

THE PHENOMENON OF MEANING AND HEIDEGGER'S ONTOLOGY

By

David Gregory Frahm

Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Philosophy

August, 2012

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

Professor Michael P. Hodges

Professor David C. Wood

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The explication of meaning typically begins, and usually ends, with an analysis of words or sentences and how they are used. Theories are advanced, contentions are raised, objections are countered, and the linguistic debate continues. However, if we step back to see the larger vista, there is a more fundamental locus of meaning—the meaning of things and events in the world. Indeed, the meaning of words is a highly sophisticated, and far too humanly, locus of meaning which involves its own specialized rules. Language is ostensibly a vehicle for communication; conveying thoughts/feelings about the world to another person of perhaps uncertain (to the speaker) background, intellectual capacity, and creativity—hence, linguistic meaning is an adumbration and amorphous shorthand to gloss over these possible shortfalls. And *a fortiori* the meaning of whole passages and texts, traditional hermeneutics, is even more complex, involving historical context and intellectual milieu.

So then, let us look into that larger vista of meaning, the meaning of things and events in the world. If we see both individual things (e.g., a hammer, a wedding ring) and events (e.g., Watergate, a domestic dispute) as entities, beings, we can say that our topic is *ontological* vice linguistic meaning. And in order to help us get into this topic, we can use the writings of Martin Heidegger, certainly one of the greatest, if not premiere, ontologists in the history of philosophy. We can build on his accomplishments, as well as contrast his shortcomings, as a way of comprehending “ontological meaning”. Ultimately, we want to explicate not only the meaning of beings, but also the larger ontological question of the meaning of *Being*, which was Heidegger’s aim in *Being and Time* {BT 1}, something he considered “the fundamental question

of philosophy” {BT 27}, and arguably his lifelong project {QB 42}. But despite this overarching theme, and despite an early interest in the conception of meaning, Heidegger curiously did not provide a substantial analysis of the phenomenon of meaning in any of his writings, nor did it play a role commensurate with its seemingly critical position.

To be direct, it is my thesis that the ontological meaning of a thing is the nature of that thing in its context(s). “Thing” here means anything: chairs, cabbages and kings, animals, events, unicorns, illusions, dreams, any individual entity or being. “Nature” here means the thing’s constitution, its make-up, essence and accidents, or Being (the last as yet undefined). And the thing’s “context” can be real, physical, or ideal, rational—any kind of existential setting. My argument, in brief, is that:

(1) Although important to his project, ontology (as the study of the meaning of beings/Being {BT 11-12}), Heidegger's exposition of "meaning" is inadequate (Chapter II); (2) An explication and analysis of the phenomenon of meaning shows it to be fuller and more complex (Chapter III); (3) This fuller conception of meaning is better not only for Heidegger's position but ontology as well: It illuminates both the conception of Being (its nature), and the meaning of Being, in its context (Chapter IV).

First, let us clarify some concepts concerning “meaning”. Although we are not dealing with “linguistic meaning”—the way meaning operates in language and relates to reality—“ontological meaning” is not completely different, and as everyone knows, it is hard to entirely separate the interpenetration of language and reality (for good reasons). Nevertheless, “ontological meaning” is the meaning of existing things in the world—and “world” here means anywhere, not an extra-mental realm in contrast to a mental realm (just as “things” so far means anything)—but there is no real denotative function here for “meanings” (as one word denotes the many entities to which it applies, its extension). In other words, so we don’t reify “meaning”

except as a topic of investigation, there are just meaningful things. On the other hand, “ontological meaning” is all about connotation, intension, attributes, as we shall see. Although “sense” is also part of what “ontological meaning” means, it is really too linguistic for reference to things; while accurate in reference to Being (expressing its modal character), the “sense of a thing” is an unusual expression to focus on that thing’s meaning.

The German concepts should also be noted. Although *Sinn* is usually translated as “sense” and *Bedeutung* as “meaning”, in *Being and Time*, both Macquarrie/Robinson (M/R) and Stambaugh (JS) normally translate *Sinn* in Heidegger’s stated project as raising “the question of the meaning [*Sinn*] of Being” {BT 1, SZ 1, original in italics; see M/R note BT 1n2}.

Significance (*Bedeutsamkeit*) for both Heidegger and myself implies a wider meaning, a larger context, the meaning of (immediate) meanings, meaning further out, importance, or sometimes meaningfulness. For example, an immediate *meaning* of a teenage boy’s car is the better ability to date girls and travel around with his friends; the *significance* of his car is really freedom and/or status. Notice that we passed over the meaning (transcription) of “car” as a wheeled/powered vehicle, etc., which is really uninformative, if not pedantic.

So then, how should we explicate the concept of the meaning of things and events in the world? I propose we use a phenomenological method, although without the more programmatic aspects (*epoché*, bracketing, noesis, noema, etc.)—just like Heidegger. The phenomenological method ostensibly offers a way to examine and disclose the “things themselves” (beings, existents, reality) without imposing a preconceived theory on it. By adopting an attitude of philosophical reflection (the “transcendental reduction”), we attempt to describe the thing literally and not speculate or hypothesize about it. Of course, “description” here means more than reporting the superficial empirical properties of a thing or event—it requires reflection,

thinking. The purpose of phenomenology's transcendental reduction is to rise above immersion in the lived natural world in order to be philosophical about the subject matter. So in that sense, phenomenology is just doing what philosophy has always attempted to do. But also, it is not an attempt to prove a syllogism or a theory. A phenomenological argument aims to encourage agreement or consent, to show reasonableness to anyone willing to listen, with an open mind, to see whether the analysis described conforms to their experiences as well—and thus to show that it is true for most people. Proof is left to science and absolute proof to mathematics.

More specifically, we will analyze and interpret the ordinary things and events in everyday experience and normal adult perception (i.e., in human existence) directly. That is, while many commentators on Heidegger quote a passage then expound on it, and sometimes illustrate their interpretation with a real-world example, we however want to get back to direct, *prima facie*, phenomenological evidence—to the things themselves. This approach also means that we will not be dealing with elaborate methodological or epistemological issues. Although Heidegger was prone to perhaps excessive methodological concerns, only to be rivaled by some commentators, we do not have the luxury or the space. Thus we will not be able to demonstrate the extent to which these examples of ordinary things and everyday experiences are not just isolated exemplars, but actually indicate universal characteristics—yet contend that. A transcendental deduction, either Kantian or Heideggerian, of the structure of meaning is not offered, although we hope to show that *that* structure is indeed an articulated unity. We also cannot provide lengthy exposition or interesting side issues; we will only have space for enough explanation to make the point—and must assume a fairly thorough understanding of Heidegger's position. Finally, we will in effect, if not explicitly, be using one aspect of Heidegger's method: show how everyday “ontic” structures have ontological significance (e.g., care, conscience, mood, anxiety,

etc.). We hope that in the end, meaning will be seen to be an important *structural* feature of human existence, of our Being. We will now look at Heidegger's conception of meaning.

CHAPTER II

HEIDEGGER ON MEANING

Heidegger's most systematic conception of meaning is explicitly addressed, and mainly contained, within one paragraph in *Being And Time*. It occurs in §32 on Understanding and Interpretation, which was preceded by a section that introduces Heidegger's conception of Understanding (§31) and is followed by §33 on Assertion and §34 on Discourse/Language. Note that while these topics are usually considered the "higher", more intellectual faculties of humans, that is not necessarily the case for Heidegger; in fact, for him, they usually function at a lower level—a more basic level of existence.

When entities within-the-world are discovered along with the Being of Dasein—that is, when they have come to be understood—we say that they have *meaning* [*Sinn*]. But that which is understood, taken strictly, is not the meaning but the entity, or alternatively, Being. Meaning is that wherein the intelligibility [*Verständlichkeit*] of something maintains itself. That which can be Articulated in a disclosure by which we understand, we call "meaning". The *concept of meaning* embraces the formal existential framework of what necessarily belongs to that which an understanding interpretation Articulates. *Meaning is the "upon-which" of a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something; it gets its structure from a fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception.* In so far as understanding and interpretation make up the existential state of Being of the "there", "meaning" must be conceived as the formal-existential framework of the disclosedness which belongs to understanding. Meaning is an *existentiale* of Dasein, not a property attaching to entities, lying 'behind' them, or floating somewhere as an 'intermediate domain' {BT 151, M/R tr. here and throughout unless otherwise noted}.

This passage makes two main points that should be explicated. First, what we understand are entities within-the-world (Stambaugh translation has "innerworldly beings") and Being, not meanings as intermediaries or properties of beings. For Heidegger, as he says just prior to this passage, when we understand beings/Being, what we disclose are their possibilities—especially as they relate to our (Dasein) possibilities—and "the character of the possibility corresponds, on each occasion, with the kind of Being of the entity which is understood." {BT 151}. This is the

“projective” futuristic character of understanding, based on its structure (fore-having, fore-sight, fore-conception), which allows interpreting something as something (e.g., a chair as a seat), hence articulation, discourse, and language. “Entities within-the-world generally are projected upon the world—that is, upon a whole of significance, to whose reference-relations concern, [i.e., Dasein] as Being-in-the-world...” {*ibid.*; Stambaugh has “totality of significance” and “referential relations” respectively}. The “relational character” of these referential relations are termed “signifying” {“*be-deuten*”, BT 87n3}, and significance is further described as the “referential context that constitutes worldliness...in the sense of a system of relations” {BT 88, S tr.}. For Heidegger, “world” *is* that general context of significance, and meaning is the (particular and general) projective “upon-which”, hence the “wherein”, of intelligibility (per the above passage). This is the usage Heidegger intends when he talks about care as the meaning of Dasein’s Being {BT 325} and “temporality as the ontological meaning of care” {BT 323}, hence “the meaning of Dasein is temporality” {BT 331}. Intelligibility lies in the context.

However, notice how difficult it is to prevent these concepts—meaning, understanding, significance, world, etc.—from collapsing into one another. That is, it is difficult to see, thus far, what is distinctive about meaning *per se*, or what it substantially adds in its own right. While Heidegger gives several uses of the concept of meaning in this key passage, he does not investigate its nature beyond the claim that meaning has the same structure/framework as understanding, and, if we make the inference, can be characterized as the projective possibilities of beings/Being. Nevertheless, that is a distinctive, positive result and we shall return to it later. But so far Heidegger is focusing on the forest (whole, totality, etc), not the trees—nor how any particular tree grows or lives.

The second main point in this passage is that, since understanding is a major structural part of the “formal existential framework” that constitutes Dasein, Heidegger states that meaning is an “existential” (M/R tr. of the noun “Existenzial”, Stambaugh uses “existential”), as are both understanding and possibility {BT 143f}. An “existential” for Heidegger is one of two ways to characterize Being; whereas “categories” characterize the Being of beings other than Dasein, “existentials” characterize the Being of Dasein {BT 44f}. But more than characteristics, they are key structural features of the complex way Dasein exists: “phenomenon...conceived as a basic mode of Dasein’s *Being*”, a “constituent” {BT 143, M/R tr.}. It is Heidegger’s conception that only Dasein really “exists” {BT 133fn, S tr. only: Heidegger’s later marginal note}—sometimes indicated by a hyphen (as we shall do to indicate this special sense, i.e., ex-ists, ex-istence)—because only Dasein transcends its here and now by projecting into its there (“*Da*”) as (spatio-)temporal Being-in-the-world {BT 350f}. Other notable existentials explicitly identified and of interest (et al.) are discourse or talk (*Rede*, “the existential-ontological foundation of language”) {BT 160f, 165}, the “they” {BT 129f}, worldhood {BT 64}, care {BT 199f}, truth (as disclosedness) {BT 226, 297}, and Being (“as the infinitive of ‘I am’”) {BT 54}. The important point here is that we have moved from epistemology to ontology; understanding hence meaning are ways Dasein ex-ists—understandingly, meaningfully—not just ways it knows the world. “This Interpretation of the concept of ‘meaning’ is one which is ontologico-existential in principle” {BT 152}.

But from this Heidegger draws other more controversial, if not provocative, corollaries: That “only Da-sein ‘has’ meaning”, “*thus only Da-sein can be meaningful or meaningless*”, and “all beings whose mode of being is unlike Da-sein must be understood as *unmeaningful*, as essentially bare of meaning as such”, hence “*can be absurd*” {BT 151f, S tr.}. As Heidegger

explains, albeit only briefly here, this rather Dasein-centric consequence is not a judgment about beings other than Dasein, but rather a recognition that they are disclosed and understood as part of Dasein's Being as Being-in-the-world. We must not forget that *Being and Time* is a “fundamental ontology” conceived as an “existential analytic” of Dasein; however, the present thesis is an attempt to take the next step toward an ontology of beings other than Dasein that is not as Dasein-centric—as are both things ready-to-hand and present-at-hand—while recognizing that Dasein is the only locus of disclosure and readiness-to-hand/presentness-at-hand are not inaccurate or untrue, just singularly perspectival. More on this later.

Heidegger considers the passage above definitive for his conception of meaning—he cites it several times (e.g., ET 154 [1930], IM 70 [1935], WM 286 [1949 Introduction])—but in other sources, meaning is usually addressed in the context of language (e.g., EL §47 [1939]) or Husserl's phenomenology (IPR §5b [1923]). Heidegger goes on to elaborate this conception of meaning somewhat, but nothing more definitive: that meaning is not restricted to the content of a judgment and can be articulated in interpretation and speech {BT 154, 156, 161}; while BT 324f repeats many of the above themes: that the phenomenon of meaning is the wherein of intelligibility and the upon-which of a projection of the understanding of the Being of beings in their possibilities. “The primary projection of the understanding of Being ‘gives’ the meaning” {BT 325, M/R tr.}, but what we are still looking for is the details on how this occurs and on what basis a being has the meaning it has.

In the *History of the Concept of Time* (1925), a lecture course that closely preceded *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger gives more details about his conception of meaning, again mainly in one section (§23). The important difference between the two accounts is that meaning in *Being and Time* is presented within the context of understanding, whereas in the *History of the Concept*

of Time meaning is presented within the context of the worldhood of the world—a much more straightforwardly ontological approach: “The worldhood of the world, that is, the specific being of this entity ‘world,’ is a specific concept of being” {HCT 170}.

Heidegger begins (§23a) by analyzing the character of worldly encounter: the world “shows itself” or “presents itself” in everyday concern as “conducive” (or not) to or for something, thus making “reference” (“a technical term”) to “a manifold of environmental things” {HCT 186}. Yet it is “not an arbitrary manifold” of things, but rather a “particular *correlation of references*”, a “closed referential totality” that is “distinguished by a specific *familiarity*” {HCT 186f}. Thus “the references are precisely the *involvements* [*Wobei*] in which the concerned occupation dwells” {HCT 187}. To embellish Heidegger’s example, when I enter my study to work on my thesis, it is out of the room that the desk/chair/computer appears; I don’t see enumerable individual things (books, shelves, cabinets, printer, etc.) that I then assemble into a room impression. And if my thesis work proceeds without distractive problems (e.g., no computer issues, chair not missing, etc.), all the room and its contents will recede into unobtrusiveness {HCT 187}; Heidegger calls this the “peculiar priority of the referential totality over the things themselves” {HCT 188}. But the familiarity is not restricted to me alone; anyone could enter that room and recognize it as a study—all of us “are moving in a common totality of surroundings” {HCT 188}. Heidegger then (§23b) analyzes the “work-world” of the craftsman in concepts that will be further explored in *Being and Time*: tool, hammer, “in-order-to”, usability, equipment, etc.; essentially, the well-known distinction between things handy or extant (ready-to-hand or present-at-hand for M/R, handiness or objective presence for S, *Zuhandenheit* or *Vorhandenheit* for Heidegger), practical and theoretical knowledge, world and nature.

In the heading of §23c Heidegger declares the “determination of the basic structure of worldhood as meaningfulness” {HCT 200}, although Heidegger will retreat from this characterization (as we shall see shortly). Based on the previous analysis, Heidegger says, “It is *not things but references* which have the primary function in the structure of encounter belonging to the world...” {HCT 200}, and the term ‘reference’ here “we shall now more accurately designate as ‘to mean’ [*bedeuten*]. The structure of encounter thus specified in references as *meaning* we shall call ‘meaningfulness’ [*Bedeutsamkeit*]” {HCT 201}. He goes on to say that ‘meaning’ does not entail “rank and value” without further investigation, but does signify the meaning of words and “word-combinations”—possessing “an intrinsic connection with verbal meaning, discourse”—which he does not pursue here {HCT 202}. Continuing with his main thesis, “When we say that the basic structure of worldhood, the being of the entity which we call world, lies in meaningfulness, this amounts to saying that the structure as we have characterized it thus far, the references and the referential contexts, are basically *correlations of meaning, meaningful contexts*” {HCT 203}.

However, because a “full understanding of this phenomenon [meaningfulness] can be obtained only from an adequate interpretation of the basic phenomenon from which it is now drawn for thematic investigation, from *being-in-the-world* as the basic constitution of Dasein” {HCT 204}, Heidegger instead examines “kindred phenomena”, various kinds of signs. Although each is somewhat different than the others, they can be divided into two groups—*taking* something as a sign (an omen like the south wind as a sign of rain, a fetish to primitive man) and *making* something into a sign (car’s turn signal, storm ball, knot in a handkerchief)—and they all provide “insight into the character of a superior presence which is constitutive for being a sign” {HCT 209}, that is, they “appresent, make present” the environing world as

“handy” for Dasein’s “concerned commerce”, care, i.e., being-in-the-world (albeit “unthematically” or inexplicitly) {HCT 206}. Here again, while we think that Heidegger would have gained more insight into the phenomenon of meaning if he had concentrated on the distinctive characteristics of these different signs (as we shall later), his point was the macroscopic view—*meaningfulness*, the *worldhood* of the world, as the next subsection makes clear.

Heidegger now puts this into the context of the understanding. Signs are “grounded” in the world, “a world whose mode of encounter and of being is meaningfulness; and that the access to what is indicated and going along with its indication is an environmental understanding, and this always also means an understanding of the in-being in this world, which is grounded in the understanding of Dasein itself” {HCT 213}. The remainder of this subsection echoes themes we have already seen in *Being and Time*: meaning is what is understood {HCT 209}, “references and referential connections are primarily meaning” {HCT 209}, meanings are “the structure of being of the world” {HCT 209}, “the referential whole of the world is a whole of meaningful connections, meaningfulness” {HCT 209f}, meaningfulness is defined as “the specific structure of the whole of understandability” {HCT 210}, “meanings are to be understood on the basis of meaningfulness, and this in turn means only on the basis of being-in-the-world” {HCT 210}, and Dasein “has meanings in the primary sense” {HCT 211}. Heidegger also touches on words, sounds, and language (which presuppose meaning) {HCT 210}, as well as briefly examining two more examples of signs—a stone-ax {HCT 211} and a roll of parchment {HCT 212}—as historical vestiges which may or may not communicate to someone (again, presupposing understanding meaning). But these examples (examined more later) do suggest a new feature of meaning that Heidegger only mentions, time. As he emphasizes,

“*Meaningfulness is first of all a mode of presence* in virtue of which every entity of the world is discovered ” {HCT 210} and later, “*Presence of the world is the worldhood of the world as meaningfulness*” {HCT 213}; but since being-in-the-world as “understanding concern” has “a remarkable kind of being”—“the mode of being of pure *letting-become-present*”—then it will be “seen that this *making present and appresenting is nothing other than time itself*” {HCT 213f}. However, like *Being and Time*, despite Heidegger’s original intent of the *History of the Concept of Time*, it too was not completed; time was not directly addressed until the last section—about a half a page in length.

Finally, Heidegger concludes “this provisional analysis of meaningfulness” by considering (§24) several tenets in “the question of the reality of the external world” as a “perverse horizon” {HCT 214}: proof or *belief* in the external world, the reality of the real defined as an “object” or as apprehended, reality as “in itself”, as perceived bodily presence, or as resistance. The general point of this section seems to be that all these presuppose Being-in-the-[meaningful-]world, thus both realism and idealism are to some extent both right and wrong {HCT 222f}.

It can now be asked why this more detailed account of meaning did not make the transition into *Being and Time*. We hinted above that Heidegger retreats from his position in the *History of the Concept of Time*, the “determination of the basic structure of worldhood as meaningfulness” {the heading of §23c, HCT 200}. To this heading compare the “earlier” version of this idea: at the beginning of §23, when Heidegger announces his plan for the “positive exposition” of the worldhood of the world, while the first two steps are substantially identical to their corresponding headings, the third step reads “c) the *determination* of the basic structure of worldhood as *deployment-totality*” {HCT 186}. As the translator, Theodore Kisiel,

points out, this latter term, “deployment-totality” (*Bewandtnisganzheit*), that replaces meaningfulness (*Bedeutsamkeit*) is “a change postdating the lecture course” {HCT 186n}. In his book, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time*, Kisiel discusses the concept of *Bewandtnis* in an analysis of the 1925 lecture course *History of the Concept of Time* as the “penultimate draft...of BT” {GBT 362}. Regarding this concept change Kisiel says,

Oddly, in his own copy of the course transcript, precisely at the point where he first announces it as the structure of worldliness..., Heidegger strikes out “meaningfulness” and replaces it with the “deployment (stanced) totality”.... We are catching him again in the act of reshaping his basic concepts after the course itself. Recall his long-standing embarrassment over the very term “meaningfulness”... {GBT 388}.

This last sentence refers to Heidegger’s highly unusual confession

...to a certain embarrassment in the choice of the right expression for the complex phenomenon which we want to call meaningfulness. And I frankly admit that this expression is not the best, but for years I have found nothing better, in particular nothing which gives voice to an essential connection of the phenomenon with what we designate as meaning in the sense of the meaning of words, inasmuch as the phenomenon possesses just such an intrinsic connection with verbal meaning, discourse {HCT 202}.

Now whether this “explains” why Heidegger did not use his analysis of meaning from the *History of the Concept of Time* in *Being and Time* is probably unknowable, but perhaps more understandable. Possibly due to his long-standing concern for this “essential connection” of meaning with discourse, he shifted the place of meaning from worldliness in *History of the Concept of Time*, substituted *Bewandtnis* in the corresponding place in *Being and Time* (§18; M/R have “involvement”, S has “relevance”), and put meaning in §32 Understanding and Interpretation, just before §33 on Assertion and §34 on Discourse/Language.

But now are either/both of these conceptions of meaning adequate? Beyond the conception that meaning is a structural whole, have we been shown how particular meanings constitute that whole? I contend that despite this fair exposition of Heidegger’s view on

meaning, we still do not know the “inner workings” of meaning. This is curious because of Heidegger’s long interest in this topic. His dissertation, “The Doctrine of Judgment in Psychologism” (1914), in part examines the role of meaning in the difference between descriptive facts and logical validity {Harries, SM 166}, concluding with the quandary, “What is the meaning of meaning?” as perhaps “something ultimate, irreducible, that precludes any further illumination” (*Gesamtausgabe* vol. 1:171, cited by Crowell, SOM 280n23). His habilitation, *The Theory of Categories and Meaning in Duns Scotus* (1915), uses “medieval Scholasticism” to assess the “general problem of categories” and “a particular sphere of objects, that of meanings”, “acts of meaning”, and “categories of meaning”, as Heidegger says in his Author’s Book Notice (1917) {Sup 61f}. And in his major work, *Being and Time*, Heidegger declares that his project is to investigate the *meaning* of Being, and he does define his (systematic) conception of meaning, yet we have found it to be indistinct and insubstantial in its own right, plus leading to questionable conclusions. But the main inadequacy is that the conception does not offer us a clear way to interpret the meaning of beings or Being—based on the nature of meaning. Later works by Heidegger do not offer a sustained analysis of meaning either. Indeed, in *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935) he seems to give up any gains his conception of meaning, presented above, has achieved: In denying that “being consists only of the word and its meaning” or that the meaning of the word, “as a meaning, constitute[s] the essence of being” {IM 73f}, Heidegger says that would be absurd: it would be thinking that the “being of the essent”—a building for example—“consisted in a word meaning” {IM 74}. He concludes that “in the word ‘being’, in its meaning, we pass through word and meaning and aim at being itself” {IM 74}, thus taking meaning as something in between us and being, in effect another being. But this is a rather ordinary conception of meaning, not his own systematic sense, which denies that meaning is an intermediary {BT 151}.

Unfortunately, no commentators can help ameliorate this inadequacy either. A review of the secondary literature shows that most large-work commentators (e.g., Dreyfus, Gelven, King, Kisiel, Mulhall, Richardson) only briefly exposit or interpret Heidegger's conception of meaning, if they mention it much at all. Even most specialty articles (e.g., Johnson, Kockelmans, Stack, Vallicella) are unremarkable (in a positive sense) for our purposes. Nor do the three most sustained analyses reach the heart of the matter. First, Karsten Harries' "The Search for Meaning" {in SM 161-208} is an early (ca. 1967) essay that offered an introductory exposition of the entire span of Heidegger's works (many still untranslated at the time), and keyed on the theme of meaning. Harries does realize that in order to understand "the meaning of the encounter between man and things...we must understand the meaning of things" {SM 169} and their Being {SM 170}, holding that meaning is both "a claim and an essential structure" {SM 182}—a claim that "demands to be acknowledged" {SM 165} and "the structure constitutive of that object, discovered in response to a claim exerted by it" {SM 166}. However, he does not analyze that structure, nor "the temporality of meaning" {SM 188} beyond Heidegger's position on temporality. Harries recognizes that the meaning of Being is beyond fundamental ontology {SM 168f}, which is why Heidegger *turned* to an examination of language {SM 191ff} in his later works. Yet in the end, for Harries, "The meaning of Being is the Holy" {SM 202, 195}, beyond the philosopher, but not poets, prophets, and theologians {SM 202}. We, on the other hand, are not ready to yield to them just yet.

Second, Thomas Bridges' dissertation, "The Concept of Meaning in Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*", is also an early work (1972), and similarly misses our point. Chapters One and Two develop the foundational concepts of reference, world, and significance. In a closely-reasoned exegesis from selected Heidegger quotes (but no new analysis of phenomenon), Bridges argues

that meaning “consists in the disclosedness of Being itself, and that significance and insignificance are to be understood as the inauthentic forms of this disclosure, i.e., as the inauthentic ways in which meaning is grasped” {CM 3}. Although the counter-argument (insignificance is relative to an ontological attitude, authenticity, whereas significance is a condition independent of that attitude) would take us too far off-topic, the main short-coming of this work is that it is little more than an in-depth clarification of Heidegger’s concepts and their interconnections, albeit undoubtedly valuable as that. The internal structure of meaning is never broached, and his Conclusion on “Heidegger’s Question of the Meaning of Being” {CM 220} is only eight pages—and essentially re-affirms Heidegger’s conclusion: temporality {CM 227}.

Third, Steven Crowell’s book, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning*, also misses the issue. Although the “space of meaning” might seem to be a troubling notion (and at least one other reviewer agrees; see Roubach MPB 189, 190, 192), it apparently means no more than what Heidegger calls “world” {SOM 212, 214}, or the clearing disclosed by disposition, understanding, and discourse {SOM 213, 215}, or as he put it explicitly in an earlier article (“Meaning and the Ontological Difference”), the “Da” of Dasein {MOD 44n10, 38}. But while Crowell gives several excellent overviews of what Heidegger is doing (esp. Ch 11), and even proposes to categorize Heidegger’s career into four periods based on the evolution of his concept of meaning {SOM 203f}, the book only examines the role of meaning and does not analyze it as a phenomenon. Crowell argues for a *transcendental* phenomenology {SOM 3, 18} and predictably is more concerned with method, the nature of the given and givenness, parsing subject-object roles, criteria of validity, and the requirements of theoretical knowledge—topics which Heidegger’s approach offers to overcome (although he frets about methodology too).

But now, what then is the nature of the phenomenon of meaning? To that we now turn.

CHAPTER III

THE PHENOMENON OF MEANING

It is my contention that meaning is not a two-termed relation—a thing and its meaning—which then leads to conundrums about the "space of meaning". Meaning should not be reified; there exists only meaningful things and how they exist, meaningfully, hence meaningfulness is ontological. My thesis is that a meaningful thing is a unitary phenomenon, but one that has a complex structure: three primary components (its nature, vector, context) and three sub-components (of the context: other things, humans, temporality) as really different types of contexts. We shall examine each of these components—via an examination of actual phenomenon—after a brief overview of our position. “Back to the things (*sache*, matters) themselves” is phenomenology's maxim.

The meaning of a thing is based on the nature of the thing, as might be expected. If it didn't have that nature, it wouldn't have that meaning. But “where” is that meaning? Although this question seems to be a category mistake, we are asking about its ontological, not spatial or physical, location. So how does meaning exist? In someone's mind, their knowledge (know-how)? Subjective? In several people's mind? Implicit in the situation? Perceived? Objective? As Heidegger says, meaning is not a property “floating somewhere” {BT 151}. It is my thesis that the meaning of a thing *is* (identical with) *how* it *fits* within its context(s). The meaningful thing's context(s) consist(s) of other things and humans (plus other sentient beings), but also its temporality—the temporality of the thing itself, which is not necessarily the same temporality as that of the contextual things or humans, nor even “universal” time. The final component is literally the linchpin: the thing's nature *is* a “vector” to its context, that is, it naturally *implicates*

its place within its context. Perhaps a preliminary example will make this overview clearer.

Consider one of Heidegger's most famous examples, a hammer. A typical hammer has a metal head with a handle and is designed to pound nails into wood (et al.). Given that nature, we can say that a hammer has the meaning of "nail-driver"; that is *how* it *fits* within its context. As a functional thing designed for a specific purpose, we can easily see how its nature implicates its context/meaning, i.e., its design is a "vector"—it has thrust and direction—to that context and meaning. But that meaning is the consequence of the various elements of the context: in this case, nails, wood, the workshop, humans who use the hammer, their intended project (build a doghouse), other humans who design, manufacture, or sell the hammer, etc. Finally, the hammer has its own temporality—it is, say, "several years old and used many weekends"—which is not the same as my temporality (although it includes me and is in human terms) or uniform, regularized universal time. However, as non-sentient, the hammer does not "have" its own temporality the way we humans (Daseins) do. We assign to it its own temporality.

How does Heidegger analyze the hammer? In his major discussions {HCT 191; BT 69, 83f, 154f, 157, 360f}, a hammer is an instrument within an equipmental totality. Although Heidegger's concern is Being, not meaning, and it is presented in a rather abstract (categorical) manner, his emphasis is on the macroscopic view (meaningful totality, meaningfulness), as we saw in his view of the concept of meaning in our Chapter Two. He and many commentators talk about the environmental context (workshop, other tools) and Dasein's purposes (in-order-to, towards-which, for-which), but gloss over the precise way it fits within that context (nail-driver). And of course, Heidegger would probably reject the notion that a thing, something other than Dasein, has temporality. So then, let us now examine each of these six components, via an examination of actual phenomenon, to show how meaning is structured in more detail. Although

I claim that all six components are the structure of every instance of meaning, some components are more prominent than others in any particular instance.

1. The nature of things. By “things” we generally mean non-human, non-animal, physical entities, individual beings, whereas “beings” includes humans and animals, but also most any “primary” existent, that is, something that is not a component of anything else. Thus, a pocket watch is a thing, a being, but its gears and hands are components until it is taken apart and then those parts become things/beings on their own. “Entities” can be anything individually distinguishable. Beings or entities need not be physical; they could be imaginary beings like unicorns, or dreams (whereas nighttime psychical occurrences are completely dependent components of human beings). By “nature” we mean the “stuff” of which something is “made”—even if it is not readily apparent (unicorns, dreams)—and its structural configuration. We don’t intend to pre-load our argument into these “definitions”; they are meant to be taken in an ordinary sense and specified more as we go along.

a. Example: wedding ring. Consider the nature of a wedding ring as our first phenomenon of meaning, something more complex than the hammer above. Although a really complete description would run for pages, we can make our point now with the following adumbration. Essentially the wedding ring means—symbolizes—marriage, a commitment to another person. But explicated further, it has meaning not only as (1) a physical thing (gold toned, circular) and (2) a material thing (molecular, chemically *Au*), but also as (3) an object of consciousness (intentional object), (4) a work of craftsmanship (perhaps well-designed, well-made), (5) an art object (possibly beautiful), (6) a social object (the aforementioned marital commitment), (7) maybe a family thing (heritage, passed down through generations), (8) a personal thing (*my* continuing marital commitment), and probably several more types of thing or

“object.” But each of these types are all aspects of the same thing. And how do they become *different* aspects? Each aspect is in fact, a different, *potentially independent* context—each aspect is a different *context of meaning*.

Thus, our example heirloom wedding ring means not only something to (respectively): (1) most any human being in the macroscopic world and (2) a scientist in the laboratory, but also to (3) a conscious transcendental subject, (4) a craftsman, (5) an artist or art critic, (6) members of a society or culture, (7) an extended family, and (8) to me personally. A thing’s meaning may be very individualistic. My heirloom wedding ring has all sorts of meanings to me that it would not have to a co-worker or a stranger. Other people undoubtedly experience less of its meaningfulness than I. The ring has, or could have, acquired these meanings in those worldly settings (contexts again), which in this case are predominantly human settings, but also in relation to other things (fingers, jewelry store) and temporality (heirloom, married 42 years ago). Possibilities are also a large part of the thing’s context; they are virtual contexts. So then, the meaning of something is discovered (uncovered, disclosed, in Heidegger’s sense) in the *relation* of that thing to its context. More fully stated, the meaning of something is constituted by the character or nature of the thing (or event) in relation to the character or nature of that thing’s specific context, usually one of many contexts, which becomes part of the character or nature of that relation. Thus, meaning is *how* the thing *fits* within its context(s). Nature and context each implicate the other (vectors), so it becomes an “internal” relationship without which each would not be the same.

b. Variation: water/ice/fog. Now, to see how the meaning of something is affected by variation of the components, consider the nature of something that is ostensibly the “same” but can take different forms depending upon certain environmental conditions:

water/ice/fog. Science tells us that these are just three different forms (“states“) of what is essentially H₂O. However, as we all know, each form has a very different *meaning*. Water means something essential to life, is a good, healthy drink—especially if cold on a hot day—and is a locus for swimming, diving, waterskiing, boating, fishing, etc. On the other hand, ice means something to put into a drink to cool it down, and can be a locus for ice skating, ice hockey, ice fishing, etc. Finally, fog can be a detrimental condition for driving or an enhancing feature in a landscape photograph. The point is that while this “stuff” is essentially (molecularly) the same in these three cases, the meaning changes significantly as the form changes—yet all these meanings are “structurally” the same: the being means something depending upon its nature and how it fits within its context, and here the context consists of worldly spaces, human activity, and particular times.

2. The nature of events. “Events” are more ephemeral types of phenomenal beings, but nevertheless they are still considered individual entities, although their boundaries are less precise than physical things. They are more complex than things since they intrinsically include not only things, but also people, attitudes, perceptions, circumstances, and even sub-events. Plus they are inherently temporal, occurring at and during a particular time and place; even recurring events are each unique to a certain time.

a. Example: a child’s birthday party. As an example of an event, consider a child’s birthday party. The event may have begun with parental planning more than a week before, then start in earnest when the other children arrive, play games, sing “Happy Birthday”, open gifts, run around, then all the guests go home and the birthday boy plays with his new toys. What is the meaning of this event? First, its essential nature is, in a phrase, “joyful milestone”, which fits within the context of his life to a greater or lesser degree (how memorable will it turn

out to be?), the lives of the other children (fun day, good cake and ice cream), and the temporality of the event: past (previous birthdays), present (the day's sub-events), and future ("I'm getting to be a big boy"), as a unitary phenomenon that forms the horizontal bounds of the arena of action (the activities of the children and adults).

b. Variation: Watergate. To see how variation affects the meaning of an event, consider the phenomenon known as Watergate. What began as "a third-rate burglary" progressed through daily Washington Post revelations, but very piecemeal, later implicating the President and his closest staff in compromising, if not illegal acts, largely concluding with the resignation of President Nixon and the books and further revelations in the years that followed. The important point here is the way the meaning of this event changed over time. When the break-in turned out to have a political motive, the meaning changed from an isolated and curious criminal event to a something more sinister because the context was different than it first appeared; the context was actually much larger and involved more and different people—indeed, different kinds of people. Over the ensuing weeks and months, the real context was gradually revealed and the event changed again into a cover-up at the highest levels of government, now because the contextual humans were reacting to the sub-events and other participants, changing the context, until those actions foreshadowed the possibility of impeachment. Now we refer to this whole sordid saga as "Watergate", an event that began in that apartment/office building but largely ended with a White House lawn helicopter—as a momentous event in the history of the United States.

3. The nature of contexts. Contexts are complex situations made up of things, humans, animals, plants, anything in the world, arranged in some way. Heidegger variously calls it "equipmental totality", "workshop", "world", etc. Context also includes more "abstract"

components: time, possibilities, projects, work, space, etc. A causal sequence is one type of context. Experience is a context, experience using a hammer, for example. Contexts can be of varying extents, intersect, and overlap. But the context that forms part of a thing's meaning is not unlimited; other things in the context may be just random, merely associated, tangential, more or less related, completely unrelated, etc.

Essentially, these are part/whole relationships; the parts make up the whole and the whole gives the parts their place within it. But "context" is not just a static relationship, like mere spatial juxtaposition; it is an active situation. A meaningful thing in a context is not like cherries that just happen to be in a bowl. As we shall see, the context (the whole) draws out the nature of a being (a part) by providing a complex environment of interrelations among its constituents, each aspect eliciting its perspective on the nature of the being (Cf. Leibniz). The whole, the context, also provides the boundary limits, the horizon, a crucial concept for Heidegger. And the part contributes its nature to the whole (context), thereby providing articulation, nuance, and variety to the whole. That is the power of Heidegger's existentialistic analysis of Dasein's death; its potentiality-for-being-a-whole defines the relatively (virtually) complete context for the meaning of any particular component event (life's myriad decisions) as meaningful. The realization of one's own mortality provides a delimiting factor ("I will not live indefinitely"), hence defines a whole (my lifetime) as an ever-present context for decisions (authentic, inauthentic) made within that whole, contributing to it (or not), thus giving them definite meaning, possibly a different meaning than they would have otherwise had.

a. Example: the context of a stabbing. To see the role of context, consider the following. There is a large knife in Mrs. Smith's kitchen. For the most part, it is used to cut meat, chop vegetables, slice bread, etc., and that context shapes the main meaning of the knife.

Then one day there is a domestic dispute at Mrs. Smith's house and now Mr. Smith is lying on the kitchen floor with the large knife in his chest. Although the overall setting/context has changed only slightly in a physical sense (both still in the kitchen), it has changed dramatically in a social sense (the relation between the Smiths), and the meaning of the knife, its immediate contextual relations, has also radically changed—from “good” (food preparation) to “bad” (murder weapon). The essential characteristics of the knife (large, heavy, balanced, sharp) haven't changed, and indeed, were conducive to both uses/functions. The main change is the meaning of the knife in this new context, a stabbing at the Smith's house.

b. Variation: stabbing motives. Further, the meaning could change over time and painstakingly: Initially, Mrs. Smith washes off the knife and disposes of Mr. Smith's body, but then forensic science discovers the traces of blood and her fingerprints. Later, her trial lawyer proves it was justifiable homicide in the killing of the extremely abusive Mr. Smith, thus the meaning has changed again, by virtue of a change in the context (the circumstances surrounding the event). Consider the statement, “Mrs. Smith killed Mr. Smith”, and how the meaning of that statement changes by varying the textual context from (1) the preliminary police report, (2) the indictment, (3) the verdict, (4) a newspaper account, (5) a fictional novel, (6) a historical novel, (7) the recounting of a dream in a psychiatric file, and (8) a “to-do” note to herself. The significance—the meaning—changes in each context.

4. The nature of vectors. A meaningful thing in a context is not like a penny in my pocket—because of the vector connection. A “vector” is an implication from the thing to—not its (reified) meaning, but rather—its *place* within the context that forms its meaning. It has direction and thrust to that niche. Heidegger calls this “reference” but that seems too weak, whereas the concept of “appresentation”—used by Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and the early

Heidegger {e.g., HCT 190, 211, 274}—is too strong (as the front of a box appresents its back sides). A vector is not a necessary relationship, but it is an internal relation. More apropos is Heidegger’s exploitation of the German concept of signify: *be-deuten* as, at root (*deuten*, to point), *pointing* {BT 87; see Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary*, on *Sinn* as originally journey, way, and *be-deuten* as to point, indicate, interpret, HD123f; cf. GBT 392, 402}. A vector shows the difference between relation and reference—pointing. In physics, a vector is a quantity with both magnitude and direction as force or velocity. Another kind of vector is the intentionality of consciousness, as is Heidegger’s conception of care as a practical (not necessarily conscious) intentionality. But our conception of the meaning vector is rather the “non-intended” (not consciously deliberate) intentionality of the implication of meaning (not “activated” by a subject). It is an existential, directional thrust, a connection. A meaning vector is established at some point in time and built up over time to what may be a Humean “constant conjunction”; it is learned, known, usually followed without thought or deliberate recall from memory, and socially passed on to others (more on that later). A vector can be “followed” both from a thing to its context and vice versa, from its context to (the nature of) the thing. Reverse vector: If I know (am told, learn, discover/disclose, figure out) the meaning of some (unknown) thing, I may be able to deduce (figure out) its nature by how it fits in its place in the world context. The meaning of meaning: it discloses world (as Heidegger realizes).

a. Example: unabridged dictionary. To illustrate this vectorial relationship, consider first an unabridged dictionary. Such a dictionary is typically very large because unusually complete, perhaps including several foreign dictionaries. If, while writing, someone needs to consult his unabridged dictionary, he would get up, walk over to a shelf, and seeing the largest of several dictionaries, open it and look up the word of interest. In this case, the

perceived dictionary vectorially implicates “something that lists definitions”, its meaning. I know what the visible dictionary means. Now consider a follow-on scenario: This person buys a new, more up-to-date, unabridged dictionary and uses the now superseded dictionary as a doorstep. This new use exploits another property of the dictionary’s nature, its size and weight, instead of its “primary” nature as a book of words and definitions. Although this change in the situation of the unabridged dictionary is a change in its context (shelf to floor), hence its meaning (definitions to doorstep), the important point here is the change in the “direction” of the vectors—upon perception, the first vector points to the meaning “definition list” whereas the second vector now points to the meaning “doorstop”. Is the change from unabridged dictionary to doorstep a change in Being? Yes, because Being is not immutable substance, but a mode of existing. The dictionary’s properties didn't change, but now we are exploiting a different property (heaviness, bulk, vice words inside); and therefore each of the two different Beings of this being has a different meaning to me. So too, if we consider the unabridged dictionary as a scientific object with measurable properties (weight).

b. Variation: unknown thing. Now consider a case where this vector does not function, the encounter with something unknown. While in an antiques store, I was looking at something that was unfamiliar to me; it had prongs, blades, and a handle. I not only didn’t know what it was, I didn’t know what *kind* of thing it was. In other words, I didn’t know its meaning and did I not experience a vector to any meaning nor category of meanings. Then I saw a little sign that designated the items on that table as *kitchen* antiques. Now a vector “shot out” to the kinds of kitchen things I, as a guy, was familiar with, but to no avail (and this seemed to be a different experience than a mental act of memory). Finally I asked the proprietor: it was an old-fashioned “automatic” apple (et al.) peeler. Who knew they even had such a device then? But

now I had a vector (thrust and direction) to its meaning (peeler) as a functionality within the context of early-American kitchens. Now consider the case of an “empty” vector: When I was a kid, I regularly found, scattered in the street, several metal rods; they were about 6-7 inches long, flat, and roundly tapered at one end. I did not know what they were from or used for, and to this day, I still don’t know. They occasioned, whenever found, a vector that never indicated their meaning-giving context.

5. The nature of humans. The nature and role of humans in meaning may be obvious and only require some pertinent reiteration. Here “humans” means more than adults and children of all nationalities, but also their ontological basis (Dasein), animals and sentient beings of all kinds (what is the meaning of a piece of algae to an amoeba: “food”), plus involving such constitutive functions as perception, conscious experience, purposes, goals, language, memory, learning, education, society, and so on. Meaning is based on a thing's nature (=Being), but part of that nature/Being is our (Dasein’s) experience with it (using, seeing, etc.), which is a relation to it, i.e., a way of our Being with it. All these, plus thousands of other similar factors, play crucial roles in the constitution of meaning. And the meaning of a thing (eventually) becomes part of its nature/Being, even if that meaning is acquired by a relation to us.

a. Example: tree. To see this role of humans/sentient beings, for example, contrast the meaning of a tree to a lumberjack and an environmentalist. Something can mean essentially very different things to different humans (i.e., different contexts). A tree can have various meanings—symbol of natural life, temporary shelter, shade, climbability, landscape, fruit, etc.—but essentially signify something very different, at the same time, to say, a lumberjack and an environmentalist. They see the tree in totally different, if not opposite, contexts. To the lumberjack, a tree occurs within the context of economic pursuits and has the

meaning of “commodity”. To the environmentalist, a tree occurs within the context of an ecology and has the meaning of “carbon dioxide/oxygen exchanger”, et al. To both, it could be the same tree with these different meanings. Each has more or less the same faculties of perception, reasoning, education, etc., yet each regards the tree with a very different meaning—how it fits within its context, differing contexts at one level (economy vs. ecology), yet similar if not the same at another level (“world”).

b. Variation: animals. Heidegger considers, at some perhaps surprising length, the nature of animals {FCM Ch 4}, however he concludes they are still little more than Cartesian automatons {FCM 269F, 271}. It is my contention that animals, as well as other sentient beings (amoeba, etc.), not only “recognize” and “use” meaning, but can originate and perpetuate meaning as well, just not self-consciously (which makes the use of quotation marks around human traits rather pretentious). For example, we have a cat that at one point in its maturation, would fetch and retrieve a ball. It had to be *the* small green ball, but if you would toss it into the kitchen from the den, the cat would chase it down, stop it with its paws, then pick it up in its mouth and bring it back, and do that repeatedly until it tired of the game. After several weeks of that game at irregular intervals, the cat developed a variation; after several retrievals in a session, the cat would take the ball over to its water dish, drop it in, then fish it out with its mouth, and only then bring it back, dripping wet. Now I don’t know if the cat was just complicating the routine, as animals (and humans) do, but it appeared suspiciously like the ball, in mid-session, had acquired the meaning “dirty” and it was changing the meaning of “water” from “drink fluid” to “wash fluid”—otherwise, why would it do that kind of new behavior? And more generally, animals not only instinctively behave in certain ways, but also try new actions, learn, adapt, and in effect, recognize meanings. Meaning, as explicitly “meaning”, is really only for human beings

who can understand and fully appreciate the relation, but other sentient beings (cats, dogs, etc.) can experience meanings in their everyday lives as well. Can it be denied that a cat experiences the *meaning* of its catnip mouse in all its playful nuances just upon perceiving (seeing, smelling) it? Can it be denied that a dog experiences the *meaning* of its food dish in all its nutritional nuances just upon perceiving (seeing, smelling, tasting) it? And why would we think this is much less than the intention of meaning that we rational human beings experience? Even before the advent of man, dinosaurs knew the meaning of their prey—as “prey”—when they occasioned upon each other. Innate meaning is still meaning. This seems to be more than just extrapolation from meaning to a human. (Also, compare the meaning of water to a plant to the “meaning” of water to a rock in a stream? Now *that* does seem like extrapolation!) Meaning is not something I have in my mind, it is *how* something fits into its context.

6. The nature of temporality. Temporality is a special kind of context. The temporality of things is not *our* temporality overlaid on the things we encounter in the world (the past as source and history, the present as being perceived and action, the future as possibilities). Even “new” (to me or you) things have an implied past (origin, i.e., it didn't just burst into existence in front of us), present as perceived now (presence, as Heidegger emphasizes), and a future—what we will do with it. It is their own temporality, although they do not “have” their own temporality like humans/Daseins do. For Heidegger, temporality is a structure of our (Dasein) understanding and existence; and temporalizing my existence is actively making present, projecting future, making past (remembering, etc.), all as a part of daily living/existing, but not something we explicitly intend or deliberately do; we do not set out to temporalize our existence as a specific act. Nor is the temporality of things “universal time” (clock time), in which things *do* occur because *it* includes everything, but only because universal time is an abstract extrapolation from

actual physical processes. That is, the physical processes of the world and worldly things—growth, maturation, decay, erosion, etc.—are ordered, uni-directional (construed as “forward”), sequences that man has observed; the pure sequential directedness is abstracted out, regularized—indeed homogenized—cut into uniform bits of various nesting sizes (seconds, minutes, etc.), and finally overlaid on *everything*: that is universal time. By contrast, the temporality of things is concrete, perhaps irregular, and imprecise, yet only recognized and “held” by humans/Daseins. The temporality of things has all three tenses: past, present, and future, but not very distinctly. Let’s look at an example to see this temporality.

a. Example: antique car. Suppose I liked the way a 1932 Model T Ford looked and wanted to own one. Lacking the time and expertise to find and restore one myself, I go to an antique car auction and successfully buy one. Now the restoration process may have used parts from various years around 1932, or used some (or all) the parts that only were from 1932, because so distinctive to the model year (headlights, radiator caps, insignia, etc.). The point here not whether parts were from 1932 or circa-1932, but rather that my “new” car has a fairly precise temporality, in contrast to the imprecise temporality of the hammer above (“several years old and used many weekends”). This car is from the past, but not *my* past. It is being driven in my and the car’s present, and will be in our common futures.

b. Variation: replica antique car. To alternate the last example, suppose the antique car auction does not have a restored 1932 Model T Ford, but only a replica version: replica fiberglass body, rebuilt engine, remanufactured parts, new seat covers, etc. Clearly this car would not have the same temporality as the restored one which used original parts, even if refurbished. Its temporality would be different, even if I did not know it.

7. The creation of meaning. Meaning, as the way something fits into its context(s), is not

just recognized as already existing, but *must* at some point originate, be created.

a. Example: new technology. The clearest instance of meaning creation is the invention of some new thing. Consider the meaning of “social networking”: Several decades ago, the internet began as a limited communication path for scientific academics to share ideas and rapidly grew into a worldwide network of email and business information/purchasing. More recently, several independent entrepreneurs developed social network applications for the internet—viz., Twitter, Facebook, YouTube—that enabled sharing thoughts, personal details, and digital pictures/videos with other subscribers. While usually mundane in meaning to most, consider the profound meaning such social networking had to the Iranian protestors who used it to show the outside world their government’s violent suppression of dissent (circa 2009) when no independent media was available. They created a new way social networking fits in the context of Iranian cultural upheaval, crackdown reportage.

b. Variation: bogus invention. To the profundity of the last example, compare a completely made-up “thing”. Suppose I designated a goldfish, a tractor, and the North Star to be collectively unified and called a “gorf”. As such, this new creation would probably have little to no meaning in anyone’s actual experiential context—although now its real meaning is “invented thesis example” in the context of my writing and your reading. Thus even this bogus invention shows that meaning is how something fits into its context.

8. The nature of significance. Although significance can be used as a synonym for meaning, we would draw a distinction between the two concepts. Whereas meaning denotes a fairly “close”, if not an immediate context, significance denotes the next further context and beyond, the wider context of the initial meaning, the context that gives meaning to the initial meaning. Even though this concentric circle of significances could go on and on (*ad infinitum?*),

we would not need another term; significance could denote them all.

a. To see this relationship between meaning and significance consider the meaning of a teenager's car. In the first instance, his car means simply transportation: getting to school, work, his friends' houses, the movies, etc. However, whether he realizes it or not, the meaning of this transportation has a further meaning—its significance—as his freedom. Without that car he would be dependent on his parents or a sibling to get around, probably only to those places that are absolutely essential or approved. On the other hand, with that car he can largely go where he wants, when he wants, i.e., freedom.

9. The human experience of meaning.

a. Meaning as a phenomenon. Meaning appears as a familiar (meaningful) thing that I must attend to, otherwise it's just part of the background. Meanings (*qua* meanings) are not directly perceived nor necessarily thought. As such, meaning is non-sensible, reflective, but in living action, I don't normally reflect, only know/apply/use meanings. Meaning is non-sensible but phenomenal; that is, the meaning of a thing—as how it fits into its context(s)—is not an object of sense perception. Perception is only of the here and now, presence/present, whereas meaning (like Being) is more expansive, including aspects not-here, not-now, past and future, a wider context of non-presence (i.e., absence), therefore understanding is required beyond sense perception. Although many beings are perceptual (perceived), their meaning is not perceived, but it is phenomenal. Although the thing is an object of sense perception, as is the context (or could be, in the case of virtual contexts, absent, historical, distant, etc.), the meaning of a thing (as *how* it *fits* into its context) is an object of a non-sensible intention, hence phenomenal. But this does not make it an *ens rational*; if Heidegger has done anything for the history of philosophy, he has shown there is something between sense perception and reason—namely

understanding—which has its own *modus operandi* in everyday human existence. If meanings were objects of sense perception, most attentive adults would unmistakably see them, we would all agree on the thing’s meaning(s) without controversy, and everyday human existence would be largely straightforward—but it’s not. The meaning of things and events are in constant need of interpretation, as Heidegger contends.

Looking at the history of philosophy, meaning—that is, meaningfulness—seems to be what Heidegger termed “phenomena” in the strict sense: what “shows itself in itself (the ‘forms of the intuition’) will be the ‘phenomena’ of phenomenology” (BT 31). As he explains, phenomena in this sense are like Kant’s conception of space and time: forms of sensible intuition (i.e., perception) that make human experience, in the way it is, possible. For Kant, the objects of experience are necessarily (a priori) spatio-temporal (as a horizon). Similarly, things and events (the “objects of experience”) are a priori meaningful in *some way* (even if sometimes unknown, doubtful, dubious), and meaning is the horizon within which they are shown as themselves. Meaning too is within the temporal horizon, always historical.

b. Meaning in conscious perception. As phenomenologists insist, consciousness is always consciousness of an object, and this is an intentional relation. Intentionality is a vector, an ideal pointing toward something, a dynamic relatedness, not just a static relation like mere spatial juxtaposition. But expressed more correctly, consciousness is always consciousness of a “meaningful thing”, since “object” is literally an abstraction, an empty shell of a worldly being, just as much as its correlate, the “subject,” is an anemic substrate of a living person. However, in experience, unless we are intrinsically interested in the thing (or it becomes curious or seems strange), consciousness “slides off” the thing to *one* of its meanings, that is, the meaning which is, at that time, important (in *my* present context). The thing is important (usually) only so far as

what it means to me now (or in anticipation of some future time, or past interpretation). This is also an intentional relation; consciousness intends the thing's meaning—and probably predominantly. In effect, for the most part, things are, in this sense, *signs*; Kisiel {GBT 380ff}, in an independent verification of our point, says that “environmental things as signs...appresent the meaningfulness of the world from which they arise”, to include other Daseins.

In fact, in perception (and not just the usual paradigm, vision), what we are really conscious of—consciousness in a general sense—is a surrounding sphere, a penumbra of meaningful things. The perceptual sphere, as *how* meaningful things are present, is in front of us (especially visually), behind us (e.g., auditorially), above and below us (e.g., tactually), perhaps in our mouth (tastefully), and all around (e.g., odorously). Each of the senses contributes to this sphere, and each sense has its own character and range, but the perceptual sphere is not just the Empiricist's bits of sights, sounds, smells, etc., that we then mentally combine into our life-world. It is there for us at all times, although less distinctly during sleep, etc. And somewhere in that perceptual sphere is a focal point, which is constantly shifting, usually in accordance with our purposes/goals/desires (Heidegger's “projects”)—consciousness in a narrow sense. Furthermore, we are consciously aware—usually explicitly (if not fully)—of our projects, immediate and long term, which is also an intentional relation (but not the same as what we “intend” to do; “intentional” is an implicated, co-present, onto-epistemological relation, not just a *future* deliberate action). Thus, the full relation of intentional consciousness is four-termed: consciousness, projects, meaningful thing, and meaning-giving context. The context of meaning is lived experiences, known/understood, remembered (but not usually requiring a specific act of memory), and applied.

c. Meaning and understanding. How do we understand the meaning of new

things and events? By *how* they fit into a (or various) context(s) and *how* they are alike/different than what we already know. During childhood, play is an early way we learn (teach ourselves) how the world works, the meaning of things—in other words, understanding the Being of beings. Understanding our own Being is not merely like, but *is* part of understanding how gravity, force, momentum, etc., affect bodily movements. In general, we discover the meaning of things by manipulating them with our hands (Heidegger’s ready-to-hand) or with the mind/thought (present-at-hand). It is ontologically significant that human being (Dasein) grows up into the world (hence, the possibility of Heidegger’s “pre-ontological understanding” of Being). Within the clearing of Dasein’s (*Da*=there/here) understanding, a thing’s (e.g., a hammer’s) context (the present) *opens it up* (discloses it) in a particular way: woodshop, board, nail, prior (the past) hammering (and tool use in general), etc.—all in light of a desired end, project (the future doghouse). The nail draws out (elicits, actualizes) a capacity of heavy blunt instruments (hammer), plus the sharp point draws out a capacity of wood to split/part. Using tools, dealing with things in normal everyday life, reveals their meaning (how they fit into their context), hence revealing the world, but (as Heidegger contends) we usually don’t realize it until it breaks, then we literally real-ize its meaning. Understanding is realizing *how* things fit together (the meaning-giving context placement).

Since meaning is something we live “within”, pre-thematically, our intentions (intended actions) really “glance off” the thing itself and we focus our attention on its meaning as what is really important, projecting our goals around or through the meaning, incorporating it in our efforts. This is why Heidegger sees meaning as possibility and an existiale of Dasein. But also, in understanding things/beings/events, we coincidentally illuminate ourselves. Here understanding, experience, knowing, is a mode of Being—an existential relation, a way of

Being, *how I am* in contextual relation to things. More than just knowing presupposes Being, knowing is a way of Being.

d. Meaning and society. Since we live/exist within meaning (i.e., a meaningful world), meaning is an existential constituent of Being-in-the-world. Society/culture, ontologically, is an aspect of Dasein's being-with other Daseins as an ontological structure of Dasein—but perhaps the more beneficial side of Heidegger's largely negative conception, “the they”. The context of meaning includes human social upbringing, a necessary condition for understanding, as well as the inauthentic “they's” opinions (hence Heidegger's need to reawaken the question of Being). Meaning and significance, when explicit, are the product of an interpretive act of judgment that relies on memory (learning, the past), intelligence (intellectual capacity, the present), and imagination (of possibilities not actually given in sense perception, the future). Meanings become widely known to others through social interaction (speech, print, etc.), tested by others, culturally ingrained and transmitted, historically settled. And so language is also a big part of the context of meaning. Heidegger's “word-things” {BT 161} are grounded in speaking and hearing—i.e., language as practiced, not a theoretical construct—just as things are grounded in practical use, not theoretical contemplation. Learning as being-told a meaning, while a child or as an adult, is only a social shortcut (and part of the value of society, culture, and communication) to the discovery or creation of meaning on one's own (trial-and-error).

Meanings can change over time and become purely historical as a backdrop (another context) for further meanings, forgotten and recovered later, or lost entirely. Things pick up new meanings over time which then become part of their total “meaning package”. Meaning-changes over time is a history that we lose or forget at our peril, they evolve; this is a major theme for Heidegger (the history of Being {HD 95ff}). A thing can pick up new meanings over time, even

temporarily. For example, using a book as a doorstop, which is not its original meaning, but rather a potential meaning—if it is large and heavy enough. Such possibilities can be entirely private, exclusively known meanings, or public, commonly known meanings. Thus the development of the meaning of Watergate as an evolution in the society/culture.

What about the (linguistic) theory of meaning as use? Although we specifically desired to avoid the problem of meaning in language as beyond the scope of our topic—the meaning of things—there is a need to at least address this idea. Although “use” certainly characterizes how a thing can fit within its context (hammer), meaning as contextual relation is more function or role than use. Wittgenstein and the analytical philosopher’s point that words are used, hence have their individualized (specific, social) meanings, is surely sound. And “use” need not imply a prior (nor necessarily explicit) intent/design, or creation for a purpose, and base utilitarianism. However, use is only one type of *how* something fits into its context, hence, cannot define the meaning of things. Our broader theory takes logical precedence. How is the meaning of a painting some kind of use? Furthermore, the reason for something, an explanation or rationale, is to be found in its meaning, its wider context (“significance”), not necessarily its use. Mom says not to run with scissors, why? Putting it in a wider context of injury, the realm of real possibilities, brings it home to the child that the consequences of his actions are possible injury; therefore, the wider context equals the reason, whereas the child doesn’t foresee this. (Thus the notion of rationality is the project of finding or providing reasons, a way of thinking as enunciating a context for something). Use implies a means/ends situation which may not always be valid for things and events; therefore meaning as contextual relation subsumes use.

To conclude this chapter, we should apply what we have learned in the above explication of the phenomenon of meaning to Heidegger’s position on meaning presented in my Chapter

Two. Our main criticism was not that his view was wrong, but rather that he was too focused on the big picture, meaning as world into which we have been thrown. But the macroscopic view of meaning as a total context that is emphasized by Heidegger presupposes my microscopic view of the structure of individual meanings that constitute that total context. Heidegger's examples presume meaningfulness is already present, but he doesn't explain how it occurs.

Meaningfulness in general creates the presumption of the meaningfulness of anything in particular. So then, we will now briefly revisit the few examples Heidegger discusses {in HCT}, taken as instances of individual meanings, in order to show the fruitfulness of our interpretation. Each brings nuance.

In the section on the “Interconnection of the phenomena of meaningfulness, sign, reference, and relation”, Heidegger examines “a rotating red arrow”, what we would call nowadays an automobile turn signal, “in order to clarify the sense of *meaningfulness*” {HCT 205, my italics}. As an “environmental thing”, the arrow indicates the direction the car will take at an intersection, thus directing the other cars “to get out of the way” {*ibid.*}. Heidegger’s first point is that “the specific reference of serviceability ‘in order to indicate’ is constitutive for the potential environmental handiness of the arrow”; but he cautions that “this referential structure ‘for indicating’... is not the indicating itself” {*ibid.*}. Although somewhat subtle, if not obscure, he seems concerned here to maintain the distinction that “this ontic indicating is grounded in the [ontological] structure of reference” {*ibid.*, original in italics}. His larger point is that “insofar as I...draw from its [the arrow’s] indication *my* particular comportment at the time” {*ibid.*}, then we can see that “the environmental sign-thing, the arrow, stands in an environmental correlation of references, and it *appresents, makes present, the envioning world*” {HCT 206}—hence, “concerned being-in-the-world” {*ibid.*}.

But below the superstructure of *meaningfulness* (handiness, referential structure), this is an instance of particular meaning. We see *how* the nature of turn signals (light indicator) fits within the context of automobile traffic conventions (heed what I'm doing, turning left), other things (cars, roads, traffic lights), other humans (drivers, pedestrians), within its own temporality (the car is five years old, but the bulb was replaced about two years ago [past], so is working now [present] and should function for some time to come [future]). This is our general method to determine meaning (not necessarily in this order): 1. What is a thing's intrinsic nature?, 2. What is its context?, 3. How does it fit into that context?, 4. Consider various aspects of that context (other things, humans), and 5. What is its temporality? This method is not an algorithm, but rather more of an art requiring imagination and intelligence. We don't need perfect knowledge about any of these elements, just enough to get by, in life and in theory, while always digging deeper.

Heidegger's subsequent examples are not as detailed or weighty. His second instance of meaning is an "omen", taking the south wind as a sign of rain {HCT 206f}. Here we are dealing with entities that are already "on hand in the world as natural processes" within the context of weather for farming or a military venture, "grounded in a particular concernedness" {*ibid.*}. Beyond the point of these entities not being produced, Heidegger is at pains here to argue that "the sense of this sign-taking would be mistaken if one were to say that the south wind 'in itself', 'objectively', is not a sign, it is so construed merely 'subjectively'" {*ibid.*}, whereas nature is "always objective" {HCT 207}. However, on our explication of meaning, how something fits into its context is not intrinsically subjective or objective, but rather depends on the nature of the thing and the context in question. While the connection between the south wind and rain was first made mentally by a human "subject" (or a series of weather-observing and duly noting,

communicative, persons), the south wind *as a sign* is how it fits within the context of rainy weather—which is neither subjective (the receptive side of sense perception within the context of some philosophies, but not in biology or physics except in the sense of an experimental “subject”), nor objective (a natural thing in the atmosphere, unless the phenomenal sign is made an intentional “object”). Even calling this sign-taking an “interpretation”, as Heidegger would (and which would not be mistaken), is fraught with an implied subjectivism that contextual fittedness seems not. As a phenomenal aspect of some kinds of wind, the subject-object decision is misguided, misleading, and/or inappropriate.

Heidegger’s next two examples of meaning are fairly straightforward. His third example, producing a sign-thing (e.g., a “storm ball in the marine weather-bureau”), he says usually requires explicit institution, a deliberate “correlation of being”, beyond serviceability, thus “*superior handiness, familiarity, and accessibility*” {HCT 207}. Unlike the natural correlation of the south wind and rain, the former being an “omen” that (perhaps) foretells the latter, putting up a conventionally-agreed storm ball to advise (the possibility) of rain not only depends on a weather forecast derived otherwise, but also on the deliberately-produced indicative meaning of the sign being realized by the appropriate audience (e.g., mariners). Here again, on our view of meaning, it is clear that the “institution of signs” that Heidegger is discussing (both cases) is a correlation of the nature of the thing (black storm ball) being made (by humans) to fit into (as indicator sign) its context (weather, ships, human mariners), within the temporality of manufacture (of storm balls), education (of mariners), and rain cloud timelines. This analysis is also true for Heidegger’s next example, a “knot tied in a handkerchief” as not just a sign, but a “pure mark” which is “defined anew with every new institution” {HCT 207}. His point here is that something usually inconspicuous, a handkerchief, is made conspicuous by tying a knot into

it, in order to indicate something—perhaps as a reminder to pick up my dry cleaning, or a distress signal from one spy to another. But, Heidegger says, “To the breadth of what this mark can indicate corresponds the narrowness of comprehensibility of this sign” {*ibid.*}; only the spies “in the know” realize its meaning (hopefully), and it is a private meaning to me. But given that narrowness, Heidegger adds, even if I forget what the knot means (“Was I supposed to get milk?”) or the spies die, the “sign-character” is not lost, just “no longer comprehended” {*ibid.*}. In other words, the phenomenal character of the knot as an indicator of some particular meaning (get dry cleaning, milk, or duress) loses “only” its *vector* to the specific niche it had in its previous context, so now it becomes a mysterious sign within the context of things to be remembered or deciphered, an “empty vector”.

Heidegger’s final two examples, both in the section on how understanding “discloses the world as meaningfulness” {HCT 209}, address what we have discussed above as perspectival meaning (5a) and temporality (6), but are further instructive. The former is analyzed by Heidegger as a “chance stone” that a farmer encounters as an “environmental thing” in his field {HCT 211}. To the farmer, whose plow was nicked by the stone, “it is disclosed for him through his specific concern” as something “obstructive, unserviceable” {*ibid.*}—i.e., it has the meaning of “obstacle” {HCT 211f}. However, Heidegger says, the farmer “is not capable of discovering the stone as it actually was and still is”, a stone-ax that “can point to an environment as *having been*” as a “source for historiological discovery and determination”—i.e., “that type of sign which we call a vestige” {HCT 211}. As such, not only is the stone-ax inaccessible to the farmer, but he might make it inaccessible to historians or archeologists, hence the rest of us, by smashing the *stone* {HCT 211f}. Heidegger’s point is that “Such odd things as historical sources are not self-evident and simple to see in their specific structure of being” (later called “ready-to-

hand” and “present-at-hand”), but more broadly, that “being-in-the-world as understanding and concerned absorption appresents the world”—and does so “explicitly...by means of signs”—thus, making “meaningfulness as such understandable” {HCT 211}.

Although we criticized Heidegger for emphasizing the macro perspective of meaningfulness at the expense of the micro perspective of individual meaning as constituents of that macro whole, our view on the structure of meaning also corrects and illuminates two other aspects of this stone-ax example. Whereas Heidegger draws the surprisingly un-Heideggerian distinction of the stone “as it actually was and still is” (stone-ax) versus the farmer’s understanding of it as an “obstacle” (stone), our discussion above of perspectival meaning (5a, tree to an environmentalist and a lumberjack) shows that this is not a distinction of actuality/interpretation, but rather of meaning in two different contexts (other things and other humans): the field-plowing farmer and the historiological archeologist. Moreover, our view also shows how the two interpretations of the stone differ in temporality. To the farmer, the temporality of the stone is one kind (past: was indeterminately there since who knows when, present: plow-nicking presence, future: dug up and thrown away if not smashed), while to the historiological archeologist it is another kind (past: stone-ax, present: historical stone-ax [i.e., Heidegger’s “was and still is”], future: prospective local museum relic).

And temporality is one of the main issues of Heidegger’s final example, “a roll of parchment with writing” {HCT 212}. Although he says this “sign and source” is a “complicated situation” and he “can only briefly allude to these problems, which belong in a hermeneutics of the historiological disciplines” {HCT 212}, the parchment roll is “a relic from an earlier time” and the writing on it can “refer back to a still earlier time” {*ibid.*}. Heidegger calls this reference “altogether peculiar: it communicates”—the writing “has its own kind of comprehensibility;

access to it presupposes its own kind of understanding” {*ibid.*}, apparently in distinction to its relicness. While Heidegger briefly discusses this example in terms of narration, report, witnesses, testimony, source, and how they “demonstrate that being a sign...is grounded in...a world whose mode of encounter and of being is meaningfulness.” {HCT 213}, for us the interesting aspect is otherwise. Notice the way in which the temporality of the parchment roll is *doubled*: like the stone-ax, there is the temporality of the roll as relic (past: old roll, present: roll with writing that shows us the past civilization, future: our understanding of our heritage may change), but also the temporality of the writing (past: different language, present: translation task, future: nuanced understanding). Yet neither temporality should be reduced to the other, and neither is identical to our (the roll finder, the other humans in his society/culture, us in particular) temporality (daily concerns).

In our final chapter, we shall address the larger context of our view of meaning, Being.

CHAPTER IV

MEANING AND BEING

So now, how can our explication of the structure of meaning help in our Heideggerian quest for the meaning of Being? Although it would be folly to think we can answer Heidegger's lifelong project in a thesis, we can conclude with some suggested conceptual paths.

Thus far our ontological investigation (in effect, into the Being of meaning) has admittedly dealt with what Heidegger would call the "ontic-existential" meaning of things (beings), that is, their meaning in everyday existence. However, among those meanings, or their "significances" (as the meaning of a meaning), may lie the "ontological-existential" meanings of those things/beings—and/or their Being—which is part of the role, significance, and power of what Heidegger calls the "pre-ontological understanding" of Being. Plus, having now laid open the structure of meaning, we can use that structure to get at not only the Being of beings, but also the meaning of Being as such or in general. In this effort we should keep in mind the distinction among: beings, their meaning(s), the Being of beings, the meaning of their Being, Being in general, and the meaning of Being in general. We will begin by reviewing hammers and examining Heidegger's analysis of a jug; then we will draw out some pertinent features of his "*Daseinanalytic*" and analysis of artworks that bear on the nature of Being/meaning. Finally, we will consider the more general ontological significance of these beings.

At the beginning of Chapter Three we briefly considered one of Heidegger's favorite examples, a hammer, as an introductory overview of the structural components of meaning. We said then that the meaning of a hammer—*how it fits* within its context—is nail-driver. We also suggested that there are other uses for a hammer (e.g., shaping metal, pulling out nails, pounding

in stakes, doorstep) and other types of hammers (e.g., ball-peen, rubber, tack, sledge). But let's say that *that* type of hammer (designed to pound nails into wood) has "nail-driver" as its main meaning. We could also say that "nail-driver" is its *essence*. Although true in this simple case, not all essences are little more than alternative but equivalent descriptions of a thing's nature and/or main meaning; but then again, essences seem to be more than just linguistic usage. In any event, if "nail-driver" is that hammer's essence (derived from the verb *to be*), then we can say that *that is how it exists* within its context (nails, boards, workshop, hammering human, weekend use, etc.), since all finite things exist within some context or another. But *how* a thing *exists* is, we contend, its *Being*. The upshot is, at least in this case and given those caveats, meaning equals Being (not to mention that, over time, things tend to exist *as* their meanings). Several commentators equate Being and meaning, at least in some sense {for example, Crowell SOM 231, 243; Bridges CM 220, 225; Vallicella PB 388, 391ff; Gelven CBT 98, 100}. That equation was my original hypothesis for this thesis; however, after analyzing the two concepts, I now think otherwise, as we shall see. I claim that Being has a structure *similar* to meaning: Being is the nature of a thing (how it exists) in a context composed of other things, humans, and temporality. But notice that one component is missing, vector; unlike meaning, in which the thing's nature refers to or implicates how it fits within its context, the context that forms part of a thing's Being is more intrinsic to its nature (to the extent that it is). Thus a hammer *fits* within a context that forms its meaning (wood as nail-driver, or door as doorstep), whereas with regard to its Being, some aspects of its context are essential to the hammer's existence (nails as a nail-driver). In some cases, a thing's context that forms part of its Being is negative; thus Heidegger contrasts a stone, which is "worldless", with an animal ("poor in world") and man (who is

“world-forming”) {FCM Pt2}. The role of context in Being will be clearer in the case of more complicated beings/things.

How does Heidegger describe a hammer’s Being? Again he focuses on the macroscopic aspects. While it is possible to show that he seemingly realizes—individually—the role of a thing’s nature (essence or Being), vector (“reference”), context (“equipmental contexture”), other things, humans (“Dasein”), and temporality in a thing’s existence, Heidegger pulls these constituents together on the level of “higher order” categories: “ready-to-hand” and, more abstractly, “presence-at-hand”. The former is analyzed in terms of serviceability and reliability {BT 68f, PLT 34f}, while the latter is, derivatively, analyzed in terms of deficiency and conspicuousness compared to the former {BT 73f, PLT 34f}. Although both these categories maintain the integrity of the thing as a whole—unlike the traditional categories (substance, quality, relation, state, etc.) which dissect a thing—they still focus on a particular aspect of the thing to the exclusion of another. Categories are appropriate to Being as substance as constant presence {HCT 219f, BT 96f, GBT 290f, 491}, a blank shell, ground, basis, holder, or support for properties (which are separable like categories); they are divisive, not holistic like meaning. On my interpretation, the difference between ready-to-hand and present-at-hand is a difference of *how* something fits within its context (instrumental vs. theoretical context), hence a difference of meaning. We could even agree that they are different “modes” of Being (that is, differences in *how* the hammer *exists* within the context of humans), but not an “unworlding” {HCT 196, 219; BT 75, 112} of the ready-to-hand into the less dynamic situation of being merely occurrent, simply present, except metaphorically or relatively. In any event, I contend that ready-to-hand and present-at-hand are inadequate to the task of capturing the existence/meaning of a hammer.

A more fruitful avenue of approach to Being Heidegger offers in the treatise “On the Essence of Ground”, which was written in 1928, the year after the publication of *Being and Time*. Near the end of that treatise, Heidegger mentions “the idea of being in general (what-being and how-being, something, nothing and nothingness)” {EG 133}, but does not elaborate on that conceptual indication. Magda King briefly discusses “this formula, bare as it is” as “the basic design of the new ontology that is to be founded—that is, brought back to its source and ground—in *Being and Time*” {GH 8}. She says the what-being is “traditionally called the ‘essence’” and the how-being is the modalities of actuality/possibility/necessity {*ibid.*}. While I would concur with the former, the latter seems too constrained; our interpretation of how-being is broader, encompassing also the multiplicity of ways and the manifold manner in which a being exists (and/or has meaning) within its context(s). The next two “articulation[s] of the idea of being” are “the widest and deepest of all distinctions: the difference between something and nothing” {GH 9}. Finally, King finds it “hard to imagine that the nothing and the not can have anything to do with time, and yet they must have, if Heidegger is serious” about “the temporal meaning enclosed in the idea of being as such” {*ibid.*}—although this “will unfortunately remain obscure” because Heidegger never finished Division Three of *Being and Time*” {*ibid.*}.

In any event, we shall use this articulated idea of “Being in general” as a way to approach the meaning of Being as such, via the Being of three beings, each with its own lessons. Again, we should be looking for how a being/Being’s nature, context, other beings/Being, humans (Daseins), and temporality all contribute. Now however, we have moved from the ontic level (things as beings) to the ontological level (the Being of beings), and most significantly, we must consider the role of non-Being (nothing, nothingness, etc.) as the new component on this level.

1. Jug. In the essay “The Thing” Heidegger analyzes a jug as something that may reveal

the nature of things in general (and ultimately, the nature of nearness) {TT 165f}. His initial description of a jug is superficial—literally and intentionally; it is a vessel that holds something within its sides and base, is held by its handle, and is “self-sustained, something that stands on its own...is self-supporting, or independent” unlike an “object” {TT 166f}. The jug stands on its own because it was the product of a process of “setting forth” by the potter, made out of “specially chosen and prepared” earth {TT 167}. “But,” Heidegger says, “its being made by the potter in no way constitutes what is peculiar and proper to the jug insofar as it is *qua* jug...that which in the jug’s nature is its own is never brought about by its making” {TT 168}. So what is “its own”? Heidegger now gives a more incisive, ontological, description:

The jug’s thingness resides in its being *qua* vessel. We become aware of the vessel’s holding nature when we fill the jug. The jug’s bottom and sides obviously take on the task of holding. But not so fast! When we fill the jug with wine, do we pour the wine into the sides and bottom? At most, we pour the wine between the sides and bottom. Sides and bottom are, to be sure, what is impermeable in the vessel. But what is impermeable is not yet what does the holding. When we fill the jug, the pouring that fills it flows into the empty jug. The emptiness, the void, is what does the vessel’s holding. The empty space, this *nothing* of the jug, is *what the jug is as the holding vessel* {TT 169, my italics}.

And the potter “does not, strictly speaking, make the jug. He only shapes the clay. No—he shapes the void” {*ibid.*}.

While this analysis is dubious on an ontic level (Heidegger himself calls it “semipoetic” {*ibid.*}), on an ontological level it is at least considerable; but we shall not argue it here. The lesson for us that the nothing, non-Being, is what makes the jug what it is, its Being as vessel. Heidegger goes on to consider the scientific view that the jug is really filled with air which is “displaced by a liquid” {TT 169f}; he says that is correct from a physics standpoint, but “science makes the jug-thing into a non-entity in not permitting things to be the standard for what is real” {TT 170}. Science takes the void “as a hollow filled with air”—but that “is not the jug’s void.

We did not let the jug's void be *its* own void" {TT 171}. By the same token, the finitude of the jug, outside its sides and bottom, its immediate surrounding perimeter and beyond, is also nothing, non-Being, and only irrelevantly air, space, etc.—irrelevant, that is, from an ontological viewpoint, irrelevant to the jug's own Being. This is generally true about many *finite* beings, but not all. For example, I would argue that a hammer's Being as a nail-driver necessarily entails the "empty space" between the hammerhead and the nail, otherwise the handyman's action would be ineffective. Whether that distance is filled with air or gas or is actually empty space, etc., is ontologically beside the important point; nail-driving power needs nothing to interfere with the downward stroke, thus it requires *that* non-Being in between. Here a being's immediate (not mediated) context becomes intrinsic to its Being. Our major lesson from the jug, and hammer, is that what constitutes a thing's Being, in contrast to what constitutes its meaning, depends on what part of its context is intrinsic or extrinsic to its Being.

Although Heidegger continues to elaborate the Being of the jug in this essay (the "thinging of the thing" as a "gathering" of the fourfold of earth, sky, mortals, and divinities, i.e., "the world" {TT 174, 177, 179}[read: context]), more pertinent now is his direct consideration of the nothing in the lecture "What is Metaphysics?" (1929). Apropos of beings like a jug, Heidegger says, in line with what we just said above, "the nothing" is not "next to beings, to which it would, as it were, adhere", nor does it "merely serve as the counterconcept of beings; rather, it originally belongs to their essential unfolding as such. In the being of beings the nihilation of the nothing occurs" {WM 91}. The nothing is more than a simple, logical, non-Being encircling all finite beings. Furthermore, "The nothing does not remain the indeterminate opposite of beings but unveils itself as belonging to the being of beings" {WM 94}. Thus Heidegger says he agrees with Hegel on the identity of pure Being and pure Nothing, but not

because they are equally indeterminate and immediate, “but rather because being itself is essentially finite and manifests itself only in the transcendence of a Dasein that is held out into the nothing” {WM 94f}. And to the latter we now turn.

2. Dasein. In Heidegger’s numerous works, he considers a great number of things, and *kinds* of things, however, he does not consider anything with as much ontological depth, breadth, and definition as he does “Dasein”. Heidegger thought that in order to understand (realize the conception of) Being he/we need to interrogate (analyze) the one being for whom Being is an issue (existential concern), Dasein, the ontological dimension of human being, man. No other entity could (has the capability to) carry out such an investigation (requiring self-consciousness, intelligence, imagination, tenacity, et al.). That investigation is not just *Being and Time* or Heidegger’s *corpus*, but the history of philosophy, as he would, I think, agree. In any event, Heidegger’s *Daseinanalytic* outlines the structure of human existence, providing a “fundamental ontology” as the methodological precursor to the ontology of Being as such. In other words, one important, if not *the* most important, *meaning* of this being (Dasein, human being, man) is “ontological explicator”—that is *how* its nature (care, understanding) implicates (vectors to, fits into) its context (other things/beings/humans/Daseins, world, Being). Contrast this with the ontic-existential meaning of a particular human being: father, accountant, coworker, etc. (although I would argue that some or all of those societal roles could be part of the Being of *that* human being, *how it exists*, as a more “concrete” Being than the ontological-existential, categorial Being of “Dasein”).

But if “ontological explicator” is an ontological meaning of Dasein, what is the Being of this being? Fortunately, Heidegger has already laid out its Being. Essentially, Dasein is there-Being (*da-sein*), or more usually put, Being-there. That is, Dasein existentially *transcends* its

here-now, ex-isting into its future, present, and past, ex-isting into its possibilities. The context of this Being is world (Being-in-the-world), which for Heidegger is a constituent component of its Being (unlike a stone) and includes, implicates other Daseins, other beings (even Nature), and temporality—all the elements of our thesis about meaning. So, as the “clearing” where the world/Being is uncovered, the meaning of Dasein’s Being is “discloser”, which for Heidegger means fundamental truth, unconcealedness (*alētheia*), which is logically prior to truth as correspondence (or coherence). Compare the meaning of the being Dasein, ontological explicator, to the meaning of Dasein’s Being, discloser; in this case, the former is a sub-species, particularization or specification, of the latter.

And in this case too, Being implicates non-Being, or considered on its own, Nothing. In the lecture “What is Metaphysics?”, Heidegger says “Da-sein means: being held out into the nothing. Holding itself out into the nothing, Dasein is in each case already beyond beings as a whole. Such being beyond beings we call *transcendence*” {WM 91}. Indeed, “For human Dasein, the nothing makes possible the manifestness of beings as such” {*ibid.*} because “[h]uman Dasein can comport itself toward beings only if it holds itself out into the nothing. Going beyond beings occurs in the essence of Dasein. But this going beyond is metaphysics itself. This implies that metaphysics belongs to the ‘the nature of the human being’” {WM 96}. The important point now is that this transcendence shows “the nothing belonging essentially to Dasein” {WM 92}. Like the jug’s void, Heidegger discusses a “nullity” at the heart of Dasein {BT 283ff}: This “existential nullity” not only “belongs to Dasein’s Being-free for its existentiell possibilities”, but it lies in the structure of thrownness, projection, and falling; it thoroughly “permeates” the very essence of “‘care’—Dasein’s Being” {BT 285}. And like the jug’s void, Dasein’s existential nullity does not have “the character of a privation, where

something is lacking in comparison with an ideal which has been set up but does not get attained in Dasein; rather, the Being of this entity is already null *as projection*” {BT 285}. In other words, this existential nullity is constitutive of Dasein’s Being as Being-there, an intrinsically finite being’s transcendence (an infinite being would not, indeed could not, be transcendent) into not-Being, Nothing. Heidegger goes on to say that “the *ontological meaning of the notness [Nichtheit]* of this existential nullity is still obscure. But this holds also for the *ontological essence of the ‘not’ in general*” {BT 285}. Thus, the “problem of the *ontological source of notness*”—or even its “mere *conditions*”—cannot “be found *except by taking the meaning of Being in general as a theme and clarifying it*” {BT 286}. But now we have advanced the clarification of the meaning of Being and the notness to this extent: each lies in the context of the other, each apparently determines (at least in part) how the other fits in that context, so each may determine, at least in part, the meaning of the other. To continue this analysis, we shall turn to our last sample being, a work of art.

3. Artwork. We just saw how Dasein is similar to a jug in certain ways (finite, core nothingness, involving others/humans); now, perhaps surprisingly again, we shall see how a work of art is ontologically similar to Dasein.

Heidegger begins his rather lengthy essay, “The Origin of the Work of Art”, with a clarification of the concept of “origin” (“that from and by which something is what it is and as it is...its essence or nature”—i.e., “source” {OWA 17}), then declares that “The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist” and “art is the origin of both artist and work”—but each in a different way {*ibid.*}. Of course, Heidegger interprets all of these in a unique way. He makes it clear that he is only considering “great art” {OWA 40} and uses the example of Van Gogh’s painting of peasant shoes {OWA 32f; Van Gogh painted several works on the subject,

but any make Heidegger's point}. This work of art (sturdy-looking, well-worn work boots) reveals the "equipmental quality" of the shoes, usefulness, and their "essential being...[as] reliability" {OWA 34}. This "revelation" is beyond whether "something is correctly portrayed" {OWA 56}. Thus, "Van Gogh's painting is the disclosure of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, *is* in truth. This entity emerges into the unconcealedness of its being" {OWA 36}—indeed, "that which is as a whole...attains to unconcealedness" {OWA 56}. (This illustrates one of Heidegger's major philosophical achievements, his reinterpretation of truth as disclosure, which is prior to any correspondence or coherence theories of truth.) Therefore, "The nature of art would then be this: the truth of beings setting itself to work" {*ibid.*}. Furthermore, the "work-being of the work" {OWA 43} "sets up" or "opens up a *world*" {OWA 44}, which is why I contend that for Heidegger, a work of art is ontologically similar to Dasein ("world-forming" {FCM Pt2}). This brings up the role of the artist. Heidegger says artistic creation is not "the self-sovereign subject's performance of genius" {OWA 76}, and it is "questionable whether...the nature of projection can be thought of in terms of the power of imagination" {OWA 72f}. In contrast to making handicrafts (or equipment), artistic creation requires mastery {OWA 58f} to bring forth "a being such as never was before and will never come to be again" {OWA 62}. And because artistic creation is so extraordinary, Heidegger conceives it as truth arising "out of nothing" {OWA 71}, a projection coming "from Nothing" {OWA 76}, bringing "something into being from out of the source of its nature in a founding leap—this is what the word origin (German *Ursprung*, literally, primal leap) means" {OWA 77f; ostensibly this is Heidegger's parenthetical remark}.

After creation, however, the artist recedes {OWA 40,65f} and the truth-set-into-work is projected not "in the direction of an indeterminate void" {OWA 75}, but toward the "coming

preservers” {*ibid.*; also OWA 66ff, 71}, who are not primarily owners, curators, or museum workers, but all who appreciate the work throughout history. Contrary to much aesthetic theory, Heidegger criticizes “aesthetic experience” as trivial private stimulation, sensuous apprehension, a state of mind, or “mere aestheticizing connoisseurship of the formal aspects of the work, its qualities and charms” {OWA 68f, 79f}. Rather, the more the work of art “stands on its own...the more purely the work is itself transported into the openness of beings—an openness opened by itself—the more simply does it transport us into this openness and thus at the same time transport us out of the realm of the ordinary” {OWA 66}. Thus, “Preserving the work means: standing within the openness of beings that happens in the work” {OWA 67}, which is “truth” for Heidegger. In this way, “Preserving the work does not reduce people to their private experiences, but brings them [i.e., people] into affiliation with the truth happening in the work. Thus it grounds being for and with one another as the historical standing-out of human existence in reference to unconcealedness” {OWA 68}. Beauty then becomes, for Heidegger, “*one way in which truth occurs as unconcealedness*” {OWA 56}, an illumination of Being as a light “shining to and into the work” {*ibid.*}, the *appearance* of “this being of truth in the work and as work” {OWA 81}. Heidegger concludes, in light of the beginning of the essay, that “art is by nature an origin: a distinctive way in which truth comes into being, that is, becomes historical” {OWA 78}. (An Addendum, written twenty years later, contends “The whole essay...deliberately yet tacitly moves on the path of the question of the nature of Being” {OWA 86}, so that what art may be otherwise, as a “cultural achievement” etc., “no answers are given”, only “directions for questioning” {*ibid.*}. Thus art “belongs to the *disclosure of appropriation [Ereignis]* by way of which the ‘meaning of Being’ (cf. *Being and Time*) can alone be defined” {*ibid.*; see the

translator's explanation for his interpretation of *Ereignis* as this unusual phrase, which “survived the critical scrutiny of Heidegger himself”, et al., PLT xviii-xxi}).)

Heidegger's contention (that art is the origin, creation from nothing, of both the artwork and the artist), on an ontical-existential level of everyday living, appears wrong, if not simply preposterous. Doesn't the artist—whether professional, serious amateur, or occasional dabbler—exist before they create the artwork? Only beings (man, natural beings) can make or create other beings according to natural physical processes. However, if we see the situation not from viewpoint of *beings*, but rather from the viewpoint of *Being*—*how* beings exist—then it becomes more understandable how this creation occurs. Art here is normative (“great art” {OWA 40}), but so too is the *existence* of the (great) artist (Van Gogh). The artwork (painting of peasant shoes) is an arrangement of colored paints on canvas in accordance with the artist's conception of his lived experience of his subject and realized through his artistic skill and mastery of the medium. No “matter” is created *ex nihilo*, but *how* (the manner in which) the work of art—simultaneous with *how* the artist—exists is created. The greatness of the work and the artist are the result of the truth revealed about beings/Being, and what it *means* (how it fits within the context of human existence). Nor is Heidegger's main point (art as a way the truth of Being occurs) dependent on art as representational or a realistic style; Heidegger himself cites a Greek temple {OWA 36f, 41ff}, but Picasso's *Guernica*, Jackson Pollock's drippings (e.g., *Autumn Rhythm*, although the title is decisive), possibly even Marcel Duchamp's “ready-made” art (e.g., a urinal as *Fountain*), all can be seen as created to reveal an aspect of the beings in the world and their meaning/Being, although avant-garde presentations, in contrast to a sofa-sized painting of a rainy Parisian street that complements your décor and was churned out in the hundreds by an unknown “artist” in an art factory.

So then, what can we learn from these four instances of the Being of beings? We earlier contended that Being is *how* a being exists. We have now seen how these four beings exist in some detail, the way their Being—and *their* non-Being—constitutes their existence. All in some way disclose Being. Essentially though, the Being and non-Being of each is unique to it, an *identity* that is the result of a complex set of existential characteristics, maintained in contradistinction to other beings, both different and (only) similar, and maintained in distinction from its context. But if the context of particular Being is other particular Being *and* particular non-Being, the context of Being in general must be (vectors to) non-Being in general—and, Heidegger would contend, the *history* of Being. So the *meaning* of Being in general lies in the nature of Being in general, non-Being in general, and the history of Being. The nature of Being in general is *how* beings uniquely exist in general. The nature of non-Being in general is undifferentiated nothingness. The nature of the history of Being is how Being changes through history. Therefore, I propose that the *meaning* of Being in general is *identity*. I will conclude with a brief elaboration of these thoughts, but leave their in-depth investigation for another time.

We have addressed what a being is (primary existent) and in what its meaning consists (its structure and how it fits into its context). What then is “Being”? What is its nature? Although Heidegger spent his life writing about this question, he does not (to my knowledge) give us a simple, straightforward, concise characterization by which we could determine the Being of a being, even as a preliminary template for recognition. Some commentators (e.g., Paul Edwards, Herman Philipse) think Being is illusory. However, it is no more an illusory “aspect” of a being than is the referent of the concept of “life”. “Life” can be conceptually isolated from living things as “that which animates living things” even if that is but a euphemism for whatever living things have (properly-functioning organic bodies, etc.) that dead or other never-living

things do not have. Life is undeniable, yet elusive as conceptually isolated, and certainly not something that exists on its own apart from living things. Similarly, Heidegger says, “Being is always the Being of an entity” {BT 9, 6} and “the Being of entities ‘is’ not itself an entity” {BT 6; later called the “ontological difference” BPP 17}. (Analogy aside, life is but one type of Being, but they are similar in this way.) So let us propose the following: In general, as such, “Being” is *how* a being exists. “How” means the manner or the way(s) in which something exists as it does, especially essentially, but also “accidentally”, contingently, non-essentially, depending on the objective of the inquiry and the nature of the thing; the general (categorical) is what it has in common, identical, with similar things, while the specific is what sets it apart from everything else, differences in the ways it exists. In the case of Dasein, the Being of Dasein as discloser is how it exists—except in Dasein’s case, it is more properly how it ex-ists—and more specifically, in all the myriad ways Heidegger details in *Being and Time* and elsewhere (care, understandingly, unto death, etc.).

So now, what is the meaning—the nature (constitution) in context—of Being in general? Applying our thesis, the question of the meaning of Being in general asks what is the context of Being in general and how does it fit therein (specifically how)? At this level, we are not able to rely on the contextual elements of beings (other things/beings, humans, temporality) or other particular Being, at least not in any straightforward way. Being in general, *how* anything exists, would encompass not only other things/beings/humans in general, the components of any/all contexts, but also particular Being—not however the ultimate *context* of Being: it vectors to non-Being (everything it is not), or considered on its own, Nothingness. So then, the meaning of Being in general, as Something, is *how* it fits within the Nothing (King’s “widest and deepest of all distinctions” above, GH 9).

Heidegger's own writings presents the *context* of the meaning of Being as the history of Being, i.e., the history of philosophy. The history of philosophy (as metaphysics) has given differing meanings to the *Being* of beings; for example, Aristotle: the permanence of substance; Leibniz: the perfection of monads; Descartes: the activity of thinking substance; Whitehead: the concrescence of actual occasions, et al. As for the *meaning* of Being, Heidegger contends that for the Greeks {IM49ff}, and largely for the history of philosophy {EP Ch 1,2}, it turned out to be (enduring or constant) presence—but today the meaning of Being is forgotten {IM 15f; see also page 29, 31f, 41} or empty {IM 29,31,33,43}. However, Heidegger himself thought (apparently) that the *meaning* of Being is not just presence and disclosure, but also absence and hiddenness—i.e., non-being/nothing and the past/future aspects of the temporal horizon/clearing in the Da of Dasein.

Heidegger's 1957 lecture *Identity and Difference* addresses “what identity is” {ID 23} by inquiring into the *relation* of Being and thinking (i.e., man): they are not the *unity* proposed by metaphysics—whether simple (Parmenides) or mediated (German Idealism)—as caused by the Being (ground, *Grund*) of beings, but rather an *identity* of different relata that “belong together” in “the event of appropriation” (*Ereignis*, “to come into one's own” {ID 14n1}, later translated as “enowning” by Emad and Maly, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, CP xixff), which is the expression of their “active nature” {ID 33n1, 37, 39, 41}. This “mutual appropriation” {ID 33} occurs within a context Heidegger calls “the framework” {*Ge-Stell*, ID 35}—currently “the technological world” {ID 35}, but not necessarily so {ID 36f}—and is that by which “man and Being have first received those determinations of essence by which man and Being are grasped metaphysically in philosophy” {ID 32}. He concludes that the *meaning* of the *identity* of Being and thinking is based upon “the active nature of identity” {ID 39, 41} which “stems from that letting belong together which we call the

appropriation” {ID 39}—an event Heidegger sees as occurring in an “abyss” (*Abgrund*), but which is “neither empty nothingness nor murky confusion” {ID 39}. Here the *meaning* of identity (active identification as a kind of process of acquiring or maintaining a being’s identity) is *how* Being and thinking *fit* within their common context, non-Being (thus is a principle of *difference* simultaneous with the principle/relation of identity?). The principle of identity as $A=A$ seems obvious and empty, while $A=B$ is not—but both formulas presuppose an individualized *identity* of the terms.

Further, is temporality—especially the temporality that applies to Being, *Temporalitat*—in some sense *how* it fits within that common context of non-Being? This concept is left largely undeveloped by Heidegger in *Being and Time*, but to be more specific, is *Temporalitat* the notion of horizon or context in general, possibly untensed (i.e., not differentiated into past, present, future)? Thus, when Heidegger says that the meaning of Dasein’s Being is care and the ontological meaning of care is temporality {BT §65}, temporality is *how* Dasein ex-ists, beyond (beneath? underlying) *how* Dasein understands and interprets the beings in the world.

Meaning is sometimes identified with Being, and both are seen to be at the core of intelligibility. This identification was my original thesis, but our investigation shows significant differences: Being connotes a thing’s nature, while meaning connotes the place of that nature within its context. However, each implies the other: a thing’s Being/nature can/will become part of the context, while its context can (but not always will?) become part of its nature; it depends on how, and to what degree, the context is intrinsic (Being) or extrinsic (meaning) to the thing/being. As for Being in general, its context is non-Being/nothingness in general—which is presumably completely undifferentiated—so therefore, non-Being/nothingness is the context for Being as differentiating (and perhaps differentiating non-Being/nothing as well), hence for Being as differentiated. (How and why is this done? Is this Heidegger’s *Ereignis* as appropriation or

enowning?) Heidegger seems to hold that the meaning of Being is more than presencing, as historically shown, but also absencing; so if the nature of Being is differentiation, then Being is the origin of the *identity* of beings—how something specifically exists (variety, modal, features)—and the ultimate (?) meaning of Being is identity over time. This is why Heidegger talks about the “thinging” of things, “worlding” of world, etc.—the identity meaning of Being; it makes things or beings not just present (presence), but identifiable and different from one another. The meaning of Being also seems to entail establishing relation(s), connectedness, possibly also influence; so is the significance (meaning of meaning) of Being furthermore *value vis-à-vis* something/everything else? If sense perception is only of the here and now, the beings present as presence, but meaning and Being are more expansive, including the not-here, not-now, past, future, wider context, non-presence (absence), it is therefore clear why *understanding* is required beyond perception, yet prior to theoretical knowledge. Even to achieve understanding, as explicit thought, is enormously difficult, although presumably not impossible.

Thus we hope to have shown, on the ontic-existential level, that the *meaning* of things is *how they fit* into their context, which is composed of other things, humans, and temporality; while on the ontological-existential level, that the *Being* of beings is how they exist, and the *meaning* of Being in general may be identity through time.

REFERENCES

- BPP *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Heidegger, Martin. Trans. Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, rev. ed., 1988.
- BT *Being and Time*. Heidegger, Martin.
Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (M/R). New York: Harper & Row, 1962. (Page citations in accordance with SZ.)
Trans. Joan Stambaugh (JS). Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996. (Page citations in accordance with SZ.)
- CBT *A Commentary on Heidegger's "Being and Time"*. Gelven, Michael. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, rev. ed., 1989.
- CM *The Concept of Meaning in Heidegger's "Sein und Zeit"*. Bridges, Thomas William. PhD Dissertation. Columbia University, 1972.
- CP *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*. Heidegger, Martin. Trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.
- EG *On the Essence of Ground*. Heidegger, Martin. Trans. William McNeill. In *Pathmarks*. Ed. William McNeill. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- EL *On the Essence of Language*. Heidegger, Martin. Trans. Wanda Torres Gregory and Yvonne Unna. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004.
- EP *The End of Philosophy*. Heidegger, Martin. Trans. Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.
- ET *On the Essence of Truth*. Heidegger, Martin. Trans. John Sallis. In *Pathmarks*. Ed. William McNeill. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- FCM *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. Heidegger, Martin. Trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- GBT *The Genesis of Heidegger's "Being and Time"*. Kisiel, Theodore. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- GH *A Guide to Heidegger's "Being and Time"*. King, Magda. Ed. John Llewelyn. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.
- HCT *History of the Concept of Time*. Heidegger, Martin. Trans. Theodore Kisiel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- HD *A Heidegger Dictionary*. Inwood, Michael. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1999.

- ID *Identity and Difference*. Heidegger, Martin. Trans. Joan Stambaugh. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.
- IM *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Heidegger, Martin. Trans. Ralph Manheim. New York: Doubleday, Anchor Books ed., 1961.
- IPR *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*. Heidegger, Martin. Trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.
- MOD “Meaning and the Ontological Difference”. Crowell, Steven. *Tulane Studies in Philosophy*, vol. 32, 1984.
- MPB “Meaning, Phenomenology, and Being”. Roubach, Michael. *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 47, no. 2, April 2004.
- OWA *The Origin of the Work of Art*. Heidegger, Martin. In *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- PB “The Problem of Being in the Early Heidegger”. Vallicella, William. *Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, vol. 45, July 1981.
- PLT *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Heidegger, Martin. Introduction by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- QB “The question of being: Heidegger’s project”. Frede, Dorothea. In *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*. Ed. Charles B. Guignon. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2nd ed., 2006.
- SM “The Search for Meaning”. Harries, Karsten. In *Existential Philosophers: Kierkegaard to Merleau-Ponty*. Ed. George Alfred Schrader, Jr. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.
- SOM *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning*. Crowell, Stephen Galt. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001.
- Sup *Supplements*. Ed. John van Buren. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.
- SZ *Sein und Zeit*. Heidegger, Martin. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 7th ed., 2006.
- TT *The Thing*. Heidegger, Martin. In *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- WM *What is Metaphysics?* Heidegger, Martin. In *Pathmarks*. Ed. William McNeill. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Includes separately the “Introduction to ‘What is Metaphysics’”, trans. Walter Kaufman.