

## The Logic of Being in Heidegger's *Being and Time*

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### Abstract

McDaniel argues that Heidegger's accounts of the kinds of being in *Being and Time* (such as Dasein, the ready-to-hand, and the present-at-hand) might be understood as spelling out meanings of different restricted existential quantifiers whose domains do not overlap. This paper develops three objections to this proposal and, ultimately, a different view of the logical form of Heidegger's kinds of being as disjuncts of the reality-predicate described by Fine applicable to any of the objects in the domain of the unrestricted existential quantifier some facts about which "ground" all facts about the remaining objects in this domain (the membership in which is denied the ontological significance invested in it by Quine and, following him, many other analytic philosophers including McDaniel).

**Keywords:** fundamental ontology, being, existence, existential quantifier, existence predicate, reality, grounding

In *Being and Time* (hereafter *BT*), Heidegger attempts to "work out" the question of Being.<sup>1</sup>

This question asks about

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006); English translation: *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 1. Henceforth cited as *SZ* with reference to the pagination in the German edition (that the English edition also keeps track of) and to the section number in square brackets. Translations are frequently lightly retouched by me.

that which determines beings as beings, that on the basis of which beings are already understood, however we may discuss them in detail.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most striking results of this project is that there is - or so Heidegger argues - more than just one “determination” that answers the above description. Crucially, there is Dasein’s Being or “*Existenz*,” pertaining to whoever is capable of pursuing Heidegger’s own inquiry into Being<sup>3</sup> (crucially, for all that Heidegger has published of *BT* is devoted to the project of “existential analytic,”<sup>4</sup> and that is to say, to an analysis of the Being of this kind of entity). There is, then, “readiness-of-hand” (*Zuhandenheit*) pertaining to beings that are a part of Dasein’s practical projects (paradigmatically - but not exclusively - tools<sup>5</sup>) and “presence-at-hand” (*Vorhandenheit*), which, in the first instance, characterises beings that are not – or indeed no longer<sup>6</sup> - ready-to-hand, and which, in the second instance, is invoked by Heidegger to describe how some prominent Western philosophers conceive of the world around them.<sup>7</sup> Finally, although *BT* discusses only these three “kinds of being” (*Seinsarten*) in any detail, Heidegger never claims that there are no more kinds of being than that. For example, he

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<sup>2</sup> *SZ*, 6 [2].

<sup>3</sup> *SZ*, 7 [2].

<sup>4</sup> *SZ*, 13 [4].

<sup>5</sup> For some non-paradigmatic cases of readiness-to-hand, see, for example, *SZ*, 71 [15].

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *SZ*, 72-76 [16].

<sup>7</sup> Most notably, Heidegger charges Descartes with “prescrib[ing] for the world its ‘real’ Being, as it were, on the basis of an idea of Being whose source has not been unveiled and which has not been demonstrated in its own right – an idea in which Being is equated with constant presence-at-hand.” *SZ*, 96 [21].

indicates that “life,”<sup>8</sup> too, might be tantamount to a distinct kind of being, and he speaks of beings which are “neither ready-to-hand nor present-at-hand but just ‘subsist’ (“*besteh[en]*”).”<sup>9</sup>

Since, in this way, “kinds of being” effectively tell us what Heidegger’s research question in *BT* – and so, the entire book – is about – Heidegger calls this “*das Gefragte*” of his inquiry<sup>10</sup> – no serious interpretation of *BT* could afford to do without some exegesis of this notion. Still, as far as I know, it took Kris McDaniel’s relatively recent and rightly celebrated essay – “Ways of Being” – to pose this interesting query to Heidegger’s text: might Heidegger’s talk of the kinds of being be understood as marking any *logical* distinctions, and, if so, logical distinctions of what sort?

McDaniel’s answer is affirmative. On his reading, Heidegger’s accounts of kinds of being in *BT* spell out meanings of different existential quantifiers, whose domains do not overlap. Metaphysicians ought to reason about the world using these local quantifiers rather than a single global one (whose domain contains their domains), and this privilege arguably enjoyed by the Heideggerian quantifiers is one we are invited to understand along the lines of Theodore Sider’s notion of “joint-carvingness.”<sup>11</sup> (McDaniel sometimes speaks here of the “naturalness” of the meanings of the Heideggerian quantifiers rather than of their joint-

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<sup>8</sup> SZ, 50 [10].

<sup>9</sup> SZ, 333 [66].

<sup>10</sup> SZ, 5 [2].

<sup>11</sup> Kris McDaniel, “Ways of Being,” in *Metametaphysics*, ed. David J. Chalmers, David Manley, and Ryan Wasserman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 290–319. Cf. Theodore Sider, “Ontological Realism,” in *Metametaphysics*, ed. David J. Chalmers, David Manley, and Ryan Wasserman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 384–423; Theodore Sider, *Writing the Book of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

carvingness, but David Lewis – from whom he adapts this usage - did not employ this notion in relation to quantifier-meanings.<sup>12)</sup>

I agree with McDaniel that Heidegger’s elaboration of the question of Being in *BT* leaves us enough clues to work out for ourselves the logical form of the kinds of being he talks about in that book. But I think that McDaniel’s reconstruction of this Heideggerian logic of Being, as it were, faces serious exegetical difficulties. My aim in this paper is to spell them out and to offer a different reconstruction.

In a rather wonderful essay called “The Question of Ontology,” Kit Fine argues that the ontological weight of objects should be represented formally, not by including them in the domain of the quantifiers (as McDaniel, following Quine, would have it), but rather through the predicate “real” applicable to all and to only those objects some facts about which “ground” all facts about the remaining objects in this domain.<sup>13</sup> Thus, any philosopher who thinks that numbers do not exist, for example, is kindly asked not to obstruct the mathematician’s work by pushing the objects her propositions are about out of the domain the quantifiers range over, and to rest content with pointing out that they are not real in this sense, but, say, grounded in our mental states. (Quine’s puckish advice would be to push.)

I shall argue that Heidegger would find Fine’s critique of Quine’s “meta-ontology”<sup>14</sup> congenial, although, for him, a single existence predicate will not do. Rather, a whole family of existence predicates is needed to reflect the diversity among the kinds of being. Thus, with

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, David Lewis, “New Work for a Theory of Universals,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 4 (1983): 343-377.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Kit Fine, “The Question of Ontology,” in *Metametaphysics*, ed. David J. Chalmers, David Manley, and Ryan Wasserman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 157–177.

<sup>14</sup> In van Inwagen’s sense. Cf. Peter van Inwagen, “Meta-Ontology,” *Erkenntnis* 48, no. 2/3 (1998): 233-250.

due respect to McDaniel, Heidegger is happy for metaphysicians to continue to employ a single global existential quantifier (or rather ordinary expressions corresponding to it<sup>15</sup>) as is their wont. But he wants them to appreciate that, whereas the contribution of things such as chairs and tin-openers to the world as it is at the fundamental level consists in their readiness-to-hand, the contribution of things such as sticks and stones consists in their presence-at-hand. Most importantly, he wants them to recognise that their own contribution consists in *Existenz* rather than in any of the remaining kinds of being.

Section 1 of this paper examines McDaniel's case for his multiple-quantifiers interpretation of the kinds of being, to which, then, Sections 2-4 develop the following three objections. First, Heidegger does not seem to betray much interest in quantificational questions (questions which ask: is there an  $x$  that is  $F$ ?).<sup>16</sup> So, it is hard to believe that the main output of the book is, as McDaniel maintains, a philosophical doctrine about quantification. Second, Heidegger clearly countenances the possibility of a single object falling under more than one kind of being. Third, Heidegger's kinds of being are always expressed either through a verb or an adjective fronted by a copula in the position of the predicate or through nouns variously derivative of such a predicative employment in the position of a subject or an object (rather than ever through a quantifier type of expression). Section 5 develops my own account of the logic of Being in *BT* and Sections 6 and 7 answer two objections to this account. The first objection argues that predicational accounts of the logic of Being assimilate the kinds of being with properties (and Heidegger would never consent to this). The second objection questions whether there is a substantive difference between my and McDaniel's accounts of the logic of Being in *BT* (in the light of McDaniel's later work).

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<sup>15</sup> I am not aware of any discussion in Heidegger's work addressing existential quantification as such.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Fine, "The Question of Ontology," 157-158.

## 1. Martin Heidegger Meets Theodore Sider

McDaniel's case for representing Heidegger's kinds of being by restricted-domain existential quantifiers is premised on the alleged unsuitability for the job of two other means of representation available in logic.

First, suppose that we represent the kinds of being by constant symbols by introducing a *having* predicate – “H” – and a constant symbol to stand for existenz, “e.” [...] And so forth for the various ways of being countenanced by Heidegger.<sup>17</sup>

“We could then say, for example, that some things *have* existenz”: “ $\exists x (Hxe)$ .”<sup>18</sup>

However, representing Heidegger's kinds of being in this way contradicts “ontological difference”<sup>19</sup> – Heidegger's claim that “[t]he Being (*Sein*) of beings ‘is’ not itself a being (*ein Seiendes*):”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> McDaniel, “Ways of Being,” 301.

<sup>18</sup> McDaniel, “Ways of Being,” 301.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, *Gesamtausgabe* 24 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), 22-23 [4]; English translation: *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 17-18 [4]. Henceforth cited as *GA* 24 with references to the pagination in the German edition, followed by a corresponding reference to the English edition, followed by the section number in square brackets.

<sup>20</sup> *SZ*, 6 [2].

In standard first-order logic, constant symbols [...] are employed to refer to entities within the domain of the quantifier. Since the constant symbols can be replaced by first-order variables, we can derive from the claim that Dasein has existenz the claim that there is an *entity* such that Dasein has *it*. However, Heidegger [...] warns us that being is not *a* being, and that the various ways of existing are not themselves entities.<sup>21</sup>

So, Heidegger's kinds of being cannot be captured by constant symbols.

Second, suppose that we do what this paper argues we *should* do: "introduce special predicates that mark the... distinctions that Heidegger wants to make."<sup>22</sup> For example, suppose that, in order to affirm Dasein's existence, we say that there is something that *existz* ("E"):  $\exists x$  (Ex).

Here, McDaniel objects that

this procedure assimilates attributing a way of being to a thing to predicating a property of that thing. *Being* is not a kind of super property, exemplified by everything. Nor is *being* a determinable property of which the various kinds of being, such as *existenz*, are determinates in the way that *being red* is a determinate of *being colored*. Ways of being are not merely special properties that some entities have and that other entities lack, and so are not most perspicuously represented by predicates.<sup>23</sup>

(Section 6 of this paper will make some proposals about what exactly might be wrong with the thesis that Heidegger's kinds of being are properties - as, unfortunately, that is all that McDaniel

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<sup>21</sup> McDaniel, "Ways of Being," 301-302.

<sup>22</sup> McDaniel, "Ways of Being," 302.

<sup>23</sup> McDaniel, "Ways of Being," 302.

says on the subject in “Ways of Being” - and argue that either McDaniel’s objection rests on a confusion of two possible interpretations of the term ‘property’ or is one I have two very good replies to. For now, however, let us grant the legitimacy of this worry and move on.)

Thus, granted that “the generic sense of ‘being’” (applicable to anything) “is represented formally by the “ $\exists$ ” of mathematical logic,” “a natural thought,” for McDaniel, “is that the specific senses of ‘being’ also are best represented by quantifiers” – only such “that range[] over only some proper subset of that which the unrestricted quantifier ranges.”<sup>24</sup>

For example, consider the *existenzial* quantifier, which in virtue of its meaning ranges over all and only those entities that have *existenz* as their kind of being, and a *subsistentzial* quantifier, which in virtue of its meaning ranges over all and only those entities that have subsistence as their kind of being. We can represent these quantifiers with the following notation: “ $\exists$ existenz” for the existenzial quantifier, and “ $\exists$ subsistence” for the subsistentzial quantifier.<sup>25</sup>

Since McDaniel holds that, for Heidegger, each being belongs in exactly one kind of being, “none of the[] domains [of the Heideggerian quantifiers] overlap.”<sup>26</sup>

But what might one need these local existential quantifiers for? Consider that McDaniel’s local existential quantifiers and the global one we normally use are *interdefinable*. McDaniel has just defined two of the Heideggerian quantifiers by appropriately restricting the domain of the global existential quantifier. It is, hopefully, also easy to see that the global

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<sup>24</sup> McDaniel, “Ways of Being,” 302.

<sup>25</sup> McDaniel, “Ways of Being,” 303.

<sup>26</sup> McDaniel, “Ways of Being,” 312. Cf. Kris McDaniel, “Heidegger’s Metaphysics of Material Beings,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 87, no. 2 (2013): 332-57.



existential quantifier could be ‘defined up’ from the local existential quantifiers, as long as we enjoy some kind of understanding of them all and decide to take them as primitive instead. So, anything that can be said with the help of Heidegger’s existential quantifiers could also be said with the help of the global existential quantifier. But, if so, are they not – as Peter van Inwagen will in fact argue in “Modes of Being and Quantification” – merely notational variants of each other?<sup>27</sup>

It is in anticipation of this challenge that McDaniel calls Sider to the rescue. The first of Sider’s theses relevant to McDaniel’s project states that “[t]he world has a distinguished structure”<sup>28</sup> and a degree of “joint-carvingness” of a concept tells us how well – or indeed how badly – the concept in question matches that structure. McDaniel himself illustrates “joint-carvingness” with this - now outdated – example (so I’ll update it for our purposes):

Consider the property of having a charge of  $-1$  and the property of either being [formerly] loved by Angelina Jolie or having a charge of  $-1$ . Eddie the electron exemplifies both features. *I charge* is a real respect of similarity between electrons, but it is bizarre to think that Brad Pitt and Eddie are similar in virtue of both being either green, being [formerly] loved by Angelina Jolie, or having a charge of  $-1$ . We recognize a metaphysical distinction between these two features: the former property *carves nature at the joints*, while the latter is a *mere disjunction*.<sup>29</sup>

The second relevant thesis propounded by Sider states that

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Peter van Inwagen, “Modes of Being and Quantification,” *Disputatio* 6, no. 38 (2014): 1-24.

<sup>28</sup> Sider, *Writing the Book*, vii.

<sup>29</sup> McDaniel, “Ways of Being,” 305.

[f]or a representation to be fully successful, truth is not enough; the representation must also use the right concepts, so that its conceptual structure matches reality's structure.<sup>30</sup>

Heidegger, McDaniel claims, accepts both these theses:

Call a language *ideal* just in case every primitive expression in that language has a perfectly [joint-carving] meaning... According to the position explicated here, a language in which the generic quantifier is semantically primitive is not an ideal language. A language is *better*, at least with respect to its apparatus of quantification, if its generic quantifier is “defined up” out of those semantically primitive restricted quantifiers that do correspond to the logical joints.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, McDaniel reads *BT* precisely as Heidegger's attempt to develop such an “ideal” language:

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<sup>30</sup> Sider, *Writing the Book*, vii. It is important to distinguish between these two theses, because, as Sider's critics like to remind us, there is an inferential gap between a *descriptive* claim that the world has “a distinguished structure” and a (more controversial) *normative* claim that our representations of the world should somehow track this structure. Cf. Eli Hirsch, “The Metaphysically Best Language,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 87, no. 3 (2013): 709-716, here 709; Cian Dorr, “Reading Writing the Book of the World,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 87, no. 3 (2013): 717-724, here 717; Shamik Dasgupta, “Realism and the Absence of Value,” *Philosophical Review* 127, no. 3 (2018): 279-322.

<sup>31</sup> McDaniel, “Ways of Being,” 309. Second italics added.

Arguably, this is in fact what Heidegger does: abandon ordinary language, and move to a technical language in which new primitive terms are introduced along with accompanying remarks to aid the reader in grasping these terms. The accompanying remarks constitute a minimal use of the terms, but one that is sufficient for these terms to latch on to any ontological joints that might be in the neighborhood.<sup>32</sup>

So, granted that the “position explicated” in “Ways of Being” is internally coherent and interesting, is it actually Heidegger’s?

It appeared to at least this reader of McDaniel’s paper that, unless there is some information that he chooses to withhold for the benefit of a reader not deeply invested in Heidegger, his entire case for representing Heidegger’s kinds of being by existential quantifiers hangs on a single thread of the intuitiveness of Quine’s dictum that “[t]o be assumed as an entity is, purely and simply, to be reckoned as the value of a variable” (within the scope of the existential quantifier).<sup>33</sup>

For consider that, even setting aside my doubts about his objection to predicative interpretations of the kinds of being – to be spelled out in Section 6 - McDaniel’s rejection of constant symbols and predicates could demonstrate the efficacy of his preferred means of representation only on the condition that the vocabulary of logic was *exhausted* by these three expressions. But, manifestly, it is not. In principle, we can always extend the vocabulary of logic in ever new ways, corresponding to ways in which we reason about things. The history of logic is, in a large part, a history of such extensions, not least one of which was the introduction

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<sup>32</sup> McDaniel, “Ways of Being,” 311-312.

<sup>33</sup> Willard Van Orman Quine, “On What There Is,” in *From a Logical Point of View* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 1-19, here 13. Cf. McDaniel, “Ways of Being,” 302.

of the quantificational apparatus itself by Frege.<sup>34</sup> So, the argument by elimination does not work here at all. For, any such an argument will invariably open itself to the following line of doubt: what if the kinds of being are *neither* constant symbols, *nor* special predicates, *nor* quantifier-meanings, *nor* what-have-you? What if their proper logical form is one we have yet to work out from scratch?

So, intuitive though Quine's dictum might be to McDaniel, it is very much in order to ask if Heidegger found it as intuitive as he.

## 2. Kinds of Being and Quantificational Questions

I propose that, if Heidegger accepted Quine's dictum, two (overlapping) classes of sentences would be in evidence in *BT*.

First, we would find sentences that disavow his existential commitment to something - and that do so without supporting the predicative interpretation of the kinds of being McDaniel rejects (and I accept).

That they might do just that is a genuine worry, for consider the following sentence from Division 1 of *BT*:

S: What is ready-to-hand in the environment is certainly not present-at-hand for an external observer exempt from Dasein...<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Other examples conspicuous here are Sider's structure operator and Fine's reality operator. Cf. Sider, *Writing the Book*, 91-94; Fine, "The Question of Ontology," 171-172.

<sup>35</sup> *SZ*, 106 [23].

Take ‘R’ as short for “ready-to-hand in the environment” and ‘P’ as short for “present-at-hand for an external observer exempt from Dasein.” Now, owing to the interdefinability of existential and universal quantification, it does not matter, logically speaking, whether we interpret S as

S1:  $\forall x (Rx \supset \neg Px)$  [‘For all  $x$ , if  $x$  is R, then it is not P.’]

or as:

S2:  $\neg \exists x (Rx \ \& \ Px)$  [‘There is no  $x$  such that it is both R and P.’].

For, S1 and S2 share their truth conditions. Still, even if S2 is as plausible an interpretation of S as S1 - making S a desired instance of a negative existential assertion - S cannot be cited in support of the thesis that Heidegger follows Quine’s dictum. For, either way, S deploys kinds of being in predicative positions. Thus, a reading of S in terms of S2 meets my first challenge (I will motivate it in a moment) only by supporting my own interpretation of the logic of Being at the expense of McDaniel’s.

Hence, we want Heidegger to say something like the following. ‘There are<sup>E</sup> no sticks and stones’ - where the expression ‘There is<sup>E</sup>/are<sup>E</sup>...’ is equivalent to an existential quantifier that ranges over all and over only those beings whose kind of being is *Existenz* (i.e. Daseins). Or: ‘There are<sup>Z</sup> no human beings’ – where the expression ‘There is<sup>Z</sup>/are<sup>Z</sup>...’ is equivalent to an existential quantifier that ranges over all and over only those beings whose kind of being is *Zuhandenheit* (i.e. paradigmatically tools). And so on. Of course, Heidegger never employs a turn of phrase exactly like these (with the superscript). They are just a placeholder for any possible expression of quantification of a local scope. But even sentences that employ the global existential quantifier rather than any of the Heideggerian ones would do. For example: ‘Nothing

is both red and not red at the same time.’ Or: ‘There is no such a thing as too much food after a healthy exercise.’

Second, we would find sentences that either disavow or affirm Heidegger’s existential commitment to something, and that do so by mentioning any of the kinds of being otherwise than as an object of such a commitment. (Again, sentences such as ‘There are ready-to-hand beings’ support the predicative interpretation of the kinds of being insofar as readiness-to-hand takes place of the predicate rather than of a quantifier type of expression.) For example, ‘There are chairs, but we should say that chairs are *zuhanden*.’ Or: ‘There are human beings, but we should say that human beings *exist* (in the sense of exhibiting Dasein’s Being).’ Although the kind of being in each of these sentences takes place not of the quantifier type of expression but of the predicate, it is clearly in some kind of competition with the standard apparatus of existential quantification. Considering just how difficult it is to heed McDaniel’s Heidegger’s advice to reason with local, rather than global, quantifiers outside of the realm of the logic-speak, it would be ungenerous not to count such sentences as evidence of the type of sentence in question.

My twofold proposal stems from the following considerations.

First, Heidegger clearly holds that the question of Being is non-trivial - otherwise there would be no point in reviving it – and if he does, indeed, accept Quine’s dictum, then he would no doubt regard the question of what can be quantified over as likewise non-trivial. So, it is incumbent on the proponent of the interpretation of the kinds of being in terms of existential quantification to show that it is not the case that, for Heidegger, just about anything can be quantified over (taking this to be the mark of triviality in quantificational questions). For, that is the only way, consistent with that interpretation, to block the following *modus tollens*: since, as far as we know, for Heidegger, anything can be quantified over, either he does not accept Quine’s dictum or he holds that the question of Being is trivial. The proponent of the quantificational interpretation needs to block this inference, because from its conclusion, one

can argue as follows. Heidegger does not that hold the question of Being is trivial. Therefore, he does not accept Quine's dictum. Hence, it is vital for McDaniel's quantificational reading of *BT* that we find sentences of the first type: that disavow Heidegger's existential commitment to something (without placing kinds of being in predicative positions, as in S2, for reasons already mentioned).

Second, even if Heidegger thought that the question of what can be quantified over is non-trivial, it does not follow that he held that his investigation of different kinds of being in *BT* would help us address *this*, as opposed to some other, question. So, it is equally important that we find sentences that either disavow or affirm his existential commitment to something and that do so by mentioning any of the kinds of being (again, without deploying them in predicative positions).

My first objection to McDaniel's quantificational interpretation of the kinds of being is that sentences belonging to either class are nowhere to be found. On the one hand, there is, as far as I know, no sentence in Heidegger's body of work that denies that there is something without supporting the predicative interpretation of the kinds of being (as in the case of S2 above). On the other hand, there is, as far as I know, no sentence in Heidegger's body of work that mentions any of the kinds of being and univocally affirms or disavows his existential commitment to something. Regarding the (right) candidate sentences of disavowal, that is because – or so I have just claimed - there are none. Regarding candidate sentences of affirmation, I claim that every such a sentence could just as well – or indeed more plausibly - be interpreted as affirming a “universal commitment” to something, similar in its logical form to S1 above. The basic formula here is ‘ $\forall x(Fx \supset Bx)$ ’, where ‘*F*’ stands for a feature of objects that serves to separate some objects in the domain of discourse from others and ‘*B*’ for its appropriate kind of being. For example, ‘For all *x*, if *x* is a chair, then it is ready-to-hand.’

Of course, the absence of evidence is not the same as the evidence of absence. But, with his quantificational interpretation of the kinds of being, McDaniel claims to capture the hard

core of Heidegger's project in *BT*. It would be incredible if he was right about the logical import of Heidegger's project and if sentences of either type did not turn up somewhere.

Since it is impossible to produce evidence of Heidegger's failing to say something (respectively, to disavow an existential commitment to something consistently with McDaniel's interpretation and either to disavow it or to affirm it by mentioning any of the kinds of being), my argument here amounts to no more than a challenge to the reader sympathetic to McDaniel's interpretation. I have now raised it and I am eagerly awaiting a reply. Still, partly in order for the reader to get her money's worth, and partly to explain what kind of reply will definitely not satisfy me, I would like to (merely) illustrate each of my claims.

Thus, to start with my first claim, whether or not there is God is, without doubt, a substantial metaphysical issue, and at that one about which even many non-metaphysicians have a view. Since Heidegger – a one-time seminarian - does dedicate a lot of attention to the concept of God (though not really in *BT*), we might expect that at one point or another he would entertain the thought that there is no God (and perhaps argue that there is). But, to the best of my knowledge - and with all due respect to Béatrice Han-Pile who asserts that “Heidegger does not believe in the existence of God”<sup>36</sup> - Heidegger never entertains such a thought.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Beatrice Han-Pile, “Early Heidegger's Appropriation of Kant,” in *A Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 80-101, here 93.

<sup>37</sup> There is a widely circulated quote from Heidegger's introduction to a never-written book on Aristotle dating from 1922 that “philosophy is *in principle* atheistic.” Martin Heidegger, *Supplements*, ed. John van Buren (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 121. However, commentators generally agree that Heidegger does not deploy the word “atheistic” here in its usual sense. Cf. Herman Philipse, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being* (Princeton:



The most thorough discussion of God's existence in Heidegger's work can be found in a lecture course he offers in Winter Semester 1920-21 entitled "The Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion" and devoted to the task of the phenomenological reconstruction of the "religious life" as it manifests itself in selected letters of Paul. In his commentary to the First Letter to Thessalonians, in particular, Heidegger attempts to make sense of the way in which, after converting to Christianity, Thessalonians now stand in community with Paul characterised as "*Gewordensein*" ("having-become" – that's Heidegger's translation of "γενέσθαι"). He analyses "*Gewordensein*" as follows:

The having-become is understood such that with the acceptance, the one who accepts treads upon an effective connection with God... The main passage which clarifies the connection is 1:9-10. It is about an *absolute turning-around*, more precisely about a *turning-toward* God and a *turning-away* from idol-images... The acceptance consists in entering oneself into the anguish of life. A joy is bound therewith, one which comes from the Holy Spirit and is incomprehensible to life. παραλαμβάνειν does not mean a belonging; rather it means an acceptance with the winning of a living effective connection with God. The being-present of God has a basic relationship to the transformation of life... The acceptance is in itself a transformation before God.<sup>38</sup>

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Princeton University Press, 1998), 94; John van Buren, "The Earliest Heidegger: A New Field of Research," in *A Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 19-31, here 25.

<sup>38</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, ed. Matthias Jung, Thomas Regehly, and Claudius Strube, *Gesamtausgabe* 60 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1995), 94-95; English translation: *Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch and

It is evident that, throughout this short passage, Heidegger is prepared to take the evidence of Paul's religious life, as it presents itself in the letters, at face value – at least as far as quantificational questions are concerned. Indeed, as we learn shortly thereafter, the success of the attempted phenomenological exercise depends on our ability to “to determine the sense of the objecthood” – “*Gegenständlichkeit*” (literally the ‘standing over against’) - “of God”<sup>39</sup> (with whom “the one who accepts” above “treads upon an effective connection [*Wirkungszusammenhang*]”). Heidegger proposes that this “can be realized only if one carries out the explication of the conceptual connections” to other concepts that emerged in the preliminary analysis of the religious life as it manifests itself in Paul's letters. He complains that “[t]his... has never been attempted, because Greek philosophy penetrated into Christianity.” (“Only Luther made an advance in this direction and from this his hatred of Aristotle can be explained.”<sup>40</sup>)

This approach to God's “objecthood” – as something that needs to be *elucidated* rather than questioned with respect to whether it ought to be affirmed or denied - does not change significantly even for the so-called “late” Heidegger, the special place in whose heart has long been vacated by Luther and medieval Christian mystics<sup>41</sup> and repopulated by prominent critics

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Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 66. Henceforth cited as *GA* 60 with German and English page references, respectively.

<sup>39</sup> *GA* 60, 97/67.

<sup>40</sup> *GA* 60, 97/67.

<sup>41</sup> They were the topic of the first lecture course Heidegger was to offer at the University of Freiburg in 1919 but that never took place. For his (embryonic but suggestive) lecture notes, see *GA* 60.

of Christianity such as Nietzsche and Marx.<sup>42</sup> Both “the death of God”<sup>43</sup> and the notion that “God and the gods withhold their presence”<sup>44</sup> - frequently invoked during this period - *presuppose* the “being-present of God” of which speaks the young Heidegger above. God can only die only on the condition that, before, there was God. God and the gods can be said to “withhold their presence” only on the condition that they can be quantified over, since they are both the subject and (indirectly) the object of this mysterious activity. Thus, shortly after the Second World War, Heidegger instructs his French readers in a famous pastoral letter of his own – better known as the “Letter on ‘Humanism’” - that “it is not only rash but also an error in procedure to maintain that the interpretation of the essence of man from the relation of his essence to the truth of Being is atheism” just as it is to hold that “such a philosophy does not decide either for or against the existence of God.”<sup>45</sup>

What I take this to show, absent any evidence to the contrary, is that, for Heidegger, anything<sup>46</sup> anyone<sup>47</sup> ever<sup>48</sup> says there is, truly is (in the sense of being quantifiable over) – excepting objects ruled out by his considerations of the nature of various kinds of being (as in S2 above) and perhaps inconsistent objects, as every commentator seems to agree that the

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, *Gesamtausgabe 9* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 339-340; English translation: *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 258-259. Henceforth cited as *GA 9* with German and English page references, respectively.

<sup>43</sup> *GA 9*, 347/264.

<sup>44</sup> *GA 9*, 338/258.

<sup>45</sup> *GA 9*, 351/267.

<sup>46</sup> God.

<sup>47</sup> Paul (or whoever claims to be him).

<sup>48</sup> Decades after the believed death of Jesus Christ.

“early” Heidegger, at least, accepted the principle of non-contradiction<sup>49</sup> and I am not aware of any consideration against this consensus. Still, in each case, the question remains in what way. And, as every reader of *BT* knows, this question remains whether or not we are considering entities like God, whose existence many find dubious, entities like sticks and stones, whose existence only philosophers could find dubious, or even entities like ourselves, whose existence not even philosophers have earnestly attempted to put in question.

The second illustration. One might think that Heidegger’s discussion of Kant on the question of “whether the external world can be proved” in the last chapter of Division 1 of *BT* is a straightforward example of Heidegger’s engaging with a quantificational question. Namely, is there a world of objects external to the mind? But if so, I surely cannot deny that called upon to resolve this question is precisely Heidegger’s – at this point in the book reasonably developed - conceptual apparatus of the kinds of being.

Here is a rough sketch of the exchange between Kant and Heidegger. Kant complains in the Preface to the second edition of the first *Critique* that

it [...] remains a scandal to philosophy and to human reason in general that the existence [*Dasein*] of things outside us (from which we derive the whole material of knowledge, even for our inner sense) must be accepted merely on *faith*, and that if anyone thinks

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<sup>49</sup> Filippo Casati argues that Heidegger came to embrace paraconsistent logic later, in his *Contributions to Philosophy*. Cf. Filippo Casati, “Heidegger and the Contradiction of Being: A Dialethic Interpretation of the Late Heidegger,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 27, no. 5 (2019): 1002-1024.

good to doubt their existence, we are unable to counter his doubts by any satisfactory proof.<sup>50</sup>

And, in the newly added “Refutation of Idealism,” he develops a novel argument to the conclusion that “things outside us” do, indeed, exist.<sup>51</sup> Heidegger argues that Kant’s argument in the “Refutation” falls short of this conclusion<sup>52</sup> (it need not bother us here why). But Kant’s even more serious mistake, in Heidegger’s eyes, was that he had *attempted* to prove the existence of the external world in the first place: “[t]he ‘scandal of philosophy’ is not that [the] proof [of the existence of the external world] has yet to be given, but that *such proofs are expected and attempted again and again.*”<sup>53</sup> For, Heidegger claims that it is in fact essential for Dasein that it preoccupies itself with “things” that populate the ‘world’ in the relevant sense. So, if we can assume that “we” exist, then so does the external world:

If Dasein is understood correctly, it defies such proofs, because, *in its Being*, it already *is* what subsequent proofs deem necessary to demonstrate for it.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2016), BxI; English translation: *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 34. Henceforth cited as *KRV* with German and English page references, respectively.

<sup>51</sup> *KRV*, B274-79/244-247.

<sup>52</sup> “Kant... is incorrect from the standpoint of the tendency of his proof.” *SZ*, 204 [43A]. Cf. *SZ*, 203-205 [43A].

<sup>53</sup> *SZ*, 205 [43A].

<sup>54</sup> *SZ*, 205 [43A]. The first italics are mine and the second Heidegger’s.

So, there is a quantificational question that preoccupies Heidegger: the question of whether or not there is an external world. And, whatever the details of his case against Kant are, he does address this question by referring what purports to be the global notion of existence at work in Kant (incidentally, Kant expresses this notion by the term “*Dasein*”) - but which, Heidegger claims, only encapsulates the local “presence-at-hand”<sup>55</sup> - to the local notion of *Dasein*’s Being (now in Heidegger’s sense).

However, a more careful reading will show that it is not the case that Heidegger understands Kant’s problem of the external world as a quantificational question. Rather, he understands it as an instance of Fine’s question of a universal commitment: namely, are (all) objects that are experienced as external to us – and that do not fail tests of their ‘reality’ internal to our representations (taking the apparently bent stick out of water and the like) - “real”? For, it is in terms of this predicate, rather than in terms of existential quantification, that Heidegger himself analyses Kant’s “Refutation” to whose problem he refers as “[t]he question of the ‘reality’ (“*Realität*”) of the ‘external world’.”<sup>56</sup>

To *have faith* in the reality of the ‘external world’, whether rightly or wrongly; to “*prove*” this reality for it, whether adequately or inadequately; to *presuppose* it, whether explicitly or not – attempts such as these which have not mastered their own basis with

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<sup>55</sup> “We must in the first instance note explicitly that Kant uses the term ‘*Dasein*’ to designate that kind of being which in the present investigation we have called ‘presence-at-hand’. ‘Consciousness of my *Dasein*’ means for Kant a consciousness of my Being-present-at-hand in the sense of Descartes. When Kant uses the term ‘*Dasein*’ he has in mind the Being-present-at-hand of consciousness just as much as the Being-present-at-hand of Things.” *SZ*, 203 [43A].

<sup>56</sup> *SZ*, 203 [43A].

full transparency, presuppose a subject which is proximally *worldless* or unsure of its world, and which must, at bottom, first assure itself of a world.<sup>57</sup>

I will now argue that, in fact, Heidegger speaks here of “reality” in more or less the same sense in which Fine does (to be fleshed out in Section 5 – but my remarks from the start of this paper will be entirely sufficient).

Shortly after his discussion of Kant on the external world, Heidegger distinguishes between two ways in which he employs terms such as the “real” and “reality” in *BT*. First, “as an ontological term” of his own, he employs them as referring, respectively, to the totality of “beings within-the-world (*innerweltliches Seiendes*)” (i.e., as I understand this never defined term,<sup>58</sup> beings insofar as they are intelligible to Dasein who, insofar as it enacts this

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<sup>57</sup> *SZ*, 206 [43A].

<sup>58</sup> But consider this passage from the *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason* (a lecture course delivered months after the publication of the first edition of *BT*): “When we say about a being that it is innerworldly (*innerweltlich*) – like nature, for example – this being still does not have the mode of being which *comports* itself *toward* a world; it does not have the mode of being of *being-in-the-world*. It has the mode of being of extantness (*Vorhandenseins*), to which additionally the determination of innerworldliness can accrue when a Dasein exists which lets that being be encountered as innerworldly in Dasein’s being-in-the-world.” Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretation von Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, ed. Ingrid Görland, *Gesamtausgabe* 25 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1995), 19 [2]; English translation: *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 14 [2]. Henceforth cited as *GA* 25 with German and English page references, respectively, followed by the section number in square brackets.

understanding, is “in-” rather than “within-“ the world) and their character as such.<sup>59</sup> Second, he sometimes employs these terms in their “traditional signification” as well, according to which “reality” “stand[s] for Being in the sense of the pure presence-at-hand of things (*pure[] Dingvorhandenheit*),”<sup>60</sup> which, as a result of a process constituent of Dasein’s Being Heidegger calls “falling” (*Verfallen*), overshadows other kinds of being and comes to be understood equivalently with “*Being in general*.”<sup>61</sup>

Since restricting the notion of reality to objects that enjoy the pure presence-at-hand of things implies, at least for Heidegger, that there are objects that are not real and that still in some sense *are*, the only way in which I can make sense of a process in which “‘*Being in general*’ is said to acquire the meaning of ‘reality’”<sup>62</sup> is as a process whereby philosophers come to use the predicate ‘real’ to single out objects in the domain of discourse that are supposed to carry the ontological burden of the entire domain (in defiance of Quine, for whom all objects in the domain of discourse come ontologically loaded). And this is essentially the use of this predicate that Fine has in mind in “The Question of Ontology.”

Noting that *both* senses of “reality” invoked by Heidegger in *BT* are inconsistent with the quantificational interpretation of Heidegger’s engagement with Kant’s problem of the external world – for, in each case, the term has a counterextension in the same domain of discourse (respectively, beings characterised by Being-in-the-world and beings that are not real in Fine’s sense) – it is clear that Heidegger’s discussion of Kant employs this term in the second sense.

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<sup>59</sup> SZ, 211 [43C].

<sup>60</sup> SZ, 211 [43C].

<sup>61</sup> SZ, 201 [43]. Cf. SZ, 175-180 [38].

<sup>62</sup> SZ, 201 [43].



The entire Section 43 of *BT*, of which Heidegger's discussion of Kant on the external world in 43A is the first instalment, is dedicated to what he calls the "problem of reality"<sup>63</sup> and to how this problem connects with his own question of Being. Heidegger's main polemical theses are that, although the term "reality" makes frequent appearances in modern philosophy, it has never been sufficiently clarified, and that Kant – and perhaps ultimately Descartes – are to be blamed for this state of affairs:

Of [...] questions about reality, the one which comes first in order is the ontological question of what "reality" signifies in general. But as long as a pure ontological problematic and methodology was lacking, this question (if it was explicitly formulated at all) was necessarily confounded with a discussion of the 'problem of the external world'; for the analysis of reality is possible only on the basis of our having appropriate access to the real. But it has long been held that the way to grasp the real is by that kind of knowing which is characterized by beholding. Such knowing 'is' as a way in which the soul – or consciousness – behaves. In so far as reality has the character of something independent and "in itself," the question of the meaning of "reality" becomes linked with that of whether the real can be independent 'of consciousness' or whether there can be a transcendence of consciousness into the 'sphere' of the real.<sup>64</sup>

It makes *no* sense to think that Heidegger accuses historical figures like Descartes and Kant – and modern philosophers arguably indebted to them like Dilthey and Scheler<sup>65</sup> - of failing to

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<sup>63</sup> SZ, 201 [43].

<sup>64</sup> SZ, 202 [43A].

<sup>65</sup> Cf. SZ, 209-211 [43B].

clarify his own technical term (whose counterextension are objects that are-in-the-world). So, he must be talking about “reality” in its “traditional signification.”

Therefore, Kant’s problem, as Heidegger understands it, is not whether the objects outside of mind belong in the domain of discourse. It is whether the objects in the domain of discourse to which the predicate ‘outside of mind’ applies, are also “real,” where the questioned “reality” of the said objects answers to some philosophically exacting standard of being the case (if Heidegger is right, the relevant *manner* of being the case consists in the “pure presence-at-hand of things”). Heidegger’s Kant asks: is it, *ceteris paribus*, true of all objects of a certain kind (outside of mind), that they meet this standard? And Heidegger replies: we should reckon here with more than one such a standard; and, our meeting our own – and that is to say, Dasein’s – standard implies that the objects in question do, indeed, meet Kant’s standard as well.

So, Heidegger’s discussion of Kant on the external world fails to make a connection between the kinds of being and the existential quantification of the sort required by McDaniel’s quantificational interpretation of Heidegger’s kinds of being; and I cannot help but suspect that any other apparent evidence of such a connection in Heidegger’s body of work will be an artefact of our own meta-ontological presuppositions in much the same way.

### **3. Beings of Many Kinds**

My second objection to McDaniel’s quantificational interpretation of the kinds of being is that Heidegger allows for a single being’s being in more than one way. Although McDaniel could easily incorporate this feature of Heidegger’s thinking into his quantificational framework if only he allowed, in turn, that the domains of the Heideggerian quantifiers may overlap, after all, the obvious thing to say – given the first objection above – is that, for Heidegger, there is nothing wrong about fitting all beings in a single domain of discourse.

Here is a well-known passage, in which Heidegger endorses the view that beings can fall under more than one kind of being, whose topic is a special case of deficiency of ready-to-hand beings - “conspicuousness:”

When we concern ourselves with something, the beings which are most closely ready-to-hand may be met as something unusable, not properly adapted for the use we have decided upon. The tool turns out to be damaged, or the material unsuitable. In each of these cases, *equipment* is here, ready-to-hand. We discover its unusability, however, not by looking at it and establishing its properties, but rather by the circumspection of the dealings in which we use it. When its unusability is thus discovered, equipment becomes conspicuous. This *conspicuousness* presents the ready-to-hand equipment as in a certain un-readiness-to-hand. But this implies that what cannot be used just lies there; it shows itself as an equipmental thing which looks so and so, and which, in its readiness-to-hand as looking that way, has constantly been present-at-hand too.<sup>66</sup>

The passage could not state more clearly – in its last sentence - that a single being can belong in more than one kind of being. The same piece of equipment that has been fully ready-to-hand up to now, reveals itself as present-to-hand, too, and indeed *all along*. So, not only is it the case that one and the same thing can be in one way at one time and in another way at another: it can be in both ways at one and the same time. But if so, McDaniel’s decision to represent Heidegger’s kinds of being by existential quantifiers with non-overlapping domains just cannot be right.

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<sup>66</sup> SZ, 73 [16].

However, in another thought-provoking paper called “Heidegger’s Metaphysics of Material Beings,” McDaniel acknowledges, if not the well-known passage above,<sup>67</sup> then at least that the “one domain” view (as he calls it) which I have just ascribed to Heidegger on the basis of this passage is in fact ascribed to Heidegger by a vast majority of Heidegger scholars.<sup>68</sup> McDaniel develops three arguments against this broad consensus, each of which needs a reply.

McDaniel’s first argument appeals to Leibniz’s Law:

Leibniz’s Law states that  $x$  is numerically identical with  $y$  if and only if  $x$  and  $y$  have the same properties. Heidegger ascribes incompatible properties to the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand. So either Heidegger’s view is inconsistent, or the properties are ascribed to distinct entities. (Or Leibniz’s Law is false or for some reason inapplicable; I set these purported options aside.)<sup>69</sup>

Since everyone agrees that Heidegger disapproved of logical inconsistency in *BT*, we should therefore give up on the one domain view.

McDaniel elaborates on three cases of relevant incompatible properties: modal, temporal, and axiological.

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<sup>67</sup> Unless we count his discussion of remarks made by other commentators in relation to this passage as a sufficient acknowledgement. Cf. McDaniel, “Heidegger’s Metaphysics,” 337 (Blattner); McDaniel, “Heidegger’s Metaphysics,” 344-347 (Dreyfus).

<sup>68</sup> For an overview, see McDaniel, “Heidegger’s Metaphysics,” 334-335.

<sup>69</sup> McDaniel “Heidegger’s Metaphysics,” 338.

As for modal properties, McDaniel understands Heidegger as holding, first, that, whereas present-at-hand beings can be whether or not Dasein exists, ready-to-hand beings can only be if Dasein exists,<sup>70</sup> and, second, that they have incompatible identity conditions:

Traditionally, present-at-hand entities were thought to be individuated by their spatiotemporal location; if two present-to-hand entities are located at the same spacetime region, then they aren't really two: "they" are identical. Ready-to-hand entities are not individuated in this way: they are individuated by their node in a network of equipmental relations: the hammer is for hammering nails, the nails are for joining the boards of the shed, the shed is for storing the hammer and the nails, etc.<sup>71</sup>

So, counting beings according to each of these identity-conditions, we will arrive at a different number of things that there are.

As for temporal properties, McDaniel asserts, following Dahlstrom<sup>72</sup> that:

Heidegger distinguishes three different kinds of time-series: dimensional time, world time, and timeliness, and this distinction corresponds to "Heidegger's ontological division into being-on-hand, being-handy, and being-here." In other words, each of the three different kinds of Being Heidegger focuses on in *Being and Time* corresponds to a distinct kind of time. Neither a present-at-hand object nor a ready-to-hand object

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<sup>70</sup> McDaniel, "Heidegger's Metaphysics," 338-339.

<sup>71</sup> McDaniel, "Heidegger's Metaphysics," 339-340.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Daniel O. Dahlstrom, *Heidegger's Concept of Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 380-381.

enjoys Dasein's specific kind of temporality. More to the point here, they do not enjoy each other's specific form of temporality.<sup>73</sup>

Finally, regarding axiological properties, he asserts that "the ready-to-hand are essentially bearers of value, whereas no present-at-hand object is."<sup>74</sup>

Unfortunately, I do not see how different kinds of properties Heidegger assigns to present-at-hand and ready-to-hand beings, though incompatible, engender a contradiction even if Heidegger supported the one domain view, as the following two analogies will show.

It is true of all pebbles that they may exist whether I possess them or not. And it is true of all my possessions that they are my possessions only on the condition that I possess them. But this does not entail that I have just pocketed two things from the ground: one that is a pebble and another that is (now) a possession of mine. There need not be a genuine contradiction in saying – should I so desire – that it is both necessary and contingent for the thing I picked from the ground that I possess it. For this might be just an elliptical way of saying that the thing I picked remains my possession only as long as I possess it and that it remains a pebble even if I no longer possess it.

Now suppose that I picked several pebbles from the ground, some grayish, and some not. Unless I am a really terrible counter, counting pebbles that I took and counting grayish things that I took will yield a different number. But this does not entail that pebbles and greyish things do not belong in a single domain of discourse. Manifestly, they do. I have just delivered a perfectly intelligible (I hope) short speech about both.

I do not see how any of McDaniel's cases of incompatible properties above differ in any significant respect from my first analogy and that his case of individuation of different kinds of

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<sup>73</sup> McDaniel, "Heidegger's Metaphysics," 340.

<sup>74</sup> McDaniel, "Heidegger's Metaphysics," 340.

being differs in any significant respect from the second one. But in that case Heidegger *can* get away with things McDaniel quotes him as saying even if he supported the one domain view.

And, indeed, a closer scrutiny of the passages cited by McDaniel reveals that Heidegger does not assign the properties in question directly to objects, as it were. Rather, he assigns them to objects *insofar as* they have other properties (more precisely, insofar as they fall under different kinds of being), which is just a way of illuminating the latter by means of the former.

Take, for example, these two passages from *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* cited by McDaniel in support of the incompatibility of modal properties of the present-at-hand with those of the ready-to-hand. What Heidegger says about present-at-hand beings (that are a part of the natural world) is this:

Intrawordliness [i.e. being intelligible in one's Being to Dasein] belongs to the being of the extant (*Vorhandene*), of nature, not as a determination of its being, but as a possible determination, and one that is necessary for the possibility of the uncoverability of nature.<sup>75</sup>

And here is what he says about the cultural artefacts:

There are beings, however, to whose being intraworldliness belongs in a certain way. Such beings are all those we call historical entities... all the things that the human being... creates, shapes, and cultivates: all his culture and his works. Beings of this kind are only, or, more exactly, arise only and come into being only as intraworldly. Culture is not in the way that nature is.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> McDaniel, "Heidegger's Metaphysics," 338; *GA* 24, 240/169 [15].

<sup>76</sup> McDaniel, "Heidegger's Metaphysics," 338-339; *GA* 25, 241/169 [15].

Heidegger could not be clearer in asserting that “*Innerweltlichkeit*” characterises nature contingently insofar as it is “*vorhanden*” rather than insofar as it is a collection of objects regardless of their kind of being. At any rate, he explicitly talks about necessary and merely possible determinations of “*its being*” (i.e. of nature *qua* “*vorhanden*”). Similarly with the necessary “*Innerweltlichkeit*” of the “historical entities” (including, but perhaps not limited to, ready-to-hand objects<sup>77</sup>). Notice, again, how carefully Heidegger limits the property-ascription to only a division of beings in general: “Beings *of this kind* are only, or, more exactly, arise only and come into being only as intraworldly.”

The inconsistency McDaniel claims to find here (for the one domain Heidegger whom he rejects) would only arise if Heidegger attributed both incompatible modal properties to beings of a single kind or to beings regardless of their kind. However, Heidegger does neither of these things. He attributes each to a different kind of being.

McDaniel’s second argument against the one domain view appeals to Heidegger’s method in *BT* – “phenomenology”<sup>78</sup> - which he understands as involving “the study of the given as it is given” (in experience). The argument is that the results of any inquiry into Being that employs this method threaten to be consistent with – perhaps even to support - traditional idealism believed in by Berkley:

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<sup>77</sup> Artworks, too, are something “the human being... creates,” and, in the 1930s, Heidegger will go on to analyse their kind of being very differently to readiness-to-hand. Cf. Martin Heidegger, “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes,” in *Holzwege*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, *Gesamtausgabe* 5 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 1-74; English translation: “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. and ed. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-56.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. *SZ*, 27-39 [7].



The idealist could in principle grant Heidegger that we are essentially in a world filled with other people, hammers, cars, etc. This fact doesn't necessarily show that a robust version of idealism is false. It may be the case that I exist only if tools exist. But this doesn't tell us what these tools are made of. Only a hasty philosopher would conclude that, since I exist only if there are tools, it follows that tools are made out of continuous masses of matter, strings, or quarks, or whatnot. From the fact that I exist only if there are Fs, nothing immediately follows about what the Fs are composed of or the necessary conditions under which Fs exist.<sup>79</sup>

Although Heidegger explicitly rejects traditional idealism (recall his claim of Dasein's dependence on the external world), McDaniel argues that

nothing could justify Heidegger in claiming that the Berkeleyian ontology is false if (1) the method of ontology is phenomenology, the study of the given as it is given and (2) when it comes to material objects, the whole content of what is given to us consists merely in entities that typically appear to us as tools.<sup>80</sup>

“Fortunately” for Heidegger, though, “more is given:”

I claim that Heidegger follows Husserl in believing that essential features are given. So if in some situations, some entities are given to us along with their essential features in such a way as to make it clear that those entities are metaphysically independent of us,

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<sup>79</sup> McDaniel, “Heidegger’s Metaphysics,” 342.

<sup>80</sup> McDaniel, “Heidegger’s Metaphysics,” 342-343.

Heidegger has phenomenological grounds for rejecting Berkeleyian idealism (as well as some versions of Cartesian skepticism).<sup>81</sup>

McDaniel spends a half of the space he dedicates to his second argument on defending this view from its critics – especially Dreyfus - according to whom Heidegger’s phenomenology reveals objects but never essential features of objects.<sup>82</sup>

Unfortunately, from my own perspective, this dialectical emphasis is misplaced, because – unlike Dreyfus - I am happy to concede that, throughout *BT*, Heidegger talks about what he perceives as essential features of different kinds of objects. What I am not happy to concede is that these essential features of objects could be understood in terms of existential quantification, let alone existential quantification over non-overlapping domains.

The closest McDaniel comes to pressing me to change my mind is below:

Heidegger holds that certain objects are given to us, and moreover are given in a certain way. If the one domain view is correct, the distinction between the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand amounts to a distinction between how one and the same set of things are given. The ready-to-hand way of giving objects enjoys a kind of priority in that typically and for the most part things are given in that way. But on the one domain view, this fact isn’t interesting from a metaphysical perspective (as opposed to an epistemological or “phenomenological” perspective), since we are still dealing with one and the same set of entities.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> McDaniel, “Heidegger’s Metaphysics,” 343.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. McDaniel, “Heidegger’s Metaphysics,” 344-349.

<sup>83</sup> McDaniel, “Heidegger’s Metaphysics,” 341-342.

Perhaps, if, on the one domain view, it was *necessarily* true that all present-at-hand objects are ready-to-hand and all ready-to-hand objects are present-at-hand, we would have some grounds for registering the difference between the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand by allocating each to a different domain of discourse. For we would otherwise struggle to explain what the supposed metaphysical (as opposed to merely subjective) distinction between them might consist in. (But note that this still does not justify the thesis that such diverse domains of discourse may not overlap - what is needed is just that they do not coincide.)

However, even if the one-domainer might perhaps be persuaded that all ready-to-hand objects are present-at-hand – even (let us be generous) necessarily so - it is easy enough for her to deny that all present-at-hand objects are ready-to-hand, in which case she will, of course, also deny that, on her view, this is true as a matter of necessity. Take, for example, a rock stuck deep in the ocean’s floor that has never been a part of any human project. Or, for a more Heideggerian example, take another case of equipment’s deficiency, “obtrusiveness” (incidentally, a further example in *BT* of a being falling under more than one kind of being):

In our concerned dealings... we also find things which are missing – which not only are not ‘handy’ (“*handlich*”) but are not ‘to hand’ (“*Zur Hand*”) at all. Again, to miss something in this way amounts to coming across something un-ready-to-hand. When we notice what is un-ready-to-hand, that which is ready-to-hand enters the mode of *obtrusiveness*. The more urgently we need what is missing, and the more authentically it is encountered in its un-readiness-to-hand, all the more obtrusive does that which is ready-to-hand become – so much so, indeed, that it seems to lose its character of readiness-to-hand. *It reveals itself as something just present-at-hand and no more, which cannot be budged without the thing that is missing.*<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> *SZ*, 73 [16]. Italics in the last sentence added.

Hence, McDaniel's second argument, too, commands little convincing power – even over those who share his understanding of Heidegger's method in *BT*. Heidegger's metaphysical distinctions can be incorporated into the one-domain framework - and without much difficulty.

McDaniel's third – “*hermeneutical*” – argument is, dialectically speaking, the weakest of the lot. Here, McDaniel revisits a number of well-known (if not always well-understood) passages from Heidegger's work from the period of *BT*. He shows how the proposed rejection of the one domain view “reveal[s] [their] previously unnoticed depth and texture.” This is not irrelevant to the issue of contention, because it is a mark of “[a] good interpretation” that it “can shed new light on old and problematic texts.”<sup>85</sup>

I agree with McDaniel about the features of a “good interpretation,” and I even agree that, without more context, his is an attractive reading of many passages at which he invites us to look again in the light of his quantificational framework. However, I also think that the context of these passages – the cases of equipmental breakdown in Section 16 of *BT* – renders this reading untenable and that neither of McDaniel's two main arguments for this reading is persuasive. And tenable and persuasive are two other qualities we want to see in a good interpretation.

I conclude that there is no real case against thinking that beings in *BT* can belong in more than one kind of being, in which case my second objection against McDaniel's quantificational interpretation stands.

#### **4. The Grammar of Being in *Being and Time***

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<sup>85</sup> McDaniel, “Heidegger's Metaphysics,” 349-350.

My third – and final - objection to McDaniel’s quantificational interpretation is that Heidegger’s kinds of being are, in fact, *always* expressed either through a verb or an adjective fronted by a copula in the position of the predicate or through nouns variously derivative of such a predicative employment in the position of a subject or an object (rather than ever through a quantifier type of expression equivalent to ‘There is/are’, ‘a/an’, or ‘some’). So, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, this linguistic practice found in a philosopher known for paying considerable attention to issues of philosophical expression suggests, precisely, the interpretation of the kinds of being as marking (among other things) distinctions between special predicates in logic rather than between existential quantifiers.

The following passage from Chapter 3 of Division 1 of *BT* is exemplary of Heidegger’s German in most relevant respects:

The [1.] *ready-to-hand* (“[d]as Zuhandene”) is not grasped theoretically at all, nor is it itself the sort of thing that circumspection takes proximally as circumspective theme. The peculiarity of what is proximally [2.] *ready-to-hand* (“des... Zuhandenen”) is that, in its [3.] *readiness-to-hand* (“Zuhandenheit”), it must, as it were, withdraw in order to be [4.] *ready-to-hand* (“zuhanden”) quite authentically.<sup>86</sup>

Occurrences 1 and 2 of readiness-to-hand are concrete nouns referring to the totality of objects to which the predicate ‘...is ready-to-hand’ applies. Occurrence 3 is the abstract noun referring to the ‘quality’ expressed in the adjectival part of this predicate. Finally, Occurrence 4 is that adjective itself.

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<sup>86</sup> SZ, 69 [15]. Italics added.

There is also a verb that goes with readiness-to-hand in *BT*: ‘to refer’ (“*verweisen*”). “Reference,” which, as Heidegger argues, “*constitutes* readiness-to-hand,”<sup>87</sup> designates the process by which one ready-to-hand item “refers” – or better, “assigns” (as “*verweisen*” might also be translated) – Dasein to other ready-to-hand items that orient its ongoing practical projects. Thus, Heidegger might say, “[h]ammer, tongs, and needle, refer in themselves to steel, iron, metal, mineral, wood, in that they consist of these.”<sup>88</sup> Or he might say,

[t]he work produced refers not only to the “towards-which” of its usability and the “whereof” of which it consists: under simple craft conditions it also has an assignment (“*Verweisung*”) to the person who is to use it or wear it.”<sup>89</sup>

Of course, the grammar and the logic of Being are not the same thing, so, in principle, the reader sympathetic to McDaniel’s interpretation might object that the grammar of Heidegger’s German is not the best guide to its underlying logic. But we saw earlier that this is not, in fact, an objection McDaniel himself would make. For, he claims that, in *BT*, “Heidegger... abandon[s] ordinary language, and move[s] to a technical language” of his own.<sup>90</sup> And I believe that he claims rightly.

In the closing pages of the Introduction to *BT*, Heidegger justifies taking such liberties as follows:

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<sup>87</sup> *SZ*, 83 [17]. My italics.

<sup>88</sup> *SZ*, 70 [15].

<sup>89</sup> *SZ*, 70-71 [15].

<sup>90</sup> McDaniel, “Ways of Being,” 311-312.

With regard to the awkwardness and ‘inelegance’ of expression in the analyses to come, we may remark that it is one thing to give a report in which we tell about *beings*, but another to grasp beings in their *Being*. For the latter task we lack not only most of the words but, above all, the ‘grammar’.<sup>91</sup>

Still, these calculated “awkwardness and ‘inelegance’” (from the point of view of a language whose grammar is at odds with the logic of Being as Heidegger sees it) do not consist in his adopting technical quantifier type of expressions like my ‘There is<sup>Z</sup>/are<sup>Z</sup>’ in place of the quantifier type of expressions native to German. Heidegger expresses Being by predicates (i.e. either by adjectives or verbs or by nouns variously derivative of them), leaving the grammar of quantification native to German untouched.

This completes my case against McDaniel’s quantificational interpretation of the kinds of being in *BT* and in favour of *some kind of* predicative reading.

## 5. Martin Heidegger Meets Kit Fine

The main consideration in deciding between different kinds of predicative readings of the logic of Being in *BT* concerns the special status Heidegger would plausibly want to assign to his existence predicates.

One way for us to go would be to mimic McDaniel’s appeal to joint-carvingness, asserting some kind of normatively-binding superiority of the employment of Heidegger’s

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<sup>91</sup> *SZ*, 38-39 [7C].

existence predicates over other ways of predicating existence.<sup>92</sup> Heidegger's accounts of the kinds of being in *BT* could then be relied on to contest the use of a single universal existence predicate such as the one he appears to employ himself in stating ontological difference: “[t]he Being of beings ‘is’ not itself *a being*.”<sup>93</sup> They could also be relied on to contest alternative non-universal existence predicates such as those found in ordinary English (as Friederike Moltmann has recently argued): to exist, to occur, to happen, to take place, to obtain, to hold, and to be valid.<sup>94</sup> (In fact, Moltmann observes that “natural languages *generally* do not display a single existence predicate, it seems, but different existence predicates for different types of entities.”<sup>95</sup>) This isn't bad, considering that shaking us out of our complacency about our understanding of the meaning of the words we use simply in virtue of being competent speakers of the relevant natural language is certainly on Heidegger's agenda in *BT*.<sup>96</sup>

However, if such was indeed the logic of Being in *BT*, most contemporary metaphysicians would react to Heidegger's assertions about the kinds of being with a shrug of

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<sup>92</sup> Something like this approach seems to find favour with Howard Kelly. Cf. Howard D. Kelly, “Heidegger the Metaphysician: Modes-of-Being and *Grundbegriffe*,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 24, no. 3 (2014): 670-693, here 672, 678.

<sup>93</sup> *SZ*, 6 [2]. Italics added.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Friederike Moltmann, “Existence predicates,” *Synthese* 197, no. 1 (2020): 311-335, here 317-320.

<sup>95</sup> Moltmann, “Existence predicates,” 317. Italics added.

<sup>96</sup> Consider Heidegger's discussion of the third prejudice against the “repetition” of the ancient inquiry into Being (*SZ*, 4 [1]) or, indeed, his decision to open *BT* with this quotation from Plato's *Sophist*: “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.” *SZ*, 1.



shoulders, as, following Quine, they regard cases of contested predication as void of ontological interest, all of which they invest in the existential quantifier.<sup>97</sup> I suggest, then, that a philosophically more fruitful clue for how to proceed can be found in Heidegger's consideration of the reality of the external world discussed in Section 2 of this paper and the affinity between the notion of reality at work there and the predicate "real" introduced by Fine in "The Question of Ontology" as challenging that very investment. (That there seems to be no parallel discussion in Heidegger's body of work of any ideas in the vicinity of joint-carvingness is, of course, another consideration in favour of this approach.)

According to Fine, most analytic philosophers following Quine succumb to a confused view of what ontology – and that is to say, an inquiry concerned with whether things of various kinds exist (as Quine, Fine, and indeed most analytic philosophers use this term<sup>98</sup>) - is all about. Their view is that ontological questions are quantificational questions. For example, the ontological question about numbers is whether there are numbers. The ontological question

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<sup>97</sup> This stance is exemplified by van Inwagen, who argues that "what is valuable in [Heidegger's investigations of *Dasein*] will better reveal its value if his philosophical vocabulary is 'de-ontologized', if they are rewritten in such a way that all occurrences of words related to *Sein* (and *Existenz*) are replaced with 'non-ontological' words." Peter van Inwagen, "Being, Existence, and Ontological Commitment," in *Metametaphysics*, ed. David J. Chalmers, David Manley, and Ryan Wasserman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 472–506, here 475. (The reasoning behind this advice to Heidegger - and Heideggerians – is just van Inwagen's old argument for the Quinean understanding of ontology from his "Meta-ontology.")

<sup>98</sup> In Heidegger's work, 'ontology' typically refers to the study of the Being of beings. For example, Heidegger's "fundamental ontology" from *BT* is concerned with Being in general, whereas "regional ontologies" are concerned with particular kinds of being. Cf. *SZ*, 11 [3], 13 [4]; *GA* 25, 35-39/24-27 [2].

about God is whether there is God. And so on. However, Fine raises two challenges to this view.

Fine's first challenge concerns explaining the non-triviality of ontological questions as well as their distinctly philosophical character. As for the first explanandum, that there are numbers follows from such an innocuous proposition as 'There are prime numbers between 7 and 17'. That there is God follows from the proposition that 'Christians believe in God'. And so forth. Yet, those who doubt the existence of such entities are not satisfied as easily as they should be if ontological questions were quantificational questions.<sup>99</sup> As for the second explanandum, it is commonly thought that it takes a distinctly philosophical reflection to answer most ontological questions. But neither of the above inferences involved philosophical reflection. The first involved mathematical reflection and the second non-philosophical reflection about people.<sup>100</sup> Fine's challenge consists in a series of objections to different ways in which proponents of the quantificational interpretation of ontology might respond to this twofold puzzle.<sup>101</sup>

Fine's second challenge, then, is this:

Consider a realist about integers; he is ontologically committed to the integers and is able to express his commitment in familiar fashion with the words 'integers exist'. Contrast him now with a realist about natural numbers, who is ontologically committed to the natural numbers and is likewise able to express his commitment in the words 'natural numbers exist'. Now, intuitively, the realist about integers holds the stronger position. After all, he makes an ontological commitment to the integers, not just to the

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<sup>99</sup> Cf. Fine, "The Question of Ontology," 158.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Fine, "The Question of Ontology," 158.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Fine, "The Question of Ontology," 159-165.

natural numbers, while the realist about natural numbers only commits himself to the natural numbers, leaving open whether he might also be committed to the negative integers. The realist about integers — at least on the most natural construal of his position—has a *thorough-going* commitment to the whole domain of integers, while the natural number realist only has a *partial* commitment to the domain.<sup>102</sup>

However, Fine continues,

on the quantificational construal of these claims, it is the realist about integers who holds the weaker position. For the realist about integers is merely claiming that there is at least one integer (which may or may not be a natural number) whereas the realist about natural numbers is claiming that there is at least one natural number, i.e. an integer that is also nonnegative. Thus the quantificational account gets the basic logic of ontological commitment wrong. The commitment to F's (the integers) should in general be weaker than the commitment to F&G's (the nonnegative integers), whereas the claim that there are F's is in general weaker than the claim that there are F & G's.<sup>103</sup>

Both challenges persuade Fine “that we [should] give up on the account of ontological claims in terms of existential quantification:”

The commitment to integers is not an existential but a universal commitment; it is a commitment to each of the integers not to some integer or other. And in expressing this commitment in the words ‘integers exist’, we are not thereby claiming that there is an

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<sup>102</sup> Fine, “The Question of Ontology,” 165.

<sup>103</sup> Fine, “The Question of Ontology,” 165-166.

integer but that every integer exists. Thus the proper logical form of our claim is not  $\exists xIx$ , where  $I$  is the predicate for being an integer, but  $\forall x(Ix \supset Ex)$ , where  $E$  is the predicate for existence.<sup>104</sup>

But what might this predicate mean, if not being quantifiable over? Fine's proposal is that 'E' conveys the idea that something is "a genuine constituent of the world."<sup>105</sup> And, in order to minimise association with quantification the word 'exists' has for most analytic philosophers, he proposes to speak of its "reality" ("R") instead.<sup>106</sup>

Fine claims that the relevant concept of the world-constitutive "reality" is one his readers will easily recognise. He also claims that any progress in fleshing out the nature of an ontological inquiry can only be achieved by bringing this concept to a greater clarity.<sup>107</sup> Interestingly, though, Fine does not conceive of this project as one of defining this concept in terms of other – perhaps more readily intelligible - concepts: "I myself do not see any way to define the concept of reality in essentially different terms."<sup>108</sup> All he sees room for is an investigation of different applications of this concept and working out the rules governing these applications.

Thus, according to Fine, besides the predicative employment of our concept of reality above,

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<sup>104</sup> Fine, "The Question of Ontology," 167.

<sup>105</sup> Fine, "The Question of Ontology," 168.

<sup>106</sup> Fine, "The Question of Ontology," 168.

<sup>107</sup> Fine, "The Question of Ontology," 171.

<sup>108</sup> Fine, "The Question of Ontology," 175.

there is a cognate operator on sentences that might be expressed by such phrases as ‘in reality’ or ‘it is constitutive of reality that’ (and that might be symbolized by ‘ $R[\dots]$ ’, where ‘ $\dots$ ’ stands in for a sentence). Thus a realist about numbers might allow that in reality there are infinitely many primes, while the anti-realist would not allow this even though he might be perfectly prepared to concede that there are in fact infinitely many primes.<sup>109</sup>

Hence, if we find the sentential operator any more intelligible than the predicate, we could then

define an object to be real if, for some way the object might be, it is constitutive of reality that it is that way (in symbols,  $Rx =_{df} \exists \phi R[\phi x]$ ) [...] We here have a progression in ideas—from quantifier, as in the original Quinean account, to predicate, to operator; and ontology finds its home, so to speak, in a conception of reality as given by the operator.<sup>110</sup>

Still, it is important for Fine to recognise that we are moving here in a single “metaphysical circle of ideas.”<sup>111</sup>

As for the rules governing the applications of our concept of reality, Fine defends the view that

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<sup>109</sup> Fine, “The Question of Ontology,” 171-172.

<sup>110</sup> Fine, “The Question of Ontology,” 172.

<sup>111</sup> Fine, “The Question of Ontology,” 175.

“something can [...] be said to be constitutive of reality if it would be part of the complement ‘...’ in any true claim of the form the ‘world consists of nothing more than...’.”<sup>112</sup>

To use a technical term from his “Question of Realism,” the predicate “real” will apply to any of the objects some facts about which jointly *ground* all facts about the remaining objects that there are. A fact – or a proposition (“grounding” can take both these items as its relata<sup>113</sup>) – grounds another just in case it can be substituted for *T* or *U* in a true instantiation of the formula below:

Its being the case that *S* consists in nothing more than its being the case that *T*, *U*, ...<sup>114</sup>

(“[W]e say that the propositions on the right (*collectively*) *ground* the proposition on the left and that each of them *partly grounds* that proposition.”<sup>115</sup>)

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<sup>112</sup> Fine, “The Question of Ontology,” 175.

<sup>113</sup> In fact, Fine holds that neither the ideology of propositions nor of facts is necessary for talking about grounding. “For we might express statements of ground in the form ‘*S* because *T*, *U*, ...’ [besides the canonical form (below)], as long as the ‘because’ is taken in a suitably strong sense, and thereby avoid all reference to propositions or facts or to the concept of truth. [...] The questions of ground, upon which realist questions turn, need not be seen as engaging either with the concept of truth or with the ontology of facts.” Kit Fine, “The Question of Realism,” in *Individuals, Essence, and Identity: Themes of Analytic Metaphysics*, ed. Andrea Bottani, Massimiliano Carrara, and Pierdaniele Giaretta (Dordrecht: Springer, 2002), 3-48, here 25.

<sup>114</sup> Fine, “The Question of Realism,” 23.

<sup>115</sup> Fine, “The Question of Realism,” 24.

My contention is that Heidegger's commitment to the kinds of being is not a commitment to using multiple operators of existential quantification, but a commitment to the idea that there is more than one way in which objects in a single domain of discourse are "in reality." In other words, Heidegger agrees with Fine that existential quantification should not be understood as by itself stating anything about how the world is constituted. It should be understood as merely stating what populates the world, leaving the question of how the world - and whatever populates it - is constituted open. He also agrees with Fine that the burden of the world-constituting should be expressed by predicative means and analysed in terms of grounding, as Fine defines it above. As far as I can see, there are *two* main things that Heidegger and Fine do not, in fact, agree on as far as the logic of Being goes.

First – and most strikingly - whereas for Fine the achievement of being world-constituting can be expressed by a single predicate R, according to Heidegger we need more predicates just like it, each standing for a different way in which a being might be world-constituting.<sup>116</sup>

Second – and (for me) more interestingly - Fine does not see much possibility for progress in meta-ontology beyond a strictly grammatical investigation of our concept of reality such as the one he offers in "The Question of Realism": of its applications both as a predicate and as a sentence operator and of the rules governing these applications as arguably best expressed with the notion of grounding. By contrast, where, for Fine, the work of the meta-ontologist ends, for Heidegger, it *begins*. We saw in Section 4 of this paper that Heidegger's ambition in *BT* is actually to improve on the ordinary language, so that it better accords with

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<sup>116</sup> In fact, Fine argues elsewhere that, if time proved to be real, reality would be heterogenous in a similar way to that in which (I hold) Heidegger claims Being is. However, he stops short of calling time real. Cf. Kit Fine, "The Reality of Tense," *Synthese* 150, no. 3 (2006): 399-414.

the Being of various kinds of entities.<sup>117</sup> For Heidegger, the kind of understanding of any important philosophical concept that is enjoyed by a competent speaker of a natural language solely in virtue of her linguistic competence is - though genuinely a species of understanding<sup>118</sup> - superficial and unfit to satisfy a philosopher. Such an “average kind of intelligibility only makes evident the [deeper] unintelligibility [of the concept in question].”<sup>119</sup> Thus, for Heidegger, the bedrock of meta-ontological investigations lies deeper than Fine, and with him, I suspect, most analytic philosophers, would allow. Descending to that deeper bedrock, Heidegger does what Fine claims he does not know how to do. He defines our concept of reality in essentially different terms as the “pure presence-at-hand of things.” (How satisfactory is this definition of our concept of reality – and even how we are to conceive of this purported bedrock for meta-ontology – are difficult questions I cannot begin to address here.<sup>120</sup>)

It is my hope that, in spite of these differences, the reader will find my Heidegger-Fine analogy useful.

In the first instance, the analogy illuminates some of the salient features of Heidegger’s thinking about the subject we have encountered in Sections 2-4.

Recall how Heidegger does not seem to show much interest in quantificational questions. This is puzzling in a philosopher who dedicates his major work (and many other writings besides) to the so-called “question of Being” and who in fact recognises the connection between the usual expression of existential quantification in German – ‘*Es gibt...*’ – and the

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<sup>117</sup> Cf. SZ, 38-39 [7C].

<sup>118</sup> E.g., “*this vague average understanding of Being is still a fact.*” SZ, 5 [2].

<sup>119</sup> SZ, 4 [1].

<sup>120</sup> Of course, Heidegger explicitly chooses “phenomenology” for his method in *BT* (as we noted earlier) - but his specification of what this method does and does not involve in Section 7 of *BT* is notoriously hard to understand.



subject-matter of his question of Being, even though, unlike its English counterpart ‘There is...’, ‘*Es gibt...*’ (literally ‘it gives...’) makes no mention of being.<sup>121</sup>

The present account *explains* this otherwise puzzling indifference. While facts expressible with the help of the existential quantifier are relevant to Heidegger’s inquiry into Being – not least in that they include facts that his talk of the kinds of being has an ambition of “grounding” – we can now understand Heidegger as sharing Fine’s view of quantificational questions as generally trivial and non-philosophical. If, following their conversion to Christianity, Thessalonians are said to stand in “an effective connection” to God, then, Heidegger might now be understood to reason, there is something in the domain of discourse that bears the designation ‘God’. What more evidence for God’s “existence” (in the quantificational sense) is needed? Certainly - he might now be understood to reason – the evidence one would want to see here won’t be of a philosophical sort (recall the young Heidegger’s Lutheran indignation at how “Greek philosophy penetrated into Christianity”<sup>122</sup>). Rather, the question of whether or not there is God ought to be settled by testimonies of religious experience (or the absence thereof). Where the philosophical reflection fits in, on the present account of Heidegger’s meta-ontology, is in trying to understand whether God makes any contribution to the entirety of facts that, in reality, make up the world around us (are facts about God grounded in facts about some other entities?), and, if it does, what is the nature of this contribution. But that is just the task the young Heidegger sets before his students – “to

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<sup>121</sup> “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 lies in the fact that something is, and in its Being as it is; in reality; in presence-at-hand; in subsistence; in validity; in Dasein; in the ‘*es gibt*’.” *SZ*, 6-7 [2].

<sup>122</sup> *GA* 60, 97/67.

determine the sense of the objecthood of God”<sup>123</sup> – and that he himself takes up in *BT* and elsewhere with respect to other types of entities.

In the second instance, the analogy explains why contemporary metaphysicians cannot dismiss Heidegger out of hand, even if we understand his kinds of being as marking differences between special predicates in logic. On the present reconstruction of the logic of Being in *BT*, Heidegger does not *overlook* the locus of ontological significance in logic: the existential quantifier. He, with Fine, finds it elsewhere. And it is now he who might be unimpressed by analytic metaphysicians’ often unquestioned fixation with existential quantification.

## 6. Of Predicates and Properties

Still, McDaniel worried that predicational accounts of the logic of Being in *BT* such as the one just described assimilate the kinds of being with properties; and Heidegger would never agree that the kinds of being are properties.<sup>124</sup> It is time we replied to this objection.

The reply will be as follows. I will argue that McDaniel’s assumption that the claim that the kinds of being can be expressed by predicates in logic entails interpreting them as properties only holds true on a certain interpretation of the term ‘property’. I will then argue that, if McDaniel’s other assumption - that Heidegger would never agree that the kinds of being are properties - is understood in terms of the relevant interpretation of the term ‘property’, then only one of the five considerations supporting that premise (as listed by Joshua Tepley in his excellent paper on the subject) can legitimately be made. I will then outline two responses to the remaining problem, one courtesy of Tepley and the other my own.

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<sup>123</sup> *GA* 60, 97/67.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. McDaniel, “Ways of Being,” 302.

It is common in analytic philosophy to distinguish between two conceptions of properties: abundant and sparse. On the first, abundant, conception, a property is just the set of objects that can be said to instantiate it. For example, the property of being a monkey is just the set of all monkeys.<sup>125</sup> However, properties conceived in this way seem useless for most theoretical purposes. “The abundant properties,” writes David Lewis, “may be as extrinsic, as gruesomely gerrymandered, as miscellaneously disjunctive, as you please.”<sup>126</sup> Thus, “[s]haring of them has nothing to do with similarity,”<sup>127</sup> for example, as McDaniel’s property of being (formerly) loved by Angelina Jolie or having a charge of -1 demonstrates rather nicely. For this reason, many philosophers, including Lewis, found it useful to talk of properties in a narrower sense also, to pick out those properties in the abundant sense that are fit for whatever theoretical purposes they might have in mind. The usual term for properties narrowed down in this way is ‘sparse’ properties. For example, Lewis’s natural properties – grandparents to Sider’s structure – are an instance of sparse properties, as are properties in the sense in which Tepley has recently argued (not irrelevantly to McDaniel’s objection) they actually apply to Heidegger’s kinds of being. Tepley’s properties (1) “account for similarities between things,” (2) “are what predicates express,” and (3) “are what abstract nouns refer to.”<sup>128</sup>

Now, it is clear that McDaniel’s assumption that conceiving of something through a logical predicate implies that there is a property associated with that predicate is true for

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<sup>125</sup> Cf. David Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 50.

<sup>126</sup> Lewis, *Plurality of Worlds*, 59.

<sup>127</sup> Lewis, *Plurality of Worlds*, 59.

<sup>128</sup> Joshua Tepley, “Properties of Being in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*,” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 22, no. 3 (2014): 461-81, here 467. For a corresponding – and much longer – list of roles Lewis’s own natural properties are supposed to play see Cian Dorr and John Hawthorne, “Naturalness,” *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* 8 (2013): 3-77, here 10-37.

abundant, but not for sparse properties. Given the usual set-theoretic semantics for quantificational logic, conceiving of something through a logical predicate does entail that there is a set of objects corresponding to that predicate (without entailing that this set of objects *fully* captures whatever this predicate talks about). But, on no account of sparse properties – each of which will impose some further conditions on abundant properties – does it entail that that the set of objects in question meets any of these further conditions (save for Tepley’s (2) above that applies to abundant properties as well and that, as such, isn’t really a further condition). Take McDaniel’s own example of being (formerly) loved by Angelina Jolie or having a charge of -1. I hope that McDaniel will agree that being (formerly) loved by Angelina Jolie or having a charge of -1 is (or at least can be readily understood as) a predicate. But my conceiving of whatever this predicate refers to by a predicate does not make it a property in Tepley’s sense. For, as McDaniel himself proposes, whatever this predicate refers to fails to satisfy Tepley’s (1) above: it is not the case that Brad Pitt and Eddie the Electron are similar in virtue of sharing this (abundant) property.

Tepley lists seven problems that might be thought to undermine the thesis that Heidegger’s kinds of being are properties in his sense, which is more, I believe, that any opponent of this thesis has done.<sup>129</sup> Since properties in Tepley’s sense are a species of abundant properties, whatever he has to say in response to these problems, if effective, also serves to exonerate my predicational account of Heidegger’s kinds of being as entailing that they are (among other things) properties in the abundant sense. However, considering that McDaniel’s premise that conceiving of something through a logical predicate assimilates that thing with a property is true for abundant, but not for sparse properties, the natural question to ask *for us* is, rather, whether McDaniel’s other premise - that Heidegger would never agree that the kinds of being involve properties – could be sustained if properties are understood in the abundant sense.

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<sup>129</sup> For a list of notable opponents, see Tepley, “Properties of Being,” 469.

I will now show that, indeed, *most* problems from Tepley's list that could serve to motivate McDaniel's other premise<sup>130</sup> do not arise for my account.

Thus, *first*, Tepley acknowledges that "[t]here are a few places where Heidegger apparently denies that being is a property."<sup>131</sup> Surely, in none of those places can Heidegger be plausibly interpreted as denying that there is a set of objects the term 'being' refers to. This is equivalent to affirming that nothing is a being and this cannot be Heidegger's view. (In principle, Heidegger could be interpreted as denying that the set of objects the term 'being' refers to is *all* there is to Being – but recall that this is not what my predicational interpretation entails.)

*Second*, "there are also some places where Heidegger seems to deny that structures of being (in particular, the structures of Dasein's being) are properties."<sup>132</sup> Again, Heidegger cannot mean that expressions introduced for different essential characteristics of Dasein are, in fact, non-referring. For this would entail, absurdly for Heidegger, that there is no such a thing as Dasein, since nothing would then instantiate all of this entity's essential characteristics. So,

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<sup>130</sup> This excludes two objections tackled by Tepley: that he has not shown that Heidegger's kinds of being are not properties of properties rather than of individuals (McDaniel holds that kinds of being are not properties of *any* kind) and that he has only shown that Heidegger was *committed* to the view that the kinds of being are properties but not that Heidegger explicitly endorsed this commitment. Surely, even if the claim that Heidegger's kinds of being are equivalent to special predicates in logic entails the claim that Heidegger's kinds of being are properties, it does not entail that Heidegger explicitly endorsed this claim. So, the fact that he doesn't explicitly endorse it cannot be held against me. Cf. Tepley, "Properties of Being," 474-475 (the first problem); 476-477 (the second problem).

<sup>131</sup> Tepley, "Properties of Being," 471.

<sup>132</sup> Tepley, "Properties of Being," 471.

Heidegger accepts that both Being and the “structures” of Being instantiate properties in the abundant sense.

*Third*, Heidegger’s associates “properties” (*Eigenschaften*) with presence-at-hand,<sup>133</sup> and, if only present-at-hand beings have properties, “it stands to reason that no kind of being is a property.”<sup>134</sup> Tepley challenges the assumption that the association between presence-at-hand and properties is of such a type that only present-at-hand beings have properties.<sup>135</sup> But even if the association Heidegger has in mind proved to be of *exactly* this type, it would no doubt be between presence-at-hand and properties in some sparse sense. For, as we have seen, Heidegger accepts that both Being and the structures of Being involve properties in the abundant sense. For, this is just to say that something instantiates Being and the structures of Being. And this contradicts the claim that only present-at-hand beings have properties in this sense.

*Fourth* - and finally - one might worry that the project of predicating properties of things is characteristic of metaphysics. “But Heidegger is not doing metaphysics in *Being and Time*, for he is trying to ‘overcome’ metaphysics in that work.”<sup>136</sup> Surely, whatever Heidegger rejects from metaphysics (as he understands it) does not include predicating properties – at least of an abundant sort – of things. Moreover, it is unclear what such a rejection could amount to: refusing to utter declarative sentences whose structure generally involves a subject and a predicate? Clearly, most sentences in *BT* – and in the remainder of Heidegger’s work - are declarative. So, Heidegger does not overcome metaphysics in any sense that could conflict with my interpretation of the kinds of being.

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<sup>133</sup> Cf. *SZ*, 73 [16].

<sup>134</sup> Tepley, “Properties of Being,” 472.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Tepley, “Properties of Being,” 472-474.

<sup>136</sup> Tepley, “Properties of Being,” 475.

There is a single challenge that arises with equal strength for Tepley and for me alike, which is that all instantiated properties – sparse or not - are beings in the sense that they can be quantified over, and this seems to contradict the ontological difference: Heidegger’s thesis that Being is not itself a being. Tepley’s reply is that the challenge is double-edged. If the kinds of beings are properties (as he argues) and if we have reasons to believe in the ontological difference, then we also have reasons to deny that all instantiated properties are beings, undercutting the challenge.<sup>137</sup> This is a great reply. But the proponent of my account of the logic of Being is entitled to an even better one: if, as I have argued, Heidegger shares Fine’s view that the existential quantifier is ontologically idle, then the fact that the kinds of being can be quantified over does *not*, in fact, contradict ontological difference. So, the proponent of my account of the logic of Being in *BT* can hold on to the assumption that all instantiated properties are beings, if she so desires.

Hence, McDaniel’s claim that predicational accounts of the logic of Being in *BT* would assimilate the kinds of being with properties, while true on the “abundant” interpretation of properties, does not imperil the present account of the logic of Being.

## **7. Of Fundamental Terms and Fundamental Truths**

The last worry I want to address is that, in a revised version of “Ways of Being,” published as the first chapter of *The Fragmentation of Being*, McDaniel suggests that it does not really matter whether the metaphysical privilege of the local quantifiers over the global one is understood in terms of joint-carvingness or in terms of Fine’s reality operator:

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<sup>137</sup> Cf. Tepley, “Properties of Being,” 469-471.

Consider a meta-ontology that recognizes two modes of being that correspond to the semantically primitive quantifiers “ $\exists 1$ ” and “ $\exists 2$ ”. Suppose further that this meta-ontology denies that the unrestricted existential quantifier is perfectly natural. How can these facts be expressed in Fine’s system? Since “ $R$ ” [the sentential operator] applies only to whole sentences, we can’t simply preface these quantifiers with “ $R$ ” to get the desired result. But we can get a desirable result in the following way: state that, for all  $\Phi$ , it’s false that  $R(\exists x \Phi)$ , but there is a  $\Phi$  and there is a  $\Psi$  such that it is true that  $R(\exists 1x \Phi)$  and it is true that  $R(\exists 2x \Psi)$ . “ $\exists 1$ ” and “ $\exists 2$ ” figure in statements that are true in reality, whereas “ $\exists$ ” does not. Perhaps other, more sophisticated meta-ontologies could be treated in a similar fashion.<sup>138</sup>

But if so, do I not express in different words what McDaniel has already expressed in “Ways of Being”? However, McDaniel’s above is an illegitimate employment of Fine’s sentential operator for at least two reasons.

First, as we have seen, the relation of grounding implied by  $R$  does not connect meanings of subsentential expressions such as those of different concepts of existential quantification but facts or entire propositions. In other words, there are some goings-on on the right-hand side (e.g., “its being the case that Britain and Germany were at war in 1940”<sup>139</sup>), there some goings-on on the left-hand side (e.g., “a compendious description of the warring activity of various individuals”), and the statement of ground asserts that the goings-on on the right-hand side are “nothing over above” the goings-on on the left-hand side. There is no suggestion that the meaning of some subsentential expression is “prior” to the meaning of another. Whoever claims

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<sup>138</sup> Kris McDaniel, *The Fragmentation of Being* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 45-46.

<sup>139</sup> I take this example from Fine, “The Question of Realism,” 24.



that the fact that Britain and Germany were at war in 1940 consist in nothing more than the warring activities of different individuals, does not claim that the expression “the state of war between Britain and Germany in 1940” should be “defined up” from “a compendious description of the warring activity of various individuals.” That would be a tedious definition, indeed! So, it is doubtful that Sider’s and “Fine’s system[s]” really deal with the same kind of facts.

Second, we saw that Fine holds that the predicate  $R$  and the sentential operator  $R$  are both a part of the “same metaphysical circle of ideas.” But this entails that any sentence that employs  $R$  can be recast as a sentence that employs  $R$  and vice versa. For example, from the fact that the various individuals who engaged in warring activities in 1940 were real it would follow that, in reality, the individuals in question engaged in warring activities in 1940, and from the fact that, in reality, various individuals engaged in warring activities in 1940 it would follow that the individuals in question were real. Thus, we should be able to infer from McDaniel’s claim “it is true that  $R(\exists 1x \Phi)$  and it is true that  $R(\exists 2x \Psi)$ ” that there are two beings that  $R$ , where it is  $R$ , rather than “there are,” that carries their ontological load. But this contradicts at least two of McDaniel’s Heidegger’s claims. First, it contradicts the claim that it is the local existential quantifiers rather than selected predicates that are ontologically charged, and second, it contradicts the claim that there are *kinds* of being: for  $R$  expresses – and univocally so - being of both entities that are found in the domains of different local existential quantifiers.

Of course, someone might wish to accept Fine’s account of reality from “The Question of Realism” but not his account of existence from “The Question of Ontology,” which exploits that account. But I’m afraid that this would be a wish that just won’t come true. The way I see it, there is an important connection between the two accounts. Putting a sentence of a language under  $R$  only adds anything to the perfectly redundant ‘It is true that...’ on the assumption that some objects in the domain of this language do not  $R$ . When we say how things, in reality, are,

we are implicitly making a comparison between two different sorts of objects. And we mean to say that the entire ontological weight of both sorts of objects is carried by the sort that Rs. If it was the existential quantifier that carried the load, what else might the distinction come down to? Because I cannot see, I conclude that Fine's views on reality and existence are interdependent.

Finally, it bears mentioning that neither Fine nor Sider would be all too pleased with McDaniel's suggestion that their approaches to fundamentality – respectively in terms of reality and in terms of joint-carvingness - are interchangeable, though each for rather different reasons. Fine explicitly worries if the sentential notion of a “fundamental truth” that his truth “in reality” aims to capture can, as Sider claims in *Writing the Book of the World*, be reconstructed from the subsentential notion of a “fundamental term” that Sider's “structure” aims to capture:<sup>140</sup>

Sider claims to be writing the book of the world. But he should decide whether he is writing a book or merely providing us with a lexicon.<sup>141</sup>

Sider, by contrast, worries if we can justify the application of the notion of a fundamental truth to anything without “saying what the distinguished structure of the world is, which,” he argues, “requires more than giving grounds.”<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> “[A] fundamental truth is a truth involving only fundamental [i.e. joint-carving] terms.” Sider, *Writing the Book*, 116.

<sup>141</sup> Kit Fine, “Fundamental Truth and Fundamental Terms,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 87, no 3 (2013): 725-732, here 732.

<sup>142</sup> Theodore Sider, “Replies to Dorr, Fine, and Hirsch,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 87, no. 3 (2013): 733-754, here 742.

A *very* interesting question of whether Sider's case against Fine convinces - and if it does, how this might impact Heidegger's project in *BT* - will have to wait until another occasion. For now, I simply wish to note that I am not alone in my commitment to thinking that there is a genuine disagreement between McDaniel's interpretation of Heidegger's kinds of being and mine.

Hence, although new and fantastically strange vocabulary abounds in *BT*, Heidegger's enterprise in his masterwork was certainly not one of providing us with a lexicon. It was, rather, to state what he regards as fundamental truths by whatever means it takes for us to see them.<sup>143</sup>

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