synthesis of classical metaphysical problems with the conceptual tools of modern science ('I am a Pure Metaphysician')) or proceeds on the basis of more or less vague, general, and implicit characterisation of the subject matter of metaphysics (e.g., Peter Van Inwagen's idea that metaphysics is concerned with 'describing Reality' in some sufficiently general sense ('The Nature of Metaphysics', pp. 11-21), Kit Fine's definition of ontology (an important branch of metaphysics) in terms of an undefined notion of 'reality' ('The Question of Ontology', pp. 157-177), or Wilfrid Sellars' contention that the philosophical enterprise aims to "understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term" ('Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man', §I)).

the metaphysical tradition *forgets* the question of Being and his later claim that it is essentially *defined* by it (in its guise as the guiding question).[7] As we indicated in the third chapter, Heidegger originally takes the question of Being to be *implicit* within the metaphysical tradition, and his project of reorienting metaphysics is an attempt to make this question *explicit* in a way that avoids the perils of onto-theology. We can now see that the question of Being lies implicit in the tradition precisely insofar as it is defined by its twofold concern with beings as such and as a whole. This remains implicit, or is forgotten, precisely insofar as the unitary character of this concern is not properly *thematised*, or insofar as the question is not properly *formulated*. What this reveals is that the question's concern with that which defines beings *as* beings is not simply a concern with *structure of beings as such*, but with *the unitary structure of beings as such and as a whole*. This provides the possibility that the inadequacy of Heidegger's positive definition of 'Being' can be overcome by an appeal to the *structure of beings as a whole*. However, just as the structure of beings as such must not be confused with the *essence* of beings as such (beingness), so must the structure of beings as a whole not be confused with the *existence* of beings as a whole, either construed *as* a being (e.g., Spinoza and Hegel) or *in terms of* a being (e.g., Aristotle and Leibniz). We cannot articulate that which defines beings as beings in terms of beings themselves.

The issue now is thus how it is that the question of Being is meant to incorporate this concern with beings as a whole, and thereby unify the two halves of metaphysics, without violating the *ontological difference*. We can gain some insight into this by returning to the strategy for answering the question that we uncovered in our reconstruction of Heidegger's initial formulation of the question in the second chapter.

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7 Heidegger himself acknowledges this tension in *IM* (p. 20), where he says: "But this talk of the "oblivion of Being" [metaphysics' tendency to forget Being] is just as ambiguous as the expression "question of Being." One protests quite rightfully that metaphysics does indeed ask about the Being of beings, and that therefore it is manifest foolishness to charge metaphysics with an oblivion of Being."

This strategy was to locate Being, as the dual unity of aspects and modes, within the structure of the phenomenological horizon within which all beings are encountered, or what he calls the *world*. Crucially, Heidegger identified the world with beings as a whole, and its *worldhood* as the structure of this totality in distinction from any given aggregate of entities. His strategy was therefore to locate the structure of beings *as such* within the structure of beings *as a whole*. Unfortunately, as promising as this is, it cannot solve the problem of unity as it stands. This is because the strategy does not emerge from a revised positive definition of 'Being', but rather from the argument for the identity of Being and intelligibility that shores up Heidegger's initial formulation of the question. This leaves us with no options. On the one hand, because the world just is the horizon of intelligibility, we cannot simply incorporate it into the definition of 'Being' without stipulating the identity of Being and intelligibility, and returning us to the problems discussed earlier. On the other, we have already undermined the argument for the identity of Being and intelligibility that licenses this strategy insofar as we have undermined the basis of Heidegger's existential analytic of Dasein.

i) Being and Nothing

All is not lost however. In the period between *Being and Time* and *Contributions to Philosophy*, while Heidegger's position was undergoing the shifts we have been tracking in the last two chapters, Heidegger developed an alternative way of understanding the subject matter of the question of Being that articulates the connection between beings as such and beings as a whole in more perspicuous terms.[8] What sets this alternative approach to the definition of 'Being' apart is precisely that it is intertwined with the account of the nature of metaphysics just examined, and that it is

8   The principle texts I am concerned with here are *WIM, BTR,* and *IM*.

presented (in line with his early project) as penetrating the hidden heart of metaphysics. This is Heidegger's infamous discussion of the latter fundamental question of metaphysics we identified above – why are there beings *rather than nothing?* – and his peculiar analysis of the way the question is qualified in terms of *the Nothing* (*das Nichts*).[9] This analysis has been widely ridiculed as exemplifying the way that seemingly profound but essentially vapid metaphysical theses can be derived from basic misunderstandings of the underlying logic of language.[10] However, the thesis that Heidegger derives from this analysis – *that Being and Nothing are identical* – can be read as essentially an alternative definition of 'Being' that gives priority to beings *as a whole* over beings *as such*. In order to understand this properly, we simply need to correctly parse Heidegger's analysis, and determine precisely what he means by the Nothing.

It is perhaps best to begin by differentiating Heidegger's thesis from the related claim which begins the dialectic of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, with which Heidegger himself draws parallels.[11] Hegel begins the *Logic* with a definition of 'Being' as "indeterminate immediacy".[12] However, he does not use this to ask anything like a *question* of Being. This would be an instance of *intentional* thinking, in which we approach something with a *prior understanding* of it (as Heidegger appreciates), and this form of thinking is supposedly overcome in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. This is what Hegel calls natural consciousness, and he takes its concept to be that of the separation of *subject* and *object*, which also involves the separation of their structures,

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9   This analysis is originally presented in *WIM*, and is extended to some extent in *IM*. I will capitalise 'Nothing' in a similar fashion to my capitalisation of 'Being' (see the introduction, fn. 1), in order to emphasise the *singularity* of *the* Nothing as opposed to the *generality* of the notion of nothingness, which will be discussed below.

10 The original and still most famous criticism along these lines was provided by Carnap ('The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language').

11 Cf. *WIM*, pp. 94-95; *BTR*, main part, ch. 4.

12 G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 82.

namely, *thought* and *Being*, respectively.[13] The *Phenomenology* consists of an immanent deduction of the consequences of the content of this concept, showing how its *minimal form* (Sense Certainty) contradicts itself and transforms itself into another form (Perception), proceeding onward through a chain of similar transitions that ultimately leads to the self-contradiction of natural consciousness itself, transforming it into its negation, the concept of the *identity* of subject and object (and thus thought and Being), which Hegel calls *Absolute Knowing*, or *Science*.

It is from this standpoint that the *Logic* begins. Rather than asking a question *about* Being, or any specific object, its aim is to allow the structure of thought to immanently unfold itself, by making explicit what is implicit in the *minimum content* that can be thought. This is the minimal form of thought *simpliciter*, as opposed to the minimal form of natural consciousness with which the Phenomenology begins. Our role as thinkers is merely to facilitate this *dialectical* process of self-explication, and we have no choice in the way in which it proceeds. As Hegel says, we "dissolve our freedom within the content" to be thought.[14] It is this form of thinking that Hegel calls *Science*.[15] The dialectic takes the form of a series of transitions between different *categories*, which are Hegel's equivalent of both Kant's (transcendental) *logical* categories and Aristotle's *metaphysical* categories (and senses of 'Being'). The *Logic* is both a logic and a metaphysics precisely insofar as it begins with the assumption that thought and Being are identical, making the immanent explication of the structure of thought simultaneously the dialectical unfolding of Being.[16] The minimal content that can be thought – indeterminate immediacy – is named 'Being' precisely because it is the

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13 The definition of natural consciousness is exceptionally simple and incredibly profound. It can be found in the introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (§82).
14 Ibid., §58.
15 Ibid., §788-808; *Science of Logic*, pp. 67-78.
16 This point is explained very well by Stephen Houlgate, in his *The Opening of Hegel's Logic* (ch.1). This brief interpretation of Hegel is very influenced by Houlgate's work. It has also benefitted incalculably from many discussions with him on the topic, as I have generally.

first category in the chain. The final category – *Absolute Idea* – is simply the culmination of the process in which Being explicates itself, in which its complete structure has been unfolded and it has become explicit *as the structure of thought itself*. The category of *Nothing* is the second category in the chain, which simply makes explicit the minimal content of the category of *Being*, i.e., its complete lack of any determinate content.[17] In essence, the move that gets the dialectical ball rolling in the *Logic* is drawing the inference that Being *is* Nothing.[18]

We must be careful here to pay attention to the difference between Hegel's *explicit* definition of 'Being' as indeterminate immediacy, and his *implicit* definition of it as the structure of the *objects* of thought. The latter is important insofar as it indicates that Hegel is still thinking Being as the structure of beings *as such*, even if he is thinking this structure by beginning from the most abstract possible characterisation of those beings. This vindicates Heidegger's description of Hegel's position in the beginning of *Being and Time* as explicitly thinking Being as the highest, and thus most empty *genus* of beings.[19] It also to some extent vindicates the way he comes to situate Hegel within the metaphysical tradition, insofar as this means that Hegel thinks Being as a form of *beingness*, in which the essence of beings is understood in terms of the properties of a specific kind of being, namely, the subject.[20] This is the basis of Hegel's famous identification of *subject* and *substance*.[21] In essence, despite the fact that Hegel initially characterises Being as empty, it's dialectical transformation into the fully

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17 It might be argued that indeterminacy and immediacy are themselves determinations, and thus that the concept of Being is poorly formed. However, Deiter Henrich has provided convincing arguments against this position ('Anfang und Methode der Logik').

18 The way the dialectic proceeds from here is itself very interesting, insofar as the next category (*Becoming*) makes explicit the transition between the categories of *Being* and *Nothing*, and thereby the process of transition between categories itself. This is superceded by the category of *Reflection* in the second book ('The Logic of Essence'), where the dialectical transitions between categories take on a more complex structure, and in turn by the category of *Syllogism* in the third book ('The Logic of the Concept'), where the dialectical transitions are made explicit as transitions between *concepts*.

19 *B&T*, pp. 22-23; See chapter 1, section 1.

20 See chapter 1, fn. 10.

21 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §17.

articulated category of *Absolute Idea* fills out its content in a way which violates the ontological difference. This violation is compounded insofar as this itself is interpreted as *Absolute Spirit*, which, much like Spinoza's substance, is a being in its own right. Hegel's philosophy can thus legitimately be viewed as the ultimate form of metaphysics as onto-theology.[22]

The real difference between Heidegger and Hegel's version of the thesis consists in the fact that Hegel's is *transitional*. It is to be superceded in the self-unfolding of the content of the concept of Being (which is identical to Being itself). This is due to its status as what Hegel calls a *speculative proposition*.[23] Heidegger's claim that Being is Nothing is not merely transitional in this way. It doesn't make explicit the *indeterminacy* of the concept of Being's content, but rather its specific *determinacy*. Being is never an empty concept for Heidegger, not even provisionally. Conversely, this means that Heidegger understands the Nothing not as a complete absence of content, but as a very determinate form of *emptiness*. It is not the *general* concept of nothingness, of which there may be many instances, but a *unique* nothingness – not *a* mere nothingness, but *the* Nothing.[24] In order to understand this properly we must return to Heidegger's analysis of the second fundamental question of metaphysics.

The most important point to make about Heidegger's analysis of the question 'Why are there beings rather than nothing?' is that he does not think that it is possible to answer the question in a way that does not violate the ontological difference, i.e., in a way that does not appeal to some privileged being (e.g., God) or set of beings (e.g., Platonic Ideas) that would function as the *ground* of beings as a whole.[25] This means that insofar as Heidegger upholds the principle of ontological difference, he thinks that

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22 Cf. *OCM*.
23 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §61-63.
24 In this respect, we can see Sartre's supposedly revolutionary development of the category of Nothingness in *Being and Nothingness* (pp. 40-45) is a decisive *regression* from Heidegger (towards Hegel).
25 Cf. *OEG*.

the question cannot be answered. However, as we've already noted, it is not the answer to the question that is important, but something else it reveals, namely, the Nothing. Carnap's criticism of Heidegger's (and Hegel's) talk of the Nothing is that it illegitimately converts a *quantifier phrase* (e.g., 'there is nothing outside') into a *singular term* (e.g., 'the nothing that is outside') which purportedly picks out some strange *metaphysical entity*. He takes it that not only is this erroneous, but properly *contradictory*, insofar as if 'the Nothing' is an entity then there aren't in fact no entities (i.e., if there is *a* nothing outside, then there is *something* outside, not *nothing* after all). Despite his claims about thinking through an apparent logical contradiction[26], this is not what Heidegger is really doing. He is very clear that the Nothing is *not* an entity – it is quite literally *no thing*. This is a purely negative characterisation though. Providing a positive characterisation, and thereby understanding precisely what Heidegger *is* doing in talking about the Nothing, requires looking at the structure of the question in more detail.

ii) Nothing and Nothingness

On the face of it, that which the question asks after is a reason for the fact that *there is something*. This is a deceptively simple quantificational claim, formulated using what is ordinarily called the *existential quantifier* (i.e., 'there is some....'). As Heidegger notes, this question can seemingly be formulated as 'Why is there something?' or 'Why are there beings?', without the qualifying phrase '...rather than nothing'. However, he maintains that this qualification is not superfluous. It is helpful here to explain an important way in which quantificational claims can be qualified, namely, *restriction*. On

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26 *WIM*, p. 85.

the standard interpretation of quantifiers[27], the variable that the quantifier binds (e.g., **x** in 'for some **x**, **x** is a dog' or 'for all **x**, if **x** is a dog then **x** is a mammal') ranges over a set of objects called the *domain* of quantification. This is naively understood as the set of *everything that exists*, or the *unrestricted* domain. To restrict this domain is to only allow the variable to range over a subset of the unrestricted domain (e.g., the set of dogs that exist). In practice, the vast majority of quantificational claims are restricted in some way, though these restrictions may be more or less explicit. For instance, when I say to my guests that 'there is no beer' I do not mean that *all of the beer in the world* has been consumed or otherwise eradicated. Rather, I am *implicitly* restricting my claim from the domain of everything, to that of those things in my house (which is a subset of everything), or even that of things in my fridge (which is a subset of things in my house). Similarly, when I say 'there is nothing in the fridge', I am not denying that there are shelves, stains, oxygen molecules, and even light in there, but am implicitly restricting my claim to food, or perhaps just edible food.

We are very adept at modulating these sorts of implicit restrictions in practice. For instance, in a more philosophical mood (perhaps later on in the party, after beer has been acquired), I am entirely capable of asking the general question 'Why is there beer?', but to make explicit the unrestricted scope of this question (as opposed to 'Why is there beer in the fridge?') it can be useful to qualify it by saying 'Why is there beer rather than *none*?'. This kind of construction has two effects. First, it *contrasts* the state

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27 This is usually called the *objectual* interpretation (cf. Jon Barwise and Jon Etchemendy, *Language Proof and Logic*, part II). It is generally contrasted with the *substitutional* interpretation, in which the variable ranges over sets of *singular terms* that purportedly refer to objects, rather than the objects themselves (cf. *MIE*, ch. 6-7; Mark Lance, 'Quantification, Substitution, and Conceptual Content'; and James Tomberlin, 'Objectual or Substitutional'). It is also sometimes contrasted with the interpretation of the quantifiers provided by *free logic*, which standardly uses two domains: an *inner* domain of existing objects and an *outer* domain of either non-existing objects or the singular terms that refer to them (cf. Karel Lambert, 'The Philosophical Foundations of Free Logic', in *Free Logic: Selected Essays*). However, as Lance shows, it's possible to reconstruct objectual quantification in substitutional terms (using substitution-inferential semantics as opposed to model-theoretic representational semantics), and as Tomberlin shows, Brandom's own way of doing this is essentially a variant of free logic. This shows that there are more complex interactions between the different interpretations of the quantifier than a simple threefold distinction might indicate.

of affairs we're demanding a reason for (the existence of beer) with an alternative state of affairs that is *prima facie* possible (the non-existence of beer). Used literally, all the 'none' does here is to pick out a state of affairs in which there is some *number* of beers (*zero*). We could ask very similar questions contrasting different states in which we varied this number (e.g., 'Why are there *two* beers rather than *three*?', 'Why are there *no* beers rather than *two*?', etc.). However, zero is the *limit-case* of the various possible states of affairs we can produce by varying the number of some kind of things. It is what we will call an *empty state of affairs*, or *a* nothing. We can contrast this limit-case with all *non-empty states of affairs*, i.e., those in which there are *some* of the kind of object in question. Second, it is an additional quirk of our language that this kind of contrast can also be used to signal a lack of implicit restrictions on the quantifier (e.g., '...in my fridge', '...in Saudi Arabia', '...that I like', etc.). When we combine these two features in the case of the fundamental question, we see that the qualification '...rather than nothing' makes explicit the possible state of affairs (there is nothing) that the actual state of affairs (there is something) is contrasted to, and the fact that this is a *unique* limit-case (the limit-case of limit-cases). The quantifier is not explicitly restricted, nor is it supposed to be implicitly restricted – it is supposed to be *completely unrestricted*. The qualification thus forces us to think the *absolutely empty* state of affairs, or *the* Nothing.

It is the *absoluteness* of this limit-case that grounds the connection between Being and Nothing. To quote Heidegger at some length:-

> The question is the broadest in scope. It comes to a halt at no being of any
>
> kind whatsoever. The question embraces all that is, and that means not only
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> what is now present at hand in the broadest sense, but also what has
>
> previously been and what will be in the future. The domain of this question
>
> is limited by what simply is not and never is: by Nothing. All that is not

Nothing comes into the question, and in the end even Nothing itself – not, as

it were, because it is something, a being, for after all we are talking about it,

but because it "is" Nothing. The scope of our question is so broad that we

can never exceed it. We are not interrogating this being or that being, nor all

beings, each in turn; instead, we are asking from the start about the whole of

what is, or as we say for reasons to be discussed later: *beings as a whole

and as such*.[28]

His claim here is that the question encourages us to think Being insofar as it has

maximal scope, or insofar as it thinks the whole as *absolute totality*.

The deceptive simplicity of the claim that there is something consists in the fact

that its domain of quantification is *absolutely unrestricted*. Although it might seem that

quantifying without any restrictions would be the most simple form of quantification,

the very possibility of such quantification is still controversial in philosophical logic, as

there are a number of serious objections to it. The most famous of these exploits the

reasoning of Russell's paradox, which in its general form provides a procedure that,

given any domain, enables one to define an object (a set) that cannot be present in it on

pain of contradiction, thereby demonstrating that the domain cannot be absolutely

unrestricted.[29] A different kind of objection is that it only makes sense to quantify over a

domain that is *sortally* restricted.[30] This is a special form of restriction using what are

called *sortal predicates*, and although there is some disagreement over precisely what

these are, it is commonly accepted that they are predicates that provide *criteria of

identification*. For instance, the predicate '...is a natural number' is defined in such a

way that we have a clear criterion for whether two natural numbers are identical: if they

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28 *IM*, pp. 2-3, my emphasis.
29 Fine, 'Relatively Unrestricted Quantification'.
30 This is the view Brandom adopts in *MIE* (ch. 6-7).

are located at the same point in the succession of numbers, then they are the same number (e.g., if **x** is the successor of 2, then **x** = 3). The objection is then that it is impossible to count any kind of object without such a criterion of identity (e.g., it makes no sense to ask 'how many *instances* of red are there in this street?', unless one specifies that one is counting instances of red *cars*, red *flashes of light*, or red *areas*, etc.). On this view, the terms 'object' and 'thing' are pseudo-sortals that are always implicitly restricted by some genuine sortal.[31]

One solution to both of these problems is to define a *minimally* restricted domain that constitutes the range of *properly* unrestricted quantifiers, as opposed to naïve or *improperly* unrestricted quantifiers. This avoids the first problem if the domain does not include abstract objects in general, or sets more specifically (e.g., if it is limited to spatio-temporally located particulars), and it avoids the second problem if it is constructed using a sortal predicate (i.e., '...is a being'), or a set of such predicates (e.g., '...is a Dasein', '...is occurrent', '...is subsistent', etc.). The consequence of this solution is that the *existential import* of the quantifiers is made relative to this constructed domain. It defines the set of everything that *exists*, and thus defines the notion of *existence*. Although it is hard to interpret Heidegger as responding to these problems directly, his early approach matches this solution quite closely. As we saw in the first chapter, this is precisely how McDaniel interprets Heidegger.[32] He takes Heidegger's concern with modes of Being to be a matter of piecing together the domains of the various restricted quantifiers they define in order to constitute the properly unrestricted quantifier. His interpretation is one sided insofar as it ignores Heidegger's concern with aspects of Being, but it is essentially correct on this point. Moreover, this makes sense of the distinction between *objects* and *entities* that we noted in the first chapter, insofar

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31 *MIE*, pp. 437-438.
32 See chapter 1, section 3, part *ii*.

as entities are *existents* and objects are not. This counters the charge that Heidegger treats Being/Nothing as a being, insofar as it can be the object of a question without thereby being an entity.[33] In talking about Being, we are not talking about something that lies *within* the properly unrestricted domain, but talking about whatever *constitutes* the domain itself.

This leads directly into another controversy in the philosophy of logic that the question skirts: the problem of *empty domains*. Classical logic and most forms of predicate logic cannot allow the domains their variables range over to be empty. *Relatively* empty states of affairs (*nothings*) are perfectly acceptable (e.g., the cases where there is no *beer*, there are no *unicorns*, or there is nothing *in the space between galaxies*), insofar as they restrict the quantifier in some way, thus allowing there to be something *in general* despite there being nothing of a *specific type* or in a *specific locale*, but the *absolutely* empty state of affairs (*the Nothing*) is logically impermissible. This means that these logics violate ontological neutrality in a very specific way. The principle reason for this is that they do not allow the introduction of *non-referring singular terms*, which purport to refer to objects that don't exist (e.g., 'the present king of France', 'Pegasus', etc.). This deficit is rectified by *free logics*, which formalise reasoning with such terms.[34] There are numerous forms of free logic, not all of which can handle empty domains, but the only logics which can (so called *universally free* or *inclusive* logics) are free. This is relevant because the introduction of non-referring terms can be interpreted as providing something like the distinction between objects and entities just mentioned, which corresponds to a similar distinction between quantifiers –

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33 See chapter 1, section 2, part *ii*. It should be noted that this does not make Heidegger a Meinongian. As was noted in the first chapter (section 1), Heidegger's notion of what constitutes a being is exceptionally inclusive. The only concrete example of an *object* which is not a *being* is Being itself. As we have subsequently shown, the problem of how Being 'is' if it is not an entity plays an important role in structuring Heidegger's project, and it is not solved through the use of a category such as *subsistence*, which Heidegger includes as a mode of Being, making subsistents beings.

34 See fn. 27.

between those without and those with existential import, respectively. In essence, representing an absolutely empty state of affairs requires distinguishing a special domain (usually called the *inner* domain) in relation to which existence is defined, insofar as only those quantifiers with existential import range over it. This domain is comparable to the properly unrestricted domain discussed above.

Now, it must be emphasised that in relating the second fundamental question to these logical considerations, we aren't suggesting that Heidegger himself was aware them. The point is that they trace the same conceptual connection between the structure of beings as a whole and the structure of beings as such that Heidegger takes the question to indicate. This is because they suggest that location within the absolute domain of quantification defines what it is for something to be an entity, regardless of which entities are so located, if any. This doesn't provide us with an account of what it is that constitutes the absolute domain – whether it is a set defined by possession of a certain property (e.g., materiality), a co-ordinate manifold that provides some privileged criterion of identity (e.g., spatio-temporal location), or something entirely more complex (e.g., an ecstatic-temporal horizon composing distinct ontological regions) – but it does bring it into question. It raises the issue of what we *presuppose* in thinking about non-empty states of affairs.

The question of why there is anything at all raises the same issue. In forcing us to think the absolutely empty state of affairs, it forces us to think that which is common to all possible states of affairs. This is the *structure* of the whole as distinct from its *contents*. It is the *framework* that defines what it would be for there to be entities, and thereby defines entities *as* entities. However, although this framework is *singular*, it is not itself an entity. It cannot be thought as a Substance without any modes, or even in terms of a God prior to his creations, because these highest beings would themselves

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have to be situated within it. The question confronts us with the ontological difference by demanding that we think the whole independently of any entities, including those that could possibly constitute it. The Nothing is a determinate emptiness precisely insofar as it presents an empty *world*, shorn of everything but what Heidegger would call its *worldhood*.[35]

We can thus see that Heidegger's definition of 'Being' in terms of the Nothing is an attempt to purify the intuition underlying his earlier strategy for answering the question of Being. The world is *essentially* the totality within which all entities *qua* entities must be contained. What it is for something to *be*, is for it to be *included* within this totality. This is what it is to say that the totality is *absolute*, or that it is *the* world. This intimate connection between what it is to be an entity and the worldhood of the world is what unites the two halves of metaphysics as an inquiry into the unitary structure of beings as such and as a whole. This unity is sundered if the world is conceived in terms of beings, because this presupposes an independent conception of beings as such. The important advance that this definition of 'Being' makes on the earlier strategy is that it gives us purchase on a notion of world that respects the ontological difference without necessarily interpreting it as something projected by Dasein. Although Heidegger certainly interpreted it in this way, it is not implied by the definition. This means that it does not depend on the identity of Being and intelligibility, or any aspect of Heidegger's argument for it.

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35 This connection is also made in *B&T* (p. 393), though in a slightly different way. There the fundamental mood of anxiety is taken to provide access to Dasein's Being-in-the-world and the structure of worldhood it contains insofar as it enables Dasein to encounter the Nothing of the world, which is here understood as the world emptied of all significance, rather than emptied of entities.

2. Rephrasing the Question

We can thus see that Heidegger's alternative definition of 'Being' suggests a possible solution to the problem of unity. This is that the *unity* of aspects of Being is tied to *singularity* of the world, or that there is an *absolute* totality of entities in terms of which they can be thought *as such*. This provides the unitary structure which our pre-ontological understanding of Being can be an understanding *of* – it is our pre-theoretical grasp of the world *qua* world. The problem is that this way of defining 'Being' is still lacking in positive content. The purchase on the notion of world provided by the second fundamental question is not yet sufficient to provide us with any account of the diversity of aspects that are supposed to be united by a proper account of its structure. The bare idea of a *framework* within which entities are situated is as yet too vague unless it is explained in Heidegger's terms – as the ecstatic-temporal horizon within which entities manifest. We thus need to refine this definition, if we are to formulate the question of Being on its basis. We must attempt to grasp *directly* that which the identification of Being and Nothing touches only *indirectly*. This means finding a better way of talking about the world and its worldhood.

i) World, Unity, and Truth

We have thus separated out the importance of the notion of world from Heidegger's account of it as Dasein's projection of the whole as horizon. Our aim is still to formulate the question of Being as inquiring after the structure of beings as such and as a whole in a way which respects the ontological difference, but, in allowing the possibility that this might be independent of Dasein's existential structure (or its equivalent), we have

restored a certain proximity to classical metaphysics lost in Heidegger's early approach. The metaphysical tradition generally conceived of *totality* as something over and above any activity of thought (e.g., *cosmos*, *mundus*, One, Absolute, Universe, etc.), even if it was unable to think this totality as something distinct from the specific entities within it without resorting to some privileged entity it constitutes or contains. At the end of the third chapter, we called this a concern with the nature of *reality*. As we saw there, this concern is abrogated in both Kant's attempt to *redefine* metaphysics and Heidegger's subsequent attempt *reorient* it, but it is restored in a liminal fashion in Heidegger's later attempt to *overcome* metaphysics, by means of the contrast between Dasein's projection of world and the earth that lies in excess of it. As untenable as this later position turns out to be, it at least hints at the possibility of maintaining the concern with the nature of reality outside of onto-theology.

The problem this poses is that, in defining 'Being' in terms of the structure of the whole, we must neither presuppose that the whole is a *feature* our understanding, nor presuppose that it is a *reality* that transcends it. We must remain neutral on this point at least provisionally, in precisely the way that we must remain neutral with regard to the identity of Being and intelligibility, as we discussed at the end of the second chapter. These issues are now thoroughly intertwined – if the world is a function of our understanding, then so is Being. The difficulty in meeting this constraint lies in accommodating the different roles understanding plays in the two cases: the first conceives the world as the unity *of* our understanding, whereas the second conceives it as the totality grasped *by* our understanding. How is our definition supposed to give us purchase on our pre-theoretical understanding of the world in a way that remains neutral between these two options? Heidegger's later work offers a possible solution. It suggests that the way our understanding is *unified* (world) is precisely what gives us

purchase upon the *totality* we aim to understand (earth). We needn't accept Heidegger's account of how the understanding is unified (i.e., the multi-layered structure of projection) in order to adopt this idea. The point is that we can locate our pre-theoretical understanding of the absolute totality of beings within the unity of our understanding as such, and leave the question of whether it represents some underlying unified reality open. Of course, it is possible that the proper formulation of the question of Being might settle this point, but it must not be settled by the definition of 'Being' from which it proceeds.

The problem is now how to approach this unity of understanding without already having carried out the transcendental inquiry which is supposed to explicate the pre-ontological understanding it harbours. The clue to solving this is to be found in the other role the inquiry must play: uncovering the structure of inquiry as such. Regardless of whether it is ultimately be cashed out in terms of some unified system of *practical* involvements, any replacement for the existential analytic must account for the *theoretical* understanding involved in the process of asking and answering questions. The unity of such understanding can be addressed in terms of the unity of this process of inquiry. This points us in the direction of a further question, at least as fundamental as that of why there is something rather than nothing: what is the case? All questions leave something *indeterminate*, insofar as the answer to the question is meant to determine it. However, most questions *determine* this indeterminacy to some extent. This is to say that they are *specific* questions. What they leave open to determination is something very specific and delineated. The question 'what is the case?' is a kind of *limit-case* of questioning, insofar as it does not determine this indeterminacy at all, making it the only completely *nonspecific* question. In other words, it leaves *everything* open to determination. It requires no specific answer, but rather the sum of all answers to all

possible questions. It unifies all other questions, insofar as the various *local* inquiries that correspond to them are all part of the *global* inquiry into 'what is the case'. That which is to be found out by the question is nothing less than the truth *as a whole*.

This *limit-question* is thus importantly distinct from all questions about particular entities, groups of entities, and their various features. Whereas asking these questions requires some prior understanding of the specific things asked about in each case, asking 'what is the case?' requires no specific prior understanding. Because it is nothing more than the general framework of inquiry within which such specific inquiries are situated, the only understanding it demands is that necessary for asking any question whatsoever. This means that any sense in which this question can be said to be *about* something, or have an *object*, must be fundamentally different from questions about entities. In turn, this means that any sense in which the unity of 'what is the case' is something over and above the way it is unified through this inquiry would be importantly distinct from the manner in which entities are *in themselves*. This leaves the question of whether the unity of 'what is the case' is a function of the understanding open.

Following this line of thought thus suggests the definition of 'world' with which Wittgenstein opens the Tractatus: "The world is all that is the case."[36] What is important about this way of approaching the notion of world is that it is principally concerned with *truth* as a whole, and only indirectly with *beings* as a whole.[37] The relation between the two is that between 'what is the case' and 'what exists', respectively. It consists in the fact that if a being exists, it is true *that* it exists. Insofar as 'what is the case' is the truth as a whole, whatever existential truths constitute it are *all* the existential truths there are.

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36 *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, §1.
37 This is attested to by the next proposition of the Tractatus: "The world is the totality of facts, not of things."(Ibid., §1.1) However, we will not adopt this formulation, as it tends to encourage treating facts as a class of entity distinct from 'things' or objects.

This makes the totality of beings to which these truths correspond an *absolute* totality – the *singular* whole to which all beings belong. Crucially, this connection persists independently of the existence of any particular entities. This is because, even if it could be the case that *nothing* existed, it would still be true *that* nothing existed. This means that the truth about 'what exists', whatever in fact exists, is a structural feature of 'what is the case'. Whatever pre-theoretical grasp of 'what is the case' lies implicit in our grasp of the general structure of inquiry therefore includes some grasp of 'what exists' as distinct from any particular entities that might exist. This constitutes a pre-theoretical understanding of *existence* as such. What this suggests is that it is indeed possible to define 'Being' as the worldhood of the world so defined, i.e., as the structure of 'what is the case' *qua* 'what is the case'. Insofar as it is an open question whether there is more to this than the general framework of inquiry, this definition is neutral in precisely the way that we require. If we adopt this definition, the simplest formulation of the question of Being would then be a modification of the limit-question: what is 'what is the case'?

The real key to this definition is the way it leverages the connection between Being and truth. The importance of this connection should not surprise us, given the crucial role we have seen it play in Heidegger's work.[38] However, although this approach also analyses the connection in terms of the notion of world, the way it does this is somewhat different from Heidegger's account. The definition enables us to grasp the *uniqueness* of the world – the fact that it is the one and only world, which contains everything that exists – in virtue of what we will call the *unity of truth*. This names the fact that there is one and only one truth. Of course, there is a sense in which there are obviously *many* different truths. It is true that snow is white, it is true that Paris is the capital of France, and it is true that something exists. These truths are distinct from one another, despite the relations of implication that can obtain between them. However,

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38 See chapter 3.

truth is *one* insofar as every claim has the *same* truth-value, no matter who asserts it.[39] There is single way things are which determines the correctness of all our claims, which is all it is to say that they are *about* the same world.

There is a potential objection to the idea that the world is unique which must be addressed, stemming from the way the notion of world is deployed in possible world semantics.[40] This is a broad ranging approach to the semantics of *modal operators* such as 'It is possible that...' and 'It is necessary that...' that attempts to model them as quantifiers over a set of worlds. A world functions as an index *at* which sentences can be evaluated as true or false. It thus corresponds to a maximally consistent set of such sentences, which amounts to a complete description of a way things might have been, or a possible state of affairs. In addition to the set of worlds, there is an *accessibility* relation between worlds which specifies which worlds are possible *from* one another. The truth of a sentence modified by a modal operator at a given world depends on the truth of the unmodified sentence at all the worlds accessible from that world. For example, 'It is possible that snow is black' is true at *w* if and only if 'Snow is black' is true at *some* world accessible from *w*, and 'It is necessary that snow is black' is true at *w* if and only if 'Snow is black' is true at *every* world accessible from *w*. There have been various different formal semantics developed along these lines, but the most important divergences are found in the way their elements are interpreted. These underpin debates regarding the *metaphysics* of modality. There are a number of different disagreements that cut across one another, regarding the nature of possible worlds (e.g., are they maximal mereological sums, properties of the actual world, ideal representations, or something else?), the relation between possible worlds and the actual world (e.g., is the

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39 This is not to say that tokenings of the same sentence cannot have different truth-values, because the same sentence can be used to make different claims by different individuals and in different contexts. This is most obvious in sentences that use indexicals and demonstratives (e.g., '*I* am tired *now*', 'The package is *here*', 'I would like *this* cake', etc.).

40 Michael J. Loux's introduction to *The Possible and the Actual* provides a concise overview of the topic.

actual world simply one world among others?), the existence of possibilia (e.g., the golden mountain, the younger sister I might have had, etc.), the sense in which worlds contain other entities (e.g., whether the same things are present in different worlds, or whether they are mere counterparts), and other issues.[41]

We aim to take no position on any of these matters, or on the truth of possible world semantics broadly construed. However, we must show that even if some version of it were true, this would not undermine the uniqueness of the world as we have construed it. The crucial point here is that although there is a narrow sense of 'what is the case' that refers only to what is true in the actual world, there is also a broad sense which incorporates what is true in all worlds.[42] This is because, if some interpretation of possible world semantics is true, there must be some true description of the totality of worlds in terms of which the truth about possibility and necessity at any given world is determined. There would have to be a way things are with possible worlds taken as a whole. Whereas the narrow sense does not necessarily incorporate all existential truths, leaving out potential truths regarding the existence of possible worlds themselves and the possibilia that populate them, the broad sense incorporates even these truths, if indeed there are any. In the end, if some interpretation of possible world semantics is true, then there may be a plurality of 'worlds' in one sense of the word, but these would nevertheless belong to a single 'world' in another sense of it. It is this latter, intrinsically unique notion of world that we are concerned with.

Returning to the definition of 'Being' we have proposed, its purpose is to enable us to locate those features of our understanding in which our grasp of beings *qua* beings consists, so that we can explicate it, and thereby uncover the diversity of *aspects* that define them. However, though we have shown that the proposed definition lets us locate

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41 A thorough summary of many of these disputes can be found in David Lewis' *On the Plurality of Worlds*.

42 This broad use roughly corresponds to what Lewis calls the 'blanket' use of the term (Ibid., p. 99).

a pre-theoretical understanding of *existence*, we have yet to show how it gives us purchase upon the more diverse range of aspects of Being. This is necessary if we are to properly solve the problem of unity. The crucial point here is that there is more true of each being than the mere fact that it exists. This includes everything that we might wish to count as an aspect of its Being: truths about its *properties*, its *relations*, its *essence*, etc. Our pre-theoretical understanding of the structure of 'what is the case' incorporates an understanding of existence insofar as the implicit grasp of the process of inquiry in which it consists necessarily involves a grasp of asking and answering questions regarding what exists. This means insofar as it necessarily involves a grasp of the kind of *truth-claims* that undertake existential commitments. However, this is not the only kind of truth-claim about entities that we must be able to grasp in order to engage in the process of inquiry. For instance, it seems sensible to hold that we must at least also have some grasp of truth-claims that predicate properties of entities (and perhaps also relations). It might even be the case that we must have a grasp of 'what is...?' questions and the truth-claims about essence which form their answers. Whatever these fundamental kinds of truth-claim are, they structure all possible answers to the limit-question, or all possible accounts of 'what is the case'. We can thus use them to derive the various aspects of Being (e.g., existence, properties, relations, essence, etc.), in much the same way that Kant derives his *categories* from the logical functions of judgement.[43] The advantage of this approach is that instead of dealing with the various senses of the word 'Being', we are dealing directly with the fundamental forms of discourse about beings. This solves the problem of unity insofar as it decouples the question of Being from any contingencies of linguistic usage.[44]

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43 *Critique of Pure Reason*, bk. 1, ch. 1.
44 Of course, all this depends upon there being a fundamental structure of discourse that does not vary with these linguistic contingencies. However, this is something presupposed by the inquiry into the structure of questioning that plays a fundamental role in the project of formulating the question of Being.

We now have the outline of an alternative formulation of the question of Being which is not susceptible to the problem of unity. The question inquires into the essential structure of the world, guided by a prior understanding of it which lies implicit in our ability to inquire into the world *as such*. It aims to understand precisely *what it is* that we grasp in such inquiry. Our formulation of the question incorporates this connection by modifying the question that corresponds to it – if asking after the world as such is to ask 'what is the case?', then asking after its essential structure is to ask 'what is 'what is the case?''. As we have tried to show, this question unites the metaphysical tradition's dual concern with beings as such and beings as a whole. This means that it is *the* question which defines the project of metaphysics. We will now address a few remaining questions about the formulation as it stands, and provide some suggestions as to how it may be fleshed out further.

Although it defines metaphysics, the question of Being is not the *only* metaphysical question. The process of inquiring into the world as such is a matter of building up a picture of the truth as a whole, through asking and answering specific questions about the beings it contains. Although in practice many of these questions depend upon a more or less detailed understanding of the specific entities concerned (e.g., 'Is the economy in recession?', 'Which pocket are my keys in?', 'What are mitochondria?', etc.), there are certain general forms of question that require nothing more than is necessary to pick them out (e.g., 'What properties does **x** possess?', 'What relations obtain between **x** and other entities?', 'What is **x**?', etc.), which correspond to the various fundamental kinds of truth-claim that form their answers. Just as we derive our formulation of the question of metaphysics from the limit-question, we may derive

subsidiary metaphysical questions from these general questions (e.g., 'What are properties?', 'What are relations?', 'What is essence?', etc.). If the goal of the defining question of metaphysics is to provide an account of precisely *what* we are grasping in the ordinary process of inquiry, then the goal of these subsidiary questions is to provide parts of the overall account by describing precisely *what* is grasped by the corresponding parts of this process. In essence, answering the question of Being is a matter of answering these subsidiary questions *together*, which is to say providing an account of the various *aspects* of Being in relation to one another. This is a reformulation of the Aristotelian problem of the unity of Being which places it at the heart of the project of metaphysics.

Of the three initial methodological constraints upon Heidegger's early project that were identified at the beginning of the previous chapter, we have so far endorsed the first two: *the priority of questioning* and *the necessity of pre-ontological understanding*. It is thus important to ask where our alternative formulation of the question stands with regard to the third: *the significance of meaning*. This names the fact that, in virtue of the reflexivity inherent in the question 'What is Being?', the inquiry into Being must be a hermeneutically circular process through which we interpret our pre-ontological understanding of Being, so as to develop it into a fully fledged metaphysics. This fact still holds under the new formulation, insofar as it retains this reflexivity. This is because the senses of both the question of Being and its subsidiary questions are themselves determined by the answer to one of these questions: what is essence? Precisely what it is for the world to have an essential structure, and to what extent it differs from the way entities may be said to have essences, is something which is itself to be explained in the course of metaphysical inquiry.[45] Despite this, we

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45 This touches upon the distinction between objects of thought and entities proper discussed earlier. The world cannot be an existent entity insofar as it cannot contain itself. Nonetheless, we have no choice but to talk about it in much the same way in which we talk about entities, deploying the same basic

still do not understand the nature of the process of interpreting our pre-ontological understanding fully.

Most importantly, we still do not know whether it is simply a matter of completely explicating our pre-ontological understanding, or whether it involves developing it beyond this point. Is there more to the fundamental structure of the world than the essential features of the way we inquire into its contents? This is effectively just the question of the identity of Being and intelligibility. However, this way of looking at the issue makes it clear that it must be resolved by the transcendental inquiry into the conditions of the possibility of intelligibility required to complete the formulation of the question. Beyond carrying out the explication of our pre-ontological understanding, the account of meaning, understanding, interpretation, questioning, and truth it supplies will determine whether any sense can be made of a structure of the world that is suitably independent of the structure of our thought about it. One way this might be achieved would be through the elaboration of the relation between meaning and essence discussed in the first chapter. This would distinguish between questions such as 'What does 'property' mean?' and 'What are properties?', with the former question seeking to explicate the prior understanding which guides the latter. The complete explication of our pre-ontological understanding on which the formulation of the question depends would thus amount to explaining what 'world' *means*, in order to determine what the world *is*.

All of this leads us back to the problem of transcendental method. In the absence of a solution to this problem, we cannot begin to flesh out the alternative formulation of

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forms of discourse. To properly accommodate this we would need to draw a distinction analogous to Kant's distinction between *general* and *transcendental logic* (*Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 95-97). The logical forms of judgement belong to the former, and the categories belong to the latter. The categories are the logical forms of judgment considered in their applicability to objects of experience (entities proper), as opposed to whatever transcendent or fictitious objects we might speculate about (objects of thought). This would enable something like a distinction between *generic essence* and *real essence* (and generic properties and real properties, etc.).

the question of Being we have outlined. The two tasks the transcendental inquiry plays in Heidegger's early project have been further specified by our account: in explicating our pre-ontological understanding of Being it must determine the correct aspects of Being, and thereby the various problems that constitute metaphysics as a whole, whereas in inquiring into the structure of questioning it must determine the possibility of inquiring into Being over and above this process of explication. Moreover, these tasks are now intertwined even more so than for Heidegger, insofar as the definition of 'Being' implies that our pre-ontological understanding is implicit in our grasp of the structure of questioning itself. We cannot provide a fully worked out method for approaching these tasks, but our alternative formulation does give us some insight into what it might be like.

The most serious problem we uncovered with Heidegger's own existential analytic was that it violated the ontological neutrality constraint – its methodology illegitimately presupposed that there are a plurality of modes of Being. We learned from this that whatever terms the inquiry is understood in they must at least initially be intelligible independently of ontological (or metaphysical) terms. Our formulation furnishes us with the clue to solving this problem. This is because it makes us focus upon the structure of the process of inquiry, rather than the mode of Being of the inquirer. As was argued in the previous chapter, this is to be understood in terms of *rational discourse* as such – as a process of giving and asking for reasons. The crucial point is that this is governed by *norms,* insofar as it can be engaged in correctly or incorrectly. We could thus describe its structure by locating those *fundamental norms* without which it could not function, and thus count as conditions of its possibility.[46] This would be to replace Heidegger's *existential analytic* of Dasein with a *normative*

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46 There is an excellent debate regarding the nature of such fundamental norms between Laukötter et al. ('Are Fundamental Discursive Norms Objective?') and Brandom ('Reply to "Are Fundamental Discursive Norms Objective?"').

analytic of discourse.

This approach is ontologically neutral insofar as it is an open question whether the normative has any metaphysical status at all. *Prima facie*, we can talk about what we *ought* to do without saying anything about what *is*. Although it is possible to claim that norms are entities, or that the ability to be bound by them is grounded in a special mode of Being, neither of these is a given, nor need they be presupposed in order to make sense of the normative. We have a basic grasp of normativity simply in virtue of being able to engage in discourse at all, insofar as it is a norm governed activity. Whether this later comes to be interpreted in metaphysical terms, or whether the separation of 'is' and 'ought' proves inviolable, it provides a basis for transcendental inquiry that need not begin with any ontological presuppositions. This is far from a worked out methodology, but it does point us in the right direction.

3. Conclusion

We have now achieved what we set out to do. We have examined the role of the question of Being within Heidegger's work and his attempts to formulate it, assessed and criticised it, and extracted his most important insights. We have then used these to outline an alternative formulation of the question which goes some way toward clarifying its aim. Still, this is only the beginning of our renewal of the question of Being. There is much to be done if this is to lead to a complete formulation of the question (a proper definition of metaphysics) and ultimately an answer to the question (an actual metaphysics).

The key task that lies before us is the development of a new transcendental philosophy adequate to complete the formulation of the question. We have suggested the

shape that this should take, but we have not yet developed anything resembling a methodology comparable to the phenomenological one it is meant to replace. However, although we have shied away from presupposing any of the results of this normative analytic, this does not mean that we have no resources to draw from in carrying it out. In this respect Brandom's work is invaluable. Although it lacks the strict methodological framework we require, it presents a rich account of the normative structure of discourse from which to draw.[47]

In closing, we can only hope that, armed with this new way of formulating the question and borrowed philosophical resources, we may succeed where Heidegger failed, and that we will not be forced to abandon the project we have sketched here in the same way the project of *Being and Time* was abandoned. Then again, as we have shown in attending to Heidegger's work, even unfulfilled promises may contain within them seeds of greatness, waiting to be harvested and sewn anew.

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[47] The major part of this is presented in *MIE*, but the reconstruction of Kant and Hegel's accounts of the rational process through which we represent the world as a whole presented in *RIP*, and the elaborated account of logical vocabulary presented in *BSD* are very important extensions of this.

List of Abbreviations

<u>Heidegger's Works</u>

AM – Aristotle's Metaphysics Ɵ 1-3
B&T – Being and Time
BTR – Being and Truth
BQP – Basic Questions of Philosophy
CP – Contributions to Philosophy: From Enowning
DT – Discourse on Thinking
EHF – The Essence of Human Freedom
FCM – Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics
FS – Four Seminars
HCT – History of the Concept of Time
IM – Introduction to Metaphysics
KPM – Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics
LQT – Logic: The Question of Truth
M – Mindfulness
MFL – Metaphysical Foundations of Logic
N – Nietzsche: Volumes 3 & 4
OCM – 'The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics'
OEG - 'On the Essence of Ground'
OET - 'On the Essence of Truth'
OWA - 'On the Origin of the Work of Art'
QJ – 'Question and Judgment'
TB – On Time and Being
TDP – Towards the Definition of Philosophy
WCT – What is Called Thinking?
WM – 'What is Metaphysics'

<u>Brandom's Works</u>

MIE – Making It Explicit
BSD – Between Saying and Doing
RIP – Reason in Philosophy

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