

which heidegger? a response to ingo farin

thomas sheehan

πάντες ὡς πρόβατα ἐπλανήθημεν,
ἕκαστος τῇ ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ
Heraclitus frag. 140¹

I welcome Prof. Ingo Farin’s critique of my *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*. His article appeared in *Parrhesia*, 26 (2016) 117-135 under the title “A Response to Sheehan’s Attempted Paradigm Shift in Heidegger Studies.” What follows is my attempt to engage his critique.²

Prof. Ingo Farin is a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Tasmania, who has translated two of Heidegger works into English and edited two important collections about his philosophy—which is to say that Farin has certainly earned his spurs in Heidegger scholarship.

Nonetheless, Prof. Farin’s text shows that he and I have been reading very different Heideggers over the years. It also raises the question of how closely he read

the book I wrote. The first issue is more important and is the main focus of what follows.

Compared with the pressing problems of the world today, Prof. Farin's and my disagreements amount to little more than a tempest in a Heideggerian teapot. But if you're intent on drinking *Heideggerian* tea, it's important to find out what's in that pot. As Mrs. Grogan says in *Ulysses*, "When I makes tea, I makes tea, and when I makes water, I makes water" (to which Mrs. Cahill added: let's hope she doesn't make 'em in the same pot).

So, what's actually brewing in the Heideggerian teapot? And which one of us—Prof. Farin or I—is making tea, and which is making water?

His critique of *Making Sense of Heidegger* comes in three parts and concludes with a call for a non-subjective concept of meaning. Each of the three parts raises an important question about Heidegger's philosophy:

- Part I: what his basic question was
- Part II: how his thinking developed
- Part III: how his phenomenology deals with meaning.

As I read him, Prof. Farin advances eight major criticisms, among a number of lesser ones: Part I argues three theses in opposition to my book:

1. that "being" (*Sein*) cannot be eliminated from Heidegger's texts;
2. that it's wrong to interpret the being of things (*das Sein des Seienden*) as the meaningful presence of things (*das Anwesen des Seienden*);
3. that Heidegger's basic question was not about what accounts for the meaningful presence of things.

Part II argues that my book is seriously flawed inasmuch as, among other things:

1. it focuses solely on SZ to the neglect of the later Heidegger;
2. it reads Dasein's appropriation (*Ereignis*) as Heidegger's later reinscription of Dasein's thrownness (*Geworfenheit*).

Part III claims that:

1. I read Heidegger's phenomenology in terms of Husserlian subjectivity;
2. I think meaning occurs only after a phenomenological epoché; and
3. I reduce meaning to a subjective performance of intentionality (hence Farin's call for a non-subjective concept of meaning).

I argue that Prof. Farin is wrong on all eight points. But since his first three points are the basis of the rest of his argument, I will take them up first under the rubric: Which Heidegger has Prof. Farin been reading? (in seven points). Secondly, I will briefly ask, how closely did Farin read *Making Sense of Heidegger*? (in two points).

I. WHICH HEIDEGGER HAS PROF. FARIN BEEN READING?

NOTA PRAEVIA

Prof. Farin begins by agreeing that Heidegger's *Sein* should *not* be reified, but he chides me (1) for claiming any Heideggerians would think otherwise and (2) for not naming names (pp. 117-119).

I'm happy to hear that no one reifies *Sein*—although Heidegger seemed to think otherwise (GA 9: 442.22; GA 66: 340.13-14; GA 73, 2: 975.22-23)—which in turn saves one the embarrassment of outing those unfortunate few who still *do* hypostasize being (ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω).

But whether hypostasized or not, is *Sein* really the core of Heidegger's thought, as Prof. Farin claims? Or is "being" only a provision stage on the way to his fundamental and final issue? Let's consult Heidegger himself on the question. He writes: "I no longer like to use the word '*Sein*'" (GA 15: 20.8-9). Indeed, he says that at the core of his thought "there is no longer room for even the word *Sein*" (GA 15: 365.17-18)—note: not even *the word* "being."

William J. Richardson notes that in the later Heidegger the word *Sein* "has almost completely disappeared from his vocabulary,"³ and Heidegger provided the reason for that:

"*Sein*" remains only the provisional term. Consider that "*Sein*" was originally called "presence," in the sense of a thing's staying-here-before-us-in-disclosedness [i.e., in meaningfulness].
(GA 7: 234. 13-17)

The motto of *Making Sense of Heidegger* is Aristotle's διορίσωμεν (1048a26), "Let's make some distinctions," a philosophical *sine-qua-non* that can help sort out good readings of Heidegger from bad. Unfortunately, Prof. Farin's text shows a less than firm grip on seven fundamental distinctions in Heidegger's work:

1. the two very different meanings of *Sein*
2. the difference between metaphysical *Sein* and phenomenological *Anwesen*
3. the ontological difference in its phenomenological articulation
4. the world-of-meaning vs. the meaningful things within it
5. Heidegger's preliminary question vs. his fundamental question (*Grundfrage*)
6. the *existential* structure of human being vs. the *existentiel*-personal elements
7. the difference between Heidegger's and Husserl's approaches to phenomenology.

Absent a clear sense of these ground-level distinctions, it's impossible to fathom what Heidegger was about. I'll take up each one of these issues in turn and compare Heidegger's position with what Prof. Farin claims.

1. *The two different meanings of Sein*

In Heidegger's texts "*Sein*" has two quite different meanings.

1. Sometimes it refers to the *Sein des Seienden*—the phenomenologically interpreted essence and/or existence of persons and things.
2. Sometimes it refers to the thrown-open clearing (*die ereignete Lichtung*) that makes the *Sein des Seienden* possible.

Heidegger was less than careful in how he used his technical term "*Sein*," and *Making Sense of Heidegger* lists seventy-four texts (none of which Farin mentions) in support of that claim. Finally, in 1954 Heidegger did get around to admitting that, yes, there *was* some major confusion about the two meanings of *Sein*—while adding the lame excuse that at least *he* knew the difference! (GA 12: 104.16–105.3)

But does Prof. Farin? It would seem not.

First, Farin seems to agree with Heidegger that being stands in correlation with human being. Farin writes: “This ‘correlativity’ [of *Sein* and *Dasein*] is constitutive for Heidegger’s basic take on being; there is no being as such outside this correlation with the human or with *Dasein*” (118.12-14).

Yes, that’s true—but Farin doesn’t bother to tell us *which of the two senses of “being”* he is referring to. This failure is the stumbling block that trips him up throughout his critique.

In both its meanings—as the being of things and as the clearing—*Sein* is indeed correlative with human being, but in *two very different ways*. Prof. Farin never acknowledges that. Instead, he uses the word “being” throughout his text (88 times by my count) without ever adding the requisite qualifications or telling us which of the two senses of “being” he’s talking about. In doing so, he reinforces the confusion that has plagued Heidegger scholarship for decades.

2. *The difference between metaphysical Sein and phenomenological Anwesen*

Having failed to distinguish the two meanings of *Sein*, Prof. Farin goes on to commit a fundamental error that runs through his entire paper: missing Heidegger’s reinterpretation of *Sein* as *Anwesen*.

In chapter 3 of SZ Heidegger worked through the question of how tools have their *Sein* (their “being”). He argued that the *Sein* of a tool is not some intrinsic ontological substance or metaphysical in-seity that the tool possesses (cf. SZ 71.37–38; 74.31–34); rather, it is the tool’s usefulness or serviceability with regard to a task. In Heidegger’s phenomenology, the “being” of a tool is its phenomenological presence-as-significance—*Anwesen* as *Bedeutsamkeit*—specifically, the tool’s ability, or not, to do the job.

From his earliest courses, Heidegger made it clear that when he writes *das Sein des Seienden* he means *das Anwesen des Seienden*: not the metaphysical essence-and-existence of something nor its mere presence-in-space-and-time, but its *meaningful* presence, its *significance* to a human being. This is a basic phenomenological fact that Heidegger constantly reiterated from early on. He did so, for example, at GA 64: 23.32–33; 24.2–3; 25.13–14; and 65.18–19—that is, in a book that Prof. Farin himself translated. How could Farin have missed the point?

But Farin does miss the point and thus accuses me of holding the same position that Heidegger held: that what the metaphysical tradition called *Sein* is what Heidegger understands phenomenologically as *Anwesen*.

According to Sheehan, in Heidegger's works the term "being" connotes "the meaningful presence" of things to humans, that is, the presence of things "within the worlds of human interests and concerns, whether those be theoretical, practical, aesthetic, religious, or whatever." (119.17-20, citing *Making Sense of Heidegger*, xii).

Yes, that's exactly right, and it's Heidegger's own position throughout the half-century of his career. This is a fundamental fact that has been accepted (as far as I know) in all reputable Heidegger scholarship for well over seventy years.

3. *The ontological difference in its phenomenological articulation*

Having missed Heidegger's reinterpretation of metaphysical *Sein* as phenomenological *Anwesen*, Prof. Farin then commits the most elementary error in Heidegger scholarship: failing to understand the ontological difference.

After correctly stating Heidegger's position (as cited just above: 119.17-20), Farin then attacks that position for allegedly conflating "being" (*Sein* read as *Anwesen*) and beings (*das Anwesende*). He does so in two steps:

First, he accurately reports Heidegger's position:
"For humans there is no being as such outside or beyond these humanly intelligible worlds"; (119.20-21)

And then he claims this position conflates beings and their meaningful presence: "[that is to say,] there are only these meaningful things as encountered in the world." (119.21-22)⁴

Farin makes a double mistake here. First, he claims that holding Heidegger's own position—that things within the world of meaning are intelligible—means eliminating "being" from the picture. Second, he claims that if, along with Heidegger, one holds that *Sein* = *Anwesen*, one thereby conflates *das Sein* and *das Seiende* and thus eliminates the ontological difference.

This can only mean that Farin (1) does not accept Heidegger's interpretation of *Sein* as *Anwesen*, and/or (2) cannot recognize the ontological difference between *das Anwesen* and *das Anwesende*. Farin seems to understand the ontological difference in its metaphysical form: *Sein* as distinct from *das Seiende*. But as his text shows (119.24-33), he does not recognize the ontological difference in its *phenomenological* formulation: *Anwesen* as different from that which is meaningfully present.⁵

4. *The world of meaning vs. the meaningful things within it*

Prof. Farin confirms and compounds the three previous errors by denying that the world of meaning (*Welt*) is what Heidegger's phenomenology understood by "*Sein*." He does that in three steps.

1. He begins by agreeing with Heidegger that the world is "a nexus of meaning and 'meaningfulness' [*Bedeutsamkeit*]." (120.40-41)
2. Then at 120.44-47 he correctly reports my own position that:
 - "being" is another term for "world";
 - "world" is the meaningful context or intelligibility of things;
 - "being" is equivalent to "meaningfulness" or "intelligibility" as such, i.e., *Anwesen*.
3. But then Farin denies that Heidegger ever held this position: "[T]he equivalence of world = meaningfulness = being is nowhere affirmed or espoused by Heidegger." (120.48-49)

But that is quite wrong: Heidegger himself was very clear on this point. (1) He identified meaningfulness as the primary character of the being of "world" ("*Bedeutsamkeit als des primären Seinscharakters der Welt*," GA 64: 24.2-30), and (2) he equated "world" and "being itself" ("*Die Welt ist . . . das Sein selber*," GA 79: 51.34-52.1).⁶

The equivalence of world (*Welt*) and being-as-such (*Anwesen als solches*) has been a fundamental datum in the scholarship for over half a century ever since William J. Richardson amply demonstrated that fact.⁷ The equivalence is obvious once one realizes that (1) *Sein* in its second sense means the clearing and (2) the clearing is what Heidegger means by "world." ("*Die Lichtung des Seins, und nur sie, ist*

Welt,” GA 9: 326.15–16).⁸ But Farin does not accept either of these two positions of Heidegger’s.

5. Heidegger’s preliminary question vs. his fundamental question (Grundfrage)

Because Prof. Farin does not distinguish between Heidegger’s two senses of *Sein*, he misses the crucial difference between (1) Heidegger’s preliminary question about the being of things and (2) his fundamental question about the thrown-open clearing that makes the being of things possible.

Classical metaphysics, beginning with Aristotle, distinguished between (1) the *being* of things and (2) the *source* (ἀρχή and αἰτία) of that being. When Heidegger moved into phenomenology, he carried over that distinction—but in a phenomenological form—as the difference between the *Anwesen* of things and the source of that *Anwesen* (*die Herkunft von Anwesen*: GA 6:2, 304.11–12).⁹

The first issue (*Sein* as the *Anwesen* of things) was only Heidegger’s preliminary topic, whereas the second—focused on “that from which and through which being occurs at all” (GA 73, 1: 82.15–16)—was the final goal of his work. He called that source the *Urphänomen* (GA 14: 81.13–14), and it rode under various titles in his philosophy, among them

- the appropriated clearing (*die ereignete Lichtung*, GA 71: 211.9; GA 85: 98.8–9)
- the appropriation of *Da-sein* to be the clearing (*Ereignis*: GA 12: 247.2–4; 249.4–6)
- the thrown-open domain (*die Entwurfbereich*: GA 9: 201.31; GA 14: 35.23–24)
- *Da-sein*, as that which “gives” (makes possible) the clearing (GA 73, 1: 642.28–29).

In addition, by failing to distinguish between Heidegger’s preliminary topic and his final goal, Prof. Farin also misses what Heidegger meant by “the meaning of being” (*der Sinn von Sein*). Farin writes that

one might argue that Heidegger is really after the “meaning of being,” because meaning is the third term that mediates between “being” and

“man.” Indeed, that Heidegger is not after *being per se*, but after the *meaning of being* is a perfectly acceptable thesis in my view. But Sheehan is not arguing along these lines at all. (120.64-68)

But contra Farin, that is precisely what I argue. However, I follow Heidegger’s rather than Farin’s understanding of “the meaning of being.”

Heidegger makes it clear that “*der Sinn von Sein*” is only an early stand-in name for *die Lichtung des Seins*. Throughout his career he gave the final goal of his philosophy a variety of titles, among them the following, all ex aequo: *Sinn = Entwurf-bereich = Offenheit = Wahrheit = Offenheit = Lichtung = Ortschaft = τόπος*.¹⁰ They all stand for *what makes the being of things possible and necessary*. Once one realizes that Heidegger’s final topic was not *Sein* but the appropriated clearing that makes *Sein* possible, Farin’s objections dissolve.¹¹

6. *The existential structure of human being vs. the existentiell–personal elements*

One of Prof. Farin’s recurring criticisms of my book deals with the term “existential” in relation to SZ. He claims (1) that “[Sheehan] reads this book as an existentialist treatise” (126.13); (2) that “Sheehan reads all of Heidegger’s work through the prism of a rather existentialistically interpreted *Being and Time*” (126.27-28) and (3) that I have a “bias for an existentialistically conceived subjectivity” (127.2-3).

Farin’s second and third claims reveal his inability to distinguish between Husserlian sub-jectivity and Heideggerian e-jectivity, a topic I shall return to in no. 7, below. But with the first criticism, Farin falls into the all-too-common trap that hobbles much of Heidegger scholarship today: the failure to distinguish between the two meanings of “existential,” which Heidegger himself clearly delineated in SZ and never abandoned.

In SZ Heidegger worked out the “essence” of human being as *Existenz* in the etymologically literal sense of ἔξ + the causative verb ἵστημι. The essence of human being is ex-sistence, “to be made to stand out and beyond,” to be thrown *as possibility into* possibilities.¹² And further, in a bold reversal of the traditional schema of act-potency Heidegger declared: “Higher than actuality is *possibility*” (SZ 38.29-30).

Ex-sistence defines the *whole* of one's human being, and like centuries of philosophers before him Heidegger distinguished between "instance" and "essence"—in Aristotelian terms, between τὸδε τι (this-particular-thing) and τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι (what and how this-particular-thing necessarily is and cannot *not* be if it is to be this-particular-thing).¹³ Heidegger did this by making a distinction between the two elements of ex-sistence:

- the essential aspects of *Existenz*, shared by all human beings, which he called "existentials"
- the personal, idiosyncratic instantiations of *Existenz* in one's own particular life, for which he used the adjective and adverb "existentiel" (*existentiell*).

Prof. Farin ignores this crucial distinction when he accuses me of an "existentialistically interpreted *Being and Time*." By "existential" he means "existentiel," whereas *Making Sense of Heidegger* argues consistently and unambiguously that Heidegger's *existentiel* perspective on human being runs through all his work from SZ to the last texts.

What is more, the *existentiel* structure of human being *is* the clearing, i.e., that which makes the meaningful presence of the things we encounter (their *Sein* as *Anwesen*) both possible and necessary. And *within* that existential clearing it is we ourselves who existentially decide, correctly or not, what the *Anwesen* or phenomenological "being" of something is.

These two crucial elements of Heidegger's work—and the distinction between them—are what Farin misses. He begins by quoting me correctly:

"Being" is not some "higher dimension" added on to and surpassing existence. It is simply what we do, finitely and mortally, in our groundless freedom.

That statement holds true in two senses. (1) Existentially, by our very essence, we "do"—that is, we *are*—the clearing. (2) Existentielly, as specific, particular persons we *do* take-things-as-this-or-that, i.e., we "project" them in terms of their meaningful presence, whether correctly or not.

But Farin objects: “I doubt that Heidegger would be willing to entertain this [position] at any stage of his career” (126.26). He can say that only by (1) ignoring the existential-existential distinction, (2) neglecting the existential-hermeneutical sense-making act of “taking-as,” and (3) failing to understand what Heidegger meant in saying that ex-sistence is, existentially, what “gives” being:

Welt “gibt” Sein; das Dasein ist das je vereinzelt “es“, das gibt; das ermöglicht und ist das “es gibt.”

World “gives” being; ex-sistence is the ever-individualized “it” that gives, which makes possible and is the “es gibt.”
(GA 73, 1: 642.28–29)

7. *The difference between Heidegger’s and Husserl’s approaches to phenomenology*

Prof. Farin seems to agree that all of Heidegger’s philosophy from 1919 until his death was phenomenological (cf. GA 14: 54.2–14; 147.16), and he agrees that Heidegger did indeed employ what he called a “phenomenological reduction” (GA 24: 29.15). But Farin then makes two critical mistakes: (1) He fails to understand Heidegger’s revolutionary *recasting* of the phenomenological reduction as phenomenological *in*-duction; and (2) he accuses me of a “broad and unqualified subsumption of Heidegger’s work under the banner of Husserlian phenomenology” (122.10–11). I will take both issues together.

Prof. Farin and I agree that Heidegger’s reduction is quite different from Husserl’s, but Farin fails to realize *what* that difference is, as he demonstrates when he claims that “in *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* Heidegger does endorse an *ontological* reduction, leading beings and entities back to being.” (122.10–11)

We note Prof. Farin’s claim: that Heidegger’s phenomenology begins with an “ontological” reduction to “being.” But clearly he fails to understand Heidegger’s radical move from *Sein* to *Anwesen*, from traditional ontology to *phenomenological* ontology. Let us consult Heidegger himself on the matter. In 1927 he defined his own sense of the phenomenological reduction:

For us [in contrast to Husserl] the phenomenological reduction means leading one’s phenomenological gaze back from one’s grasp of the entity,

however that grasp is determined, [and redirecting it] to the understanding of the being of the entity. . . .

—and Farin stops there, whereas Heidegger goes on to add a set of parentheses (which Farin does not discuss) within which he says exactly what he means by “understanding the *Sein*” of something:

das Verstehen des Seins (Entwerfen auf die Weise seiner Unverborgenheit) dieses Seienden.

That is: “Understanding the being of an entity” means “projecting the entity *in terms of how it is disclosed*.”¹⁴

Farin misses this capital point. For Heidegger, to understand the “being” of something is to understand the way the thing is *phenomenologically disclosed*, that is to say: the way it is *anwesend*, aka ἀληθές, aka meaningfully present. The “being” Heidegger has in mind here is *Sein* phenomenologically reinterpreted as *Anwesen*.

This is the crux interpretum that stumps Farin both here and in his previous six mistakes. But to miss this point is to miss everything that is revolutionary in Heidegger’s “phenomenological ontology” (SZ 38.21)—a phrase in which the adjective swallows the noun. A *phenomenological* ontology is one in which *Sein* is understood as *Anwesen*, the meaningful presence of an entity.

All phenomenology, including Heidegger’s, is correlation-research, and as such it is about meaning, and specifically about the meaningful presence of what one encounters (GA 64: 23-25). In the natural attitude we mostly look “through” (that is, ignore) the meaning-constituting correlation. Thematizing the phenomenological correlation entails shifting the philosophical gaze *away from* an exclusive focus on the object and redirecting it instead onto the *correlation itself*. The radical difference between Husserl’s phenomenology and Heidegger’s begins at this point. The following two diagrams illustrate that difference.

For Husserl the correlation is between the meaning-constituting subject and the meaningfully constituted object.

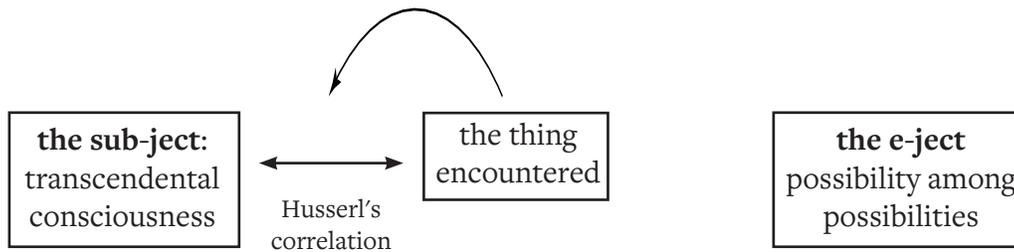


Figure 1. Husserl: *re-duction* (ἐπαναγωγή)

For Heidegger, on the other hand, the existential essence of human being is not sub-jectivity but e-jectivity: ex-sistence thrown ahead *as possibility into* possibilities; and thus the phenomenological correlation lies between what we encounter and the meaningful possibilities we are living into. (GA 14: 131.16-17).

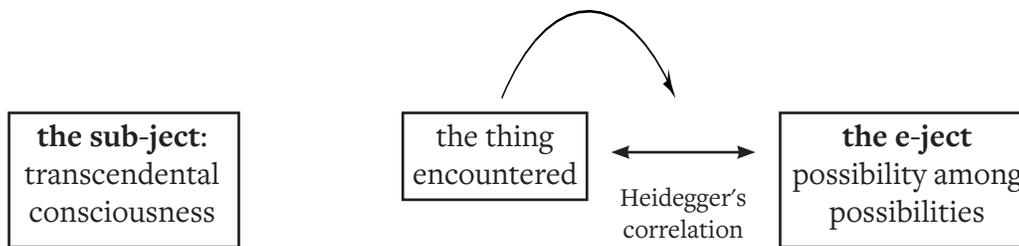


Figure 2. Heidegger: *in-duction* (ἐπαγωγή)

Therefore, Heidegger's refocusing of the phenomenological gaze is not a Husserlian *re-duction* (ἐπαν-αγωγή) but an *in-duction* (ἐπ-αγωγή), a redirecting of the gaze *forward* to the correlation between what we encounter and our concerns (GA 9: 244.12-35).¹⁵ We could call Heidegger's refocusing of the gaze a phenomenological *re-duction*, as he himself did (GA 24: 29.15) so long as we remember that leading the gaze "back" means leading it *back to where we already are*: a priori ahead as possibility among possibilities.

Prof. Farin misses both Heidegger's notion of *Da-sein* as e-jectivity and his recasting of the phenomenological reduction, and he evidences as much when he writes (1) "it is quite doubtful that Heidegger ever subscribed to the Husserlian kind of phenomenological reduction [sic!] as invoked by Sheehan." (121.31-32); (2) "his

[Sheehan's] concept of meaning remains within a subjective cast" (130.7-8); and (3) "According to Sheehan, the focal meaning of 'the open' is human Da-sein, understood as human subjectivity" (124.4-5).

With each of these assertions Prof. Farin shows that his dogmatic cathexis on "*Sein*" precludes any understanding of Heidegger's phenomenological revolution and thus blocks his way to a proper grasp of what Heidegger's texts, whether early or late, are about.

Moreover, in Heidegger scholarship it goes without saying that once Heidegger had positioned his work within the proper phenomenological correlation, his goal was to go further and discuss "being itself" (*das Anwesen selbst*) and its source, in what he once called a "phenomenological construction" (GA 24: 30.2). This was the task that he set for the unpublished division, SZ I.3. Following that, the topic of SZ II (also unpublished) was to have been a "phenomenological destruction" of the history of ontology.¹⁶

But the only way into these tasks was, and still is, the phenomenological reduction that Heidegger recasts as a phenomenological *in*-duction. Thus contra Farin (121.25-122.1) that initial move remained for Heidegger—and still remains for those who would understand him—"the only entrance into Heidegger's work."

II. HOW CLOSELY DID PROF FARIN READ *MAKING SENSE OF HEIDEGGER*?

The rest of Prof. Farin's criticisms are grounded on the seven misunderstandings discussed above. Therefore, rather than going into each one of them in detail, I will respond to only two.

1. *The alleged lack of references*

Prof. Farin repeatedly criticizes me for (1) inadequately referencing Heidegger's texts and (2) trying to patch up this embarrassing lack by some translational sleight of hand. He makes the claim most pointedly in the following passage:

Although Sheehan often repeats his thesis that "being = realness = meaningfulness" "is Heidegger's own," he provides no textual evidence whatsoever for this extraordinary interpretation. Nor does he adduce any

reference in support of this interpretation from the existing body of Heidegger scholarship. Unimpressed by this embarrassing deficit, Sheehan attempts to patch up his position by “translating” Heidegger’s word “being” by the English word “meaningful presence,” or “significance,” or “intelligibility.” This is as unprecedented as it is blatantly false, for “being” never means “intelligibility” or “significance,” or even “meaningful presence.” Sheehan’s translational *legerdemain* obviously fails to make up for the lack of textual evidence in his argumentation.

(121.1-10)

The book contains, I believe, some 1174 footnotes, many of which provide three to five (and sometimes up to seven) separate references to and citations of Heidegger’s texts. That makes for well over 2200 references to Heidegger’s works, both to the German originals and the English translations, with page- and line-numbers provided for each one.

While I do not expect Prof. Farin to trace down each and every reference, he might have checked at least a few of them—for example, the references to Heidegger’s texts on *Sein*, *Welt*, and *Bedeutsamkeit* mentioned above in no. 4, which clearly contradict Farin’s claim.

And there are others. For example, when he attacks me for arguing that “thrownness and appropriation are identical, simply earlier and later names for the same existential structure” (130.20-21), we might have expected him to first check at least some of the seven supporting footnotes, which in fact show that identification to be the case. For example:

Der Sprung (der geworfene Entwurf) ist der Vollzug des Entwurfs der Wahrheit des Seyns im Sinne der Einrückung in das Offene, dergestalt, daß der Werfer des Entwurfs als **geworfener** sich erfährt, **d. h. er-eignet** durch das Seyn.

(GA 65: 239.1-6)

Der Entwurf als geworfener: Gemeint immer nur der Entwurf der Wahrheit des Seyns. Der Werfer selbst, das Da-sein, ist **geworfen, er-eignet** durch das Seyn.

(GA 65: 304.5-9)¹⁷

Another example: Prof. Farin claims I am wrong to say that *ex-sistence/Da-sein* is the open clearing in both the early and the later Heidegger.

Sheehan writes: “Metaphorically speaking, as thrown-open (i.e., appropriated), human being is the ‘open space’ or clearing within which the meaningful presence of things can occur.” And to make sure that no one misses the point he immediately adds in parenthesis that this just quoted ‘sentence is Heidegger’s philosophy in a nutshell.’ Clearly, Sheehan assumes that what is a proper characterization of “the open” in *Being and Time* fits all other works by Heidegger as well.

(124.5-10)

Making Sense of Heidegger amply substantiates the claims cited above with multiple references to Heidegger’s texts, both early and late. Perhaps Farin should have at least glanced at some of them. Those texts include (here I give only the references, since the texts themselves are provided in the book at 137-138):

SZ 133.5	SZ 147.2-3	GA 2: 216, note a
GA 3: 229.10-11	GA 6:2: 323.14-15	GA 9: 325.20-21
GA 14: 35.23-24	GA 15: 380.11-12	GA 15: 415.10-13
GA 45: 154.27-28	GA 45: 213.1-4	GA 49: 60.25-27
GA 66: 129.5	GA 66: 321.12	GA 66: 328.1-2
GA 69: 101.12-13	GA 70: 125.12	GA 71: 211.8-9

As well as texts outside of the *Gesamtausgabe*:

- Heidegger’s “Lettre à Monsieur Beaufret, (23 novembre 1945),” 182.27-184.3
- “Die ‘Seinsfrage’ in *Sein und Zeit*,” 9.23
- *Zollikon Seminar* 156.35-157.3; 157.31-32; and 351.14-17.

There are yet others, but these should suffice.

In short, I believe Prof. Farin’s allegation of insufficient references to Heidegger’s work does not stand up to the evidence.

2. Phenomenology, meaning, hermeneutics

A couple of issues gather under this rubric. In the first place, Prof. Farin criticizes me for holding, with Heidegger, two positions: (1) that *Sein* in all its forms is always written under phenomenological erasure, and (2) that after a philosopher enters the phenomenological correction, the field of investigation is exclusively the meaningfulness of things to human beings. Farin objects: “But that is not even true for Husserl!” because “after the reduction we are still dealing with what is given to the natural attitude.” (121.19-28)

With that Farin exposes the basis of his misprision: he attributes to me a position that neither I nor any phenomenologist I know would ever hold, namely, that (in Farin’s words) “meaning, and in particular meaningfulness, is the prerogative of philosophical or phenomenological reflection alone” (128.28-29).

Can Farin point to a single sentence in *Making Sense of Heidegger* that says or even intimates that? The book is quite clear on the matter, especially in chapter 4 which draws on GA 64, the book Farin himself translated. To paraphrase Heidegger (GA 42: 169.22–25), meaning is the air we breathe, without which we would descend to the level of the mere beast. Our very *Existenz* is sense-making (GA 21: 146.29–31; 150.26–27). We live in intelligibility, we live and breathe meaning, whether in our everyday practical lives or our theoretical worlds. That has been the case, as best we can tell, ever since *Homo sapiens* came on the scene some 200,000 years ago. And that is what *In-der-Welt-sein* is all about: “Dasein . . . in seiner Vertrautheit mit der Bedeutsamkeit” (SZ 87.19–20).

All that the phenomenological reduction/induction does is to *thematize* the world of meaning that we already live in but overlook both in our everyday lives and in our theoretical pursuits. And once the philosopher carries out that thematization, the only topic left—the *obiectum materiale* of all phenomenological work—is meaningfulness.

The second issue under this rubric is Prof. Farin’s complaint that my book overlooks hermeneutics and especially the influence of Schleiermacher and Dilthey on Heidegger. I don’t think Farin gets it—where the “it” refers to the major source of Heidegger’s notion of hermeneutics, which is neither Schleiermacher (least of all Schleiermacher) nor Dilthey (for all that Heidegger owes to him) but rather Aristotle, and specifically *De interpretatione* (Περὶ ἑρμηνείας). This is a treatise that

Heidegger worked through time and again from 1922 until 1930 as he crafted his own meaning of “hermeneutics.”

A major defect of Prof. Farin’s paper, which vitiates his entire critique, is his failure to say a word about Aristotle. This, despite the fact that Heidegger is virtually incomprehensible absent a nuanced awareness of what he got from Aristotle regarding being, ex-sistence, truth, language, technology—the list is virtually endless.¹⁸ For now, however, just a word about how this omission on Farin’s part undermines his critique regarding hermeneutics.

It is noteworthy that, despite its title—Περὶ ἑρμηνείας—that entire treatise does not make a single reference to “hermeneutics” in the current philosophical sense of the term. If Aristotle had written a book about hermeneutics in our contemporary sense (Farin’s sense), the title would have been Περὶ ἑρμηνευτικῆς (that is, Περὶ τῆς τέχνης ἑρμηνευτικῆς), “Concerning the *Art* of Interpreting,” and its Latin translation by Boethius would have been entitled *De interpretativa* (= *De arte interpretativa*) instead of *De interpretatione*.

In Περὶ ἑρμηνείας the word ἑρμηνεία does not mean “hermeneutics” but instead refers to an ἀπόφανσις, a declarative sentence. How Heidegger got his doctrine of sense and meaning from a treatise on the parts and forms of declarative sentences is laid out in his early courses, and has been spelled out elsewhere.¹⁹ The short version of the story is: Heidegger burrowed under the *discursive* structure of declarative sentences in order to find and articulate what Aristotle had left unsaid: the thrown-openness of *Da-sein* as what makes such discursivity possible and necessary. Heidegger did what neither Frege nor the Husserl of *Logical Investigations* had attempted: he explicitly grounded his theory of sense and meaning on the groundless existential structure of human being. *Pace* Farin, Heidegger’s *fundamental* hermeneutical move in SZ had nothing to do with what Schleiermacher meant by hermeneutics, and it went far beyond anything Heidegger had learned from Dilthey. That move consisted in rooting his *Bedeutungslehre* or doctrine of meaning in his analysis of ex-sistence (SZ 166.9-10).

Farin’s complaints at 130.1-11 that (1) I do not “acknowledge Heidegger’s indebtedness to Schleiermacher and Dilthey”; (2) that my “concept of meaning remains within a subjective cast”; and (3) that I read *Da-sein* as what “Husserl would refer to as transcendental consciousness” simply reveal his failure to grasp what Heidegger’s theory of meaning was all about. And that failure, in turn, rests on his

demonstrated inability to make the seven basic distinctions mentioned earlier.



So finally: What is brewing in the Heidegger teapot? And why does it matter? First of all, one may not *want* to drink *only* Heideggerian tea. Maybe Prof. Farin's own idiosyncratic blend would taste better. But then we wouldn't call it Heideggerian tea, would we?

Secondly, Prof. Farin's critique may well be spot on, and I may be the one making water. For one thing, I clearly have not responded to all his points, especially about Heidegger-I and Heidegger-II—although, were there world enough and time, I would argue that those criticisms suffer from the same problems evidenced in the first seven issues discussed above.

And thirdly, why should it matter? After all, Heidegger is dead, and he never wanted disciples, and he was wrong about a whole host of issues, both in philosophy and in life. Maybe what he *actually* said should not stand in the way of Prof. Farin proposing what he *wants* Heidegger to say.

In any case, I end (and perhaps every philosophy text should end) with the sentiment that the young Shelley expressed in 1811 when announcing the publication of his pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism*:

As a love of truth is the only motive which actuates the Author of this little tract, he earnestly entreats that those of his readers who may discover any deficiency in his reasoning, or may be in possession of proofs which his mind could never obtain, would offer them, together with their objections, to the Public, as briefly, as methodically, as plainly as he has taken the liberty of doing.

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NOTES

1. From *Ioannis Antiocheni fragmenta quae supersunt omnia*, 2463, f. 11, 5. Roughly: Keeping philosophers on the path is like herding kittens.
2. Prof. Farin's article is available online at https://www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia26/parrhesia26_farin.pdf. I cite Farin's text by page and line number, and Heidegger's work by the Gesamtausgabe number, followed by page and line. One exception: I cite *Sein und Zeit* as SZ, with page-and-lines from the Niemeyer edition.
3. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), 633.16–17; also 633 note 30: "Even in SZ, presumably, Heidegger sensed the inadequacy of the term but could find no other way to designate the process under discussion."
4. Re. conflation: Farin reveals how little he understands my book when he speaks of its "straight-forward identification of being with meaningful things [sic!] as they show up in the world" (119.32–33)
5. Farin confirms that he misses the ontological difference between *das Anwesen* and *das Anwesende* when he writes: "But this cannot be right, for Heidegger takes great pains to distinguish between meaningful things and entities on the one hand and being on the other hand" (119.23–24).
6. On world as meaningfulness, see SZ 87.17–18; 334.33–34; etc.
7. Richardson, *Heidegger*, 36 n. 22; 167 n. 15; 231.5–7; 572.14–15; 578.24–28 and n. 4; 625.35–36; 626.5; 633.16–17 and n. 30.
8. See also GA 7: 91.12–15; GA 12: 23.10 and 23.18.
9. Cf. also GA 2: 53 note a; GA 10: 131.19–20 and .28; GA 73, 2: 984.2; GA 14: 45.29–30; etc.
10. GA 9: 201.29–31; GA 15: 344.20–28. Cf. GA 65: 331.24: "verschiedene Namen für dasselbe."
11. Farin further shows he understands neither Heidegger's *Grundfrage* nor my book when he claims (128.1–2). that I make "significance"—i.e., *Anwesen* as *Bedeutsamkeit*—"the sole subject matter in Heidegger's work." On the contrary, the book consistently emphasizes that Heidegger's *Grundfrage* is about the *Herkunft* of significance, viz., *Ereignis*.
12. See GA 83: 72.23–24: "Das *sistere*—ex: Wesen der Existenz des Menschen." See *ibid.*, 69.4: "*Existentia*, ἔκστασις—*distentia*." There is no "inside" to ex-sistence (SZ 162.27).
13. For Heidegger's reading of τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, see, for example, GA 2: 114n and SZ 326.1: "wie es je schon war."
14. The entire text is at GA 24: 29.15–19: "Für uns bedeutet die phänomenologische Reduktion die Rückführung des phänomenologischen Blickes von der wie immer bestimmten Erfassung des Seienden auf das Verstehen des Seins (Entwerfen auf die Weise seiner Unverborgenheit) dieses Seienden." On projecting as understanding see GA 16: 424.21–22: "Verstehen, d.h. Entwerfen (ins Offene bringen)."
15. See also GA 62: 131–32, 191–92; GA 22: 250.29.
16. The unpublished second half of SZ was to be entitled "Grundzüge einer phänomenologischen Destruktion der Geschichte der Ontologie am Leitfaden der Problematik der Temporalität" (SZ 39.36–38).
17. Also "Übernahme der Geworfenheit" (SZ 325–26) and "Übernahme der Er-eignung" (GA 65: 322.6–9) and other texts cited on pp. 236–37 of *Making Sense of Heidegger*.
18. This, I think, explains why he misses the fundamental arguments of the book. The first 100 pages of *Making Sense of Heidegger* are virtually all about Heidegger's Aristotle, as is much of the remaining 200 pages. But nary a word on that in Farin's essay.

19. Cf. this writer's "Sense and Meaning: From Aristotle to Heidegger," in Niall Keane and Chris Lawn, *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics*, Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016, 270-279.