

# META-POLITICS



Martin Heidegger

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# THE MAN Politics and Ideology

## The Jewish Contamination of German Spiritual Life

LETTER TO VICTOR SCHWOERER (1929)

Freiburg i. Br., 2 October 1929

Most esteemed Mr. Privy Councillor,

In the coming days, Dr. Baumgarten's application for a fellowship will be sent to the Emergency Association (of German Science).

I should like to add to the official letter of recommendation my personal request to you, esteemed Mr. Privy Councillor, to give this application your undivided attention.

In what follows, I want to make more explicit what I could only indirectly hint at in my recommendation. Nothing less is at stake than our undeferrable facing of the fact that we are confronted by a crucial choice: Either to infuse, again, our *German* spiritual life with genuine indigenous forces and educators, or to leave it at the mercy, once and for all, of the growing Jewish contamination, both in a larger and a narrower sense. We can only regain our own path, if we prove capable of helping fresh forces to prosper, without the usual baiting and fruitless controversies.

With this great goal in mind, I would be particularly obliged, if Mr. Baumgarten whom I have chosen as my "Assistant," could receive the fellowship support requested.

We are currently enjoying the most beautiful fall days in our new home, and I take great pleasure, every day, in seeing my work deeply rooted in our native soil.

In sincere appreciation, I am, most esteemed Mr. Privy Councillor,

devotedly yours,  
Martin Heidegger

*Translated by Manfred Stassen*

## The Self-Assertion of the German University (1933)

The assumption of the rectorate is the commitment to the *spiritual* leadership of this institution of higher learning.<sup>1</sup> The following<sup>2</sup> of teachers and students awakens and grows strong only from a true and joint rootedness in the essence of the German university. This essence, however, gains clarity, rank, and power only when first of all and at all times the leaders are themselves led—led by that unyielding spiritual mission that forces the fate of the German people to bear the stamp of its history.

Do we know about this spiritual mission? Whether we do or not, the question must be faced: *are* we, the body of teachers and students of this “high” school, truly and jointly rooted in the essence of the German university? Does this essence have genuine strength to stamp our being (*Dasein*)? No doubt, only if we most deeply *will* this essence. But who would doubt this? “Self-governance” is commonly seen as the dominant characteristic of the university’s essence; it is to be preserved. However—have we considered fully what this claim to self-governance demands of us?

Surely, self-governance means: to set our own task, to determine ourselves the way and manner in which it is to be realized, so that thus we shall be what we ought to be. But do we know *who we ourselves are*, this body of teachers and students of the highest school of the German people? *Can* we even know this without the most constant and unsparing *self-examination*?

Neither an awareness of the present conditions of the university, nor an acquaintance with its earlier history are enough to guarantee a sufficient knowledge of its essence—unless we first delimit what

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<sup>1</sup> Like the more usual *Hochschule*, *hohe Schule* means first of all “institution of higher learning.” *Hohe Schule*, however, carries a special aura. To preserve at least a trace of this aura, I have translated the term below as “‘high’ school.”

<sup>2</sup> ‘Followers’ would be the more natural translation of *Gefolgschaft*, but the term suggests followers gathered together in one body. The word belongs with *Lehrerschaft* and *Studentenschaft*, which I have translated as ‘body of teachers’ and ‘student body’, respectively.



this essence is to be, clearly and unsparingly; and having thus delimited it, *will* it, and in such willing, *assert* ourselves.

Self-governance must be grounded in self-examination. Self-examination, however, presupposes that the German university possesses the strength to *self-assertion*. Will we enact it? And how?

The self-assertion of the German university is the primordial, shared will to its essence. We understand the German university as the “high” school that, grounded in science, by means of science educates and disciplines the leaders and guardians of the fate of the German people. The will to the essence of the German university is the will to science as will to the historical mission of the German people as a people that knows itself in its state. *Together*, science and German fate must come to power in this will to essence. And they will do so if, and *only* if, we—this body of teachers and students—*on the one hand* expose science to its innermost necessity and, *on the other hand*, are equal to the German fate in its most extreme distress.

To be sure, as long as—talking about “the new concept of science”—we contest the self-sufficiency and lack of presuppositions of an all too up-to-date science, we will not experience the essence of science in its innermost necessity. Such doing is merely negative; looking back hardly beyond the last decades, it has turned by now into a mere semblance of a true struggle for the essence of science.

If we want to grasp the essence of science, we must first face up to this decisive question: should there still *be* science for us in the future, or should we let it drift toward a quick end? That there should be science at all, is never unconditionally necessary. But if there is to be science, and if it is to be *for* us and *through* us, under what conditions can it then truly exist?

Only if we again place ourselves under the power of the *beginning* of our spiritual-historical being (*Dasein*). This beginning is the setting out<sup>3</sup> of Greek philosophy. Here, for the first time, western man raises himself up from a popular base and, by virtue of his language, stands up to the *totality of what is*,<sup>4</sup> which he questions and

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<sup>3</sup> *Aufbruch* suggests that this “setting out” is also a “breaking open.”

<sup>4</sup> “Darin [in this setting out] steht der abendländische Mensch aus seinem Volkstum kraft seiner Sprache erstmals auf gegen das Seiende im Ganzen. . . .” *Aufstehen* suggests here a standing up that raises man beyond his rootedness in the people, but also a “revolt” (*Aufstand*) against all entities. “People” does not preserve the aura carried by such words as *Volk*, *Volkstum*, and *volklich*, which figure so prominently in the address. Nor can we capture it by casting a quick glance at the *völkische* rhetoric of National Socialism. Only careful consideration of the history of their use prevents misunderstanding.

#### 4 · *The Self-Assertion of the German University*

conceives as the being that it is. All science is philosophy, whether it knows and wills it—or not. All science remains bound to that beginning of philosophy. From it it draws the strength of its essence, supposing that it still remains equal to this beginning.

Here we want to regain for *our* being (*Dasein*) two distinguishing properties of the original Greek essence of science.

Among the Greeks an old story went around that Prometheus had been the first philosopher. Aeschylus has this Prometheus utter a saying that expresses the essence of knowing.

τέχνη δάνάγκης ασθενεστερα μακροῦ (Prom. 514 ed. Wil).

“Knowing, however, is far weaker than necessity.” This is to say: all knowing about things has always already been delivered up to overpowering fate and fails before it.

Just because of this, knowing must develop its highest defiance; called forth by such defiance, all the power of the hiddenness of what is must first arise for knowing really to fail. Just in this way, what is opens itself in its unfathomable inalterability and lends knowing its truth. Encountering this Greek saying about the creative impotence of knowing, one likes to find here all too readily the prototype of a knowing based purely on itself, while in fact such knowing has forgotten its own essence; this knowing is interpreted for us as the “theoretical” attitude—but what do the Greeks mean by θεωρία? One says: pure contemplation, which remains bound only to the thing in question and to all it is and demands. This contemplative behavior—and here one appeals to the Greeks—is said to be pursued for its own sake. But this appeal is mistaken. For one thing, “theory” is not pursued for its own sake, but only in the passion to remain close to and hard pressed by what is as such. But, for another, the Greeks struggled precisely to conceive and to enact this contemplative questioning as one, indeed as the highest mode of ἐνέργεια, of man’s “being-at-work.” They were not concerned to assimilate practice to theory; quite the reverse: theory was to be understood as itself the highest realization of genuine practice. For the Greeks science is not a “cultural good,” but the innermost determining center of all that binds human being to people and state.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> “. . . des ganzen volklich-staatlichen Daseins.” I considered retaining *Dasein* as a by now well established, untranslatable technical term. But the reader should not assume that in the Rectorial Address *Dasein* means just what it does in *Being and Time*. Heidegger, e.g., speaks of the *Dasein eines Volkes*. *Volklich-staatlich*, too, poses a problem: thus the translation cannot capture the intimate union of *Volk* and *Staat* suggested by the hyphenated adjective.

Science, for them, is also not a mere means of bringing the unconscious to consciousness, but the power that hones and embraces being-there (*Dasein*) in its entirety.

Science is the questioning holding of one's ground in the midst of the ever self-concealing totality of what is. This active perseverance knows, as it perseveres, about its impotence before fate.

This is the original essence of science. But doesn't this beginning by now lie two and a half millennia behind us? Hasn't human progress changed science as well? Certainly! The Christian-theological interpretation of the world that followed, as well as the later mathematical-technological thinking of the modern age, have separated science both in time and in its concerns from its beginning. But this does not mean that the beginning has been overcome, let alone brought to nought. For if indeed this primordial Greek science is something great, then the *beginning* of this great thing remains what is *greatest* about it. The essence of science could not even be emptied out and used up, as is happening today despite all its results and "international organizations," if the greatness of the beginning did not *still* endure. The beginning *still is*. It does not lie *behind us*, as something that was long ago, but stands *before us*. As what is greatest, the beginning has passed in advance beyond all that is to come and thus also beyond us. The beginning has invaded our future. There it awaits us, a distant command bidding us catch up with its greatness.

Only if we resolutely submit to this distant command to recapture the greatness of the beginning, will science become the innermost necessity of our being (*Dasein*). Otherwise it remains an accident we fall into or the settled comfort of a safe occupation, serving to further a mere progress of information.

But if we submit to the distant command of the beginning, science must become the fundamental happening of our spiritual being as part of a people.<sup>6</sup>

And if, indeed, our ownmost being (*Dasein*) itself stands before a great transformation, if what that passionate seeker of God and the last German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, said is true: "God is dead"—and if we have to face up to the forsakenness of modern man in the midst of what is, what then is the situation of science?

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<sup>6</sup> "... unseres geistig-volklichen Daseins." This suggests that *Geist* and *Volk* code-terminate our *Dasein*.

What was in the beginning the awed perseverance of the Greeks in the face of what is, transforms itself then into the completely unguarded exposure to the hidden and uncertain, i.e., the questionable. Questioning is then no longer a preliminary step, to give way to the answer and thus to knowledge, but questioning becomes itself the highest form of knowing. Questioning then unfolds its ownmost strength to unlock in all things what is essential. Questioning then forces our vision into the most simple focus on the inescapable.

Such questioning shatters the division of the sciences into rigidly separated specialties, carries them back from their endless and aimless dispersal into isolated fields and corners, and exposes science once again to the fertility and the blessing bestowed by all the world-shaping powers of human-historical being (*Dasein*), such as: nature, history, language; people, custom, state; poetry, thought, faith; disease, madness, death; law, economy, technology.

If we will the essence of science understood as the *questioning, unguarded holding of one's ground in the midst of the uncertainty of the totality of what-is*, this will to essence will create for our people its world, a world of the innermost and most extreme danger, i.e., its truly *spiritual* world. For "spirit" is neither empty cleverness, nor the noncommittal play of wit, nor the endless drift of rational distinctions, and especially not world reason; spirit is primordially attuned, knowing resoluteness toward the essence of Being. And the *spiritual world* of a people is not the superstructure of a culture, no more than it is an armory stuffed with useful facts and values; it is the power that most deeply preserves the people's strengths, which are tied to earth and blood;<sup>7</sup> and as such it is the power that most deeply moves and most profoundly shakes its being (*Dasein*). Only a spiritual world gives the people the assurance of greatness. For it necessitates that the constant decision between the will to greatness and a letting things happen that means decline, will be the law presiding over the march that our people has begun into its future history.

If we will this essence of science, the body of teachers of this university must really step forward into the most dangerous post, threatened by constant uncertainty about the world. If it holds this

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<sup>7</sup> ". . . sondern sie ist die Macht der tiefsten Bewahrung der erd-und bluthaften Kräfte als Macht der innersten Erregung und weitesten Erschütterung seines Daseins."

ground, that is to say, if from such steadfastness—in essential nearness to the hard-pressing insistence of all things—arises a common questioning and a communally tuned saying, then it will gain the strength to lead. For what is decisive if one is to lead is not just that one walk ahead of others, but that one have the strength to be able to walk alone, not out of obstinacy and a craving for power, but empowered by the deepest vocation and broadest obligation. Such strength binds to what is essential, selects the best, and awakens the genuine following (*Gefolgschaft*) of those who are of a new mind. But there is no need to first awaken this following. Germany's student body is on the march. And *whom* it seeks are those leaders through whom it wills to so elevate its own vocation that it becomes a grounded, knowing truth, and to place it into the clarity of interpretive and effective word and work.

Out of the resoluteness of the German student body to be equal to the German fate in its most extreme distress, comes a will to the essence of the university. This will is a true will in that the German student body, through the new Student Law,<sup>8</sup> places itself under the law of its own essence and in this way for the first time determines that essence. To give the law to oneself is the highest freedom. The much celebrated "academic freedom" is being banished from the German university; for this freedom was not genuine, since it was only negative. It meant primarily freedom from concern, arbitrariness of intentions and inclinations, lack of restraint in what was done and left undone. The concept of the freedom of the German student is now brought back to its truth. Henceforth the bond and service of the German student will unfold from this truth.

The first bond binds into the community of the people. It obligates to help carry the burden and to participate actively in the troubles, endeavors, and skills of all its estates (*Stände*) and members. From now on this bond will be fixed and rooted in the being (*Dasein*) of the German student by means of the *Labor Service (Arbeitsdienst)*.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Proclaimed on May 1, 1933, the *neue Studentenrecht* sought to organize students according to the *Führerprinzip* in an effort to integrate the universities into the National Socialist state.

<sup>9</sup> Following World War I, the *Arbeitsdienst* emerged, in good part as a response to the unemployment problem. On July 23, 1931 the government of the conservative Heinrich Brüning made this voluntary *Arbeitsdienst* part of its attempt to deal with unemployment. The National Socialist state was quick to recognize, not only its economic importance, but the pedagogical possibilities of such service, which was to be *eine Schule der Volksgemeinschaft*, a school that would join members of different classes in genuine community. The law of June 26, 1935, made six months of such service mandatory for every young German.

## 8 · *The Self-Assertion of the German University*

The *second* bond binds to the honor and destiny of the nation in the midst of other peoples. It demands the readiness, secured by knowledge and skill, and tightened by discipline, to give all. In the future this bond will encompass and penetrate the entire being (*Dasein*) of the student as *Armed Service* (*Wehrdienst*).

The *third* bond of the student body binds it to the spiritual mission of the German people. This people shapes its fate by placing its history into the openness of the overwhelming power of all the world-shaping powers of human being (*Dasein*) and by ever renewing the battle for its spiritual world. Thus exposed to the most extreme questionableness of its own being (*Dasein*), this people wills to be a spiritual people. It demands of itself and for itself that its leaders and guardians possess the strictest clarity of the highest, widest, and richest knowledge. Still youthful students, who at an early age have dared to act as men and who extend their willing to the future destiny of the nation, force themselves, from the very ground of their being, to serve this knowledge. They will no longer permit *Knowledge Service* (*Wissensdienst*) to be the dull and quick training for a “distinguished” profession. Because the statesman and the teacher, the doctor and the judge, the minister and the architect, lead the being (*Dasein*) of people and state, because they watch over it and keep it honed in its fundamental relations to the world-shaping powers of human being, these professions and the training for them have been entrusted to the Knowledge Service. Knowledge does not serve the professions, quite the reverse: the professions effect and administer that highest and essential knowledge of the people concerning its entire being (*Dasein*). But for us this knowledge is not the settled taking note of essences and values in themselves; it is the most severe endangerment of human being (*Dasein*) in the midst of the overwhelming power of what is. The very questionableness of Being, indeed, compels the people to work and fight and forces it into its state (*Staat*), to which the professions belong.

The three bonds—by the people, to the destiny of the state, in a spiritual mission—are *equally primordial* to the German essence. The three services that stem from it—Labor Service, Armed Service, and Knowledge Service—are equally necessary and of equal rank.

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But if Heidegger's discussion of the three Services refers the reader to the political situation of the time, it also refers him to Plato's *Republic*. Such ambiguities make the Rectoral Address particularly difficult to translate.

Only engaged knowledge about the people and knowledge about the destiny of the state that keeps itself in readiness, only these create, at one with knowledge about the spiritual mission, the primordial and full essence of science, whose realization is our task—supposing that we submit to the distant command of the beginning of our spiritual-historical being (*Dasein*).

*This* science is meant when the essence of the German university is delimited as the “high” school that, grounded in science, by means of science educates and disciplines the leaders and guardians of the fate of the German people.

*This* primordial concept of science obligates us not only to “objectivity” (“*Sachlichkeit*”), but, first of all, to make our questioning in the midst of the historical-spiritual world of the people simple and essential. Indeed—only in such questioning can objectivity truly ground itself, i.e., discover its nature and limit.

Science, in this sense, must become the power that shapes the body of the German university. This implies a twofold task: For one, the body of teachers and the student body, each in its own way, must be *seized* and *remain* seized by the concept of science. At the same time, however, this concept of science must intervene in and transform the basic patterns in which teachers and students join to act as members of a scientific community: the *faculties* and *specialties*.<sup>10</sup>

The faculty is a faculty only if, rooted in the essence of its science, it develops into a faculty for spiritual legislation, able to shape those powers of human being (*Dasein*) that press *it* hard into the *one* spiritual world of the people.

The speciality is a speciality only if, from the very outset, it places itself in the realm of this spiritual legislation and thus tears down departmental barriers and overcomes what lets professional training lose itself in what is stale and counterfeit.

At the moment when faculties and specialties begin to raise the essential and simple questions of their science, both teachers and students are already encompassed by the *same* final necessities and pressing concerns, inseparable from the being (*Dasein*) of people and state.

The unfolding of the primordial essence of science, however, demands such a degree of rigor, responsibility, and superior patience

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<sup>10</sup> *Fachschaften*. I have translated both *Fachschaft* and *Fach* as specialty. *Fach* also means compartment, suggesting the compartmentalization that has attended specialization in the sciences.

that, in comparison, matters like conscientious adherence to or eager tinkering with established procedures hardly carry any weight.

But if the Greeks took three centuries just to put the *question* of what knowledge is upon the right basis and on a secure path, *we* have no right to presume that the elucidation and unfolding of the essence of the German university could take place in the current or in the coming semester.

*One thing*, however, we do know from the indicated essence of science; we do know that the German university will only take shape and come to power when the three services—Labor Service, Armed Service, and Knowledge Service—primordially coalesce and become *one* formative force. That is to say:

The teaching body's will to essence must awaken and strengthen and thus gain the simplicity and breadth necessary to knowledge about the essence of science. The student body's will to essence must force itself to rise to the highest clarity and discipline of knowing and, demanding and determining, integrate its engaged understanding of the people and its state, which is itself a kind of science, into the essence of science.<sup>11</sup> The two wills must confront one another, ready for *battle*. All faculties of will and thought, all strengths of the heart and all skills of the body, must be unfolded *through* battle, heightened *in* battle, and preserved *as* battle.

We choose the knowing battle of those who question and profess with Carl von Clausewitz:<sup>12</sup> "I take leave of the frivolous hope of salvation by the hand of accident."

This battle community of teachers and students, however, will only transform the German university into a place of spiritual legislation and establish in it the center of the most disciplined and focused preparation for the highest service to the people in its state, when teachers and students arrange their being (*Dasein*) more simply, more unsparingly, and more frugally than all their fellow Germans. All leading must grant the body of followers its own strength. All following, however, bears resistance within itself. This essential opposition of leading and following must not be obscured, let alone eliminated.

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<sup>11</sup> I have translated *Mitwissenschaft* as "engaged understanding . . . which is itself a kind of science." In its context, *Mitwissenschaft* points both to *Wissenschaft* (science) and to *mitwissen*, a knowing that actively participates in the knowledge of others.

<sup>12</sup> Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831), for many years head of the Prussian War College and author of the influential *Vom Krieg* (*On War*).



Battle alone keeps this opposition open and implants in the entire body of teachers and students that basic mood which lets self-limiting self-assertion empower resolute self-examination to genuine self-governance.

Do we, or do we not, will the essence of the German university? It is up to us whether, and to what extent, we concern ourselves with self-examination and self-assertion not just casually, but penetrating to their very foundations, or whether—with the best of intentions—we only change old arrangements and add new ones. No one will keep us from doing this.

But no one will even ask us whether we do or do not will, when the spiritual strength of the West fails and the joints of the world no longer hold, when this moribund semblance of a culture caves in and drags all that remains strong into confusion and lets it suffocate in madness.

Whether this will happen or not depends alone on whether or not we, as a historical-spiritual people, still and once again will ourselves. Every individual *participates* in this decision, even he, and indeed especially he, who evades it.

But we do will that our people fulfill its historical mission.

We do will ourselves. For the young and the youngest strength of the people, which already reaches beyond us, *has* by now *decided* the matter.<sup>13</sup>

But we fully understand the splendor and the greatness of this setting out only when we carry within ourselves that profound and far-reaching thoughtfulness that gave ancient Greek wisdom the word:

τὰ . . . μεγάλα πάντα ἐπισηφαλή . . .

“All that is great stands in the storm . . .”

(Plato, *Republic*, 497 d, 9).<sup>13</sup>

*Translated by Karsten Harries*

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<sup>13</sup> B. Jowett translates the passage from which this saying is taken as follows:

“What is there remaining?”

“The question of how the study of philosophy may be so ordered as not to be the ruin of the State: All great attempts are attended with risk; ‘hard is the good,’ as men say.”

## Follow the Führer! (1934)

*On October 30, 1933, the Mayor's employment program found work for 600 unemployed. The auxiliary services of child care and clothing sensibly bettered the conditions of the workers, so that now their National Socialist education can begin. On the twenty-second of this month (February, 1934) the 600 marched to the largest lecture hall of the university and were greeted by the Rector in the following address:*

German compatriots! German workers! As Rector of the university I greet you most heartily in this house. This greeting marks the beginning of our work together. We will begin by making clear the meaning of the till now unheard-of event, that you, relief workers of the town of Freiburg, have met us in the largest lecture hall of the university. What does this event mean?

Through widespread and entirely new methods of work procurement, the town of Freiburg has led you to employment and food. And because of that you are favored over the other unemployed men of the town. But this privilege has its duties, too.

And your duty is to take the employment, and perform the tasks, in whatever manner the *Führer* of our new State demands. For employment is not merely the lifting of extreme poverty, it is not merely the putting aside of inner hopelessness or despair, nor merely protection from harassment; it is equally and uniquely a building up in the new future of our people.

The employment procurement service must make workers and unemployed comrades alike active in and for the State, and thereby in and for the whole people. The compatriot who gets work will find that he is not cast off and left to fend for himself, but that he belongs to the people, and that every service and every achievement has its own value and leads on to other tasks and achievements. From this experience he will win back his self-respect and a proud bearing, and will be able to show firmness and decision in meeting his comrades.

The goal is to work hard for a satisfying existence as a member of the German community of peoples.

But to do this you must know where you stand as a member of this people; you must know how the people incorporates its members and by this incorporation renews itself; you must know what is happening to the people in this National Socialist State; you must know what a hard struggle it will be to bring this new reality to fruition; you must know what the coming healing of the body of the German people means, and what it demands from each individual; you must know to what a pretty pass German men have come because of urbanization, and how they will be given back to the soil and the land through settlements, *you must know the implications of the fact that eighteen million Germans belong to the German people, but not to the German State because they live beyond the state frontiers.*

Every working man of our people must know for what reason and to what end he stands there. Through this living, and always current, knowledge will his life first be rooted in the whole German people and in its destiny. And with the procurement of employment goes the procurement of this knowledge, and it is your right, and indeed your duty, to demand this knowledge and to make every effort to come by it.

And now your young comrades of the university stand ready to help you get the knowledge. They are resolved to help, so that the knowledge may unfold in you and grow, and never again sleep. They will help you, not as "scholars," from the "upper" classes, but as comrades of the people who have recognized your duty.

They will not come to you as "educated" people condescending to a class, or even a "lower class," of uneducated men, but as comrades. They will listen to your questions, your needs, your difficulties and your doubts, talk these through with you, and by your common work bring you to clarity, freedom and decision. And so, what does it mean that we are met here in this hall of the university?

It is a sign that there exists a new common resolve to throw up a bridge between those who labor with their hands and those who perform brain work. This resolve is no longer an empty dream—and why not? *Because through the National Socialist State our entire German reality has been altered, and that means altering all our previous ideas and thinking, too.*

The words "knowledge" and "scholarship" have acquired a different meaning, and so too have the words "work" and "worker."

Scholarship is not the possession of a restricted class of citizens to misuse as a weapon for the exploitation of those who do the work; it is only a stronger and therefore more responsible form of that knowledge that the whole German people must demand and seek for the sake of its historico-political existence, if this people desires to safeguard its continuation and greatness. The knowledge of true scholarship does not differ in its tradition from the knowledge of farmers, lumberjacks, miners and craftsmen. For knowledge means being at home in the world in which we live as individuals and as part of a community.

Knowledge means growth of resolve and action in the performance of a task that has been given us, whether that task be ordering the fields, or felling a tree, or mining, or questioning the laws of Nature, or determining the place of history in the force of destiny.

*Knowledge means being in the place where we are put.*

It is not so important for knowledge, as some people we know believe, whether or not it is something that originally grew in us, but it is important that we hold fast by our actions and our behavior to what we know. We no longer make a distinction between "educated" and "uneducated." And that is not because they are the same thing; we simply no longer place any value at all on this distinction. We do distinguish, however, between knowledge and the appearance of knowledge. The farmer, the craftsman and the scholar all have true knowledge, each after his own fashion, and in his field of work. On the other hand, the learned man may totally deceive himself by what is only the appearance of knowledge.

If you want to become rich in knowledge, it is not a question of getting yourself bits and pieces of some "general picture," as if you were being given charity. There must be awakened in you that knowledge by whose power you may become, each in his own place and specialty, clear and resolute German men.

*Knowledge and its possession, as National Socialism understands these words, do not divide the classes, but rather bind and unite the people in the one great will of the State.* Like the words "knowledge" and "scholarship," the words "worker" and "work" have taken on a new sound and a changed meaning. The "worker" is not, as Marxism would have him be, merely the opponent of exploitation. The working class is not the disinherited class marching to a general class war. "Work" is not simply the production of goods for others, nor is it merely the opportunity and means of getting a reward.

No. To us, “work” is the title of every regulated act and undertaking that is performed with responsibility toward the individual, the group and the State, and so becomes of service to the people. Work is found wherever, and only wherever, men’s free power of decision sets itself to perform a task under the governance of a resolve. Work is therefore something spiritual in its own right, for it is founded upon freely acting knowledge of the circumstances, and regulated understanding of the work—that is to say, upon its own knowledge. The production of the miner is not fundamentally less spiritual than the action of the scholar.

“The workers” and “scholarly knowledge” form no contrast. Every worker is a learned man in his own way, and only as such can he work. The animal remains shut off from the privilege of work, which is denied to him. Every one who consciously decides and acts is a worker.

For this reason the resolve to throw up a living bridge cannot any longer remain an empty wish in you, any more than in us. The resolve to complete procurement of work by the procurement of knowledge must become in us inmost certainty, not flagging belief. For in what that resolve demands, we are but following the glorious will of our *Führer*. To become one of his loyal following means to desire wholeheartedly and undeviatingly that the German people may once more find its growing unity, its true worth and true power, and may procure thereby its endurance and greatness as a work State. *To the man of this unprecedented resolve, our Führer Adolf Hitler, let us give a threefold “Heil!”*

*Translated by D. D. Runes*

## Why Do I Stay in the Provinces? (1934)

On the steep slope of a wide mountain valley in the southern Black Forest, at an elevation of 1,150 meters, there stands a small ski hut. The floor plan measures six meters by seven. The low-hanging roof covers three rooms: the kitchen which is also the living room, a bedroom and a study. Scattered at wide intervals throughout the narrow base of the valley and on the equally steep slope opposite, lie the farmhouses with their large overhanging roofs. Higher up the slope the meadows and pasture lands lead to the woods with its dark fir-trees, old and towering. Over everything there stands a clear summer sky, and in its radiant expanse two hawks glide around in wide circles.

This is my work-world—seen with the eye of an observer: the guest or summer vacationer. Strictly speaking I myself never observe the landscape. I experience its hourly changes, day and night, in the great comings and goings of the seasons. The gravity of the mountains and the hardness of their primeval rock, the slow and deliberate growth of the fir-trees, the brilliant, simple splendor of the meadows in bloom, the rush of the mountain brook in the long autumn night, the stern simplicity of the flatlands covered with snow—all of this moves and flows through and penetrates daily existence up there, and not in forced moments of “aesthetic” immersion or artificial empathy, but only when one’s own existence stands in its work. It is the work alone that opens up space for the reality that is these mountains. The course of the work remains embedded in what happens in the region.

On a deep winter’s night when a wild, pounding snowstorm rages around the cabin and veils and covers everything, that is the perfect time for philosophy. Then its questions must become simple and essential. Working through each thought can only be tough and rigorous. The struggle to mold something into language is like the resistance of the towering firs against the storm.

And this philosophical work does not take its course like the aloof studies of some eccentric. It belongs right in the middle of the peasants’ work. When the young farmboy drags his heavy sled up

the slope and guides it, piled high with beech logs, down the dangerous descent to his house, when the herdsman, lost in thought and slow of step, drives his cattle up the slope, when the farmer in his shed gets the countless shingles ready for his roof, my work is of the same sort. It is intimately rooted in and related to the life of the peasants.

A city-dweller thinks he has gone "out among the people" as soon as he condescends to have a long conversation with a peasant. But in the evening during a work-break, when I sit with the peasants by the fire or at the table in the "Lord's Corner," we mostly say nothing at all. We smoke our pipes in silence. Now and again someone might say that the woodcutting in the forest is finishing up, that a marten broke into the hen-house last night, that one of the cows will probably calf in the morning, that someone's uncle suffered a stroke, that the weather will soon "turn." The inner relationship of my own work to the Black Forest and its people comes from a centuries-long and irreplaceable rootedness in the Alemanian-Swabian soil.

At most, a city-dweller gets "stimulated" by a so-called stay in the country. But my whole work is sustained and guided by the world of these mountains and their people. Lately from time to time my work up there is interrupted for long stretches by conferences, lecture trips, committee meetings and my teaching work down here in Freiburg. But as soon as I go back up there, even in the first few hours of being at the cabin, the whole world of previous questions forces itself upon me in the very form in which I left it. I simply am transported into the work's own kind of rhythm, and in a fundamental sense I am not at all in command of its hidden law. People in the city often wonder whether one gets lonely up in the mountains among the peasants for such long and monotonous periods of time. But it isn't loneliness, it is solitude. In large cities one can easily be as lonely as almost nowhere else. But one can never be in solitude there. Solitude has the peculiar and original power not of isolating us but of projecting our whole existence out into the vast nearness of the presence [*Wesen*] of all things.

In the public world one can be made a "celebrity" overnight by the newspapers and journals. That always remains the surest way to have one's ownmost intentions get misinterpreted and quickly and thoroughly forgotten.

In contrast, the memory of the peasant has its simple and sure fidelity which never forgets. Recently an old peasant woman up there was approaching death. She liked to chat with me frequently,

and she told me many old stories of the village. In her robust language, full of images, she still preserved many old words and various sayings which have become unintelligible to the village youth today and hence are lost to the spoken language. Very often in the past year when I lived alone in the cabin for weeks on end, this peasant woman with her 83 years would still come climbing up the slope to visit me. She wanted to look in from time to time, as she put it, to see whether I was still there or whether "someone" had stolen me off unawares. She spent the night of her death in conversation with her family. Just an hour and a half before the end she sent her greetings to the "Professor." Such a memory is worth incomparably more than the most astute report by any international newspaper about my alleged philosophy.

The world of the city runs the risk of falling into a destructive error. A very loud and very active and very fashionable obtrusiveness often passes itself off as concern for the world and existence of the peasant. But this goes exactly contrary to the one and only thing that now needs to be done, namely, to keep one's distance from the life of the peasant, to leave their existence more than ever to its own law, to keep hands off lest it be dragged into the literati's dishonest chatter about "folk-character" and "rootedness in the soil." The peasant doesn't need and doesn't want this citified officiousness. What he needs and wants is quiet reserve with regard to his own way of being and its independence. But nowadays many people from the city, the kind who know their way around and not least of all the skiers, often behave in the village or at a farmer's house in the same way they "have fun" at their recreation centers in the city. Such goings-on destroy more in one evening than centuries of scholarly teaching about folk-character and folklore could ever hope to promote.

Let us stop all this condescending familiarity and sham concern for "folk-character" and let us learn to take seriously that simple, rough existence up there. Only then will it speak to us once more.

Recently I got a second invitation to teach at the University of Berlin. On that occasion I left Freiburg and withdrew to the cabin. I listened to what the mountains and the forest and the farmlands were saying, and I went to see an old friend of mine, a 75-year old farmer. He had read about the call to Berlin in the newspapers. What would he say? Slowly he fixed the sure gaze of his clear eyes on mine, and keeping his mouth tightly shut, he thoughtfully put his faithful hand on my shoulder. Ever so slightly he shook his head. That meant: absolutely no!



## The Thinker as Poet (1947)

When the early morning light quietly  
grows above the mountains . . . .

The world's darkening never reaches  
to the light of Being.

We are too late for the gods and too  
early for Being. Being's poem,  
just begun, is man.

To head toward a star—this only.

To think is to confine yourself to a  
single thought that one day stands  
still like a star in the world's sky.

\* \* . \*

When the little windwheel outside  
the cabin window sings in the  
gathering thunderstorm . . . .

When thought's courage stems from  
the bidding of Being, then  
destiny's language thrives.

As soon as we have the thing before  
our eyes, and in our hearts an ear  
for the word, thinking prospers.

Few are experienced enough in the  
difference between an object of  
scholarship and a matter thought.

If in thinking there were already  
adversaries and not mere  
opponents, then thinking's case  
would be more auspicious.

\* \* \*

When through a rent in the rain-clouded  
sky a ray of the sun suddenly glides  
over the gloom of the meadows . . . .

We never come to thoughts. They come  
to us.

That is the proper hour of discourse.

Discourse cheers us to companionable  
reflection. Such reflection neither  
parades polemical opinions nor does it  
tolerate complaisant agreement. The sail  
of thinking keeps trimmed hard to the  
wind of the matter.

From such companionship a few perhaps  
may rise to be journeymen in the  
craft of thinking. So that one of them,  
unforeseen, may become a master.

\* \* \*

When in early summer lonely narcissi  
bloom hidden in the meadow and the  
rock-rose gleams under the maple . . . .

The splendor of the simple.

Only image formed keeps the vision.  
Yet image formed rests in the poem.

How could cheerfulness stream  
through us if we wanted to shun  
sadness?

Pain gives of its healing power  
where we least expect it.

\* \* \*

When the wind, shifting quickly, grumbles  
in the rafters of the cabin, and the  
weather threatens to become nasty . . . .

Three dangers threaten thinking.

The good and thus wholesome  
danger is the nighness of the singing  
poet.

The evil and thus keenest danger is  
thinking itself. It must think  
against itself, which it can only  
seldom do.

The bad and thus muddled danger  
is philosophizing.

\* \* \*

When on a summer's day the butterfly  
settles on the flower and, wings  
closed, sways with it in the  
meadow-breeze . . . .

All our heart's courage is the  
echoing response to the  
first call of Being which  
gathers our thinking into the  
play of the world.

In thinking all things  
become solitary and slow.

Patience nurtures magnanimity.

He who thinks greatly must  
err greatly.

\* \* \*

When the mountain brook in night's  
stillness tells of its plunging  
over the boulders . . . .

The oldest of the old follows behind  
us in our thinking and yet it  
comes to meet us.

That is why thinking holds to the  
coming of what has been, and  
is remembrance.

To be old means: to stop in time at  
that place where the unique  
thought of a thought train has  
swung into its joint.

We may venture the step back out  
of philosophy into the thinking of  
Being as soon as we have grown  
familiar with the provenance of  
thinking.

\* \* \*

When in the winter nights snowstorms  
tear at the cabin and one morning the  
landscape is hushed in its blanket of  
snow . . . .

Thinking's saying would be stilled in  
its being only by becoming unable  
to say that which must remain  
unspoken.

Such inability would bring thinking  
face to face with its matter.

What is spoken is never, and in no  
language, what is said.

That a thinking is, ever and suddenly—  
whose amazement could fathom it?

\* \* \*

When the cowbells keep tinkling from  
the slopes of the mountain valley  
where the herds wander slowly . . . .

The poetic character of thinking is  
still veiled over.

Where it shows itself, it is for a  
long time like the utopism of  
a half-poetic intellect.

But poetry that thinks is in truth  
the topology of Being.

This topology tells Being the  
whereabouts of its actual  
presence.

\* \* \*

When the evening light, slanting into  
the woods somewhere, bathes the tree  
trunks in gold . . . .

Singing and thinking are the stems  
neighbor to poetry.

They grow out of Being and reach into  
its truth.

Their relationship makes us think of what  
Hölderlin sings of the trees of the  
woods:

“And to each other they remain unknown,  
So long as they stand, the neighboring  
trunks.”

# Only a God Can Save Us: *Der Spiegel's* Interview with Martin Heidegger (September 23, 1966)

S: Professor Heidegger, we have stated time and again that your philosophical work has been somewhat overshadowed by some events in your life which, while they did not last very long, have still never been cleared up.

H: You mean 1933.

S: Yes, before and after. We would like to put this in a larger context and, from that vantage point, raise some questions which appear to be important, e.g., what are the possibilities that philosophy could have an effect on reality, in particular on political reality?

H: These are important questions. Who is to say that I can answer them? But first of all I must say that, before my rectorship, I was not in any way politically active. In the Winter Semester of 1932–33, I had a leave of absence, and I spent most of that time at my cabin.

S: Well, then how did it happen that you became rector of the University of Freiburg?

H: In December 1932, my neighbor, von Möllendorf, who was Professor of Anatomy, was elected rector. The term of office of the new rector at the University of Freiburg begins on April 15. During the Winter Semester of 1932–33, he and I often spoke of the situation, not only of the political situation, but especially of that of the universities, and of the situation of the students which appeared in part to be hopeless. My judgment was this: insofar as I could judge things, only one possibility was left, and that was to attempt to stem the coming development by means of constructive powers which were still viable.

S: So you saw a connection between the situation of the German university and the political situation in Germany as a whole?

H: I certainly followed political events between January and March 1933 and occasionally I spoke about them with my younger

colleagues. But my work itself was concerned with a comprehensive interpretation of presocratic thought. At the beginning of the Summer Semester I returned to Freiburg. In the meantime on April 16, Professor von Möllendorf had begun his office as rector. Scarcely two weeks later he was relieved of his office by the then Badish Minister of Culture. The occasion for this decision by the Minister, an occasion for which the Minister was presumably looking, was the fact that the Rector had forbidden posting the so-called Jewish proclamation.

S: Professor von Möllendorf was a Social Democrat. What did he do after his removal?

H: On the very day he was removed, von Möllendorf came to me and said: "Heidegger, now you must take over the rectorship." I said that I lacked experience in administration. The vice-rector at that time, Prof. Sauer (Theology), likewise urged me to become a candidate for the rectorship. For otherwise the danger would be that a party functionary would be named rector. The younger faculty, with whom I had been discussing the structure of the University for many years, besieged me to take over the rectorship. For a long time I hesitated. Finally I said that I was ready to take over the office in the interest of the University, but only if I could be certain of the unanimous agreement of the Plenum. My doubts about my suitability for the rectorship persisted. On the morning of the day which had been set for the election, I went to the Rector's office and explained to von Möllendorf (who though no longer Rector was present there) and to Professor Sauer, that I just could not possibly take over the office. Both these colleagues told me that the election had been set up in such a way that I could no longer withdraw my candidacy.

S: And after this you declared yourself ready. How then was your relationship with the National Socialists formed?

H: On the second day after I had assumed office, the "student leader" with two companions visited me as Rector and demanded again the posting of the Jewish proclamation. I declined. The three students left remarking that the prohibition would be reported to the National Student Leadership. After a few days a telephone call came from the Office of Higher Education [SA *Hochschulamt*], in the highest SA echelons, from the SA Leader Dr. Baumann.<sup>1</sup> He demanded the posting of the so called proclamation, since it had already been posted in other universities. If I refused I would have to

reckon with removal, if not, indeed, with the closing of the University. I attempted to win the support of the Badish Minister of Culture for my prohibition. The latter explained that he could do nothing in opposition to the SA. Nevertheless, I did not retract my prohibition.

S: Up to now that was not known.

H: The motive which moved me to take over the rectorship had already appeared in my inaugural address at Freiburg in the year 1929, *What Is Metaphysics?*: "The fields of the sciences lie far apart. The methods of treating their objects are fundamentally different. Today this fragmented multiplicity of discipline is held together only by the technical organization of the universities and the faculties and held together as a unit of meaning only through the practical orientation of the academic departments. The roots of the sciences in their essential ground have withered away."<sup>2</sup> What I attempted to do during my term of office with respect to this situation of the university—which has by today deteriorated to the extreme—is contained in my rectorial address.<sup>3</sup>

S: We attempted to find out how and whether this remark from 1929 coincided with what you said in your inaugural address as rector in 1933. We are taking a sentence out of context. "The much-sung 'academic freedom' is driven out of the German university. This freedom was false because it was only negative." We might suppose that this sentence expresses at least in part ideas which are even today not foreign to you.

H: Yes, I still stand behind that statement. For this academic "freedom" was all too often only a negative one: freedom *from* taking the trouble to reflect and meditate as scientific studies demand. But the sentence which you have picked out should not be isolated. It should, rather, be read in context. Then what I wanted understood by "negative freedom" will become clear.

S: Good. One can understand that. Still we believe that we perceive a new tone in your rector's address when you speak there, four months after Hitler was named Chancellor of the Reich, of the "greatness and glory of this new dawn."

H: Yes, I was convinced of that.

S: Could you explain that a bit more?

H: Gladly. At that time I saw no alternative. In the general confusion of opinions and of the political trends of twenty-two parties,



it was necessary to find a national, and above all a social, point of view, perhaps of the sort attempted by Friedrich Naumann. To give you but one example, I can only refer you here to an essay by Eduard Spranger, which goes far beyond my rector's address. [This essay appeared in a periodical, *Die Erziehung*, ed. by A. Fischer, W. Flitner, H. Nohl and E. Spranger, 1933, p. 401—*Der Spiegel*.]

S: When did you begin to be concerned with political situations? The twenty-two parties had been there for a long time. And there were millions of unemployed people in 1930.

H: At that time I was completely taken up with the questions that are developed in *Being and Time* (1927) and in the writings and lectures of the following years. These are the fundamental questions of thinking which in an indirect way affect even national and social questions. The question which concerned me directly as a teacher in the university was the question of the meaning of the sciences and, in connection with this, the question of the determination of the task of the university. This concern is expressed in the title of my rectorial address: "The Self-determination of the German University." Such a title had not been risked in any rectorial address up to that time. And yet who among those who have engaged in polemics against this address has read it thoroughly, thought it through and interpreted it in terms of the situation of those times?

S: But to speak of the self-determination of the German university in such a turbulent world, wasn't that a bit inappropriate?

H: Why so? The self-determination of the university: that goes against the so-called political science which was demanded at that time in the Party and by the National Socialist Students. At that time the title had a completely different meaning: it did not mean the science of politics, as it does today; rather it meant: science as such, in its meaning and worth, is devalued in favor of the practical needs of the people. The counter-position to such politicizing of science is rightly expressed in the rectorial address.

S: Do we understand you correctly? While you drew the university into something which you at that time felt to be a new dawn, still you wished to see the university assert itself against currents which were overpowering and which would have no longer allowed the university to keep its identity?

H: Certainly. But self-determination should simultaneously pose the task of retrieving from the merely technical organization

of the university a new meaning which could come out of a reflection on the tradition of Western-European thought.

S: Professor, are we to understand that you thought at that time that it was possible for the university to regain its health in alliance with the National Socialists?

H: That is not exactly correct. I did not say, in alliance with the National Socialists. Rather the university should renew itself by means of its own reflection and in this way secure a firm position against the danger of the politicization of science—in the aforementioned sense.

S: And that is why you proclaimed these three pillars in your rectoral address: the service of work, military service and the service of knowledge. In this way, you meant to say, the “service of knowledge” should be lifted up to a position of equal rank with the other two, something which the National Socialists surely would not have granted it?

H: There was no talk of “pillars.” If you read it carefully, you will see that the “service of knowledge” does, to be sure, stand in the third place in the enumeration, but in terms of its meaning it is first. One ought to remember that work and the military, like every human activity, are grounded in knowledge and are enlightened by it.

S: But we must—and this will be the end of this miserable quoting—still mention one more remark, one which we cannot imagine that you would still subscribe to today. You said in the Fall, 1933: “Do not let doctrines and ideas be the rules of your Being. The *Führer* himself and he alone is the present and future German reality and its rule.”

H: These sentences are not found in the rectorial address, but only in the local *Freiburg Students Newspaper*, at the beginning of 1933–34 Winter Semester. When I took over the rectorship it was clear to me that I would not see it through without some compromises. I would today no longer write the sentences which you cite. Even by 1934 I no longer said such things.

S: May we ask you once more a related question? It has become clear up to this point in this conversation that your position in the year 1933 fluctuated between two poles. You had to say many things *ad usum delphini* [for the use of the Dauphin, i.e., for public consumption]; that is one pole. But the other pole was more posi-

tive, and this you express by saying: I had the feeling that here is something new, here is a new dawn.

H: That is right. It's not that I had spoken only for the sake of appearances; I also saw such a possibility.

S: You know that some reproaches have been made against you in this connection concerning your collaboration with the NSDAP<sup>4</sup> and its units and which are still not contradicted. Thus you have been accused of having taken part in the book burnings by the student body or by the Hitler Youth.

H: I had forbidden the planned book burning which was to take place in front of the University buildings.

S: Then you were also accused of having had the books of Jewish authors removed from the library or from the Philosophical Seminar.

H: As Director of the Seminar I had authority only over its library. I did not comply with the repeated demands to remove the books of Jewish authors. Former participants in my seminars could testify today that not only were no books of Jewish authors removed, but that these authors, and above all Husserl, were cited and discussed just as before 1933.

S: Well then how do you explain the origin of such rumors? Is it just maliciousness?

H: According to my knowledge of the sources, I am inclined to believe that. But the motives of the defamation lie deeper. Taking over the rectorship was probably only the occasion, but not the determining cause. Probably the polemics will flare up again and again, whenever the occasion presents itself.

S: You had Jewish students also after 1933. Your relationship to some of these students is supposed to have been quite warm.

H: My attitude after 1933 remained unchanged. One of my oldest and most gifted students, Helene Weiss, who later emigrated to Scotland, was awarded her doctorate from Basel—for this was no longer possible at Freiburg—with a dissertation, *Causality and Chance in the Philosophy of Aristotle*, printed in Basel in 1942. At the conclusion of the Foreword, the author writes: "The attempt at a phenomenological interpretation, which we here submit in its preliminary stage, was made possible by M. Heidegger's unpublished interpretations of Greek Philosophy." I have here a copy of

the book with a dedication by the author in her own handwriting. I visited Dr. Weiss several times in Brussels before her death.

S: You and Jaspers were friends for a long time. Then after 1933 this relationship became clouded. The story goes that the problem was that Jaspers had a Jewish wife. Would you comment on that?

H: Karl Jaspers and I had been friends since 1919. I visited him and his wife in Heidelberg during the Summer Semester of 1933. Karl Jaspers sent me all his publications between 1934 and 1938, "with warm regards."

S: You were a student of Edmund Husserl, your Jewish predecessor in the Chair of Philosophy at Freiburg University. He had recommended you to the faculty to be his successor as professor. Your relationship with him must have included some gratitude.

H: To be sure. You know the dedication of *Being and Time*.

S: Of course. But later on this relationship too became clouded. Can you and are you willing to tell us what caused this?

H: Our differences with respect to philosophical matters had been accentuated. In the beginning of the Thirties Husserl settled accounts with Max Scheler and me in public, the clarity of which left nothing to be desired. I could not discover what had moved Husserl to cut himself off from my thought in such a public way.

S: On what occasion was this?

H: Husserl spoke in the Berlin Sports Palace before the student body. Erich Mühsam reported it in one of the large Berlin newspapers.

S: In our context the actual controversy itself is not of interest. All that is interesting is that there was no controversy which had anything to do with 1933.

H: None in the least.

S: Reproaches were made against you that, in 1941, the year of the publication of the fifth edition of *Being and Time*, you left out the original dedication to Husserl.

H: That's right. I explained this in my book, *On the Way to Language*. I wrote there, "To counter widely circulated allegations, let it be stated here explicitly that the dedication of *Being and Time* mentioned on p. 16 [p. 92 in the German edition of *Unterwegs zur Sprache*] of the *Dialogue* remained in *Being and Time* until its fourth edition of 1935. In 1941, when my publishers felt that the

fifth edition might be endangered and that, indeed, the book might be suppressed, I finally agreed, at the suggestion and wish of Niemeyer, that the dedication be omitted from the edition on the condition imposed by me that the note to page 38 [of the German Edition of *Being and Time*] be retained—a note which in fact states the reason for that dedication, and which runs: ‘If the following investigation has taken any steps forward in disclosing the “things themselves,” the author must first of all thank E. Husserl, who, by providing his own incisive personal guidance and by freely turning over his unpublished investigations, familiarized the author with the most diverse areas of phenomenological research during his student years at Freiburg’”<sup>5</sup>

S: Then we hardly need to ask whether it is correct that you, as rector of the University of Freiburg, had forbidden Professor Emeritus Husserl to enter or to use the University Library or the library of the Philosophical Seminar.

H: That is a slander.

S: And there is no letter which contains this prohibition against Husserl? Then how did this rumor get started?

H: I don’t know that either. I cannot find an explanation for it. I can show you the impossibility of this whole affair by means of something else which is not known. When I was rector I was able, in a meeting I had with the Minister, to retain the then Director of the Medical Clinic, Professor Thannhauser and also Professor von Hevesy, Professor of Physics, who was later to be a Nobel Prize winner. Both of these men were Jews, whom the Ministry had demanded be removed. Now it is absurd that I would have retained both these men and at the same time have taken the alleged steps against Husserl, who was an emeritus and my own teacher. Moreover I kept the students and lecturers from organizing a demonstration against Professor Thannhauser. At that time, there were unsalaried lecturers who were stuck without students and who thought: now is the time to be promoted. When they met with me about this, I turned them all down.

S: You did not attend Husserl’s funeral in 1938.

H: Let me say the following about that. The reproach that I broke off my relations with Husserl is unfounded. In May 1933, my wife wrote a letter in both our names to Frau Husserl in which we expressed our unaltered gratitude. We sent this letter to Husserl

with a bouquet of flowers. Frau Husserl answered tersely in a formal thank you note and wrote that relations between our families were broken off. It was a human failing that [at Husserl's sick bed or at the time of his death] I did not express once more my gratitude and my admiration. And for that I asked Frau Husserl's forgiveness in writing.

S: Husserl died in 1938. By February 1934, you had already resigned the rectorship. How did that come about?

H: I should expand upon that somewhat. I had the intention of doing something about the technical organization of the University, that is, of reforming the faculties from the inside and on the basis of the tasks imposed upon them by their various fields. With this in mind, I proposed to nominate as deans of the individual faculties for the Winter Semester of 1933–34 younger and, above all, outstanding men, without regard for their position in the Party. Thus deans were appointed as follows: in the Law School, Professor Erich Wolff; in Philosophy, Professor Schadewaldt; in Natural Sciences, Professor Soergel; in Medicine, Professor von Möllendorf, who had been removed as rector in the Spring. But by Christmas 1933 it became clear to me that the innovations for the University, which I had in mind, could not be carried out because of opposition both within the faculty and from the Party. The faculty, for example, took it amiss that I included students in responsible positions in the Administration of the University, much as is the case today. One day I was called to Karlsruhe. There the Minister, through his assistant and in the presence of the Nazi student leader, demanded that I replace the Deans of the Law School and Medical School by other members of the faculty who would be acceptable to the Party. I refused to do this and tendered my resignation from the rectorship, should the Minister persist in his demands. That is what happened. That was in February 1934. I stepped down after ten months in office, even though rectors at that time remained in office two or more years. While both the foreign and domestic press commented in the most divergent ways about the appointment of the new rector, they were silent about my resignation.

S: Did you have the opportunity at that time to present your thoughts about university reform to the Reichs Minister?

H: At what time?

S: One still hears of a trip which Rust made to Freiburg in 1933.

H: We are dealing here with two different episodes. I gave a brief formal greeting to the Minister on the occasion of the Schla-

geter<sup>6</sup> celebration in Schönau i.W. Secondly I spoke with the Minister in November 1933 in Berlin. I presented my views to him on the sciences and the possible structure of the faculties. He listened to everything so attentively, that I had the hope that my presentation would have an effect. But nothing happened. It is beyond me why I should be reproached for this conversation with the then Reichs Minister of Education, while at that very time all foreign governments hastened to recognize Hitler and to show him the customary international courtesies.

S: Did your relationship with the NSDAP change after you resigned as rector?

H: After I stepped down as rector I limited myself to teaching. In the Summer Semester of 1934 I lectured on "Logic." In the following semester I gave the first Hölderlin lecture. In 1936, I began the Nietzsche lectures. Anyone with ears to hear heard in these lectures a confrontation with National Socialism.

S: How did the transfer of offices take place? You did not participate in the celebration.

H: Right, I did indeed decline to participate in the ceremony of the change of rectors.

S: Was your successor a committed Party member?

H: He was a member of the Law Faculty. The Party Newspaper *Der Alemanne* announced his appointment as rector with a banner headline: "The First National Socialist Rector of the University."

S: How did the Party act toward you?

H: I was constantly under surveillance.

S: Were you aware of that?

H: Yes—the case with Dr. Hanke (*sic*).

S: How did you find that out?

H: He came to me himself. He had already received his doctorate (*promoviert*) in the Winter Semester of 1936–37 and he was a member of my advanced seminar in the Summer Semester of 1937. He had been sent by the SD<sup>7</sup> to keep me under surveillance.

S: Why did he suddenly come to you?

H: Because of my Nietzsche seminar in the Summer Semester of 1937 and because of the way in which the work proceeded in the seminar, he told to me that he could no longer maintain the surveil-

lance which he was assigned to do. And he wanted to make me aware of this situation in view of my future teaching activity.

S: So the Party kept a watchful eye over you?

H: I only knew that my writings were not allowed to be discussed, for example the essay, *Plato's Theory of Truth*. My Hölderlin lecture, which was given in the Spring of 1936 in Rome at the Germanic Institute, was attacked in an insidious way in the Hitler Youth Magazine *Wille und Macht* (Will and Power). Those who are interested should read the polemics against me which started in the summer of 1934 in Kriek's magazine, *Volk im Werden* (People in Process). I was not a delegate from Germany at the International Congress of Philosophy in Prague in 1934. I was also supposed to be excluded from the Descartes Congress in Paris in 1937. This seemed so odd in Paris that the leadership of the Congress there—Professor Bréhier of the Sorbonne—asked me on his own why I was not a part of the German delegation. I answered that the leadership of the Congress could inquire about this at the Reichs Ministry of Education. After some time a request came from Berlin that I should belatedly join the delegation. But I declined. My lectures, *What is Metaphysics?* and *On the Essence of Truth*, were sold there under the counter with a plain dust wrapper. Soon after 1934 the rectorial address was withdrawn from circulation at the instigation of the Party.

S: Did things get worse later on?

H: In the last year of the war, 500 of the most important scholars (*Wissenschaftler*) and artists of every kind were exempted from war service. I was not among the exempted. On the contrary, in the summer of 1944 I was ordered to work on the fortifications over on the Rhine.

S: Karl Barth worked on the fortifications on the Swiss side.

H: It is interesting how this took place. The rector called together all the faculty (*Dozentenschaft*). Then he gave a speech to the effect that what he was saying at that time was in agreement with the regional Nazi leaders (*NS-Kreisleiter* and *NS-Gauleiter*). The entire faculty was to be divided into three groups. First, those who could be dispensed with completely; second, those who could only be partially dispensed with; third, those who were indispensable. The category of completely dispensable people included Heidegger and also G. Ritter.<sup>8</sup> In the Winter Semester of 1944–45,



after finishing my work on the fortifications on the Rhine, I gave a lecture course with the title, *Poetizing and Thinking*. This was in a certain sense a continuation of my Nietzsche lectures, that is to say, a confrontation with National Socialism. After the second lecture I was drafted into the *Volkssturm*—the oldest member of the faculty to be called up.<sup>9</sup>

S: Perhaps we might summarize: in 1933 you were, as an unpolitical man in the strict sense, not in the wider sense, caught up in the politics of this supposed new dawn . . .

H: by way of the university . . .

S: . . . caught up by way of the university in this supposed new dawn. After about a year you gave up the function you had assumed. But in a lecture in 1935, which was published in 1953 as *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, you said, “The works that are being peddled (about) nowadays as the philosophy of National Socialism, but have nothing whatever to do with the inner truth and greatness of this movement (namely, the encounter between global technology and contemporary man), have all been written by men fishing the troubled waters of values and totalities.”<sup>10</sup> Did you only add the words in parentheses in 1953, that is, with the book’s publication—perhaps in order to explain to the reader of 1953 how you in 1935 saw the inner truth and greatness of this movement, that is, of National Socialism? Or was this parenthetical remark explaining your viewpoint already there in 1935?

H: It was present in my manuscript from the beginning and agreed completely with my conception of technology at that time, though not as yet with the later interpretation of the essence of technology as the “frame” (*das Ge-Stell*).<sup>11</sup> The reason I did not read this passage aloud was that I was convinced that my audience were understanding me correctly. The dumb ones, the spies, and the snoopers wanted to understand me otherwise, and would, no matter what.

S: Certainly you would also have classified the Communist movement that way too?

H: Yes, definitely—as determined by global technology.

S: And also “Americanism”?

H: Yes, I would say that too. Meanwhile in the past thirty years it should have become clearer that the global movement of modern technology is a force whose scope in determining history can

scarcely be overestimated. A decisive question for me today is: how can a political system accommodate itself to the technological age, and which political system would this be? I have no answer to this question. I am not convinced that it is democracy.

S: "Democracy" is a catch-all word under which quite different ideas can be brought together. The question is whether a transformation of this political structure is still possible. After 1945, you addressed yourself to the political aspirations of the Western world and then you spoke also of democracy, of the political expression of the Christian worldview, and even of the idea of a constitutional state—and you have labelled all these aspirations "half truths."

H: First of all, would you please tell me where I spoke about democracy and all the other things you refer to? I would characterize them as half truths because I do not see in them a genuine confrontation with the technological world, because behind them is in my view a notion that technology is in its essence something over which man has control. In my opinion, that is not possible. Technology is in its essence something which man cannot master by himself.

S: In your view, which of all these things you have just sketched out is the most timely?

H: That I don't see. But I do see a decisive question here. We must first of all clarify what you mean by "timely," that is, what "time" means. And still more, we must ask whether timeliness is the measure of the "inner truth" of human action, or rather, whether thinking and poetizing are not the activity which gives us the measure, despite the heretical meaning we have given to that term.

S: It is striking that man at no time has been able to master his own tools; I am thinking of "The Magician's Apprentice."<sup>12</sup> Isn't it then a bit too pessimistic to say that we will not be able to manage this much greater tool of modern technology?

H: Pessimism, no. Pessimism and optimism are attitudes which we are trying to consider, and they do not go far enough. Above all modern technology is not a tool and it has nothing to do with tools anymore.

S: Why should we be so thoroughly overpowered by technology?

H: I did not say overpowered. I am saying that we still have no way to respond to the essence of technology.

H: One could make the following quite naive rejoinder: what is to be overcome here? Everything is functioning. More and more power plants are being built. We have peak production. Men in the highly technological parts of the world are well provided for. We live in prosperity. What is really missing here?

H: Everything is functioning. This is exactly what is so uncanny, that everything is functioning and that the functioning drives us more and more to even further functioning, and that technology tears men loose from the earth and uproots them. I do not know whether you were frightened when I saw pictures coming from the moon to the earth. We don't need any atom bomb. The uprooting of man has already taken place. The only thing we have left is purely technological relationships. This is no longer the earth on which man lives. As you know I recently had a long conversation with René Char of the Provence, the poet and resistance fighter. Rocket bases are being built in the Provence and the country is being devastated in an incredible way. This poet, who certainly cannot be suspected of sentimentality and of glorification of the idyllic, tells me that the uprooting of man which is taking place there will be the end, if poetry and thought do not once more succeed to a position of might without force.

S: We say now that we would rather be here, and of course in our lifetime we will not have to leave. But who knows whether it is the destiny of man to remain on this earth. It is conceivable that man has no destiny at all. But at any rate one could envisage the possibility that man would reach out from this earth to other planets. That will certainly not be for a long time. But where is it written that man's place is here?

H: According to our human experience and history, at least as far as I see it, I know that everything essential and everything great originated from the fact that man had a home and was rooted in a tradition. Present-day literature for example is predominantly destructive.

S: The word "destructive" bothers us, especially since the word nihilistic, thanks to you and your philosophy, has received an all-encompassing breadth of meaning. It is shocking to hear the word "destructive" in regard to literature, which you could and ought after all to see as completely part and parcel of this nihilism.

H: I would like to say that the literature I have in mind is not nihilistic in the way that I think of nihilism.

S: You obviously envisage, and this is what you have already said, a world movement which either leads up to or has already led up to the absolute technological state.

H: Yes.

S: Good. Now the question naturally comes up: can the individual in any way influence this network of inevitabilities, or could philosophy influence it, or could both together influence it inasmuch as philosophy could guide the individual or several individuals toward a specific action?

H: Let me respond briefly and somewhat ponderously, but from long reflection: philosophy will not be able to effect an immediate transformation of the present condition of the world. This is not only true of philosophy, but of all merely human thought and endeavor. Only a god can save us. The sole possibility that is left for us is to prepare a sort of readiness, through thinking and poetizing, for the appearance of the god or for the absence of the god in the time of foundering (*Untergang*); for in the face of the god who is absent, we founder.

S: Is there a connection between your thinking and the emergence of this god? Is there in your view a causal connection? Do you think that we can think god into being here with us?

H: We can not think him into being here; we can at most awaken the readiness of expectation.

S: But are we able to help?

H: The preparation of a readiness may be the first step. The world cannot be what it is or the way that it is through man, but neither can it be without man. According to my view this is connected with the fact that what I name with the word Being, a word which is of long standing, traditional, multifaceted and worn out, needs man for its revelation, preservation and formation. I see the essence of technology in what I call the frame (*das Ge-Stell*), an expression which has often been laughed at and is perhaps somewhat clumsy. The frame holding sway means: the essence of man is framed, claimed and challenged by a power which manifests itself in the essence of technology, a power which man himself does not control. To help with this realization is all that one can expect of thought. Philosophy is at an end.

S: In earlier times—and not only in earlier times—it was thought that philosophy effected a great deal indirectly—seldom in a direct way—and that indirectly it could effect a great deal, that it could help new currents to break through. If one only thinks of the Germans, of the great names of Kant, Hegel up to Nietzsche, not to mention Marx, then it can be shown that philosophy has had, in a roundabout way, a tremendous effect. Do you really think the effectiveness of philosophy has come to an end? And if you say that the old philosophy is dead, no longer exists, does this not include the idea that this effectiveness of philosophy (if indeed there ever were such) today, at least, no longer exists?

H: If one thinks in different terms a mediated effect is possible, but not a direct one. Hence thinking, as it were, can usually change the situation of the world.

S: Excuse me, we do not want to philosophize. We are not up to that. But we have here touched upon the boundaries between politics and philosophy. So please overlook the fact that we are drawing you into such a conversation. You have just said that philosophy and the individual are capable of nothing other than . . .

H: . . . this preparation of the readiness, of keeping oneself open for the arrival of or the absence of the god. Moreover the experience of this absence is not nothing, but rather a liberation of man from what I called “fallenness amidst beings” in *Being and Time*. A meditation on what is today belongs to the preparation of the readiness we referred to.

S: But then as a matter of fact the celebrated impetus would have to come from the outside, from a god or whomever. Thus thinking could today no longer be effective of itself and autonomous. But this was the case formerly in the opinion of the people of earlier days and, I believe, in ours too.

H: But not immediately.

S: We have already mentioned Kant, Hegel and Marx as men who caused a great stir. But there have also been impulses coming from Leibniz—for the development of modern physics and therefore for the origin of the modern world in general. We believe that you have just said that you no longer take such an effect into account today.

H: No longer in the sense of philosophy. The role which philosophy has played up to now has been taken over by the sciences. In

order to give an adequate explanation of the "effect" of thought, we must discuss more thoroughly what "effect" and "effecting" can mean. If we have discussed the Principle of Sufficient Reason sufficiently, one ought to make here fundamental distinctions among occasion, impetus, furthering, assistance, obstacle, and co-operation. Philosophy dissolves into the individual sciences: psychology, logic and political science.

S: And now what or who takes the place of philosophy?

H: Cybernetics.

S: Or the pious one who keeps himself open.

H: But that is no longer philosophy.

S: What is it then?

H: I call it the "other thinking."

S: You call it the "other thinking." Would you like to formulate that a bit more clearly?

H: Did you have in mind the concluding sentence in my lecture, "The Question of Technology": questioning is the piety of thought"?<sup>13</sup>

S: We found a sentence in your Nietzsche lectures which is enlightening. You said there: "It is because the highest possible bond prevails in philosophical thought that all great thinkers think the same. This sameness, however, is so essential and rich that one individual can never exhaust it, so each only binds himself to the other all the more strictly." But it appears that, in your opinion, just this philosophical edifice has led us to a very definite end.

H: It has come to an end, but it has not become for us null and void; rather it has turned up anew in this conversation. My whole work in lectures and exercises in the past thirty years has been in the main only an interpretation of Western philosophy. The regress into the historical foundations of thought, the thinking through of the questions which are still unasked since the time of Greek philosophy—that is not a cutting loose from the tradition. I am saying: the traditional metaphysical mode of thinking, which terminated with Nietzsche, no longer offers any possibility for experiencing in a thoughtful way the fundamental traits of the technological age, an age which is just beginning.

S: Approximately two years ago, in a conversation with a Buddhist monk, you spoke of "a completely new way of thinking" and

you said that “only a few people are capable of” this new way of thought. Did you want to say that only a very few people can have the insights which in your view are possible and necessary?

H: To “have” them in the utterly primordial sense, so that they can, in a certain way, “say” them.

S: But you did not make clear in this conversation with the Buddhist just how this passing over into reality (*Verwirklichung*) takes place.

H: I cannot make this clear. I know nothing about how this thinking “has an effect” (*wirkt*). It may be that the path of thinking has today reached the point where silence is required to preserve thinking from being all jammed up just within a year. It may also be that it will take three hundred years for it “to have an effect.”

S: We understand that very well. But since we don’t live three hundred years from now, but here and now, silence is denied to us. We politicians, semi-politicians, citizens, journalists, etc., we constantly have to make decisions of one kind or another. We must try to adapt to the system we live in, we must attempt to change it, we must look for the small opportunity of reform and the still smaller one of revolution. We expect help from the philosopher, if only indirect help, help in a roundabout way. And now we hear: I cannot help you.

H: And I cannot.

S: That surely discourages the non-philosopher.

H: I cannot, because the questions are so difficult that it would be contrary to the meaning of the task of thought to step up publicly, as it were, to preach and to impose moral judgment. Perhaps one might risk the following: to the mystery of the superior global power of the unthought essence of technology there corresponds the tentativeness and inconspicuousness of thought, which attempts to meditate this still unthought essence.

S: You do not number yourself among those who could show a way, if people would only listen to them?

H: No. I know of no paths to the immediate transformation of the present situation of the world, assuming that such a thing is humanly possible at all. But it seems to me that the thinking which I attempt would awaken, clarify and fortify the readiness which we have mentioned.

S: A clear answer. But can and may a thinker say: just wait and within the next 300 years something will occur to us?

H: It is not a matter simply of waiting until something occurs to man within the next 300 years, but of thinking ahead (without prophetic proclamations) into the time which is to come, of thinking from the standpoint of the fundamental traits of the present age, which have scarcely been thought through. Thinking is not inactivity but is in itself the action which stands in dialogue with the world mission (*Welt-geschick*). It seems to me that the distinction, which stems from metaphysics, between theory and praxis, and the representation of some kind of transmission between the two, blocks the way to an insight into what I understand by thinking. Perhaps I may refer here to my lectures which appeared in 1954 with the title, *What Is Called Thinking?*<sup>14</sup> Perhaps it is also a sign of the times that this book of all my publications has been read the least.

S: Let us go back to our beginning. Would it not be conceivable to regard National Socialism, on the one hand, as the realization of that "global encounter" and, on the other, as the last, worst, strongest and at the same time most impotent protest against this encounter "of global technology" and contemporary man? Evidently you experience an opposition in your own person which is such that many by-products of your activity can really only be explained by the fact that, with various parts of your being, which are not concerned with your philosophical core, you cleave to many things which you as a philosopher know have no substance—concepts for example like "homeland," "roots," or the like. How do global technology and the homeland fit together?

H: I would not say that. It seems to me that you are taking technology too absolutely. I do not see the situation of man in the world of global technology as a fate which cannot be escaped or unravelled. On the contrary, I see the task of thought to consist in helping man in general, within the limits allotted to thought, to achieve an adequate relationship to the essence of technology. National Socialism, to be sure, moved in this direction. But those people were far too limited in their thinking to acquire an explicit relationship to what is really happening today and has been underway for three centuries.

S: Perhaps present day Americans have this explicit relationship?



H: They do not have it either. They are still caught up in a thought (Pragmatism) which favors functions and manipulations but which, at the same time, blocks the way to a meditation on what properly belongs to modern technology. Meanwhile there are in the U.S.A. some stirrings of efforts to get away from pragmatic-positivistic thought. And who of us can say whether or not one day in Russia and China the ancient traditions of a "thought" will awaken which will help make possible for man a free relationship to the technical world?

S: But if no one has it and the philosopher cannot give it to anyone . . .

H: It is not for me to decide how far I will get with my attempt to think and in what way it will be accepted in the future and transformed in a fruitful way. In 1957 I gave a lecture on the anniversary of the University of Freiburg, called *The Principle of Identity*.<sup>15</sup> That lecture tried to show, in a few steps, just how far a thoughtful experience of what is most proper to modern technology can go. It showed that the possibility arises for man in the technological world to experience a relationship to a claim which he not only can hear but to which he himself belongs. My thinking stands in a definitive relationship to the poetry of Hölderlin. I do not take Hölderlin to be just any poet whose work, among many others, has been taken as a subject by literary historians. For me Hölderlin is the poet who points to the future, who expects god and who therefore may not remain merely an object of Hölderlin research and of the kind of presentations offered by literary historians.

S: A propos of Hölderlin, we ask your indulgence to quote your own writings. In your Nietzsche lectures you said that the "widely known opposition between the Dionysian and the Apollonian [sic], between the sacred passion and sober presentation, is a hidden stylistic law of the historical destiny of the Germans and we must be prepared and ready one day to be formed by it. This opposition is not a formula with whose help we describe 'culture.' With this opposition, Hölderlin and Nietzsche have put a question mark before the Germans' task to find their being historically. Will we understand this sign, this question mark? One thing is sure. History will take revenge upon us if we don't understand it." We do not know in what year you wrote that. We would guess it was in 1935.

H: The quote probably belongs to the Nietzsche lecture, "The Will to Power as Art," 1936-37. It could also have been written in the following years.<sup>16</sup>

S: So, would you clarify this a bit? It leads us from generalities to the concrete destiny of the Germans.

H: I could explain what was said in the quotation in the following way: it is my conviction that a reversal can be prepared only in the same place in the world where the modern technological world originated, and that it cannot happen because of any takeover by Zen-Buddhism or any other Eastern experiences of the world. There is need for a rethinking which is to be carried out with the help of the European tradition and of a new appropriation of that tradition. Thinking itself can be transformed only by a thinking which has the same origin and calling.

S: It is exactly at the same place where the technological world originated, that it must, as you think . . .

H: . . . be transcended (*aufgehoben*) in the Hegelian sense, not pushed aside, but transcended, but not through man alone.

S: You assign in particular a special task to the Germans?

H: Yes, in the sense of the dialogue with Hölderlin.

S: Do you believe that the Germans have a special qualification for this reversal?

H: I have in mind especially the inner relationship of the German language with the language of the Greeks and with their thought. This has been confirmed for me today again by the French. When they begin to think, they speak German, being sure that they could not make it with their own language.

S: Are you trying to tell me that that is why you have had such a strong influence on the Romance countries, in particular on the French?

H: Because they see that they can no longer get by in the contemporary world with all their great rationality when it comes right down to understanding the world in the origin of its being. One can translate thinking no more satisfactorily than one can translate poetry. At best one can circumscribe it. As soon as one makes a literal translation everything is changed.

S: A discomfoting thought.

H: We would do well to take this discomfort seriously and on a large scale, and to finally consider the grave consequences of the transformation which Greek thought experienced when it was translated into Roman Latin. Indeed this today even [this] blocks

the way to an adequate reflection on the fundamental words of Greek thought.

S: Professor, we must always start with the optimistic assumption that something which can be communicated can also be translated. For if we cease to be optimistic about the contents of thought being communicated beyond linguistic barriers, then we are threatened by provincialism.

H: Would you characterize Greek thought as it differs from the mode of representation in the Roman Empire as “provincial”? Business letters can be translated into all languages. The sciences, (today, the natural sciences with Mathematical Physics as the fundamental science) are translatable into all world languages. Or put more accurately: they are not translated but the same mathematical language is spoken. We are touching here on a field which is broad and difficult to survey.

S: Perhaps this is also part of the problem. It is no exaggeration to say that we have at the moment a crisis of the democratic-parliamentary system. We have had it for a long time. We have it especially in Germany, but not only in Germany. We have it also in the classical democratic countries, England and America. In France it is not even a crisis any more. Now for the question. Could not the “thinker” provide us with indications—as far as I am concerned as by-products—which would show that either this system must be replaced by a new one (and, if so, how this new system is supposed to look) or else that a reform ought to be possible (and if so, how this reform could come about)? Otherwise, we are left with this situation: the person normally in charge of things (even though he might not determine them and even though things are usually in charge of him) is not a person trained in philosophy and is going to reach faulty conclusions, perhaps with disastrous results. So shouldn't the philosopher be prepared to give thought to how human beings can get along with their fellowmen in a world which they themselves have made so thoroughly technological, and which has perhaps overpowered them? Isn't one justified in expecting a philosopher to give us some indications as to how he perceives the possibility for life? And does the philosopher not miss a part (if you want a small part) of his profession and his calling if he has nothing to say about all that?

H: So far as I can see, an individual is not, because of thought, in a position to grasp the world as a whole so that he could give

practical instructions, particularly in the face of the problem of finding a basis for thinking itself. So long as it takes itself seriously vis-à-vis the great tradition it would be asking too much of thinking to have it set about giving instructions. By what authority could this take place? In the realm of thinking there are no authoritative assertions. The only measure for thinking is the matter which is itself to be thought. But this is above everything else questionable. In order to make this state of affairs clear we would need above all a discussion of the relationship between philosophy and the sciences, for the technical and practical successes of the sciences make thinking in the sense of philosophy appear today to be more and more superfluous. Thinking has by reason of its own task put itself in a difficult situation. And along with this difficulty, there is also an alienation from thinking, an alienation which is nourished by the position of power occupied by the sciences, so that thinking must give up answering questions of a practical and world-wide character, the very answers that are demanded by daily necessities.

S: Professor, in the realm of thinking there are no authoritative assertions. So it can really not be surprising that modern art finds it difficult to make authoritative assertions. Nevertheless you call it destructive. Modern art often considers itself experimental art. Its works are attempts . . .

H: I don't mind being taught.

S: . . . attempts [which arise] out of the isolated situation of contemporary man and of the artist. And out of one hundred attempts now and again one will chance to hit the mark.

H: This is exactly the great question. Where does art stand? What place does it occupy?

S: Good enough. But then you are asking of art what you no longer demand of thought.

H: I ask nothing of art. I am only saying that there is a question about what place art occupies.

S: If art does not know its place, is it therefore destructive?

H: All right, cross that out! However I would like to say that I do not see how modern art shows the way, especially since we are left in the dark as to how modern art perceives or tries to perceive what is most proper to art.

S: The artist, too, lacks a sense of being bound to that which has been handed down. He can find something to be beautiful, and he

can say: one could have painted that six hundred years ago or three hundred years ago or even thirty. But he can no longer do it. Even if he wanted to; he could not do it. For otherwise the greatest artist would be the ingenious forger, Hans van Meergeren, who would then paint "better" than all the others. But that just isn't true anymore. So the artist, writer and poet are in a situation similar to the thinker. How often must we say: close your eyes?

H: If one takes the "culture industry" as a framework for relating art and poetry and philosophy, then the comparison is justified. However, if not only the idea of an "industry" is questionable, but also what "culture" means, then the meditation on what is questionable here belongs to the realm of those tasks which are assigned to thought, whose distressing situation can hardly be comprehended. But the greatest distress of thought consists in the fact that today, as far as I can see, no thinker speaks who is "great" enough to bring thinking immediately, and in a formative way, before its subject matter, and thereby to get it underway. For us contemporaries the greatness of what is to be thought is too great. Perhaps we might bring ourselves to build a narrow and not far-reaching footpath as a passageway.

S: Professor Heidegger, thank you for this interview.

*Translated by Maria P. Alter and John D. Caputo*

## Notes

1. *Sturm Abteilung*, Storm Troop.
2. Martin Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?* 9. Aufl. (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1965), pp. 24–5. Engl. trans: "What is Metaphysics?" trans. R. F. C. Hull and A. Crick in *Existence and Being*, ed. W. Brock (London: Vision Press, 1956), p. 356. With the exception of this passage, we have used the existing English translations of the works of Heidegger referred to in the interview.
3. Martin Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität* (Breslau: Korn, 1933).
4. *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (the National Socialists or "Nazis").
5. Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), p. 269. Engl. Trans. *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 199–200.
6. Albert Leo Schlageter (1894–1923), shot by the French for his role in the resistance to the French occupation of the Ruhr.

7. *Sicherheitsdiens*t, the Security Service.

8. *Der Spiegel* provides the following note: Professor Gerhard Ritter, at that time full Professor of Modern History in the Univ. of Freiburg, was imprisoned on Nov. 1, 1944 in connection with the assassination attempt on Hitler on July 20, 1944 and was freed by the allied troops only on April 25, 1945. The historian became Professor *emeritus* in 1956 and died in 1967. (From *Carl Goerdeler und die deutsche Widerstandsbewegung*).

9. "It was in order to utilize the last reserves of his manpower that Hitler had created a new fighting force of hurriedly-trained civilians—the *Volkssturm*—into which all able-bodied males between 16 and 60 were compulsorily drafted." Richard Grundberger, *Germany 1918–1945* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 181.

10. Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 2. Aufl. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1958), p. 152. Engl. trans: *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), p. 166.

11. For Joan Stambaugh's translation of "Ge-Stell" as "frame" see her introduction to Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 14, n. 1.

12. A poem by Goethe.

13. Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1954), p. 44.

14. Martin Heidegger, *Was Heisst Denken?* 2. Aufl. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1961). Engl. Trans. *What is Called Thinking?* trans. F. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper, 1968).

15. See *Supra*, n. 11.

16. Heidegger's guess is right; cf. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961), B. I, p 124.

# THE METHOD

## Philosophy from Phenomenology to “Thanking”

### DE(CON)STRUCTION AND PHENOMENOLOGY

#### The Task of a Destructuring of the History of Ontology (1927)

All research—especially when it moves in the sphere of the central question of being—is an ontic possibility of Da-sein. The being of Da-sein finds its meaning in temporality. But temporality is at the same time the condition of the possibility of historicity as a temporal mode of being of Da-sein itself, regardless of whether and how it is a being “in time.” As a determination historicity is prior to what is called history (world-historical occurrences). Historicity means the constitution of being of the “occurrence” of Da-sein as such; it is the ground for the fact that something like the discipline of “world history” is at all possible and historically belongs to world history. In its factual being Da-sein always is as and “what” it already was. Whether explicitly or not, it *is* its past. It is its own past not only in such a way that its past, as it were, pushes itself along “behind” it, and that it possesses what is past as a property that is still objectively present and at times has an effect on it. Da-sein “is” its past in the manner of *its* being which, roughly expressed, on each occasion “occurs” out of its future. In its manner of existing at any given time, and accordingly also with the understanding of being that belongs to it, Da-sein grows into a customary interpretation of itself and grows up in that interpretation. It under-

stands itself in terms of this interpretation at first, and within a certain range, constantly. This understanding discloses the possibilities of its being and regulates them. Its own past—and that always means that of its “generation”—does not *follow after* Da-sein but rather always already goes ahead of it.

This elemental historicity of Da-sein can remain concealed from it. But it can also be discovered in a certain way and be properly cultivated. Da-sein can discover, preserve, and explicitly pursue tradition. The discovery of tradition and the disclosure of what it “transmits,” and how it does this, can be undertaken as a task in its own right. Da-sein thus assumes the mode of being that involves historical inquiry and research. But the discipline of history—more precisely, the historicity underlying it—is possible only as the kind of being belonging to inquiring Da-sein, because Da-sein is determined by historicity in the ground of its being. If historicity remains concealed from Da-sein, and so long as it does so, the possibility of historical inquiry and discovery of history is denied it. If the discipline of history is lacking, that is no evidence *against* the historicity of Da-sein; rather it is evidence for this constitution of being in a deficient mode. Only because it is “historic” in the first place can an age lack the discipline of history.

On the other hand, if Da-sein has seized upon its inherent possibility not only of making its existence transparent but also of inquiring into the meaning of existentiality itself, that is to say, of provisionally inquiring into the meaning of being in general; and if insight into the essential historicity of Da-sein has opened up in such inquiry, then it is inevitable that inquiry into being, which was designated with regard to its ontic-ontological necessity, is itself characterized by historicity. The elaboration of the question of being must therefore receive its directive to inquire into its own history from the most proper ontological sense of the inquiry itself, as a historical one; that means to become historical in a disciplined way in order to come to the positive appropriation of the past, to come into full possession of its most proper possibilities of inquiry. The question of the meaning of being is led to understand itself as historical in accordance with its own way of proceeding, that is, as the provisional explication of Da-sein in its temporality and historicity.

The preparatory interpretation of the fundamental structures of Da-sein with regard to its usual and average way of being—in which it is also first of all historical—will make the following clear:



Da-sein not only has the inclination to be entangled in the world in which it is and to interpret itself in terms of that world by its reflected light; at the same time Da-sein is also entangled in a tradition which it more or less explicitly grasps. This tradition deprives Da-sein of its own leadership in questioning and choosing. This is especially true of *that* understanding (and its possible development) which is rooted in the most proper being of Da-sein—the ontological understanding.

The tradition that hereby gains dominance makes what it “transmits” so little accessible that initially and for the most part it covers it over instead. What has been handed down it hands over to obviousness; it bars access to those original “wellsprings” out of which the traditional categories and concepts were in part genuinely drawn. The tradition even makes us forget such a provenance altogether. Indeed, it makes us wholly incapable of even understanding that such a return is necessary. The tradition uproots the historicity of Da-sein to such a degree that it only takes an interest in the manifold forms of possible types, directions, and standpoints of philosophizing in the most remote and strangest cultures, and with this interest tries to veil its own groundlessness. Consequently, in spite of all historical interest and zeal for a philologically “objective” interpretation, Da-sein no longer understands the most elementary conditions which alone make a positive return to the past possible—in the sense of its productive appropriation.

At the outset (section 1) we showed that the question of the meaning of being was not only unresolved, not only inadequately formulated, but despite all interest in “metaphysics” has even been forgotten. Greek ontology and its history, which through many twists and turns still define the conceptual character of philosophy today, are proof of the fact that Da-sein understands itself and being in general in terms of the “world.” The ontology that thus arises is ensnared by the tradition, which allows it to sink to the level of the obvious and become mere material for reworking (as it was for Hegel). Greek ontology thus uprooted becomes a fixed body of doctrine in the Middle Ages. But its systematics is not at all a mere joining together of traditional elements into a single structure. Within the limits of its dogmatic adoption of the fundamental Greek conceptions of being, this systematics contains a great deal of unpretentious work which does make advances. In its *scholastic* mold, Greek ontology makes the essential transition via the *disputationes metaphysicae* of Suarez into the “metaphysics” and tran-

scendental philosophy of the modern period; it still determines the foundations and goals of Hegel's *Logic*. Insofar as certain distinctive domains of being become visible in the course of this history and henceforth chiefly dominate the range of problems (Descartes' *ego cogito*, subject, the "I," reason, spirit, person), the beings just cited remain unquestioned with respect to the being and structure of their being, which indicates the thorough neglect of the question of being. But the categorial content of traditional ontology is transferred to these beings with corresponding formalizations and purely negative restrictions, or else dialectic is called upon to help with an ontological interpretation of the substantiality of the subject.

If the question of being is to achieve clarity regarding its own history, a loosening of the sclerotic tradition and a dissolving of the concealments produced by it is necessary. We understand this task as the destructuring of the traditional content of ancient ontology which is to be carried out along the *guidelines of the question of being*. This destructuring is based upon the original experiences in which the first and subsequently guiding determinations of being were gained.

This demonstration of the provenance of the fundamental ontological concepts, as the investigation which displays their "birth certificate," has nothing to do with a pernicious relativizing of ontological standpoints. The destructuring has just as little the *negative* sense of disburdening ourselves of the ontological tradition. On the contrary, it should stake out the positive possibilities of the tradition, and that always means to fix its *boundaries*. These are factually given with the specific formulation of the question and the prescribed demarcation of the possible field of investigation. Negatively, the destructuring is not even related to the past: its criterion concerns "today" and the dominant way we treat the history of ontology, whether it be conceived as the history of opinions, ideas, or problems. However, the destructuring does not wish to bury the past in nullity; it has a *positive* intent. Its negative function remains tacit and indirect.

The destructuring of the history of ontology essentially belongs to the formulation of the question of being and is possible solely within such a formulation. Within the scope of this treatise, which has as its goal a fundamental elaboration of the question of being, the destructuring can be carried out only with regard to the fundamentally decisive stages of this history.

In accord with the positive tendency of the destructuring the question must first be asked whether and to what extent in the

course of the history of ontology in general the interpretation of being has been thematically connected with the phenomenon of time. We must also ask whether the range of problems concerning temporality which necessarily belongs here was fundamentally worked out or could have been. Kant is the first and only one who traversed a stretch of the path toward investigating the dimension of temporality—or allowed himself to be driven there by the compelling force of the phenomena themselves. Only when the problem of temporality is pinned down can we succeed in casting light on the obscurity of his doctrine of the schematism. Furthermore, in this way we can also show *why* this area had to remain closed to Kant in its real dimensions and in its central ontological function. Kant himself knew that he was venturing forth into an obscure area: “This schematism of our understanding as regards appearances and their mere form is an art hidden in the depths of the human soul, the true devices of which are hardly ever to be divined from Nature and laid uncovered before our eyes.” What it is that Kant shrinks back from here, as it were, must be brought to light thematically and in principle if the expression “being” is to have a demonstrable meaning. Ultimately the phenomena to be explicated in the following analysis under the rubric of “temporality” are precisely those that determine the *most covert* judgments of “common reason,” analysis of which Kant calls the “business of philosophers.”

In pursuing the task of destructuring on the guideline of the problem of temporality the following treatise will attempt to interpret the chapter on the schematism and the Kantian doctrine of time developed there. At the same time we must show why Kant could never gain insight into the problem of temporality. Two things prevented this insight. On the one hand, the neglect of the question of being in general, and in connection with this, the lack of a thematic ontology of *Da-sein*—in Kantian terms, the lack of a preliminary ontological analytic of the subjectivity of the subject. Instead, Kant dogmatically adopted Descartes’ position— notwithstanding all his essential advances. Despite his taking this phenomenon back into the subject, however, his analysis of time remains oriented toward the traditional, common understanding of it. It is this that finally prevented Kant from working out the phenomenon of a “transcendental determination of time” in its own structure and function. As a consequence of this double effect of the tradition, the decisive *connection* between *time* and the “*I think*”

remained shrouded in complete obscurity. It did not even become a problem.

By taking over Descartes's ontological position Kant neglects something essential: an ontology of *Da-sein*. In terms of Descartes' innermost tendency this omission is a decisive one. With the *cogito sum* Descartes claims to prepare a new and secure foundation for philosophy. But what he leaves undetermined in this "radical" beginning is the manner of being of the *res cogitans*, more precisely, *the meaning of being of the "sum."* Working out the tacit ontological foundations of the *cogito sum* will constitute the second stage of the destructuring of, and the path back into, the history of ontology. The interpretation will demonstrate not only that Descartes had to neglect the question of being altogether but also why he held the opinion that the absolute "certainty" of the *cogito* exempted him from the question of the meaning of the being of this being.

However, with Descartes it is not just a matter of neglect and thus of a complete ontological indeterminateness of the *res cogitans sive mens sive animus* ["the thinking thing, whether it be mind or spirit"]. Descartes carries out the fundamental reflections of his *Meditations* by applying medieval ontology to this being which he posits as the *fundamentum inconcussum* ["unshakable foundation"]. The *res cogitans* is ontologically determined as *ens*, and for medieval ontology the meaning of the being of the *ens* is established in the understanding of it as *ens creatum*. As the *ens infinitum* God is the *ens increatum*. But createdness, in the broadest sense of something having been produced, is an essential structural moment of the ancient concept of being. The ostensibly new beginning of philosophizing betrays the imposition of a fatal prejudice. On the basis of this prejudice later times neglect a thematic ontological analysis of "the mind" ["*Gemüt*"] which would be guided by the question of being; likewise they neglect a critical confrontation with the inherited ancient ontology.

Everyone familiar with the medieval period sees that Descartes is "dependent" upon medieval scholasticism and uses its terminology. But with this "discovery" nothing is gained philosophically as long as it remains obscure to what a profound extent medieval ontology influences the way posterity determines or fails to determine the *res cogitans* ontologically. The full extent of this influence cannot be estimated until the meaning and limits of ancient ontology have been shown by our orientation toward the question of being. In other words, the destructuring sees itself assigned the task of in-

terpreting the foundation of ancient ontology in light of the problem of temporality. Here it becomes evident that the ancient interpretation of the being of beings is oriented toward the “world” or “nature” in the broadest sense and that it indeed gains its understanding of being from “time.” The outward evidence of this—but of course *only* outward—is the determination of the meaning of being as *parousia* or *ousia*, which ontologically and temporally means “presence” [“*Anwesenheit*”]. Beings are grasped in their being as “presence”; that is to say, they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time, the *present*.

The problem of Greek ontology must, like that of any ontology, take its guideline from *Da-sein* itself. In the ordinary and also the philosophical “definition,” *Da-sein*, that is, the being of human being, is delineated as *zōon logon echon*, that creature whose being is essentially determined by its ability to speak. *Legein* (cf. section 7, b) is the guideline for arriving at the structures of being of the beings we encounter in speech and discussion. That is why the ancient ontology developed by Plato becomes “dialectic.” The possibility of a more radical conception of the problem of being grows with the continuing development of the ontological guideline itself, that is, with the “hermeneutics” of the *logos*. “Dialectic,” which was a genuine philosophic embarrassment, becomes superfluous. Aristotle “no longer has any understanding” of it for *this* reason, that he places it on a more radical foundation and transcends it. *Legein* itself, or *noein*—the simple apprehension of something objectively present in its pure objective presence [*Vorhandenheit*], which Parmenides already used as a guide for interpreting being—has the temporal structure of a pure “making present” of something. Beings, which show themselves in and for this making present and which are understood as genuine beings, are accordingly interpreted with regard to the present; that is to say, they are conceived as presence (*ousia*).

However, this Greek interpretation of being comes about without any explicit knowledge of the guideline functioning in it, without taking cognizance of or understanding the fundamental ontological function of time, without insight into the ground of the possibility of this function. On the contrary, time itself is taken to be one being among others. The attempt is made to grasp time itself in the structure of its being on the horizon of an understanding of being which is oriented toward time in an inexplicit and naïve way.

Within the framework of the following fundamental elaboration of the question of being we cannot offer a detailed temporal inter-

pretation of the foundations of ancient ontology—especially of its scientifically highest and purest stage, that is, in Aristotle. Instead, we offer an interpretation of Aristotle's treatise on time, which can be taken as a way of discerning the basis and limits of the ancient science of being.

Aristotle's treatise on time is the first detailed interpretation of this phenomenon that has come down to us. It essentially determined all the following interpretations, including that of Bergson. From our analysis of Aristotle's concept of time it becomes retrospectively clear that the Kantian interpretation moves within the structures developed by Aristotle. This means that Kant's fundamental ontological orientation—despite all the differences implicit in a new inquiry—remains Greek.

The question of being attains true concreteness only when we carry out the destructuring of the ontological tradition. By so doing we can thoroughly demonstrate the inescapability of the question of the meaning of being and so demonstrate the meaning of our talk about a "retrieve" of this question.

In this field where "the matter itself is deeply veiled," any investigation will avoid overestimating its results. For such inquiry is constantly forced to face the possibility of disclosing a still more original and more universal horizon from which it could draw the answer to the question "What does 'being' mean?" We can discuss such possibilities seriously and with a positive result only if the question of being has been reawakened and we have reached the point where we can come to terms with it in a controlled fashion.

*Translated by Joan Stambaugh*

## The Phenomenological Method of the Investigation (1927)

With the preliminary characterization of the thematic object of the investigation (the being of beings, or the meaning of being in general) its method would appear to be already prescribed. The task of ontology is to set in relief the being of beings and to explicate being itself. And the method of ontology remains questionable in the highest degree as long as we wish merely to consult historically transmitted ontologies or similar efforts. Since the term "ontology" is used in a formally broad sense for this investigation, the approach of clarifying its method of tracing the history of that method is automatically precluded.

In using the term "ontology" we do not specify any particular philosophical discipline standing in relation to others. It should not at all be our task to satisfy the demands of any established discipline. On the contrary, such a discipline can be developed only from the objective necessity of particular questions and procedures demanded by the "things themselves."

With the guiding question of the meaning of being the investigation arrives at the fundamental question of philosophy in general. The treatment of this question is *phenomenological*. With this term the treatise dictates for itself neither a "standpoint" nor a "direction," because phenomenology is neither of these and can never be as long as it understands itself. The expression "phenomenology" signifies primarily a *concept of method*. It does not characterize the "what" of the objects of philosophical research in terms of their content but the "how" of such research. The more genuinely effective a concept of method is and the more comprehensively it determines the fundamental conduct of a science, the more originally it is rooted in confrontation with the things themselves and the farther away it moves from what we call a technical device—of which there are many in the theoretical disciplines.

The term *phenomenology* expresses a maxim that can be formulated: "To the things themselves!" It is opposed to all free-floating

constructions and accidental findings; it is also opposed to taking over concepts only seemingly demonstrated; and likewise to pseudo-questions which often are spread abroad as “problems” for generations. But one might object that this maxim is, after all, abundantly self-evident and, moreover, an expression of the principle of all scientific knowledge. It is not clear why this commonplace should be explicitly put in the title of our research. In fact, we are dealing with “something self-evident” which we want to get closer to, insofar as that is important for the clarification of procedure in our treatise. We shall explicate only the preliminary concept of phenomenology.

The expression has two components, phenomenon and logos. Both go back to the Greek terms *phainomenon* and *logos*. Viewed extrinsically, the word “phenomenology” is formed like the terms theology, biology, sociology, translated as the science of God, of life, of the community. Accordingly, phenomenology would be the *science of phenomena*. The preliminary concept of phenomenology is to be exhibited by characterizing what is meant by the two components, phenomenon and logos, and by establishing the meaning of the *combined* word. The history of the word itself, which originated presumably with the Wolffian school, is not important here.

(a) *The Concept of Phenomenon.* The Greek expression *phainomenon*, from which the term “phenomenon” derives, comes from the verb *phainesthai*, meaning “to show itself.” Thus *phainomenon* means what shows itself, the self-showing, the manifest. *Phainesthai* itself is a “middle voice” construction of *phainō*, to bring into daylight, to place in brightness. *Phainō* belongs to the root *pha-*, like *phōs*, light or brightness, that is, that within which something can become manifest, visible in itself. Thus the meaning of the expression “phenomenon” is *established as what shows itself in itself*, what is manifest. The *phainomena*, “phenomena,” are thus the totality of what lies in the light of day or can be brought to light. Sometimes the Greeks simply identified this with *ta onta* (beings). Beings can show themselves from themselves in various ways, depending on the mode of access to them. The possibility even exists that they can show themselves as they are *not* in themselves. In this self-showing beings “look like. . . .” Such self-showing we call *seeming* [*Scheinen*]. And so the expression *phainomenon*, phenomenon, means in Greek: what looks like something, what “seems,” “semblance.” *Phainomenon agathon* means a good that looks



like—but “in reality” is not what it gives itself out to be. It is extremely important for a further understanding of the concept of phenomenon to see what is named in both meanings of *phainomenon* (“phenomenon” as self-showing and “phenomenon” as semblance) are structurally connected. Only because something claims to show itself in accordance with its meaning at all, that is, claims to be a phenomenon, *can* it show itself *as* something it is *not*, or *can* it “only look like. . . .” The original meaning (phenomenon, what is manifest) already contains and is the basis of *phainomenon* (“semblance”). We attribute to the term “phenomenon” the positive and original meaning of *phainomenon* terminologically, and separate the phenomenon of semblance from it as a privative modification. But what *both* terms express has at first nothing at all to do with what is called “appearance” or even “mere appearance.”

One speaks of “appearances or symptoms of illness.” What is meant by this are occurrences in the body that show themselves and in this self-showing as such “indicate” something that does *not* show itself. When such occurrences emerge, their self-showing coincides with the objective presence [*Vorhandensein*] of disturbances that do not show themselves. Appearance, as the appearance “of something,” thus precisely does *not* mean that something shows itself; rather, it means that something makes itself known which does not show itself. It makes itself known through something that does show itself. Appearing is a *not showing itself*. But this “not” must by no means be confused with the privative not which determines the structure of semblance. What does *not* show itself, in the manner of what appears, can also never seem. All indications, presentations, symptoms, and symbols have this fundamental formal structure of appearing, although they do differ among themselves.

Although “appearing” is never a self-showing in the sense of phenomenon, appearing is possible only *on the basis* of a *self-showing* of something. But this, the self-showing that makes appearing possible, is not appearing itself. Appearing is a *making itself known* through something that shows itself. If we then say that with the word “appearance” we are pointing to something in which something appears without itself being an appearance, then the concept of phenomenon is not thereby delimited but *presupposed*. However, this presupposition remains hidden because the expression “to appear” in this definition of “appearance” is used in two senses. That in which something “appears” means that in which something makes itself known, that is, does not show itself; in the

expression “without itself being an ‘appearance’” appearance means the *self-showing*. But this self-showing essentially belongs to the “wherein” in which something makes itself known. Accordingly, phenomena are *never* appearances, but every appearance is dependent upon phenomena. If we define phenomenon with the help of a concept of “appearance” that is still unclear, then everything is turned upside down, and a “critique” of phenomenology on this basis is surely a remarkable enterprise.

The expression “appearance” itself in turn can have a double meaning. First, *appearing* in the sense of making itself known as something that does not show itself and, second, in the sense of what does the making itself known—what in its self-showing indicates something that does not show itself. Finally, one can use appearing as the term for the genuine meaning of phenomenon as self-showing. If one designates these three different states of affairs as “appearance” confusion is inevitable.

However, this confusion is considerably increased by the fact that “appearance” can take on still another meaning. If one understands what does the making itself known—what in its self-showing indicates the nonmanifest—as what comes to the fore in the non-manifest itself, and radiates from it in such a way that what is non-manifest is thought of as what is essentially *never* manifest—if this is so, then appearance is tantamount to production [*Hervorbringung*] or to what is produced [*Hervorgebrachtes*]. However, this does not constitute the real being of the producing or productive [*Hervorbringende*], but is rather appearance in the sense of “mere appearance.” What does the making itself known and is brought forward indeed shows itself in such a way that, as the emanation of what it makes known, it precisely and continually veils what it is in itself. But then again this not-showing which veils is not semblance. Kant uses the term “appearance” in this twofold way. On the one hand, appearances are for him the “objects of empirical intuition,” what shows itself in intuition. This self-showing (phenomenon in the genuine, original sense) is, on the other hand, “appearance” as the emanation of something that makes itself known but *conceals* itself in the appearance.

Since a phenomenon is constitutive for “appearance” in the sense of making itself known through a self-showing, and since this phenomenon can turn into semblance in a privative way, appearance can also turn into mere semblance. Under a certain kind of light someone can look as if he were flushed. The redness that

shows itself can be taken as making known the objective presence of fear; this in turn would indicate a disturbance in the organism.

*Phenomenon*—the self-showing in itself—means a distinctive way something can be encountered. On the other hand, *appearance* means a referential relation to beings themselves such that what does the *referring* (the making known) can fulfill its possible function only if it shows itself in itself—only if it is a “phenomenon.” Both appearance and semblance are themselves founded in the phenomenon, albeit in different ways. The confusing multiplicity of “phenomena” designated by the terms phenomenon, semblance, appearance, mere appearance, can be unraveled only if the concept of phenomenon is understood from the very beginning as the self-showing in itself.

But if in the way we grasp the concept of phenomenon we leave undetermined which beings are to be addressed as phenomena, and if we leave altogether open whether the self-showing is actually a particular being or a characteristic of the being of beings, then we are dealing solely with the *formal* concept of phenomenon. If by the self-showing we understand those beings that are accessible, for example, in Kant’s sense of empirical intuition, the formal concept of phenomenon can be used legitimately. In this usage phenomenon has the meaning of the *common* concept of phenomenon. But this common one is not the phenomenological concept of phenomenon. In the horizon of the Kantian problem what is understood phenomenologically by the term of phenomenon (disregarding other differences) can be illustrated when we say that what already shows itself in appearance prior to and always accompanying what we commonly understand as phenomena, though unthematically, can be brought thematically to self-showing. What thus shows itself in itself (“the forms of intuition”) are the phenomena of phenomenology. For, clearly, space and time must be able to show themselves in this way. They must be able to become phenomena if Kant claims to make a valid transcendental statement when he says that space is the *a priori* “wherein” of an order.

Now if the phenomenological concept of phenomenon is to be understood at all (regardless of how the self-showing may be more closely determined), we must inevitably presuppose insight into the sense of the formal concept of phenomenon and the legitimate use of phenomenon in its ordinary meaning. However, before getting hold of the preliminary concept of phenomenology we must delimit the meaning of *logos*, in order to make clear in which sense phenomenology can be “a science of” phenomena.

(b) *The Concept of Logos.* The concept of *logos* has many meanings in Plato and Aristotle, indeed in such a way that these meanings diverge without a basic meaning positively taking the lead. This is in fact only an illusion which lasts so long as an interpretation is not able to grasp adequately the basic meaning in its primary content. If we say that the basic meaning of *logos* is speech, this literal translation becomes valid only when we define what speech itself means. The later history of the word *logos*, and especially the manifold and arbitrary interpretations of subsequent philosophy, conceal constantly the real meaning of speech—which is manifest enough. *Logos* is “translated,” and that always means interpreted, as reason, judgment, concept, definition, ground, relation. But how can “speech” be so susceptible of modification that *logos* means all the things mentioned, and indeed in scholarly usage? Even if *logos* is understood in the sense of a statement, and statement as “judgment,” this apparently correct translation can still miss the fundamental meaning—especially if judgment is understood in the sense of some contemporary “theory of judgment.” *Logos* does not mean judgment, in any case not primarily, if by judgment we understand “connecting two things” or “taking a position” either by endorsing or rejecting.

Rather, *logos* as speech really means *dēloun*, to make manifest “what is being talked about” in speech. Aristotle explicates this function of speech more precisely as *apophainesthai*.<sup>4</sup> *Logos* lets something be seen (*phainesthai*), namely what is being talked about, and indeed for the speaker (who serves as the medium) or for those who speak with each other. Speech “lets us see,” from itself, *apo . . .*, what is being talked about. In speech (*apophansis*), insofar as it is genuine, *what* is said should be derived *from* what is being talked about. In this way spoken communication, in what it says, makes manifest what it is talking about and thus makes it accessible to another. Such is the structure of *logos* as *apophansis*. Not every “speech” suits *this* mode of making manifest, in the sense of letting something be seen by indicating it. For example, requesting (*euchē*) also makes something manifest, but in a different way.

When fully concrete, speech (letting something be seen) has the character of speaking or vocalization in words. *Logos* is *phonē*, indeed *phonē meta phantasias*—vocalization in which something always is sighted.

Only *because* the function of *logos* as *apophansis* lies in letting something be seen by indicating it can *logos* have the structure of

*synthesis*. Here synthesis does not mean to connect and conjoin representations, to manipulate psychological occurrences, which then gives rise to the “problem” of how these connections, as internal, correspond to what is external and physical. The *syn* [of *synthesis*] here has a purely apophantical meaning: to let something be seen in its *togetherness* with something, to let something be seen as something.

Furthermore, because *logos* lets something be seen, it can *therefore* be true or false. But everything depends on staying clear of any concept of truth construed in the sense of “correspondence” or “accordance” [*Übereinstimmung*]. This idea is by no means the primary one in the concept of *alētheia*. The “being true” of *logos* as *alētheuein* means: to take beings that are being talked *about* in *legen* as *apophainesthai* out of their concealment; to let them be seen as something unconcealed (*alēthes*); to *discover* them. Similarly “being false,” *pseudesthai*, is tantamount to deceiving in the sense of covering up: putting something in front of something else (by way of letting it be seen) and thereby passing it off *as* something it is *not*.

But because “truth” has this meaning, and because *logos* is a specific mode of letting something be seen, *logos* simply may *not* be acclaimed as the primary “place” of truth. If one defines truth as what “genuinely” pertains to judgment, which is quite customary today, and if one invokes Aristotle in support of this thesis, such a procedure is without justification and the Greek concept of truth thoroughly misunderstood. In the Greek sense what is “true”—indeed more originally true than the *logos* we have been discussing—is *aisthēsis*, the simple sense perception of something. To the extent that an *aisthēsis* aims at its *idia* [what is its own]—the beings genuinely accessible only *through* it and *for* it, for example, looking at colors—perception is always true. This means that looking always discovers colors, hearing always discovers tones. What is in the purest and most original sense “true”—that is, what only discovers in such a way that it can never cover up anything—is pure *noein*, straightforwardly observant apprehension of the simplest determinations of the being of beings as such. This *noein* can never cover up, can never be false; at worst it can be a nonapprehending, *agnoein*, not sufficing for straightforward, appropriate access.

What no longer takes the form of a pure letting be seen, but rather in its indicating always has recourse to something else and so always lets something be seen *as* something, acquires with this

structure of synthesis the possibility of covering up. However, "truth of judgment" is only the opposite of this covering up; it is a *multiply-founded* phenomenon of truth. Realism and idealism alike thoroughly miss the meaning of the Greek concept of truth from which alone the possibility of something like a "theory of Ideas" can be understood as philosophical *knowledge*. And because the function of *logos* lies in letting something be seen straightforwardly, in *letting* beings be *apprehended*, *logos* can mean *reason*. Moreover, because *logos* is used in the sense not only of *legein* but also of *legomenon*—what is pointed to as such; and because the latter is nothing other than the *hypokeimenon*—what always already lies present at the *basis* of all relevant speech and discussion; for these reasons *logos* qua *legomenon* means ground, *ratio*. Finally, because *logos* as *legomenon* can also mean what is addressed, as something that has become visible in its relation to something else, in its "relat- edness," *logos* acquires the meaning of *relation* and *relationship*.

This interpretation of "apophantic speech" may suffice to clarify the primary function of *logos*.

(c) *The Preliminary Concept of Phenomenology*. When we bring to mind concretely what has been exhibited in the interpretation of "phenomenon" and "*logos*" we are struck by an inner relation between what is meant by these terms. The expression "phenomenology" can be formulated in Greek as *legein ta phainomena*. But *legein* means *apophainesthai*. Hence phenomenology means: *apophainesthai ta phainomena*—to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself. That is the formal meaning of the type of research that calls itself "phenomenology." But this expresses nothing other than the maxim formulated above: "To the things themselves!"

Accordingly, the term "phenomenology" differs in meaning from such expressions as "theology" and the like. Such titles designate the objects of the respective disciplines in terms of their content. "Phenomenology" neither designates the object of its researches nor is it a title that describes their content. The word only tells us something about the *how* of the demonstration and treatment of *what* this discipline considers. Science "of" the phenomena means that it grasps its objects in *such* a way that everything about them to be discussed must be directly indicated and directly demonstrated. The basically tautological expression "descriptive phenomenology" has the same sense. Here description

does not mean a procedure like that of, say, botanical morphology. The term rather has the sense of a prohibition, insisting that we avoid all nondemonstrative determinations. The character of description itself, the specific sense of the *logos*, can be established only from the "material content" [*Sachheit*] of what is "described," that is, of what is to be brought to scientific determinateness in the way phenomena are encountered. The meaning of the formal and common concepts of the phenomenon formally justifies our calling every way of indicating beings as they show themselves in themselves "phenomenology."

Now what must be taken into account if the formal concept of phenomenon is to be deformed to the phenomenological one, and how does this differ from the common concept? What is it that phenomenology is to "let be seen"? What is it that is to be called "phenomenon" in a distinctive sense? What is it that by its very essence becomes the *necessary* theme when we indicate something *explicitly*? Manifestly it is something that does *not* show itself initially and for the most part, something that is *concealed*, in contrast to what initially and for the most part does show itself. But at the same time it is something that essentially belongs to what initially and for the most part shows itself, indeed in such a way that it constitutes its meaning and ground.

But what remains *concealed* in an exceptional sense, or what falls back and is *covered up* again, or shows itself only in a *distorted* way, is not this or that being but rather, as we have shown in our foregoing observations, the *being* of beings. It can be covered up to such a degree that it is forgotten and the question about it and its meaning altogether omitted. Thus what demands to become a phenomenon in a distinctive sense, in terms of its most proper content, phenomenology has taken into its "grasp" thematically as its object.

Phenomenology is the way of access to, and the demonstrative manner of determination of, what is to become the theme of ontology. *Ontology is possible only as phenomenology*. The phenomenological concept of phenomenon, as self-showing, means the being of beings—its meaning, modifications, and derivatives. This self-showing is nothing arbitrary, nor is it something like an appearing. The being of beings can least of all be something "behind which" something else stands, something that "does not appear."

Essentially, nothing else stands "behind" the phenomena of phenomenology. Nevertheless, what is to become a phenomenon can

be concealed. And precisely because phenomena are initially and for the most part *not* given phenomenology is needed. Being covered up is the counterconcept to “phenomenon.”

There are various ways phenomena can be covered up. In the first place, a phenomenon can be covered up in the sense that it is still completely *undiscovered*. There is neither knowledge nor lack of knowledge about it. In the second place, a phenomenon can be *buried over*. This means it was once discovered but then got covered up again. This covering up can be total, but more commonly, what was once discovered may still be visible, though only as semblance. However, where there is semblance there is “being.” This kind of covering up, “distortion,” is the most frequent and the most dangerous kind because here the possibilities of being deceived and misled are especially pernicious. Within a “system” the structures and concepts of being that are available but concealed with respect to their autochthony may perhaps claim their rights. On the basis of their integrated structure in a system they present themselves as something “clear” which is in no need of further justification and which therefore can serve as a point of departure for a process of deduction.

The covering up itself, whether it be understood in the sense of concealment, being buried over, or distortion, has in turn a twofold possibility. There are accidental coverings and necessary ones, the latter grounded in the enduring nature of the discovered. It is possible for every phenomenological concept and proposition drawn from genuine origins to degenerate when communicated as a statement. It gets circulated in a vacuous fashion, loses its autochthony, and becomes a free-floating thesis. Even in the concrete work of phenomenology lurks possible inflexibility and the inability to grasp what was originally “grasped.” And the difficulty of this research consists precisely in making it self-critical in a positive sense.

The way of encountering being and the structures of being in the mode of phenomenon must first be *wrested* from the objects of phenomenology. Thus the *point of departure* of the analysis, the *access* to the phenomenon, and *passage through* the prevalent coverings must secure their own method. The idea of an “originary” and “intuitive” grasp and explication of phenomena must be opposed to the naïveté of an accidental, “immediate,” and unreflective “beholding.”

On the basis of the preliminary concept of phenomenology just delimited, the terms “phenomenal” and “phenomenological” can



now be given fixed meanings. What is given and is explicable in the way we encounter the phenomenon is called "phenomenal." In this sense we speak of phenomenal structures. Everything that belongs to the manner of indication and explication, and constitutes the conceptual tools this research requires, is called "phenomenological."

Because phenomenon in the phenomenological understanding is always just what constitutes being, and furthermore because being is always the being of beings, we must first of all bring beings themselves forward in the right way if we are to have any prospect of exposing being. These beings must likewise show themselves in the way of access that genuinely belong to them. Thus the common concept of phenomenon becomes phenomenologically relevant. The preliminary task of a "phenomenological" securing of that being which is to serve as our example, as the point of departure for the analysis proper, is always already prescribed by the goal of this analysis.

As far as content goes, phenomenology is the science of the being of beings—ontology. In our elucidation of the tasks of ontology the necessity arose for a fundamental ontology which would have as its theme that being which is ontologically and ontically distinctive, namely, *Da-sein*. This must be done in such a way that our ontology confronts the cardinal problem, the question of the meaning of being in general. From the investigation itself we shall see that the methodological meaning of phenomenological description is *interpretation*. The *logos* of the phenomenology of *Da-sein* has the character of *hermeneuein*, through which the proper meaning of being and the basic structures of the very being of *Da-sein* are *made known* to the understanding of being that belongs to *Da-sein* itself. Phenomenology of *Da-sein* is *hermeneutics* in the original signification of that word, which designates the work of interpretation. But since discovery of the meaning of being and of the basic structures of *Da-sein* in general exhibits the horizon for every further ontological research into beings unlike *Da-sein*, the present hermeneutic is at the same time "hermeneutics" in the sense that it works out the conditions of the possibility of every ontological investigation. Finally, since *Da-sein* has ontological priority over all other beings—as a being in the possibility of existence [*Existenz*]*—hermeneutics*, as the interpretation of the being of *Da-sein*, receives a specific third and, philosophically understood, *primary* meaning of an analysis of the existentiality of existence. To the extent that

this hermeneutic elaborates the historicity of Da-sein ontologically as the ontic condition of the possibility of the discipline of history, it contains the roots of what can be called "hermeneutics" only in a derivative sense: the methodology of the historical humanistic disciplines.

As the fundamental theme of philosophy being is not a genus of beings; yet it pertains to every being. Its "universality" must be sought in a higher sphere. Being and its structure transcend every being and every possible existent determination of a being. *Being is the transcendence pure and simple.* The transcendence of the being of Da-sein is a distinctive one since in it lies the possibility and necessity of the most radical *individuation*. Every disclosure of being as the *transcendens* is *transcendental* knowledge. *Phenomenological truth (disclosedness of being) is veritas transcendentalis.*

Ontology and phenomenology are not two different disciplines which among others belong to philosophy. Both terms characterize philosophy itself, its object and procedure. Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology, taking its departure from the hermeneutic of Da-sein, which, as an analysis of *existence*, has fastened the end of the guideline of all philosophical inquiry at the point from which it *arises* and to which it *returns*.

The following investigations would not have been possible without the foundation laid by Edmund Husserl; with his *Logical Investigations* phenomenology achieved a breakthrough. Our elucidations of the preliminary concept of phenomenology show that its essential character does not consist in its *actuality* as a philosophical "movement." Higher than actuality stands *possibility*. We can understand phenomenology solely by seizing upon it as a possibility.

With regard to the awkwardness and "inelegance" of expression in the following analyses, we may remark that it is one thing to report narratively about *beings* and another to grasp beings in their *being*. For the latter task not only most of the words are lacking but above all the "grammar." If we may allude to earlier and in their own right altogether incomparable researches on the analysis of being, then we should compare the ontological sections in Plato's *Parmenides* or the fourth chapter of the seventh book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* with a narrative passage from Thucydides. Then we can see the stunning character of the formulations with which their philosophers challenged the Greeks. Since our powers are essentially inferior, and also since the area of being to be disclosed ontologically is far more difficult than that presented to the Greeks, the

complexity of our concept-formation and the severity of our expression will increase.

## The Outline of the Treatise

The question of the meaning of being is the most universal and the emptiest. But at the same time the possibility inheres of its most acute individualization in each particular Da-sein. If we are to gain the fundamental concept of "being" and the prescription of the ontologically requisite conceptuality in all its necessary variations, we need a concrete guideline. The "special character" of the investigation does not belie the universality of the concept of being. For we may advance to being by way of a special interpretation of a particular being. Da-sein, in which the horizon for an understanding and a possible interpretation of beings is to be won. But his being is in itself "historic," so that its most proper ontological illumination necessarily becomes a "historical" interpretation.

The elaboration of the question of being is a two-pronged task; our treatise therefore has two divisions.

*Part One:* The interpretation of Da-sein on the basis of temporality and the explication of time as the transcendental horizon of the question of being.

*Part Two:* Basic features of a phenomenological destructuring of the history of ontology on the guideline of the problem of temporality.

The first part consists of three divisions:

- (1) The preparatory fundamental analysis of Da-sein.
- (2) Da-sein and temporality.
- (3) Time and being.

The second part likewise has three divisions:

- (1) Kant's doctrine of the schematism and of time, as preliminary stage of a problem of temporality.
- (2) The ontological foundation of Descartes' *cogito sum* and the incorporation of medieval ontology in the problem of the *res cogitans*.
- (3) Aristotle's treatise on time as a way of discerning the phenomenal basis and the limits of ancient ontology.

## My Way to Phenomenology (1963)

My academic studies began in the winter of 1909–10 in theology at the University of Freiburg. But the chief work for the study in theology still left enough time for philosophy which belonged to the curriculum anyhow. Thus both volumes of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* lay on my desk in the theological seminary ever since my first semester there. These volumes belonged to the university library. The date due could be easily renewed again and again. The work was obviously of little interest to the students. But how did it get into this environment so foreign to it?

I had learned from many references in philosophical periodicals that Husserl's thought was determined by Franz Brentano. Ever since 1907, Brentano's dissertation "On the manifold meaning of being since Aristotle" (1862) had been the chief help and guide of my first awkward attempts to penetrate into philosophy. The following question concerned me in a quite vague manner: If being is predicated in manifold meanings, then what is its leading fundamental meaning? What does Being mean? In the last year of my stay at the *Gymnasium*, I stumbled upon the book of Carl Braig, then professor for dogmatics at Freiburg University: "On Being. Outline of Ontology." It had been published in 1896 at the time when he was an associate professor at Freiburg's theological faculty. The larger sections of the work give extensive text passages from Aristotle, Thomas of Aquinas and Suarez, always at the end, and in addition the etymology for fundamental ontological concepts.

From Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, I expected a decisive aid in the questions stimulated by Brentano's dissertation. Yet my efforts were in vain because I was not searching in the right way. I realized this only very much later. Still, I remained so fascinated by Husserl's work that I read in it again and again in the years to follow without gaining sufficient insight into what fascinated me. The spell emanating from the work extended to the outer appearance of the sentence structure and the title page. On that title page I encountered the name of the publisher Max Niemeyer. This encounter is before my eyes as vividly today as then. His name was connected

with that of "Phenomenology," then foreign to me, which appears in the subtitle of the second volume. My understanding of the term "phenomenology" was just as limited and vacillating as my knowledge in those years of the publisher Max Niemeyer and his work. Why and how both names—Niemeyer Publishing House and Phenomenology—belong together would soon become clearer.

After four semesters I gave up my theological studies and dedicated myself entirely to philosophy. I still attended theological lectures in the years following 1911, Carl Braig's lecture course on dogmatics. My interest in speculative theology led me to do this, above all the penetrating kind of thinking which this teacher concretely demonstrated in every lecture hour. On a few walks when I was allowed to accompany him, I first heard of Schelling's and Hegel's significance for speculative theology as distinguished from the dogmatic system of Scholasticism. Thus the tension between ontology and speculative theology as the structure of metaphysics entered the field of my search.

Yet at times this realm faded to the background compared with that which Heinrich Rickert treated in his seminars: the two writings of his pupil Emil Lask who was killed as a simple soldier on the Galician front in 1915. Rickert dedicated the third fully revised edition of his work *The Object of Knowledge, Introduction to Transcendental Philosophy*, which was published the same year, "to my dear friend." The dedication was supposedly to testify to the teacher's benefit derived from this pupil. Both of Emil Lask's writings—*The Logic of Philosophy and the Doctrine of Categories, A Study of the Dominant Realm of Logical Form* (1911) and *The Doctrine of Judgment* (1912)—themselves showed clearly enough the influence of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*.

These circumstances forced me to delve into Husserl's work anew. However, my repeated beginning also remained unsatisfactory, because I couldn't get over a main difficulty. It concerned the simple question how thinking's manner of procedure which called itself "phenomenology" was to be carried out. What worried me about this question came from the ambiguity which Husserl's work showed at first glance.

The first volume of the work, published in 1900, brings the refutation of psychologism in logic by showing that the doctrine of thought and knowledge cannot be based on psychology. In contrast, the second volume, which was published the following year and was three times as long, contains the description of the acts of

consciousness essential for the constitution of knowledge. So it is a psychology after all. What else is section 9 of the fifth investigation concerning "The Meaning of Brentano's Delimitation of 'psychical phenomena'?" Accordingly, Husserl falls back with his phenomenological description of the phenomena of consciousness into the position of psychologism which he had just refuted. But if such a gross error cannot be attributed to Husserl's work, then what is the phenomenological description of the acts of consciousness? Wherein does what is peculiar to phenomenology consist if it is neither logic nor psychology? Does a quite new discipline of philosophy appear here, even one with its own rank and precedence?

I could not disentangle these questions. I remained without knowing what to do or where to go. I could hardly even formulate the questions with the clarity in which they are expressed here.

The year 1913 brought an answer. The *Yearbook for Philosophy and Phenomenological Investigation* which Husserl edited began to be published by the publisher Max Niemeyer. The first volume begins with Husserl's treatise *Ideas*.

"Pure phenomenology" is the "fundamental science" of philosophy which is characterized by that phenomenology. "Pure" means: "transcendental phenomenology." However, the "subjectivity" of the knowing, acting and valuing subject is posited as "transcendental." Both terms, "subjectivity" and "transcendental," show that "phenomenology" consciously and decidedly moved into the tradition of modern philosophy but in such a way that "transcendental subjectivity" attains a more original and universal determination through phenomenology. Phenomenology retained "experiences of consciousness" as its thematic realm, but now in the systematically planned and secured investigation of the structure of acts of experience together with the investigation of the objects experienced in those acts with regard to their objectivity.

In this universal project for a phenomenological philosophy, the *Logical Investigations*, too—which had so to speak remained philosophically neutral—could be assigned their systematic place. They were published in the same year (1913) in a second edition by the same publisher. Most of the investigations had in the meantime undergone "profound revisions." The sixth investigation, "the most important with regard to phenomenology" (preface to the second edition) was, however, withheld. But the essay "Philosophy as Exact Science" (1910–11) which Husserl contributed to the first volume of the new journal *Logos* also only now acquired a sufficient basis for its programmatic theses through the *Ideas*.

In virtue of these publications, Niemeyer's work attained the foremost rank of philosophical publishers. At that time the rather obvious idea was current that with "phenomenology" a new school had arisen in European philosophy. Who could have denied the correctness of this statement?

But such historical calculation did not comprehend what had happened in virtue of "phenomenology," that is, already with the *Logical Investigations*. This remained unspoken, and can hardly even be rightly expressed today. Husserl's own programmatical explanations and methodological presentations rather strengthened the misunderstanding that through "phenomenology" a beginning of philosophy was claimed which denied all previous thinking.

Even after the *Ideas* was published, I was still captivated by the never-ceasing spell of the *Logical Investigations*. That magic brought about anew an unrest unaware of its own reason, although it made one suspect that it came from the inability to attain the act of philosophical thinking called "phenomenology" simply by reading the philosophical literature.

My perplexity decreased slowly, my confusion dissolved laboriously, only after I met Husserl personally in his workshop.

Husserl came to Freiburg in 1916 as Heinrich Rickert's successor. Rickert had taken over Windelband's chair in Heidelberg. Husserl's teaching took place in the form of a step-by-step training in phenomenological "seeing" which at the same time demanded that one relinquish the untested use of philosophical knowledge. But it also demanded that one give up introducing the authority of the great thinkers into the conversation. However, the clearer it became to me that the increasing familiarity with phenomenological seeing was fruitful for the interpretation of Aristotle's writing, the less I could separate myself from Aristotle and the other Greek thinkers. Of course I could not immediately see what decisive consequences my renewed occupation with Aristotle was to have.

As I myself practiced phenomenological seeing, teaching and learning in Husserl's proximity after 1919 and at the same time tried out a transformed understanding of Aristotle in a seminar, my interest leaned anew toward the *Logical Investigations*, above all the sixth investigation in the first edition. The distinction which is worked out there between sensuous and categorical intuition revealed itself to me in its scope for the determination of the "manifold meaning of being."

For this reason we—friends and pupils—begged the master again and again to republish the sixth investigation which was then diffi-

cult to obtain. True to his dedication to the cause of phenomenology, the publisher Niemeyer published the last chapter of the *Logical Investigations* again in 1922. Husserl notes in the preface: "As things stand, I had to give in to the wishes of the friends of this work and decide to make its last chapter available again in its old form." With the phrase "the friends of this work," Husserl also wanted to say that he himself could not quite get close to the *Logical Investigations* after the publication of the *Ideas*. At the new place of his academic activity, the passion and effort of his thought turned toward the systematic development of the plan presented in the *Ideas* more than ever. Thus Husserl could write in the preface mentioned to the sixth investigation: "My teaching activity in Freiburg, too, furthered the direction of my interest toward general problems and the system."

Thus Husserl watched me in a generous fashion, but at the bottom in disagreement, as I worked on the *Logical Investigations* every week in special seminars with advanced students in addition to my lectures and regular seminars. Especially the preparation for this work was fruitful for me. There I learned one thing—at first rather led by surmise than guided by founded insight: What occurs for the phenomenology of the acts of consciousness as the self-manifestation of phenomena is thought more originally by Aristotle and in all Greek thinking and existence as *aletheia*, as the unconcealedness of what-is present, its being revealed, its showing itself. That which phenomenological investigations rediscovered as the supporting attitude of thought proves to be the fundamental trait of Greek thinking, if not indeed of philosophy as such.

The more decisively this insight became clear to me, the more pressing the question became: Whence and how is it determined what must be experienced as "the things themselves" in accordance with the principle of phenomenology? Is it consciousness and its objectivity or is it the Being of beings in its unconcealedness and concealment?

Thus I was brought to the path of the question of Being, illumined by the phenomenological attitude, again made uneasy in a different way than previously by the questions prompted by Brentano's dissertation. But the path of questioning became longer than I suspected. It demanded many stops, detours and wrong paths. What the first lectures in Freiburg and then in Marburg attempted shows the path only indirectly.



“Professor Heidegger—you have got to publish something now. Do you have a manuscript?” With these words the dean of the philosophical faculty in Marburg came into my study one day in the winter semester of 1925–26. “Certainly,” I answered. Then the dean said: “But it must be printed quickly.” The faculty proposed me *unico loco* as Nicolai Hartmann’s successor for the chief philosophical chair. Meanwhile, the ministry in Berlin had rejected the proposal with the explanation that I had not published anything in the last ten years.

Now I had to submit my closely protected work to the public. On account of Husserl’s intervention, the publishing house Max Niemeyer was ready to print immediately the first fifteen proof sheets of the work which was to appear in Husserl’s *Jahrbuch*. Two copies of the finished page proofs were sent to the ministry by the faculty right away. But after some time, they were returned to the faculty with the remark: “Inadequate.” In February of the following year (1927), the complete text of *Being and Time* was published in the eighth volume of the *Jahrbuch* and as a separate publication. After that the ministry reversed its negative judgment half a year later and made the offer for the chair.

On the occasion of the strange publication of *Being and Time*, I came first into direct relationship with the publishing house Max Niemeyer. What was a mere name on the title page of Husserl’s fascinating work during the first semester of my academic studies became evident now and in the future in all the thoroughness and reliability, generosity and simplicity, of publication work.

In the summer of 1928, during my last semester in Marburg, the *Festschrift* for Husserl’s seventieth birthday was in preparation. At the beginning of this semester Max Scheler died unexpectedly. He was one of the co-editors of Husserl’s *Jahrbuch* where he published his great investigation *Formalism in Ethics and Material Ethics of Value* in the first and second volume (1916). Along with Husserl’s *Ideas*, it must count as the most significant contribution to the *Jahrbuch*. Through its far-reaching effects, it placed the scope and effectiveness of the Niemeyer publishing house in a new light.

The *Festschrift* for Edmund Husserl appeared punctually for his birthday as a supplement to the *Jahrbuch*. I had the honor of presenting it to the celebrated teacher within a circle of his pupils and friends on April 8, 1929.

During the following decade all more extensive publications were withheld until the publishing house Niemeyer dared to print

my interpretation of Hölderlin's hymn "As on a Holiday" in 1941 without giving the year of publication. I had given this lecture in May of the same year as a public guest lecture at the university of Leipzig. The owner of the publishing house, Mr. Hermann Niemeyer, had come from Halle to hear this lecture. Afterward we discussed the publication.

When I decided twelve years later to publish earlier lecture series, I chose the Niemeyer publishing house for this purpose. It no longer bore the designation "Halle a.d. Saale." Following great losses and manifold difficulties, and visited by hard personal suffering, the present owner had re-established the firm in Tübingen.

"Halle a.d. Saale"—in the same city, the former *Privatdozent* Edmund Husserl taught during the '90's of the last century at that university. Later in Freiburg, he often told the story of how the *Logical Investigations* came to be. He never forgot to remember the Max Niemeyer publishing house with gratitude and admiration, the house which took upon itself the venture of publishing, at the turn of the century, an extensive work of a little-known instructor who went his own new ways and thus had to estrange contemporary philosophy, which ignored the work for years after its appearance, until Wilhelm Dilthey recognized its significance. The publishing house could not know at that time that his name would remain tied to that of phenomenology in the future, that phenomenology would soon determine the spirit of the age in the most various realms—mostly in a tacit manner.

And today? The age of phenomenological philosophy seems to be over. It is already taken as something past which is only recorded historically along with other schools of philosophy. But in what is most its own phenomenology is not a school. It is the possibility of thinking, at times changing and only thus persisting, of corresponding to the claim of what is to be thought. If phenomenology is thus experienced and retained, it can disappear as a designation in favor of the matter of thinking whose manifestness remains a mystery.

*Translated by Joan Stambaugh*

## THINKING/THANKING

### The Pathway (1949)

It runs from the park gate toward Ehnried. The old linden trees in the Schloss garden gaze after it from behind the wall—whether at Easter when the path shines bright between rising crops and waking meadows, or at Christmas when it disappears in snowdrifts behind the next hill. At the wayside crucifix it turns off to the woods. Along its edge the pathway greets a tall oak under which stands a roughly hewn bench.

Often there lay on the bench one or another of the great thinkers' writings which youth's awkwardness attempted to decipher. When the puzzles ran together, and no way out presented itself, the pathway helped. For it escorts feet quietly along the winding path through the expanse of barren country.

Time and again, thinking from the same books or from one's own attempts would traverse the trail which the pathway drew through the countryside. The path remains as close to the step of the thinker as to that of the farmer walking out to the mowing in early morning.

With the years, the oak along the way frequently calls the early games and first choices. Then deep in the forest an oak might fall under the axe's blow, and the father would look through the woods and sunny clearings for the cord allotted to him and his workshop. There he labored, thoughtful when pausing from his efforts at the sound of tower clock and bells—both maintaining their own relationship to time and temporality.

Out of the oak's bark the boys carved their boats: equipped with rudder and tiller they floated in Metten brook or in the school fountain. The world-wide journeys of these games reached their destination easily and found their way back to shore again. The dream element in such voyages remained hidden in a then hardly perceptible luster which lay over everything. The eye and hand of mother surrounded their world. It was as if her unspoken care protected

every being. Those trips of play still knew nothing of wanderings when all shores stay distant. Meanwhile, the hardness and smell of oakwood began to speak more distinctly of the slowness and constancy in the tree's growth. The oak itself spoke: Only in such growth is grounded what lasts and fructifies. Growing means this: to open oneself up to the breadth of heaven and at the same time to sink roots into the darkness of earth. Whatever is genuine thrives only if man does justice to both—ready for the appeal of highest heaven, and cared for in the protection of sustaining earth.

Again and again the oak says this to the pathway passing securely by. The pathway collects whatever has its being along the way; to all who pass this way it gives what is theirs. The same fields and meadows accompany the pathway through each season with an ever-changing nearness. Whether the Alps above the forests are sinking away into the evening twilight, whether there where the pathway swings over the rolling hill the lark climbs into the summer morning, whether the East-wind approaches in storm from over where mother's home lies, whether a woodsman as night nears drags his bundle of brushwood to the hearth, whether a harvesting wagon sways homeward in the pathway's tracks, whether children are gathering the first flowers at meadow's edge, whether fog for days moves its gloom and burden over the fields—always and everywhere the message of the same rests on the pathway:

The Simple preserves the puzzle of what remains and what is great. Spontaneously it enters men and needs a lengthy growth. With the unpretentiousness of the ever-same it hides its blessing. The breadth of all growing things which rest along the pathway bestows world. In what remains unsaid in their speech is—as Eckhardt, the old master of letter and life, says—God, only God.

But the message of the pathway speaks just so long as there are men (born in its breeze) who can hear it. They are hearers of their origin, not servants of their production. In vain does man try with his plans to bring order to his globe if he does not order himself to the message of the pathway. The danger looms that today's men are hard of hearing towards its language. They have ears only for the noise of media, which they consider to be almost the voice of God. So man becomes distracted and path-less. The Simple seems monotonous to the distracted. The monotonous brings weariness. The annoyed find only the uniform. The Simple has fled. Its quiet power is exhausted.

Certainly the number of those who still recognize the Simple as their hard-earned possession is quickly diminishing. But it is these

few who will everywhere be the ones remaining. Through the gentle force of the pathway they are going to be able to overcome the gigantic energies of atomic power which human calculation artifacted, fettering its own activity.

The pathway's message awakens a sense which loves freedom and, at a propitious place, leaps over sadness and into a final serenity. This resists the stupidity of simply working, which when done for itself promotes only what negates.

In the pathway's seasonally changing breeze this knowing serenity (whose mien often seems melancholy) thrives. This serene knowing is *das Kuinzige*.<sup>\*</sup> No one wins it who does not have it. Those who have it, have it from the pathway. Along its path winter's storm encounters harvest's day, the agile excitement of Spring and the detached dying of Autumn meet, the child's game and the elder's wisdom gaze at each other. And in a unique harmony, whose echo the pathway carries with it silently here and there, everything is sparked serene.

This knowing serenity is a gate to the eternal. Its door turns on hinges once forged out of the puzzles of human existence by a skilled smith.

From Ehnried the way turns back to the park gate. Over a final hill its narrow ribbon runs through moorland until it reaches the town wall. It shines dimly in the starlight. Behind the Schloss the tower of Saint Martin's church rises. Slowly, almost hesitatingly, eleven strokes of the hour sound in the night. The old bell, on whose ropes boys' hands have been rubbed hot, shakes under the blows of the hour's hammer whose dark-droll face no one forgets.

With the last stroke the stillness becomes yet more still. It reaches out even to those who have been sacrificed before time in two world wars. The Simple has become simpler. The ever-same surprises and frees. The message of the pathway is now quite clear. Is the soul speaking? Is the world speaking? Is God speaking?

Everything speaks abandonment unto the same. Abandonment does not take. Abandonment gives. It gives the inexhaustible power of the Simple. The message makes us at home after a long origin here.

*Translated by T. F. O'Meara*

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<sup>\*</sup>This phrase in Upper Swabian dialect is still in use in some areas. It is a dialect form for *kein nützend*, not useful. From its originally negative tone, it developed a positive meaning allied to serene, playful. Heidegger paraphrases: "A serene melancholy, which says what it knows with veiled expressions."—Trans.

# What Is Called, What Calls for, Thinking? (1952)

The question “What is called thinking?” can be asked in four ways. It asks:

- (1) What is designated by the word “thinking?”
- (2) What does the prevailing theory of thought, namely logic, understand by thinking?
- (3) What are the prerequisites we need to perform thinking rightly?
- (4) What is it that commands us to think?

We assert: the fourth question must be asked first. Once the nature of thinking is in question, the fourth is the decisive question. But this is not to say that the first three questions stand apart, outside the fourth. Rather, they point to the fourth. The first three questions subordinate themselves to the fourth which itself determines the structure within which the four ways of asking belong together.

We might say also: the fourth question, What is it that calls on us to think?, develops and explicates itself in such a way that it calls forth the other three. But how the four questions belong together within the decisive fourth question, that is something we cannot find out by ingenuity. It must reveal itself to us. And it will do so only if we let ourselves become involved in the questioning of the question. To do that, we must strike out on a way. The way seems to be implicit in the fact that the fourth question is the decisive one. And the way must set out from this question, since the other three, too, come down to it. Still, it is not at all certain whether we are asking the fourth question in the right way if we begin our questioning with it.

The thing that is in substance and by nature first, need not stand at the beginning—in fact, perhaps it cannot. The first and the beginning are not identical. We must therefore first explore the four ways in which the question may be asked. The fourth way will probably

prove to be decisive; yet another way remains unavoidable, which we must first find and travel to get to the fourth, decisive one. This situation alone tells us that the for us decisive way of asking our question, "What is called thinking?," is still remote and seems almost strange to us. It becomes necessary, then, first to acquaint ourselves explicitly with the ambiguity of the question, not only to give attention to that ambiguity as such, but also in order that we may not take it too lightly, as a mere matter of linguistic expression.

The ambiguity of the question "What is called thinking?" lies in the ambiguity of the questioning verb "to call."

The frequent idiom "what we call" signifies: what we have just said is meant in substance in this or that way, is to be understood this way or that. Instead of "what we call," we also use the idiom "that is to say."

On a day of changeable weather, someone might leave a mountain lodge, alone, to climb a peak. He soon loses his way in the fog that has suddenly descended. He has no notion of what we call mountaineering. He does not know any of the things it calls for, all the things that must be taken into account and mastered.

A voice calls to us to have hope. It beckons us to hope, invites us, commends us, directs us to hope.

This town is called Freiburg. It is so named because that is what it has been called. This means: the town has been called to assume this name. Henceforth it is at the call of this name to which it has been commended. To call is not originally to name, but the other way around: naming is a kind of calling, in the original sense of demanding and commending. It is not that the call has its being in the name; rather every name is a kind of call. Every call implies an approach, and thus, of course, the possibility of giving a name. We might call a guest welcome. This does not mean that we attach to him the name "Welcome," but that we call him to come in and complete his arrival as a welcome friend. In that way, the welcome-call of the invitation to come in is nonetheless also an act of naming, a calling which makes the newcomer what we call a guest whom we are glad to see.

But calling is something else than merely making a sound. Something else, again essentially different from mere sound and noise, is the cry. The cry need not be a call, but may be: the cry of distress. In reality, the calling stems from the place to which the call goes out. The calling is informed by an original outreach toward. . . . This alone is why the call can make a demand. The mere cry dies

away and collapses. It can offer no lasting abode to either pain or joy. The call, by contrast, is a reaching, even if it is neither heard nor answered. Calling offers an abode. Sound and cry and call must be clearly distinguished.

The call is the directive which, in calling to and calling upon, in reaching out and inviting, directs us toward an action or non-action, or toward something even more essential. In every calling, a call has already gathered. The calling is not a call that has gone by, but one that has gone out and as such is still calling and inviting; it calls even if it makes no sound.

As soon as we understand the word “to call” in its original root significance, we hear the question “What is called thinking?” in a different way. We then hear the question: “What is That which calls on us to think, in the sense that it originally directs us to thinking and thereby entrusts to us our own essential nature as such—which is insofar as it thinks?”

What is it that calls on us to think? As we develop the question, it asks: where does the calling come from that calls on us to think? In what does this calling consist? How can it make its claim on us? How does the calling reach us? How does it reach down into our very nature, in order to demand from us that our nature be a thinking nature? What is our nature? Can we know it at all? If there can be no knowledge here, then in what way is our nature revealed to us? Perhaps in just this way, and only in this way, that we are called upon to think?

“What is it that calls on us to think?” We find that we ourselves are put in question, this question, as soon as we truly ask it, not just rattle it off.

But from what other source could the calling into thought come than from something that in itself needs thought, because the source of the calling wants to be thought about by its very nature, and not just now and then? That which calls on us to think and appeals to us to think, claims thought for itself and as its own, because in and by itself it gives food for thought—not just occasionally but now and always.

What so gives food for thought is what we call most thought-provoking. Nor does it give only what always remains to be thought about; it gives food for thought in the much wider-reaching and decisive sense that it first entrusts thought and thinking to us as what determines our nature. . . .



What is called thinking? This time we shall take the question in the sense listed first, and ask: What does the word "thinking" say? Where there is thinking, there are thoughts. By thoughts we understand opinions, ideas, reflections, propositions, notions. But the Old English word "thanc" says more than that—more not only in terms of the usual meaning mentioned here, but something different; and different not only by comparison with what went before, but different in nature, in that it is decidedly distinct and also decisive. The *thanc* means man's inmost mind, the heart, the heart's core, that innermost essence of man which reaches outward most fully and to the outermost limits, and so decisively that, rightly considered, the idea of an inner and an outer world does not arise.

When we listen to the word *thanc* in its basic meaning, we hear at once the essence of the two words: thinking and memory, thinking and thanks, which readily suggest themselves in the verb "to think."

The *thanc*, the heart's core, is the gathering of all that concerns us, all that we care for, all that touches us insofar as we are, as human beings. What touches us in the sense that it defines and determines our nature, what we care for, we might call contiguous or contact. For the moment, the word may strike us as odd. But it grows out of the subject matter it expresses, and has long been spoken. It is only that we fail too easily to hear what is spoken.

Whenever we speak of subject and object, there is in our thoughts a project and a base, an oppositeness—there is always contact in the widest sense. It is possible that the thing which touches us and is in touch with us if we achieve our humanity, need not be represented by us constantly and specifically. But even so it is concentrated, gathered *toward* us beforehand. In a certain manner, though not exclusively, we ourselves are that gathering.

The gathering of what is next to us here never means an after-the-fact collection of what basically exists, but the tidings that overtake all our doings, the tidings of what we are committed to beforehand by being human beings.

Only because we are by nature gathered in contiguity can we remain concentrated on what is at once present and past and to come. The word "memory" originally means this incessant concentration on contiguity. In its original telling sense, memory means as much as devotion. This word possesses the special tone of the pious and piety, and designates the devotion of prayer, only because it denotes the all-comprehensive relation of concentration upon the holy and

the gracious. The *thanc* unfolds in memory, which persists as devotion. Memory in this originary sense later loses its name to a restricted denomination, which now signifies no more than the capacity to retain things that are in the past.

But if we understand memory in the light of the old word *thanc*, the connection between memory and thanks will dawn on us at once. For in giving thanks, the heart in thought recalls where it remains gathered and concentrated, because that is where it belongs. This thinking that recalls in memory is the original thanks.

The originary word *thanc* allows us to hear what the word “thinking” tells us. This manner of hearing corresponds to the essential situation which the word *thanc* designates. This manner of hearing is the decisive one. Through it, we understand what “thinking” calls for, by way of the *thanc*. The current familiar usage, by contrast, leads us to believe that thinking does not stem from thought, but that thoughts first arise out of thinking.

However, we must listen still more closely to the sphere that appeals to us in the originary words “*thanc*,” “memory,” “thanks.” What gives us food for thought ever and again is the most thought-provoking. We take the gift it gives by giving thought to what is most thought-provoking. In doing so, we keep thinking what is most thought-provoking. We recall it in thought. Thus we recall in thought that to which we owe thanks for the endowment of our nature—thinking. As we give thought to what is most thought-provoking, we give thanks.

To the most thought-provoking, we devote our thinking of what is to-be-thought. But this devoted thought is not something that we ourselves produce and bring along, to repay gift with gift. When we think what is most thought-provoking, we then give thought to what this most thought-provoking matter itself gives us to think about. This thinking which recalls, and which *qua* thinking alone is true thanks, does not need to repay, nor be deserved, in order to give thanks. Such thanks is not a recompense; but it remains an offering; and only by this offering do we allow that which properly gives food for thought to remain what it is in its essential nature. Thus we give thanks for our thinking in a sense that is almost lost to our language, and, so far as I can see, is retained only in our Alemannic usage. When the transaction of a matter is settled, or disposed of, we say in Alemannic dialect that it is “thanked.” Disposing does not mean here sending off, but the reverse: it means to bring the matter forth and leave it where it belongs. This sort of disposing is called thanking.

If thinking could dispose of that which ever and again gives food for thought, dispose it into its own nature, such thinking would be the highest thanks mortals can give. Such thinking would be the thankful disposal of what is most thought-provoking, into its most integral seclusion, a seclusion where the most thought-provoking is invulnerably preserved in its problematic being. Not one of us here would presume to claim that he is even remotely capable of such thinking, or even a prelude to it. At the very most, we shall succeed in preparing for it.

But assuming that some men will be capable of it some day, of thinking in the mode of such thankful disposal then this thinking would at once be concentrated in the recall which recalls what is forever most thought-provoking. Then thinking would dwell within memory—memory understood in the sense of its originary expression. . . .

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The title of this lecture course is a question. The question runs: What is called thinking? As a course of lectures, we expect it to answer the question. As the course proceeds, then, it would make the title disappear bit by bit. But the title of our lecture course remains—because it is intended as it sounds. It remains the title of the entire course. That course remains one single question: What is it that calls on us to think? What is That which calls us into thinking?

By the way we have chosen, we are trying to trace the call by which Western-European thinking is summoned and directed to that which is consummated as thinking.

We are trying to hear the call for which we ask, in a saying of Parmenides that says:

Χρή τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τε

Useful is the λέγειν so also the νοεῖν.

Later on, with Plato and Aristotle, the two terms signify—each by itself—what subsequent philosophy understands by thinking.

But if we, following the later tradition, translate λέγειν and νοεῖν in Parmenides' saying straight away into "thinking," we then get in the way of our own purpose. For we are after all trying first to detect in that saying to what fundamental traits of its own essential nature thinking is called. This is why we translate λέγειν literally with: letting-lie-before-us, and νοεῖν, on the other hand, with: tak-

ing-to-heart. Both belong to one single mutual conjunction. But even this conjunction does not yet distinguish the fundamental character of thinking.

The conjunction in its turn requires the determination by that to which it complies. What is that? Quite clearly That to which λέγειν and νοεῖν refer. The saying names it in the word that immediately follows. That word is: εἶν. The translation, correct by the dictionary, is: being. Everybody understands the word, at least by and large and for everyday use, if indeed the word is ever spoken in everyday language.

“What is called thinking?” At the end we return to the question we asked at first when we found out what our word “thinking” originally means. *Thanc* means memory, thinking that recalls, thanks.

But in the meantime we have learned to see that the essential nature of thinking is determined by what there is to be thought about: the presence of what is present, the Being of beings. Thinking is thinking only when it *recalls* in thought the εἶν, That which this word indicates properly and truly, that is, unspoken, tacitly. And that is the duality of beings and Being. This quality is what properly gives food for thought. And what is so given, is the gift of what is most worthy of question.

Can thinking take this gift into its hands, that is, take it to heart, in order to entrust it in λέγειν, in the telling statement, to the original speech of language?

*Translated by Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray*

# Discourse on Thinking (1955)

## Memorial Address

Let my first public word in my home town be a word of thanks.

I thank my homeland for all that it has given me along the path of my life. I have tried to explain the nature of this endowment in those few pages entitled "Der Feldweg" which first appeared in 1949 in a book honoring the hundredth anniversary of the death of Conradin Kreutzer. I thank Mayor Schühle for his warm-hearted welcome. And I am especially grateful for the privilege of giving the memorial address at today's ceremony.

Honored Guests, Friends and Neighbors! We are gathered together in commemoration of the composer Conradin Kreutzer, a native of our region. If we are to honor a man whose calling it is to be creative, we must, above all, duly honor his work. In the case of a musician this is done through the performance of his compositions.

Conradin Kreutzer's compositions ring forth today in song and chorus, in opera and in chamber music. In these sounds the artist himself is present; for the master's presence *in the work* is the only true presence. The greater the master, the more completely his person vanishes behind his work.

The musicians and singers who take part in today's celebration are a warrant that Conradin Kreutzer's work will come to be heard on this occasion.

But does this alone constitute a memorial celebration? A memorial celebration means that we think back, that we *think*. Yet what are we to think and to say at a memorial which is devoted to a composer? Is it not the distinction of music to "speak" through the sounding of tones and so not to need ordinary language, the language of words? So they say. And yet the question remains: Do playing and singing alone make our celebration a thoughtful celebration, one in which we think? Hardly! And so a "memorial address" has been put on the program. It is to help us to think back both to the composer we honor and to his work. These memories

come alive as soon as we relate the story of Conradin Kreutzer's life, and recount and describe his works. Through such a relating we can find much that is joyful and sorrowful, much that is instructive and exemplary. But at bottom we merely allow ourselves to be entertained by such a talk. In listening to such a story, no thinking at all is needed, no reflecting is demanded on what concerns each one of us immediately and continuously in his very being. Thus even a memorial address gives no assurance that we will think at a memorial celebration.

Let us not fool ourselves. All of us, including those who think professionally, as it were, are often enough thought-poor; we all are far too easily thought-less. Thoughtlessness is an uncanny visitor who comes and goes everywhere in today's world. For nowadays we take in everything in the quickest and cheapest way, only to forget it just as quickly, instantly. Thus one gathering follows on the heels of another. Commemorative celebrations grow poorer and poorer in thought. Commemoration and thoughtlessness are found side by side.

But even while we are thoughtless, we do not give up our capacity to think. We rather use this capacity implicitly, though strangely: that is, in thoughtlessness we let it lie fallow. Still only that can lie fallow which in itself is a ground for growth, such as a field. An expressway, where nothing grows, cannot be a fallow field. Just as we can grow deaf only because we hear, just as we can grow old only because we were young; so we can grow thought-poor or even thought-less only because man at the core of his being has the capacity to think; has "spirit and reason" and is destined to think. We can only lose or, as the phrase goes, get loose from that which we knowingly or unknowingly possess.

The growing thoughtlessness must, therefore, spring from some process that gnaws at the very marrow of man today: man today is in *flight from thinking*. This flight-from-thought is the ground of thoughtlessness. But part of this flight is that man will neither see nor admit it. Man today will even flatly deny this flight from thinking. He will assert the opposite. He will say—and quite rightly—that there were at no time such far-reaching plans, so many inquiries in so many areas, research carried on as passionately as today. Of course. And this display of ingenuity and deliberation has its own great usefulness. Such thought remains indispensable. But—it also remains true that it is thinking of a special kind.

Its peculiarity consists in the fact that whenever we plan, research, and organize, we always reckon with conditions that are

given. We take them into account with the calculated intention of their serving specific purposes. Thus we can count on definite results. This calculation is the mark of all thinking that plans and investigates. Such thinking remains calculation even if it neither works with numbers nor uses an adding machine or computer. Calculative thinking computes. It computes ever new, ever more promising and at the same time more economical possibilities. Calculative thinking races from one prospect to the next. Calculative thinking never stops, never collects itself. Calculative thinking is not meditative thinking, not thinking which contemplates the meaning which reigns in everything that is.

There are, then, two kinds of thinking, each justified and needed in its own way: calculative thinking and meditative thinking.

This meditative thinking is what we have in mind when we say that contemporary man is in flight-from-thinking. Yet you may protest: mere meditative thinking finds itself floating unaware above reality. It loses touch. It is worthless for dealing with current business. It profits nothing in carrying out practical affairs.

And you may say, finally, that mere meditative thinking, persevering meditation, is "above" the reach of ordinary understanding. In this excuse only this much is true, meditative thinking does not just happen by itself any more than does calculative thinking. At times it requires a greater effort. It demands more practice. It is in need of even more delicate care than any other genuine craft. But it must also be able to bide its time, to await as does the farmer, whether the seed will come up and ripen.

Yet anyone can follow the path of meditative thinking in his own manner and within his own limits. Why? Because man is a *thinking*, that is, a *meditating* being. Thus meditative thinking need by no means be "high-flown." It is enough if we dwell on what lies close and meditate on what is closest; upon that which concerns us, each one of us, here and now; here, on this patch of home ground; now, in the present hour of history.

What does this celebration suggest to us, in case we are ready to meditate? Then we notice that a work of art has flowered in the ground of our homeland. As we hold this simple fact in mind, we cannot help remembering at once that during the last two centuries great poets and thinkers have been brought forth from the Swabian land. Thinking about it further makes clear at once that Central Germany is likewise such a land, and so are East Prussia, Silesia, and Bohemia.

We grow thoughtful and ask: does not the flourishing of any genuine work depend upon its roots in a native soil? Johann Peter Hebel once wrote: "We are plants which—whether we like to admit it to ourselves or not—must with our roots rise out of the earth in order to bloom in the ether and to bear fruit." (*Works*, ed. Altwegg III, 314.)

The poet means to say; For a truly joyous and salutary human work to flourish, man must be able to mount from the depth of his home ground up into the ether. Ether here means the free air of the high heavens, the open realm of the spirit.

We grow more thoughtful and ask: does this claim of Johann Peter Hebel hold today? Does man still dwell calmly between heaven and earth? Does a meditative spirit still reign over the land? Is there still a life-giving homeland in whose ground man may stand rooted, that is, be autochthonic?

Many Germans have lost their homeland, have had to leave their villages and towns, have been driven from their native soil. Countless others whose homeland was saved, have yet wandered off. They have been caught up in the turmoil of the big cities, and have resettled in the wastelands of industrial districts. They are strangers now to their former homeland. And those who *have* stayed on in their homeland? Often they are still more homeless than those who have been driven from their homeland. Hourly and daily they are chained to radio and television. Week after week the movies carry them off into uncommon, but often merely common, realms of the imagination, and give the illusion of a world that is no world. Picture magazines are everywhere available. All that with which modern techniques of communication stimulate, assail, and drive man—all that is already much closer to man today than his fields around his farmstead, closer than the sky over the earth, closer than the change from night to day, closer than the conventions and customs of his village, than the tradition of his native world.

We grow more thoughtful and ask: What is happening here—with those driven from their homeland no less than with those who have remained? Answer: the *rootedness*, the *autochthony*, of man is threatened today at its core! Even more: The loss of rootedness is caused not merely by circumstance and fortune, nor does it stem only from the negligence and the superficiality of man's way of life. The loss of autochthony springs from the spirit of the age into which all of us were born.

We grow still more thoughtful and ask: If this is so, can man, can man's work in the future still be expected to thrive in the fertile



ground of a homeland and mount into the ether, into the far reaches of the heavens and the spirit? Or will everything now fall into the clutches of planning and calculation, of organization and automation?

If we reflect upon what our celebration today suggests, then we must observe the loss of man's autochthony with which our age is threatened. And we ask: What really is happening in our age? By what is it characterized?

The age that is now beginning has been called of late the atomic age. Its most conspicuous symbol is the atom bomb. But this symbolizes only the obvious; for it was recognized at once that atomic energy can be used also for peaceful purposes. Nuclear physicists everywhere are busy with vast plans to implement the peaceful uses of atomic energy. The great industrial corporations of the leading countries, first of all England, have figured out already that atomic energy can develop into a gigantic business. Through this atomic business a new era of happiness is envisioned. Nuclear science, too, does not stand idly by. It publicly proclaims this era of happiness. Thus in July of this year at Lake Constance, eighteen Nobel Prize winners stated in a proclamation: "Science [and that is modern natural science] is a road to a happier human life."

What is the sense of this statement? Does it spring from reflection? Does it ever ponder on the meaning of the atomic age? No! For if we rest content with this statement of science, we remain as far as possible from a reflective insight into our age. Why? Because we forget to ponder. Because we forget to ask: What is the ground that enabled modern technology to discover and set free new energies in nature?

This is due to a revolution in leading concepts which has been going on for the past several centuries, and by which man is placed in a different world. This radical revolution in outlook has come about in modern philosophy. From this arises a completely new relation of man to the world and his place in it. The world now appears as an object open to the attacks of calculative thought, attacks that nothing is believed able any longer to resist. Nature becomes a gigantic gasoline station, an energy source for modern technology and industry. This relation of man to the world as such, in principle a technical one, developed in the seventeenth century first and only in Europe. It long remained unknown in other continents, and it was altogether alien to former ages and histories.

The power concealed in modern technology determines the relation of man to that which exists. It rules the whole earth. Indeed,

already man is beginning to advance beyond the earth into outer space. In not quite twenty years, such gigantic sources of power have become known through the discovery of atomic energy that in the foreseeable future the world's demands for energy of any kind will be ensured forever. Soon the procurement of the new energies will no longer be tied to certain countries and continents, as is the occurrence of coal, oil, and timber. In the foreseeable future it will be possible to build atomic power stations anywhere on earth.

Thus the decisive question of science and technology today is no longer: Where do we find sufficient quantities of fuel? The decisive question now runs: In what way can we tame and direct the unimaginably vast amounts of atomic energies, and so secure mankind against the danger that these gigantic energies suddenly—even without military actions—break out somewhere, “run away” and destroy everything?

If the taming of atomic energy is successful, and it will be successful, then a totally new era of technical development will begin. What we know now as the technology of film and television, of transportation and especially air transportation, of news reporting, and as medical and nutritional technology, is presumably only a crude start. No one can foresee the radical changes to come. But technological advance will move faster and faster and can never be stopped. In all areas of his existence, man will be encircled ever more tightly by the forces of technology. These forces, which everywhere and every minute claim, enchain, drag along, press and impose upon man under the form of some technical contrivance or other—these forces, since man has not made them, have moved long since beyond his will and have outgrown his capacity for decision.

But this too is characteristic of the new world of technology, that its accomplishments come most speedily to be known and publicly admired. Thus today everyone will be able to read what this talk says about technology in any competently managed picture magazine or hear it on the radio. But—it is one thing to have heard and read something, that is, merely to take notice; it is another thing to understand what we have heard and read, that is, to ponder.

The international meeting of Nobel Prize winners took place again in the summer of this year of 1955 in Lindau. There the American chemist, Stanley, had this to say: “The hour is near when life will be placed in the hands of the chemist who will be able to

synthesize, split and change living substance at will." We take notice of such a statement. We even marvel at the daring of scientific research, without thinking about it. We do not stop to consider that an attack with technological means is being prepared upon the life and nature of man compared with which the explosion of the hydrogen bomb means little. For precisely if the hydrogen bombs do *not* explode and human life on earth is preserved, an uncanny change in the world moves upon us.

Yet it is not that the world is becoming entirely technical which is really uncanny. Far more uncanny is our being unprepared for this transformation, our inability to confront meditatively what is really dawning in this age.

No single man, no group of men, no commission of prominent statesmen, scientists, and technicians, no conference of leaders of commerce and industry, can brake or direct the progress of history in the atomic age. No merely human organization is capable of gaining dominion over it.

Is man, then, a defenseless and perplexed victim at the mercy of the irresistible superior power of technology? He would be if man today abandons any intention to pit meditative thinking decisively against merely calculative thinking. But once meditative thinking awakens, it must be at work unceasingly and on every last occasion—hence, also, here and now at this commemoration. For here we are considering what is threatened especially in the atomic age: the autochthony of the works of man.

Thus we ask now: even if the old rootedness is being lost in this age, may not a new ground and foundation be granted again to man, a foundation and ground out of which man's nature and all his works can flourish in a new way even in the atomic age?

What could the ground and foundation be for the new autochthony? Perhaps the answer we are looking for lies at hand; so near that we all too easily overlook it. For the way to what is near is always the longest and thus the hardest for us humans. This way is the way of meditative thinking. Meditative thinking demands of us not to cling one-sidedly to a single idea, nor to run down a one-track course of ideas. Meditative thinking demands of us that we engage ourselves with what at first sight does not go together at all.

Let us give it a trial. For all of us, the arrangements, devices, and machinery of technology are to a greater or lesser extent indispensable. It would be foolish to attack technology blindly. It would be shortsighted to condemn it as the work of the devil. We depend on

technical devices; they even challenge us to ever greater advances. But suddenly and unaware we find ourselves so firmly shackled to these technical devices that we fall into bondage to them.

Still we can act otherwise. We can use technical devices, and yet with proper use also keep ourselves so free of them, that we may let go of them any time. We can use technical devices as they ought to be used, and also let them alone as something which does not affect our inner and real core. We can affirm the unavoidable use of technical devices, and also deny them the right to dominate us, and so to warp, confuse, and lay waste our nature.

But will not saying both yes and no this way to technical devices make our relation to technology ambivalent and insecure? On the contrary! Our relation to technology will become wonderfully simple and relaxed. We let technical devices enter our daily life, and at the same time leave them outside, that is, let them alone, as things which are nothing absolute but remain dependent upon something higher. I would call this comportment toward technology which expresses "yes" and at the same time "no," by an old word, *release-ment toward things*.

Having this comportment we no longer view things only in a technical way. It gives us clear vision and we notice that while the production and use of machines demands of us another relation to things, it is not a meaningless relation. Farming and agriculture, for example, now have turned into a motorized food industry. Thus here, evidently, as elsewhere, a profound change is taking place in man's relation to nature and to the world. But the meaning that reigns in this change remains obscure.

There is then in all technical processes a meaning, not invented or made by us, which lays claim to what man does and leaves undone. We do not know the significance of the uncanny increasing dominance of atomic technology. *The meaning pervading technology hides itself*. But if we explicitly and continuously heed the fact that such hidden meaning touches us everywhere in the world of technology, we stand at once within the realm of that which hides itself from us, and hides itself just in approaching us. That which shows itself and at the same time withdraws is the essential trait of what we call the mystery. I call the comportment which enables us to keep open to the meaning hidden in technology, *openness to the mystery*.

Release-ment toward things and openness to the mystery belong together. They grant us the possibility of dwelling in the world in a

totally different way. They promise us a new ground and foundation upon which we can stand and endure in the world of technology without being imperiled by it.

Releasement toward things and openness to the mystery give us a vision of a new autochthony which someday even might be fit to recapture the old and now rapidly disappearing autochthony in a changed form.

But for the time being—we do not know for how long—man finds himself in a perilous situation. Why? Just because a third world war might break out unexpectedly and bring about the complete annihilation of humanity and the destruction of the earth? No. In this dawning atomic age a far greater danger threatens—precisely when the danger of a third world war has been removed. A strange assertion! Strange indeed, but only as long as we do not meditate.

In what sense is the statement just made valid? This assertion is valid in the sense that the approaching tide of technological revolution in the atomic age could so captivate, bewitch, dazzle, and beguile man that calculative thinking may someday come to be accepted and practiced *as the only* way of thinking.

What great danger then might move upon us? Then there might go hand in hand with the greatest ingenuity in calculative planning and inventing indifference toward meditative thinking, total thoughtlessness. And then? Then man would have denied and thrown away his own special nature—that he is a meditative being. Therefore, the issue is the saving of man's essential nature. Therefore, the issue is keeping meditative thinking alive.

Yet releasement toward things and openness to the mystery never happen of themselves. They do not befall us accidentally. Both flourish only through persistent, courageous thinking.

Perhaps today's memorial celebration will prompt us toward this. If we respond to the prompting, we think of Conradin Kreutzer by thinking of the origin of his work, the life-giving powers of his Heuberg homeland. And it is *we* who *think* if we know ourselves here and now as the men who must find and prepare the way into the atomic age, through it and out of it.

If releasement toward things and openness to the mystery awaken within us, then we should arrive at a path that will lead to a new ground and foundation. In that ground the creativity which produces lasting works could strike new roots.

Thus in a different manner and in a changed age, the truth of what Johann Peter Hebel says should be renewed:

We are plants which—whether we like to admit it to ourselves or not—must with our roots rise out of the earth in order to bloom in the ether and to bear fruit.

*Translated by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund*

# THE MESSAGE From “Being” to “Beyng”

## FUNDAMENTAL ONTOLOGY

### An Analysis of Environmentality and Worldliness in General (1927)

#### The Being of Beings Encountered in the Surrounding World

The phenomenological exhibition of the being of beings encountered nearest to us can be accomplished under the guidance of the everyday being-in-the-world, which we also call *association in the world with inner-worldly beings*. Associations are already dispersed in manifold ways of taking care of things. However, as we showed, the closest kind of association is not mere perceptual cognition, but, rather, a handling, using, and taking care of things which has its own kind of “knowledge.” Our phenomenological question is initially concerned with the being of those beings encountered when taking care of something. A methodical remark is necessary to secure the kind of seeing required here.

In the disclosure and explication of being, beings are always our preliminary and accompanying theme. The real theme is being. What shows itself in taking care of things in the surrounding world constitutes the prethematic being in the domain of our analysis. This being is not the object of a theoretical “world”-cognition; it is what is used, produced, and so on. As a being thus encountered, it comes pre-thematically into view for a “knowing” which, as a phenomenological knowing, primarily looks toward being and on the basis of this thematization of being thematizes actual beings as well. Thus, this phenomenological interpretation is not a cognition of existent qualities of beings; but, rather, a determination of the

structure of their being. But as an investigation of being it independently and explicitly brings about the understanding of being which always already belongs to Da-sein and is "alive" in every association with beings. Phenomenologically pre-thematic beings, what is used and produced, become accessible when we put ourselves in the place of taking care of things in the world. Strictly speaking, to talk of putting ourselves in the place of taking care is misleading. We do not first need to put ourselves in the place of this way of being in associating with and taking care of things. Everyday Da-sein always already *is* in this way; for example, in opening the door, I use the doorknob. Gaining phenomenological access to the beings thus encountered consists rather in rejecting the interpretational tendencies crowding and accompanying us which cover over the phenomenon of "taking care" of things in general, and thus even more so beings *as* they are encountered of their own accord *in* taking care. These insidious mistakes become clear when we ask: Which beings are to be our preliminary theme and established as a pre-phenomenal basis?

We answer: things. But perhaps we have already missed the pre-phenomenal basis we are looking for with this self-evident answer. For an unexpressed anticipatory ontological characterization is contained in addressing beings as "things" (*res*). An analysis which starts with such beings and goes on to inquire about being comes up with thingliness and reality. Ontological explication thus finds, as it proceeds, characteristics of being such as substantiality, materiality, extendedness, side-by-sideness. . . . But the beings encountered and taken care of are also pre-ontologically hidden at first in this being. When one designates things as the beings that are "initially given" one goes astray ontologically, although one means something else ontically. What one really means remains indefinite. Or else one characterizes these "things" as "valuable." What does value mean ontologically? How is this "having" value and being involved with value to be understood categorially? Apart from the obscurity of this structure of having value, is the phenomenal character of being of what is encountered and taken care of in association thus attained?

The Greeks had an appropriate term for "things": *pragmata*, that is, that with which one has to do in taking care of things in association (*praxis*). But the specifically "pragmatic" character of the *pragmata* is just what was left in obscurity and "initially" determined as "mere things." We shall call the beings encountered in



taking care *useful things*. In association we find things for writing, things for sewing, things for working, driving, measuring. We must elucidate the kind of being of useful things. This can be done following the guideline of the previous definition of what makes a useful thing a useful thing: usable material.

Strictly speaking, there "is" no such thing as *a* useful thing. There always belongs to the being of a useful thing a totality of useful things in which this useful thing can be what it is. A useful thing is essentially "something in order to . . .". The different kinds of "in order to" such as serviceability, helpfulness, usability, handiness, constitute a totality of useful things. The structure of "in order to" contains a *reference* of something to something. Only in the following analyses can the phenomenon indicated by this word be made visible in its ontological genesis. At this time, our task is to bring a multiplicity of references phenomenally into view. In accordance with their character of being usable material, useful things always are *in terms of* their belonging to other useful things: writing materials, pen, ink, paper, desk blotter, table, lamp. Furniture, windows, doors, room. These "things" never show themselves initially by themselves, in order then to fill out a room as a sum of real things. What we encounter as nearest to us, although we do not grasp it thematically, is the room, not as what is "between the four walls" in a geometrical, spatial sense, but rather as material for living. On the basis of the latter we find "accommodations," and in accommodations the actual "individual" useful thing. A totality of useful things is always already discovered *before* the individual useful thing.

Association geared to useful things which show themselves genuinely only in this association, that is, hammering with the hammer, neither *grasps* these beings thematically as occurring things nor does it even know of using or the structure of useful things as such. Hammering does not just have a knowledge of the useful character of the hammer; rather, it has appropriated this useful thing in the most adequate way possible. When we take care of things, we are subordinate to the in-order-to-constitutive for the actual useful thing in our association with it. The less we just stare at the thing called hammer, the more actively we use it, the more original our relation to it becomes and the more undisguisedly it is encountered as what it is, as a useful thing. The act of hammering itself discovers the specific "handiness" of the hammer. We shall call the useful thing's kind of being in which it reveals itself by itself *handiness*. It

is only because useful things have *this* “being-in-themselves,” and do not merely occur, that they are handy in the broadest sense and are at our disposal. No matter how keenly we just *look at* the “outward appearance” of things constituted in one way or another, we cannot discover handiness. When we just look at things “theoretically,” we lack an understanding of handiness. But association which makes use of things is not blind, it has its own way of seeing which guides our operations and gives them their specific thingly quality. Our association with useful things is subordinate to the manifold of references of the “in-order-to.” The kind of seeing of this accommodation to things is called *circumspection*.

“Practical” behavior is not “atheoretical” in the sense of a lack of seeing, and the difference between it and theoretical behavior lies not only in the fact that on the one hand we observe and on the other we *act*, and that action must apply theoretical cognition if it is not to remain blind. Rather, observation is a kind of taking care just as primordially as action has *its own* kind of seeing. Theoretical behavior is just looking, noncircumspectly. Because it is noncircumspect, looking is not without rules; its canon takes shape in *method*.

Handiness is not grasped theoretically at all, nor is it itself initially a theme for circumspection. What is peculiar to what is initially at hand is that it withdraws, so to speak, in its character of handiness in order to be really handy. What everyday association is initially busy with is not tools themselves, but the work. What is to be produced in each case is what is primarily taken care of and is thus also what is at hand. The work bears the totality of references in which useful things are encountered.

As the *what-for* of the hammer, plane, and needle, the work to be produced has in its turn the kind of being of a useful thing. The shoe to be produced is for wearing (footgear), the clock is made for telling time. The work which we primarily encounter when we deal with things and take care of them—what we are at work with—always already lets us encounter the *what-for* of *its* usability in the usability which essentially belongs to it. The work that has been ordered exists in its turn only on the basis of its use and the referential context of beings discovered in that use.

But the work to be produced is not just useful for . . . ; production itself is always a using *of* something for something. A reference to “materials” is contained in the work at the same time. The work is dependent upon leather, thread, nails, and similar things. Leather in its turn is produced from hides. These hides are taken from ani-

mals which were bred and raised by others. We also find animals in the world which were not bred and raised and even when they have been raised these beings produce themselves in a certain sense. Thus beings are accessible in the surrounding world which in themselves do not need to be produced and are always already at hand. Hammer, tongs, nails in themselves refer to—they consist of—steel, iron, metal, stone, wood. “Nature” is also discovered in the use of useful things, “nature” in the light of products of nature.

But nature must not be understood here as what is merely objectively present, nor as the *power of nature*. The forest is a forest of timber, the mountain a quarry of rock, the river is water power, the wind is wind “in the sails.” As the “surrounding world” is discovered, “nature” thus discovered is encountered along with it. We can abstract from nature’s kind of being as handiness; we can discover and define it in its pure objective presence. But in this kind of discovery of nature, nature as what “stirs and strives,” what overcomes us, entrances us as landscape, remains hidden. The botanist’s plants are not the flowers of the hedgerow, the river’s “source” ascertained by the geographer is not the “source in the ground.”

The work produced refers not only to the what-for of its usability and the whereof of which it consists. The simple conditions of craft contain a reference to the wearer and user at the same time. The work is cut to his figure; he “is” there as the work emerges. This constitutive reference is by no means lacking when wares are produced by the dozen; it is only undefined, pointing to the random and the average. Thus not only beings which are at hand are encountered in the work but also beings with the kind of being of *Da-sein* for whom what is produced becomes handy in its taking care. Here the world is encountered in which wearers and users live, a world which is at the same time our world. The work taken care of in each case is not only at hand in the domestic world of the workshop, but rather in the *public world*. Along with the public world, the *surrounding world of nature* is discovered and accessible to everyone. In taking care of things, nature is discovered as having some definite direction on paths, streets, bridges, and buildings. A covered railroad platform takes bad weather into account, public lighting systems take darkness into account, the specific change of the presence and absence of daylight, the “position of the sun.” Clocks take into account a specific constellation in the world system. When we look at the clock, we tacitly use the “position of the sun” according to which the official astronomical regulation of time is carried out. The

surrounding world of nature is also at hand in the usage of clock equipment which is at first inconspicuously at hand. Our absorption in taking care of things in the work world nearest to us has the function of discovering; depending upon the way we are absorbed, innerworldly beings that are brought along together with their constitutive references are discoverable in varying degrees of explicitness and with a varying attentive penetration.

The kind of being of these beings is "handiness" (*Zuhandenheit*). But it must not be understood as a mere characteristic of interpretation, as if such "aspects" were discursively forced upon "beings" which we initially encounter, as if an initially objectively present world-stuff were "subjectively colored" in this way. Such an interpretation overlooks the fact that in that case beings would have to be understood beforehand and discovered as purely objectively present, and would thus have priority and take the lead in the order of discovering and appropriating association with the "world." But this already goes against the ontological meaning of the cognition which we showed to be a *founded* mode of being-in-the-world. To expose what is merely objectively present, cognition must first penetrate *beyond* things at hand being taken care of. *Handiness is the ontological categorial definition of beings as they are "in themselves."* But "there are" handy things, after all, only on the basis of what is objectively present. Admitting this thesis, does it then follow that handiness is ontologically founded in objective presence?

But if, in our continuing ontological interpretation, handiness proves to be the kind of being of beings first discovered within the world, if its primordially can ever be demonstrated over and against pure objective presence, does what we have explained up to now contribute in the least to an ontological understanding of the phenomenon of world? We have, after all, always "presupposed" world in our interpretation of these innerworldly beings. Joining these beings together does not result as a sum in something like "world." Is there then any path at all leading from the being of these beings to showing the phenomenon of world?

### **The Worldly Character of the Surrounding World Making Itself Known in Innerworldly Beings**

World itself is not an innerworldly being, and yet it determines innerworldly beings to such an extent that they can only be encoun-

tered and discovered and show themselves in their being because "there is" world. But how "is there" world? If Da-sein is ontically constituted by being-in-the-world and if an understanding of the being of its self belongs just as essentially to it, even if that understanding is quite indeterminate, does it not then have an understanding of world, a pre-ontological understanding which lacks and can dispense with explicit ontological insights? Does not something like world show itself to being-in-the-world taking care of the beings encountered within the world, that is, their innerworldliness? Does not this phenomenon come to a pre-phenomenological view; is it not always in view without requiring a thematically ontological interpretation? In the scope of its heedful absorption in useful things at hand, does not Da-sein have a possibility of being in which, together *with* the innerworldly beings taken care of, their worldliness becomes apparent to it in a certain way?

If such possibilities of being of Da-sein can be shown in its heedful association, a path is opened to pursue the phenomenon thus illuminated and to attempt, so to speak, to "place" it and interrogate the structures evident in it.

Modes of taking care belong to the everydayness of being-in-the-world, modes which let the beings taken care of be encountered in such a way that the worldly quality of innerworldly beings appears. Beings nearest at hand can be met up with in taking care of things as unusable, as improperly adapted for their specific use. Tools turn out to be damaged, their material unsuitable. In any case, *a useful thing* of some sort is at hand here. But we discover the unusability not by looking and ascertaining properties, but rather by paying attention to the associations in which we use it. When we discover its unusability, the thing becomes conspicuous. *Conspicuousness* presents the thing at hand in a certain unhandiness. But this implies that what is unusable just lies there, it shows itself as a thing of use which has this or that appearance and which is always also objectively present with this or that outward appearance in its handiness. Pure objective presence makes itself known in the useful thing only to withdraw again into the handiness of what is taken care of, that is, of what is being put back into repair. This objective presence of what is unusable still does not lack all handiness whatsoever; the useful thing *thus* objectively present is still not a thing which just occurs somewhere. The damage to the useful thing is still not a mere change in the thing, a change of qualities simply occurring in something objectively present.

But heedful association does not just come up against unusable things *within* what is already at hand. It also finds things which are missing, which are not only not “handy,” but not “at hand” at all. When we come upon something unhandy, our missing it in this way again discovers what is at hand in a certain kind of mere objective presence. When we notice its unhandiness, what is at hand enters the mode of *obtrusiveness*. The more urgently we need what is missing and the more truly it is encountered in its unhandiness, all the more obtrusive does what is at hand become, such that it seems to lose the character of handiness. It reveals itself as something merely objectively present, which cannot be budged without the missing element. As a deficient mode of taking care of things, the helpless way in which we stand before it discovers the mere objective presence of what is at hand.

In associating with the world taken care of, what is unhandy can be encountered not only in the sense of something unusable or completely missing, but as something unhandy which is *not* missing at all and *not* unusable, but “gets in the way” of taking care of things. That to which taking care of things cannot turn, for which it has “no time,” is something *unhandy* in the way of not belonging there, of not being complete. Unhandy things are disturbing and make evident the *obstinacy* of what is initially to be taken care of before anything else. With this obstinacy the objective presence of what is at hand makes itself known in a new way as the being of what is still present and calls for completion.

The modes of conspicuousness, obtrusiveness, and obstinacy have the function of bringing to the fore the character of objective presence in what is at hand. What is at hand is not thereby *observed* and stared at simply as something objectively present. The character of objective presence making itself known is still bound to the handiness of useful things. These still do not disguise themselves as mere things. Useful things become “things” in the sense of what one would like to throw away. But in this tendency to throw things away, what is at hand is still shown as being at hand in its unyielding objective presence.

But what does this reference to the modified way of encountering what is at hand, a way in which its objective presence is revealed, mean for the clarification of the *phenomenon of world*? In the analysis of this modification, too, we are still involved with the being of innerworldly beings. We have not yet come any closer to the phenomenon of world. We have not yet grasped that phenomenon, but we now have the possibility of catching sight of it.

In its conspicuousness, obtrusiveness, and obstinacy, what is at hand loses its character of handiness in a certain sense. But this handiness is itself understood, although not thematically, in associating with what is at hand. It does not just disappear, but bids farewell, so to speak, in the conspicuousness of what is unusable. Handiness shows itself once again, and precisely in doing so the worldly character of what is at hand also shows itself, too.

The structure of being of what is at hand as useful things is determined by references. The peculiar and self-evident "in itself" of the nearest "things" is encountered when we take care of things, using them but not paying specific attention to them, while bumping into things that are unusable. Something is unusable. This means that the constitutive reference of the in-order-to to a what-for has been disturbed. The references themselves are not observed, rather they are "there" in our heedful adjustment to them. But in a *disruption of reference*—in being unusable for . . . —the reference becomes explicit. It does not yet become explicit as an ontological structure, but ontically for our circumspection which gets annoyed by the damaged tool. This circumspect noticing of the reference to the particular what-for makes the what-for visible and with it the context of the work, the whole "workshop" as that in which taking care of things has always already been dwelling. The context of useful things appears not as a totality never seen before, but as a totality that has continually been seen beforehand in our circumspection. But with this totality world makes itself known.

Similarly, when something at hand is missing whose everyday presence was so much a matter of course that we never even paid attention to it, this constitutes a *breach* in the context of references discovered in our circumspection. Circumspection comes up with emptiness and now sees for the first time what the missing thing was at hand *for* and at hand *with*. Again, the surrounding world makes itself known. What appears in this way is not itself one thing at hand among others and certainly not something *objectively present* which lies at the basis of the useful thing at hand. It is "there" before anyone has observed or ascertained it. It is itself inaccessible to circumspection insofar as circumspection concentrates on beings, but it is always already disclosed for that circumspection. "To disclose" and "disclosedness" are used as technical terms in what follows and mean "to unlock"—"to be open." Thus "to disclose" never means anything like "obtaining something indirectly by inference."

That the world does not “consist” of what is at hand can be seen from the fact (among others) that when the world appears in the modes of taking care which we have just interpreted, what is at hand becomes deprived of its worldliness so that it appears as something merely objectively present. In order for useful things at hand to be encountered in their character of “being-in-itself” in our everyday taking care of the “surrounding world,” the references and referential contexts in which circumspection is “absorbed” must remain nonthematic for that circumspection and all the more so for a noncircumspect, “thematic” abstract comprehension. *When the world does not make itself known*, that is the condition for the possibility of what is at hand not emerging from its inconspicuousness. And this is the constitution of the phenomenal structure of the being-in-itself of these beings.

Privative expressions such as inconspicuousness, unobtrusiveness, and nonobstinacy tell of a positive phenomenal character of the being of what is initially at hand. These negative prefixes express the character of keeping to itself of what is at hand. That is what we have in mind with being-in-itself which, however, we “initially” typically ascribe to things objectively present, as that which can be thematically ascertained. When we are primarily and exclusively oriented toward that which is objectively present, the “in-itself” cannot be ontologically explained at all. However, we must demand an interpretation if the talk about “in-itself” is to have any ontological importance. Mostly one appeals ontically and emphatically to this in-itself of being, and with phenomenal justification. But this *ontic* appeal does not already fulfill the claim of the *ontological* statement presumably given in such an appeal. The foregoing analysis already makes it clear that the being-in-itself of innerworldly beings is ontologically comprehensible only on the basis of the phenomenon of world.

If, however, world can appear in a certain way, it must be disclosed in general. World is always already predisposed for circumspect heedfulness together with the accessibility of innerworldly beings at hand. Thus, it is something “in which” *Da-sein* as a being always already *was*, that to which it can always only come back whenever it explicitly moves toward something in some way.

According to our foregoing interpretation, being-in-the-world signifies the unthematic, circumspect absorption in the references constitutive for the handiness of the totality of useful things. Taking care of things always already occurs on the basis of a familiarity



with the world. In this familiarity Da-sein can lose itself in what it encounters within the world and be numbed by it. With what is Da-sein familiar? Why can the worldly character of innerworldly beings appear? How is the referential totality in which circumspection "moves" to be understood more precisely? When this totality is broken, the objective presence of beings is thrust to the fore.

In order to answer these questions which aim at working out the phenomenon *and problem* of worldliness, a concrete analysis of the structures is necessary in whose context our questions are being asked.

### Reference and Signs

In our preliminary interpretation of the structure of being of things at hand ("useful things"), the phenomenon of reference became visible, but in such a sketchy fashion that we at the same time emphasized the necessity of uncovering the phenomenon merely indicated with regard to its ontological origin. Moreover, it became clear that reference and the referential totality were in some sense constitutive of worldliness itself. Until now we saw the world appear only in and for particular ways of taking care of what is at hand in the surrounding world, together *with* its handiness. Thus the further we penetrate into the understanding of the being of innerworldly beings, the more broad and certain the phenomenal basis for freeing the phenomenon of world becomes.

We shall again take our point of departure with the being of what is at hand with the intention of grasping the phenomenon of *reference* more precisely. For this purpose we shall attempt an ontological analysis of the kind of useful thing in terms of which "references" can be found in a manifold sense. Such a "useful thing" can be found in *signs*. This word names many things. It names not only different *kinds* of signs, but being-a-sign-for something can itself be formalized to a *universal kind of relation* so that the sign structure itself yields an ontological guideline for "characterizing" any being whatsoever.

But signs are themselves initially useful things whose specific character as useful things consists in *indicating*. Such signs are signposts, boundary-stones, the mariner's storm-cone, signals, flags, signs of mourning, and the like. Indicating can be defined as a "kind" of referring. Taken in an extremely formal sense, to refer

means to *relate*. But relation does not function as the genus for “species” of reference which are differentiated as sign, symbol, expression, and signification. Relation is a formal definition which can be directly read off by way of “formalization” from every kind of context, whatever its subject matter or way of being.

Every reference is a relation, but not every relation is a reference. Every “indicating” is a reference, but not every reference is an indicating. This means that every “indicating” is a relation, but not every relation is an indicating. Thus the formal, universal character of relation becomes apparent. If we investigate such phenomena as reference, sign, or even signification, nothing is to be gained by characterizing them as relations. Finally, we must even show that “relation” itself has its ontological origin in reference *because* of its formal, universal character.

If this analysis is limited to an interpretation of the sign as distinct from the phenomenon of reference, even with this limitation, the full multiplicity of possible signs cannot be adequately investigated. Among signs there are symptoms, signs pointing backward as well as forward, marks, hallmarks whose way of indicating is different regardless of what it is that serves as a sign. We should differentiate these signs from the following: traces, residues, monuments, documents, certificates, symbols, expressions, appearances, significations. These phenomena can easily be formalized on the basis of their formal relational character. We are especially inclined today to subject all beings to an “interpretation” following the guideline of such a “relation,” an interpretation which is always “correct” because it basically says nothing, no more than the facile scheme of form and content.

As an example of a sign, we choose one which we shall see again in a later analysis, though in a different regard. Motor cars are equipped with an adjustable red arrow whose position indicates which direction the car will take, for example, at an intersection. The position of the arrow is regulated by the driver of the car. This sign is a useful thing which is at hand not only for the heedfulness (steering) of the driver. Those who are not in the car—and they especially—make use of this useful thing in that they yield accordingly or remain standing. This sign is handy within the world in the totality of the context of useful things belonging to vehicles and traffic regulations. As a useful thing, this pointer is constituted by reference. It has the character of in-order-to, its specific serviceability, it is there in order to indicate. The indicating of this sign can

be taken as a kind of "referring." But here we must note that this "referring" as indicating is not the ontological structure of the sign as a useful thing.

As indicating, "referring" is rather grounded in the structure of being of useful things, in serviceability for. The latter does not automatically make something a sign. The useful thing "hammer" is also characterized by serviceability, but it does not thus become a sign. The "referral" of indicating is the ontic concretion of the what-for of serviceability, and determines a useful thing for that what-for. The referral "serviceability for," on the other hand, is an ontological, categorical determination of the useful thing *as* useful thing. The fact that the what-for of serviceability gets its concretion in indicating is accidental to the constitution of the useful thing as such. The distinction between referral as serviceability and referral as indicating became roughly apparent in the example of the sign. The two coincide so little that their unity first makes possible a particular kind of useful thing. But just as surely as indicating is fundamentally different from referral as the constitution of a useful thing, it is just as incontestable that signs have a peculiar and even distinctive relation to the kind of being of the totality of useful things present in the surrounding world and their worldly character. Useful things which indicate have an *eminent* use in heedful association. However, it cannot suffice ontologically simply to ascertain this fact. The ground and meaning of this pre-eminence must be clarified.

What does the indicating of a sign mean? We can only answer this by defining the appropriate way of associating with things that indicate. In doing this we must also make their handiness genuinely comprehensible. What is the appropriate way of dealing with signs? Taking our orientation toward the above example (the arrow), we must say that the corresponding behavior (being) toward the sign encountered is "yielding" or "remaining still" with reference to the approaching car which has the arrow. As a way of taking a direction, yielding belongs essentially to the being-in-the-world of *Da-sein*. *Da-sein* is always somehow directed and underway. Standing and remaining are only boundary instances of this directed being "underway." Signs address themselves to a specifically "spatial" being-in-the-world. A sign is *not* really "comprehended" when we stare at it and ascertain that it is an indicating thing that occurs. Even if we follow the direction which the arrow indicates and look at something which is objectively present in the region thus indi-

cated, even then the sign is not really encountered. The sign applies to the circumspection of heedful association in such a way that the circumspection following its direction brings the actual aroundness of the surrounding world into an explicit "overview" in that compliance. Circumspect overseeing does not *comprehend* what is at hand. Instead, it acquires an orientation within the surrounding world. Another possibility of experiencing useful things lies in encountering the arrow as a useful thing belonging to the car. Here the arrow's specific character of being a useful thing need not be discovered. What and how it is to indicate can remain completely undetermined, and yet what is encountered is not a mere thing. As opposed to the nearest finding of a multiply undetermined manifold of useful things, the experience of a thing requires its own *definiteness*.

Signs such as we have described let what is at hand be encountered, more precisely, let their context become accessible in such a way that heedful association gets and secures an orientation. Signs are not things which stand in an indicating relationship to another thing but are *useful things which explicitly bring a totality of useful things to circumspection so that the worldly character of what is at hand makes itself known at the same time*. In symptoms and preliminary indications "what is coming" "shows itself," but not in the sense of something merely occurring which is added to what is already objectively present. "What is coming" is something which we expect or "didn't expect" insofar as we were busy with other things. What has happened and occurred becomes accessible to our circumspection through signs after it has already happened. Signs indicate what is actually "going on." Signs always indicate primarily "wherein" we live, what our heedfulness is concerned with, what the relevance is.

The peculiar character of useful things as signs becomes especially clear in "establishing a sign." This happens in and through a circumspect anticipation which needs the possibility at hand of letting the actual surrounding world make itself known for circumspection through something at hand at any time. But the character of not emerging and keeping to itself which we described belongs to the being of innerworldly beings at hand nearest to us. Thus circumspect association in the surrounding world needs a useful thing at hand which in its character of being a useful thing takes over the "work" of *letting* things at hand become *conspicuous*. Accordingly, production of such useful things (signs) must take their conspicu-

ousness into consideration. But even as conspicuous things, they are not taken as objectively present arbitrarily, but are "set up" in a definite way with a view toward easy accessibility.

But establishing signs does not necessarily have to come about in such a way that a useful thing at hand which was not yet present at all is produced. Signs also originate when something already at hand is *taken as a sign*. In this mode establishing a sign reveals a still more primordial meaning. Indicating not only creates the circumspectly oriented availability of a totality of useful things and the surrounding world in general, establishing a sign can even discover something for the first time. What is taken as a sign first becomes accessible through its handiness. For example, when the south wind is "accepted" by the farmer as a sign of rain, this "acceptance" or the "value attached" to this being is not a kind of bonus attached to something already objectively present, that is, the movement of the wind and a certain geographical direction. As this mere occurrence which is meteorologically accessible, the south wind is *never initially* objectively present which sometimes takes on the function of omen. Rather, the farmer's circumspection first discovers the south wind in its being by taking the lay of the land into account.

But, one will protest, *what* is taken as a sign must, after all, first have become accessible in itself and grasped *before* establishing the sign. To be sure, it must already be there in some way or another. The question simply remains *how* beings are discovered in this preliminary encounter, whether as something merely occurring and not rather as an uncomprehended kind of useful thing, a thing at hand which one did not know "what to do with" up to now, which accordingly veiled itself to circumspection. *Here again, one must also not interpret the character of useful things at hand which have not been discovered by circumspection as mere thingliness presented for the comprehension of something merely objectively present.*

The handy presence of signs in everyday associations and the conspicuousness which belongs to signs and can be produced with varying intentions and in different ways not only document the inconspicuousness constitutive for what is at hand nearest to us, the sign itself takes its conspicuousness from the inconspicuousness of the totality of useful things at hand in everydayness as a "matter of course," for example, the well-known "string on one's finger" as a reminder. What it is supposed to indicate is always something to be taken care of within the purview of everydayness. This sign can

indicate many things of the most diverse sort. The narrowness of intelligibility and use corresponds to the breadth of what can be indicated in such signs. Not only is it mostly at hand as a sign only for the person who "establishes" it, it can become inaccessible to him so that a second sign is necessary for the possible circumspect applicability of the first one. The string which cannot be used as a sign does not thus lose its sign character, but rather acquires the disturbing obtrusiveness of something near at hand.

One could be tempted to illustrate the distinctive role of signs in everyday heedfulness for the understanding of the world itself by citing the extensive use of "signs," such as fetishism and magic, in primitive *Da-sein*. Certainly the establishment of signs that underlies such use of signs does not come about with theoretical intent and by way of theoretical speculation. The use of signs remains completely within an "immediate" being-in-the-world. But when one looks more closely, it becomes clear that the interpretation of fetishism and magic under the guideline of the idea of signs is not sufficient at all to comprehend the kind of "handiness" of beings encountered in the world of primitives. With regard to the phenomenon of signs, we might give the following interpretation that for primitive people the sign coincides with what it indicates. The sign itself can represent what it indicates not only in the sense of replacing it, but in such a way that the sign itself always *is* what is indicated. This remarkable coincidence of the sign with what is indicated does not, however, mean that the sign-thing has already undergone a certain "objectification," has been experienced as a pure thing and been transposed together with what is signified to the same region of being of objective presence. The "coincidence" is not an identification of hitherto isolated things, but rather the sign has not yet become free from that for which it is a sign. This kind of use of signs is still completely absorbed in the being of what is indicated so that a sign as such cannot be detached at all. The coincidence is not based on a first objectification, but rather upon the complete lack of such an objectification. But this means that signs are not at all discovered as useful things, that ultimately what is "at hand" in the world does not have the kind of being of useful things at all. Perhaps this ontological guideline (handiness and useful things), too, can provide nothing for an interpretation of the primitive world, and certainly for an ontology of thingliness. But if an understanding of being is constitutive for primitive *Da-sein* and the primitive world in general, it is all the more urgent to develop

the “formal” idea of worldliness; namely, of a phenomenon which can be modified in such a way that all ontological statements which assert that in a given phenomenal context something is *not yet* or *no longer* such and such may acquire a *positive* phenomenal meaning in terms of what it is *not*.

The foregoing interpretation of signs should simply offer phenomenal support for our characterization of reference. The relation between sign and reference is threefold: (1) As a possible concretion of the what-for of serviceability, the indicating is based upon the structure of useful things in general, upon the in-order-to (reference). (2) As the character of useful things at hand, the indicating of signs belongs to a totality of useful things, to a referential context. (3) Signs are not just at hand along with other useful things but rather in their handiness the surrounding world becomes explicitly accessible to circumspection. *Signs are something ontically at hand which as this definite useful thing functions at the same time as something which indicates the ontological structure of handiness, referential totality, and worldliness.* The distinctive characteristic of these things at hand within the surrounding world circumspectly taken care of is rooted here. Thus reference cannot itself be comprehended as a sign if it is ontologically to be the foundation for signs. Reference is not the ontic specification of something at hand since it, after all, constitutes handiness itself. In what sense is reference the ontological “presupposition” of what is at hand, and as this ontological foundation, to what extent is it at the same time constitutive of worldliness in general?

### **Relevance and Significance: The Worldliness of the World**

Things at hand are encountered within the world. The being of these beings, handiness, is thus ontologically related to the world and to worldliness. World is always already “there” in all things at hand. World is already discovered beforehand together with everything encountered, although not thematically. However, it can also appear in certain ways of associating with the surrounding world. World is that in terms of which things at hand are at hand for us. How can world let things at hand be encountered? Our analysis showed that what is encountered within the world is freed in its being for heedful circumspection, for taking matters into account. What does this prior freeing mean and how is it to be understood

as the ontological distinction of the world? What problems does the question of the worldliness of the world confront?

The constitution of useful things as things at hand has been described as reference. How can world free beings of this kind with regard to their being, why are these beings encountered first? We mentioned serviceability for, impairment, usability, and so forth, as specific kinds of reference. The what-for of serviceability and the wherefore of usability prefigure the possible concretion of reference. The “indicating” of signs, the “hammering” of the hammer, however, are not qualities of beings. They are not qualities at all if this term is supposed to designate the ontological structure of a possible determination of things. In any case, things at hand are suited and unsuited for things, and their “qualities” are, so to speak, still bound up with that suitability or unsuitability, just as objective presence, as a possible kind of being of things at hand, is still bound up with handiness. But as the constitution of useful things, serviceability (reference) is also not the suitability of beings, but the condition of the possibility of being for their being able to be determined by suitability. But then what does reference mean? The fact that the being of things at hand has the structure of reference means that they have in themselves the character of *being referred*. Beings are discovered with regard to the fact that they are referred, as those beings which they are, to something. They are relevant *together with* something else. The character of being of things at hand is *relevance*. To be relevant means to let something be together with something else. The relations of “together . . . with . . .” is to be indicated by the term reference.

Relevance is the being of innerworldly beings, for which they are always already initially freed. Beings are in each case relevant. Being is the *ontological* determination of the being of these beings, not an ontic statement about beings. What the relevance is about is the what-for of serviceability, the wherefore of usability. The what-for of serviceability can in turn be relevant. For example, the thing at hand which we call a hammer has to do with hammering, the hammering has to do with fastening something, fastening something has to do with protection against bad weather. This protection “is” for the sake of providing shelter for Da-sein, that is, for the sake of a possibility of its being. *Which* relevance things at hand have is prefigured in terms of the total relevance. The total relevance which, for example, constitutes the things at hand in a workshop in their handiness is “earlier” than any single useful thing, as



is the farmstead with all its utensils and neighboring lands. The total relevance itself, however, ultimately leads back to a what-for which *no longer* has relevance, which itself is not a being of the kind of being of things at hand within a world, but is a being whose being is defined as being-in-the-world, to whose constitution of being worldliness itself belongs. This primary what-for is not just another for-that as a possible factor in relevance. The primary "what-for" is a for-the-sake-of-which. But the for-the-sake-of-which always concerns the being of *Da-sein* which is essentially concerned *about* this being itself in its being. For the moment we shall not pursue any further the connection indicated which leads from the structure of relevance to the being of *Da-sein* itself as the real and unique for-the-sake-of-which. "Letting something be relevant" first of all requires a clarification which goes far enough to bring the phenomenon of worldliness to *the* kind of definiteness needed in order to be able to ask questions about it in general.

Ontically, to let something be relevant means to let things at hand *be* in such and such a way in factual taking care of things, to let them be *as* they are and *in order that* they be such. We grasp the ontic meaning of this "letting be" in a fundamentally ontological way. Thus we interpret the meaning of the previous freeing of innerworldly beings initially at hand. Previously letting "be" does not mean first to bring something to its being and produce it, but rather to discover something that is already a "being" in its handiness and thus let it be encountered as the being of this being. This "*a priori*" letting something be relevant is the condition of the possibility that things at hand be encountered so that *Da-sein* in its ontic association with the beings thus encountered can let them be relevant in an ontic sense. On the other hand, letting something be relevant, understood in an ontological sense, concerns the freeing of *every* thing at hand as a thing at hand, whether it is relevant in the ontic sense or whether it is such a being which is precisely *not* relevant ontically—which is initially and for the most part what is taken care of, which we do not let "be" as the discovered being it is, but work over it, improve it, destroy it.

To have always already let something be freed for relevance is an *a priori perfect* characterizing the kind of being of *Da-sein* itself. Understood ontologically, letting something be relevant is the previous freeing of beings for their innerworldly handiness. The with-what of relevance is freed in terms of the together-with-what of relevance. It is encountered by heedfulness as this thing at hand. When

a *being* shows itself in general to heedfulness, that is, when a being is discovered in its being, it is always already a thing at hand in the surrounding world and precisely not “initially” merely objectively present “world-stuff.”

As the being of things at hand, relevance itself is always discovered only on the basis of a relevant totality previously discovered, that is, in the things at hand encountered; what we called the worldly character of things at hand thus lies prediscovered. This totality of relevance previously discovered contains an ontological relation to the world. Letting beings be relevant and thus freeing them for a totality of relevance must have already somehow disclosed that for which it is freeing. That for which things at hand in the surrounding world are freed (in such a way that the things at hand first become accessible *as* innerworldly beings) cannot itself be understood as a being of the kind of being thus discovered. It is essentially not discoverable if we restrict *discoveredness* as the term for a possibility of being of all beings *unlike* Da-sein.

But now what does that mean, to say that for which innerworldly beings are initially freed must previously be disclosed? An understanding of being belongs to the being of Da-sein. Understanding has its being in an act of understanding. If the kind of being of being-in-the-world essentially belongs to Da-sein, then the understanding of being-in-the-world belongs to the essential content of its understanding of being. The previous disclosure of that for which the freeing of things encountered in the world ensues is none other than the understanding of world to which Da-sein as a being is always already related.

Previous letting something be relevant to . . . with . . . is grounded in an understanding of something like letting things be relevant, and such things as the in-which and with-which of relevance. These things and what underlies them, such as the what-for to which relevance is related, the for-the-sake-of-which from which every what-for is ultimately derived, all of these must be previously disclosed in a certain intelligibility. And what is that in which Da-sein understands itself pre-ontologically as being-in-the-world? In understanding a context of relations, Da-sein has been referred to an in-order-to in terms of an explicitly or inexplicitly grasped potentiality-of-its-being for the sake of which it is, which can be authentic or inauthentic. This prefigures a what-for as the possible letting something be relevant which structurally allows for relevance *to* something else. Da-sein is always in each case already re-

ferred in terms of a for-the-sake-of-which to the with-what of relevance. This means that, insofar as it is, it always already lets beings be encountered as things at hand. That *within* which Da-sein understands itself beforehand in the mode of self-reference is that *for which* it lets beings be encountered beforehand. *As that for which one lets beings be encountered in the kind of being of relevance, the wherein of self-referential understanding is the phenomenon of world.* And the structure of that which Da-sein is referred is what constitutes the *worldliness* of the world.

Da-sein is primordially familiar with that within which it understands itself in this way. This familiarity with the world does not necessarily require a theoretical transparency of the relations constituting the world as world. But it is probable that the possibility of an explicit ontological and existential interpretation of these relations is grounded in the familiarity with the world constitutive for Da-sein. This familiarity, in its turn, helps to constitute Da-sein's understanding of being. This possibility can be explicitly appropriated when Da-sein has set as its task a primordial interpretation of its being and the possibilities of that being or, for that matter, of the meaning of being in general.

But as yet our analyses have only first laid bare the horizon within which something akin to world and worldliness is to be sought. For our further reflection, we must first make clear how the context of the self-referral of Da-sein is to be understood ontologically.

*Understanding*, which will be analyzed with proper penetration . . . holds the indicated relations in a preliminary disclosure. In its familiar being-in-relevance, understanding holds itself *before* that disclosure as that within which its reference moves. Understanding can itself be referred in and by these relations. We shall call the relational character of these referential relations *signifying*. In its familiarity with these relations, Da-sein "signifies" to itself. It primordially gives itself to understand its being and potentiality-of-being with regard to its being-in-the-world. The for-the-sake-of-which signifies an in-order-to, the in-order-to signifies a what-for, the what-for signifies a what-in of letting something be relevant, and the latter a what-with of relevance. These relations are interlocked among themselves as a primordial totality. They are what they are as this signifying in which Da-sein gives itself to understand its being-in-the-world beforehand. We shall call this relational totality of signification *significance*. It is what constitutes the

structure of the world, of that in which Da-sein as such always already is. *In its familiarity with significance Da-sein is the ontic condition of the possibility of the disclosure of beings encountered in the mode of being of relevance (handiness) in a world that can thus make themselves known in their in-itself.* As such, Da-sein always means that a context of things at hand is already essentially discovered with its being. In that it *is*, Da-sein has always already referred itself to an encounter with a “world.” This *dependency of being referred* belongs essentially to its being.

But the significance itself with which Da-sein is always already familiar contains the ontological condition of the possibility that Da-sein, understanding and interpreting, can disclose something akin to “significations” which in turn found the possible being of words and language.

As the existential constitution of Da-sein, its being-in-the-world, disclosed significance is the ontic condition of the possibility for discovering a totality of relevance.

If we thus define the being of what is at hand (relevance) and even worldliness itself as a referential context, are we not volatilizing the “substantial being” of innerworldly beings into a system of relations, and, since relations are always “something thought,” are we not dissolving the being of innerworldly beings into “pure thought”?

Within the present field of investigation the repeatedly designated differences of the structures and dimensions of the ontological problematic are to be fundamentally distinguished:

- (1) The being of the innerworldly beings initially encountered (handiness);
- (2) The being of beings (objective presence) that is found and determined by discovering them in their own right in going through beings initially encountered;
- (3) The being of the ontic condition of the possibility of discovering innerworldly beings in general, the worldliness of the world.

This third kind of being is an *existential* determination of being-in-the-world, that is, of Da-sein. The other two concepts of being are *categories* and concern beings unlike Da-sein. The referential context that constitutes worldliness as significance can be formally understood in the sense of a system of relations. But we must realize that such formalizations level down the phenomena to the extent

that the true phenomenal content gets lost, especially in the case of such “simple” relations as are contained in significance. These “relations” and “relata” of the in-order-to, for-the-sake-of, the with-what of relevance resist any kind of mathematical functionalization in accordance with their phenomenal content. Nor are they something thought, something first posited in “thinking,” but rather relations in which heedful circumspection as such already dwells. As constitutive of worldliness, this “system of relations” does not volatilize the being of innerworldly beings at all. On the contrary, these beings are discoverable in their “substantial” “in itself” only on the basis of the worldliness of the world. And only when innerworldly beings can be encountered at all does the possibility exist of making what is merely objectively present accessible in the field of these beings. On the basis of their merely objective presence these beings can be determined mathematically in “functional concepts” with regard to their “properties.” Functional concepts of this kind are ontologically possible only in relation to beings whose being has the character of pure substantiality. Functional concepts are always possible only as formalized substantial concepts.

*Translated by Joan Stambaugh*

# The Question of Being

(*Letter to Ernst Jünger "Concerning  
'The Line'"*) (1955)

## Foreword

This article repeats, unchanged and expanded by a few lines (p. 24f.), the text of the contribution to the publication issued in honor of Ernst Jünger (1955). The title has been changed. It read: *Concerning "The Line."* The new title is meant to indicate that the consideration of the essence of nihilism stems from a discussion of Being. According to tradition, the question of being is understood by philosophy to be of being as being. It is *the* question of metaphysics. The answering of this question is always related to an interpretation of Being which remains as yet unquestioned and prepares the ground and basis for metaphysics. Metaphysics does not go back to its ground. This return is explained in the Introduction to *What Is Metaphysics?*, which has been added to the text of the lecture from the fifth edition (1949) on. (Seventh edition 1955, pp. 7–23).

## Concerning "The Line"

Dear Mr. Jünger,

My greetings on the occasion of your sixtieth birthday adopts, with a slight change, the title of the treatise which you dedicated to me on a similar occasion. Your contribution, *Across the Line*, appeared in the meanwhile, enlarged in a few places, as a separate article. It is a "situation appraisal" which refers to the "crossing over" of the line, but is not confined to a description of the situation. The line is also called the "zero meridian" (p. 29). You speak (pp. 22 and 31) of a "zero point." The zero refers to nothingness and, in fact, to empty nothingness. Where everything pushes

towards nothingness, nihilism reigns. At the zero meridian it approaches its completion. Taking up an interpretation of Nietzsche, you understand nihilism as the process whereby "the highest values become devaluated" (*Will to Power*, No. 2, from the year 1887).

The zero line has its zone as a meridian. The area of complete nihilism forms the boundary between two eras. The line designating it is the critical line. By means of it is determined whether the movement of nihilism ends in negative nothingness or whether it is the transition to the realm of a "new turning-towards on the part of Being" (p. 32). The movement of nihilism must accordingly be intended of itself for diverse possibilities and, according to its essence, have a number of meanings.

Your estimation of the situation follows the signs which indicate whether and to what extent we cross over the line and thereby step out of the zone of complete nihilism. In the title of your essay *Across the Line*, the "über" signifies across, *trans*, *meta*. However, the following remarks interpret the "über" only in the meaning of *de*, *peri*. They treat "of" the line itself, of the zone of self-completing nihilism. If we stick to the picture of the line, then we find that it blends in a space which is itself determined by a place. The place assembles. The assemblage, in its essence, contains what is assembled. Out of the place of the line originates the origin of the essence of nihilism and its fulfillment.

My letter would like to think ahead to this place of the line and in that way explain the line. Your estimation under the name of *trans lineam* and my discussion under the name of *de linea* belong together. The former includes the latter. The latter remains dependent on the former. By saying this, I am not telling you anything special. You know that an estimation of the situation of man in respect to the movement of nihilism and within it demands an adequate determination of essence. Such knowledge is lacking in many places. This lack clouds the view in estimating our situation. It makes the judgment of nihilism superficial and the eye blind to the presence "of this strangest [the word *unheimlich* here signifies not having a home] of all guests" (Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, *The Plan*, WW XV, p. 141). It is called the "strangest" because as the unconditional will to will, it wants homelessness as such. Therefore, it does not help to show it the door because it has long since and invisibly been moving around in the house. The important thing is to get a glimpse of this guest and to see through it. You write (p. 11): "A good definition of nihilism would be comparable to making the

cancer bacillus visible. It would not signify a cure but perhaps the presupposition of it, insofar as men contribute anything towards it. It involves an event which goes far beyond history.”

“A good definition of nihilism” might thus be expected of a discussion *de linea* provided that the effort within the power of man to effect a cure can be compared to being escorted *trans lineam*. To be sure you emphasize that nihilism is not to be placed on an equal basis with sickness, or just as little, on a basis with chaos and evil. Nihilism itself, as little as is the cancer bacillus, is something diseased. In regard to the *essence* of nihilism there is no prospect and no meaningful claim to a cure. Nevertheless, the attitude of your essay is a medical one, as is already indicated by its organization into prognosis, diagnosis, therapy. The young Nietzsche once called the philosopher the “physician of civilization (WW X, p. 225). But now it is no longer a question only of civilization. You say quite rightly: “The whole is at stake.” “The entire planet is at stake” (p. 28). Healing can only bear upon the malignant results and dangerous symptoms of this planetary event. Even more urgently we need knowledge and recognition of the bacillus, that is, of the essence of nihilism. Even more necessary is thought, assuming that an adequate experience of the essence is provided by suitable thinking. However, to the same degree as the possibilities of an immediately effective healing are disappearing, the ability of thinking has also already lessened. The essence of nihilism is neither healable nor unhealable. It is the heal-less, but as such a unique relegation into health. If thinking is to approach the domain of the essence of nihilism, then it necessarily becomes more temporary and thereby different.

Whether a discussion of the line can bring about “a good definition of nihilism,” whether it may even strive for anything of the sort, becomes doubtful to precursory thinking. A discussion of the line must attempt something else. The rejection of a definition expressed hereby seems to sacrifice the strictness of thinking. It might also happen, however, that such a rejection first brings thinking in the direction of an effort which makes it possible to find out the nature of the pertinent strictness of thinking. This can never be decided from the judgment seat of the *ratio*. The latter is by no means a just judge. It unscrupulously pushes everything not in conformity with *it* into the presumable swamp of the irrational, which it itself has staked out. Reason and its conceptions are only *one* kind of thinking and are by no means determined by themselves but by that



which has been called thinking, to think in the manner of the *ratio*. That its dominance arises as rationalization of all categories, as establishing norms, as leveling in the course of the unfolding of European nihilism, provides food for thought, just as do the concomitant attempts at flight into irrational.

What is most serious, however, is that rationalism and irrationalism are entangled in a sort of reciprocal intercourse out of which they not only cannot find their way, but no longer wish to extricate themselves. Therefore, every possibility is denied by which thinking might face a demand which is outside of the either/or of the rational and irrational. Such thinking could, however, be prepared for by what is taking faltering steps in the ways of historical elucidation, reflection, and explanation.

My explanation would like to meet halfway the medical diagnosis of the situation you present. You look and cross over the line; I look first only at the line you present. One reciprocally assists the other in the breadth and clarity of experience. Both could help to arouse the "adequate strength of the mind" (p. 28) which is required for a crossing of the line.

In order that we may see nihilism in the phase of its completion we must accompany its movement in action. The description of this action is especially impressive when, as a description, it itself participates in the action. However, the description thereby runs into extreme danger and faces a far-reaching responsibility. The responsibility of whoever participates in such a manner must be collected in that response which arises from an unswerving questioning within the greatest possible ability of questioning nihilism and be adopted and carried out as corresponding to the latter.

Your essay, *The Worker* (1932), has achieved a description of European nihilism in its phase after World War I. It develops out of your treatise *Total Mobilization* (1930). *The Worker* belongs in the phase of "active nihilism" (Nietzsche). The action of the work consisted—and in a changed function still consists—in the fact that it makes the "total work character" of all reality visible from the figure of the worker. Thus nihilism, which at first is only European, appears in its planetary tendency. However, there is no description in itself which would be able to show reality in itself. Every description, the more sharply it advances, moves that much more positively in its own way within a definite horizon. The manner of vision and the horizon—you say "optics"—appear for human conceptions from the basic experiences of being in the whole. But they

are already preceded by a vista never to be made first by man, of how being "is." The basic experience which carries and pervades your conception and presentation arose in the destructiveness of the first World War. Being in the whole, however, reveals itself to you in the light and shadow of the metaphysics of the will to power which Nietzsche expounds in the form of a doctrine of values.

In the winter of 1939 to 1940 I explained *The Worker* in a small circle of university professors. They were astonished that such a clear-sighted book had been available for years and that no one had yet learned by himself to dare make the attempt to let his glance move towards the present in the optics of the *Worker* and to do some planetary thinking. It was felt that to do this even the universally historical view of world history did not suffice. In those days *On the Marble Cliffs* was much read but, as it seemed to me, without an adequately broad, that is, planetary horizon. There was, however, also no surprise that an attempt to explain *The Worker* was being watched and was finally forbidden. For it is a part of the essence of the will to power not to permit the reality which it has power over to appear in *that* reality in which it itself exists.

You will permit me to repeat a review of the above-named attempt at explanation. I am doing it because I hope that in this letter I am going to be able to say some things more plainly and more freely. The review reads:

"Ernst Jünger's essay *The Worker* has weight because, in a way different from Spengler's, it achieves what all the Nietzsche literature was not able to achieve so far, namely, to communicate an experience of being and of what it is, in the light of Nietzsche's outline of being as the will to power. To be sure, Nietzsche's metaphysics has thereby by no means been speculatively understood; not even the paths towards it are indicated; on the contrary, instead of being questionable, in the true sense of the word, this metaphysics becomes a matter of course and apparently superfluous."

You see, the critical question thinks in a sense which, to be sure, it is not within the province of the descriptions achieved by *The Worker* to pursue. Much of what your descriptions brought into view and discussed for the first time, everyone sees and says today. Besides, *The Question about Technology* owes enduring advancement to the descriptions in *The Worker*. In regard to your "descriptions" it might be appropriate to remark that you do not merely depict something real that is already known but make available a "new reality" in which it is "less a question of new ideas or of a new system . . ." (*The Worker*, foreword).

But even today—and why should it not be so?—what is fruitful in what you say is gathered together in the well-understood “description.” However, the optics and the horizon which guide the describing are no longer or not yet correspondingly determined as they were formerly. For now you no longer take part in the action of active nihilism, which is also already thought of in *The Worker* in Nietzsche’s sense in the direction towards an overcoming. No longer taking part, however, by no means already means standing outside of nihilism, especially not when the essence of nihilism is not nihilistic and the history of this essence is older and yet remains younger than the historically determinable phases of the various forms of nihilism. Therefore, your essay *The Worker* and the succeeding even more advanced treatise, *About Pain* (1934) do not belong among the discarded documents of the nihilistic movement. On the contrary, it seems to me that these works will *last* because by them, insofar as they speak the language of our century, the discussion of the *essence* of nihilism, which has by no means yet been accomplished, can be newly enkindled.

While I am writing this I recall our conversation towards the end of the last decade. On a walk along a forest road we stopped at a place where a woodland path branches off. At that time I urged you to have *The Worker* republished unchanged. You followed my suggestion only reluctantly for reasons which were concerned less with the content of the book than with the proper moment of its reappearance. Our conversation about *The Worker* was broken off. My own thoughts were not sufficiently collected in order to analyze clearly enough the reasons for my proposal. In the meanwhile, time has probably become riper so that I may say something about it.

On the one hand, the movement of nihilism has become more manifest in its planetary, all-corroding, many-faceted irresistibility. No one with any insight will still deny today that nihilism is in the most varied and most hidden forms of “the normal state” of man (cf. Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, No. 23). The best evidences of this are the exclusively re-active attempts against nihilism, which, instead of entering into a discussion of its essence, strive for the restoration of what has been. They seek salvation in flight, namely in flight from a glimpse of the worthiness of questioning the metaphysical position of man. The same flight is also urgent where apparently all metaphysics is abandoned and is replaced by logistics, sociology, and psychology. The will to know which breaks forth here, and its more tractable total organization, points to an increase

of the will to power, which is of a different kind from that which Nietzsche designated as active nihilism.

On the other hand, your own thoughts and desires are aimed at helping to get out of the zone of complete nihilism without giving up the groundplan of the prospect which *The Worker*, preceding from Nietzsche's metaphysics, opened up.

You write (*Across the Line*, p. 36): "Total mobilization has entered a stage which is even more threatening than what has gone before. The German is, to be sure, no longer its subject, and thereby the danger grows that he will be conceived as its object." Even now you see total mobilization, and rightly so, as a distinguishing character of what is real. But its reality is for you no longer determined by the "*will to* (the italics are mine) total mobilization" *The Worker*, p. 148) and no longer in such a way that this will may be regarded as the only source of the "giving of meaning" which justifies everything. That is why you write (*Across the Line*, p. 30): "There is no doubt that our component realities (these are, according to p. 31 'personnel, works, and installations') as a whole are moving across the critical line. Thereby dangers and security are changing." In the zone of the line, nihilism approaches its completion. The totality of the "human component realities" can only cross over the line when they step out of the zone of complete nihilism.

Accordingly, a discussion of the line must ask in what the fulfillment of nihilism consists. The answer seems to be obvious. Nihilism is fulfilled when it has seized all the component realities and appears everywhere, when nothing can assert itself any longer as an exception, in so far as it has become a normal state. However, it is only in the normal state that the fulfillment *is realized*. The former is a consequence of the latter. Fulfillment means the gathering together of all the possibilities of the essence of nihilism which as a whole and individually remain difficult to see through. The possibilities of the essence of nihilism can only be considered if we think back to its essence. I say "back" because the essence of nihilism comes before and, therefore, ahead of each of the nihilistic phenomena and collects them in its fulfillment. The fulfillment of nihilism is, however, not already its end. With the fulfillment of nihilism only *begins* the final phase of nihilism. Its zone, because it is dominated throughout by a normal state and its consolidation, is presumably unusually broad. That is why the zero-line, where fulfillment approaches the end, is not yet at all visible at the end.

What is the situation, however, with regard to the prospect of a crossing of the line? Are the human component realities already in transit *trans-lineam* or are they only entering the wide field in front of the line? But perhaps we are being held spellbound by an unavoidable optical delusion. Perhaps the zero-line is suddenly emerging before us in the form of a planetary catastrophe. Who will then still cross it? And what can catastrophes do? The two World Wars neither checked the movement of nihilism nor diverted it from its course. What you say (p. 36) about total mobilization provides the confirmation. How do matters stand now with the critical line? In every case they stand in such a way that a discussion of its place might arouse a consideration of whether and in what way we may think of a crossing of the line.

However, the attempt to say a few things in a conversation with you by letter encounters a peculiar difficulty. The reason for it lies in the fact that in the "beyond" across the line, that is, in the space on this side of and on the other side of the line, you speak the same language. The position of nihilism has, so it seems, already been given up in a certain way by the crossing of the line, but *its language has remained*. Here I mean language not as a mere means of expression, which can be taken off and changed like clothing without touching that which is being discussed. In language there appears first of all and exists that which in the use of suitable words we apparently only express subsequently and, what is more, with expressions which we believe might be omitted at will and be replaced by others. The language in *The Worker* reveals its chief features, it seems to me, first and foremost in the subtitle of the work. It reads "Dominance and *Gestalt*." It characterizes the basic outline of the work. "*Gestalt*" you understand first in the sense of the *Gestalt* psychology of that time as "a whole which comprises more than the sum of its parts." One might consider to what extent this characterization of *Gestalt* still, namely through the "more" and "the sum," leans on summative conception and leaves what is form-like as such in uncertainty. But you put *Gestalt* on a cultist level and thereby rightly set it off against "mere idea."

Here "idea" is understood in the modern sense of *perceptio*, of perception through a subject. On the other hand, for you too, form is accessible only through seeing. It is that kind of seeing which the Greeks call *idein*, a word which Plato uses for a seeing which does not see that changeable thing which is perceivable through the senses but that unchangeable thing, Being, the idea. You also char-

acterize *Gestalt* as "Being in repose." *Gestalt* is, to be sure, not an "idea" in the modern sense of the word, but for that reason it is also not a regulative conception of reason in the Kantian sense. Being in repose remains for Greek thinking utterly different from changeable being. This difference between Being and being then appears, as seen in the direction from being to Being, as transcendence, that is, as the meta-physical. However, this difference is not an absolute separation. So little, indeed, that what is present (being) is brought forth in the present (Being) but is, however, not caused by it, in the sense of an efficient causation. That which brings forth is at times thought of by Plato as that which makes an imprint (*tupos*) (cf. *Theätet* 192 a, 194 b). You also think of the relationship of form to that which "forms" it as the relationship between stamp and impression. To be sure, you understand the stamping in the modern sense as bestowing "meaning" on the meaning-less. *Gestalt* is the "source of bestowing of meaning" (*The Worker*, p. 148).

The historical reference to the homogeneousness of *Gestalt*, *idea*, and Being does not wish to subject your work to an historical accounting, but to announce that *it dwells in metaphysics*. According to the latter, all being, the changeable and fluid, the mobile and mobilized, has been conceived as coming from a "Being in repose," even where "Being" (the reality of the real), is thought of as by Hegel and Nietzsche, as pure growth and absolute movement. *Gestalt* is "metaphysical power" (*The Worker*, pp. 113, 124, 146).

In another respect the metaphysical conception in *The Worker* is, however, differentiated from the Platonic and even from the modern, except that of Nietzsche. The source of the giving of meaning, the power which is present from the outset and thus stamping everything, is *Gestalt* as the *Gestalt of a humanity*: "The *Gestalt* of the worker." *Gestalt* reposes in the essential structure of a humanity, which as subject is the basis of all being. Not the I-ness of an individual person, the subjectiveness of the egoity, but the pre-formed formlike presence of a species of men (type) forms the most extreme subjectivity which comes forth in the fulfillment of modern metaphysics and is presented by its thinking.

In the *Gestalt* of the worker and in its dominance the subjective is no longer seen, and even less, the subjectivistic subjectivity of the essence of man. The metaphysical seeing of the *Gestalt* of the worker corresponds to the outline of the essential *Gestalt* of Zarathustra within the metaphysics of the will to power. What is hidden in this appearing of the objective subjectivity of the subject (of the

Being of being) which is meant as a human *Gestalt* and not as an individual human being?

Talk of the subjectivity (not subjectivity) of the essence of man as the foundation for the objectivity of every subject (everything which is present) seems to be paradoxical and artificial in every respect. The reason why this appears to be so is that we have scarcely begun to ask why and in which way within modern metaphysics a line of thinking becomes necessary which presents Zarathustra as a *Gestalt*. The oft-given statement that Nietzsche's thinking had fatally turned into imagining is itself only the abandonment of thoughtful questioning. However, we do not even have to think back as far as Kant's transcendental deduction of categories in order to see that in the process of seeing *Gestalt* as the source of the giving-of-meaning, it is a question of the *legitimation* of the Being of being. It would be an all too crude statement to say that here man moves in a secularized world in place of God as the creator of the Being of being. That the essence of man does, indeed, play a part is certain. But the being (verbal) of man, "the reality in man" (cf. Kant and *The Problem of Metaphysics*, 1st edit. 1929, §43) is nothing human. In order that the idea of the essence of man can reach the level of that which already is the basis of everything present as being in the state of presence which first permits a "representation" in being and thus "legitimizes" it *as* being, man must first of all be represented in the sense of an authoritative fundamental. But authoritative for what? For the assuring of being in its Being. In what sense does "Being" appear if it is a question of the assuring of being? In the sense of what is everywhere and at all times determinable and, that means, representable. Understanding being in this way, Descartes found the subjectivity of the subject in the *ego cogito* of mortal man. The appearing of the metaphysical *Gestalt* of man as the source of the giving-of-meaning is the final consequence of establishing the essence of man as its authoritative subject. Accordingly the inner form of metaphysics, which is based on what may be called transcendence, is changed. For essential reasons the latter has several meanings within metaphysics. Whenever this multiplicity of meanings is disregarded a fatal confusion spreads which may be regarded as the distinguishing characteristic of metaphysical conceptions still customary today.

Transcendence is firstly the relationship between being and Being starting from the former and going toward the latter. Transcendence is, however, at the same time the relationship leading from

the changeable being to a *being in repose*. Transcendence, finally corresponding to the use of the title "Excellency," is that *highest being itself* which can then also be called "Being," from which results a strange mixture with the first mentioned meaning.

Why do I bore you with a reference to the distinctions which are applied on much too grand a scale today, that is, scarcely thought through in their differentiation and their homogeneousness? In order to make plain from this point how the meta-physical of metaphysics, transcendence, changes, when, within the confines of the differentiation, the *Gestalt* of the essence of man appears as the source of the giving-of-meaning. Transcendence, understood in the manifold sense, turns back into the corresponding re-scendence and disappears in it. A retreat of this kind through *Gestalt* takes place in such a way that its state of being present is represented and is present again in the imprint of its stamping. The state of being of the *Gestalt* of the worker is power. The representation of the state of being present is its dominance as a "new and special kind of will to power" (*The Worker*, p. 70).

This new and special characteristic you have become aware of and have recognized in "work" as the total character of the reality of the real. Thereby metaphysical conception, in the light of the will to power, is wrested more decidedly out of the biological-anthropological range which confused Nietzsche's path too much, evidence of which may be found in a remark such as the following: "Which ones will prove to be the *strongest* in this? (in the rise of the doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the identical) . . .—Men, who *are sure of their power* and who represent with conscious pride the *achieved* strength of man (*Will to Power*, No. 55 end). "Dominance" (*The Worker*, p. 192) is "only possible today as the representation of the *Gestalt* of the worker which lays claim to planetary validity." "Work" in the highest sense and in the sense which permeates all mobilization is "representation of the *Gestalt* of the worker" (*Ibid.*, p. 202). "However, the way in which the *Gestalt* of the worker is beginning to penetrate the world is the total character of work" (*Ibid.*, p. 99). A later sentence (p. 150) reads almost the same: "Technology is the way in which the *Gestalt* of the worker mobilizes the world."

Directly ahead of this is the decisive remark: "In order to have a real relationship to technology one must be something more than a technician" (p. 149). That statement I can only understand in this way: by "real" relationship you mean true relationship. True is that



which corresponds to the essence of technology. Through direct technical achievement, that is, through the at times special character of work, this fundamental relationship is never attained. It rests on the relationship to the total character of work. "Work" understood in this way is, however, identical with Being in the sense of the will to power (p. 86).

Which definition of the essence of technology results from this? It is "the symbol of the *Gestalt* of the worker" (p. 72). Technology is obviously based, "as mobilization of the world through the *Gestalt* of the worker" (p. 154), on that reversal of transcendence into the re-scendence of the *Gestalt* of the worker whereby its state of being present is developed into the representation of its power. Therefore, you can write (*Ibid.*): "Technology . . . like the destroyer of all faith in general, is also the most decisive anti-Christian power which has appeared hitherto."

Your essay, *The Worker*, by means of its subtitle "Dominance and *Gestalt*," already outlines the characteristic features of that entire new metaphysics of the will to power, insofar as this will is now presented everywhere and completely as work. Already at the first reading of your essay I was stirred by the questions which I must still raise today: what determines the essence of work? Does it result from the *Gestalt* of the worker? How so is the *Gestalt* of the worker such as it is if the essence of work does not pervade it? Does this *Gestalt* accordingly acquire its human state of being present from the essence of work? Whence comes the meaning of working and worker at the high level which you assign to *Gestalt* and its dominance? Does this meaning originate from the fact that work is thought of here as an imprinting of the will to power? Does this particularization perhaps even stem from the essence of technology "as the mobilization of the world through the *Gestalt* of the worker"? And finally, does the essence of technology determined in this way point into even more primordial regions?

All too easily one might point out that in your delineations of the relationship between the total character of work and the *Gestalt* of the worker, a circle embraces the determining (work) and the determined (the worker) in their reciprocal relationship. Instead of evaluating this reference as a proof of illogical thinking, I take the circle as a sign that here the roundness of a whole is to be thought of, in a kind of thinking, to be sure, for which "logic," measured by the freedom of contradiction, can never be the standard.

The questions raised above are even more clearly worthy of question if I frame them as I wanted to present them to you recently

in connection with my lecture in Munich (*The Question about Technology*). If technology is the mobilization of the world through the *Gestalt* of the worker, it takes place through the stamping state of being present of this special human will to power. In the state of being present and representation is manifested the characteristic trait of what was revealed to Western thought as Being. "Being" has since the early days of the Greek world up to the latest days of our century meant being present. Every kind of state of being present and presentation stems from the event of being present. The "will to power," however, as the reality of the real, is a phase of the appearance of the "Being" of being. "Work," from which the *Gestalt* of the worker for its part obtains its meaning, is identical with "Being." Here it is to be considered whether and to what extent the essence of "Being" is in itself the relation with the essence of man. (cf. *Was heisst Denken?*, p. 73f.). In this relation would then have to be based the relationship between "work," as understood metaphysically, and the "worker." It seems to me that the following questions can scarcely be avoided:

May we consider the *Gestalt* of the worker as *Gestalt*; may we consider Plato's *idea* as *eidos* even more primordially in respect to the origin of their essence? If not, which reasons forbid this and demand instead that *Gestalt* and *idea* be taken simply as the ultimate for us and the first in themselves? If so, along which paths can the question as to the origin of the essence of the *idea* and of *Gestalt* move? By way of formulation, does the essence of *Gestalt* arise in the area of origin of what I call *Ge-Stell*? Does the origin of the essence of the *idea* accordingly also belong within the same area from which comes the essence of *Gestalt* which is related to it? Or is the *Ge-Stell* only a function of the human *Gestalt*? If this were the case, then the *essence* of Being and the Being of being would be completely the making of human conception. The era in which European thinking meant this is still casting its last shadow over us.

In the first place, these questions as to *Gestalt* and *Ge-Stell* remain peculiar considerations. They should not be imposed on anyone, especially since they are themselves still struggling in a temporary state. Nor are the questions in this letter raised as such as should have been raised in *The Worker*. To demand this would be to misunderstand the style of the essay. It is incumbent upon it to achieve the interpretation of reality in regard to the total character of its work, in such a way, in fact, that the interpretation itself plays a part in this character and proclaims the special character of

the work of an author in this day and age. That is why at the end of the book, in the "survey" (p. 296, note) there are the following sentences: "All of these concepts (*Gestalt*, type, organic construction, total) are *notabene* there by way of comprehension. We are not concerned with them as such. They can be forgotten or set aside without further ado after they have been used as magnitudes of work for the grasping of a definite reality which exists in spite of and beyond every concept; the reader has to see *through* the description as through an optical system."

This "*notabene*" I have in the meanwhile obeyed each time in reading your writings and have asked myself whether concepts, meanings of words, and, before that, language can only be an "optical system" for you, whether, facing these systems, there exists a reality in itself by which the systems, like screwed on apparatuses, can be unscrewed and replaced by others. Is it not already inherent in the meaning of "work magnitudes" that in each case they help to determine the reality, the total character of work of everything real, only in such a way as they are already determined by it? Concepts are, to be sure, "there to be grasped." However, the modern conception of what is real, the objectification in comprehending which moves from the start, always remains an attack on the real in so far as the latter is challenged to put in an appearance within the horizon of the concept. The consequence of the challenge in the environs of contemporary comprehension is that the grasped reality proceeds unexpectedly and, at first, long unnoticed, to a counter-attack by which modern natural science, in spite of Kant, is suddenly surprised and must first become acquainted with this surprise as certain knowledge by its own discoveries within the scientific process.

Heisenberg's relation of indeterminateness can certainly never be derived directly from Kant's transcendental interpretation of the knowledge of physical Nature. But just as little can that relation ever be conceived, that is, thought of, without having this conception go back first of all to the transcendental realm of the subject-object relationship. If this has taken place, then only does the question begin as to the origin of the essence of the objectification of being, that is, of the essence of "grasping."

In your and in my case, however, it is a question not even only of concepts of a science, but of basic words, such as, *Gestalt*, dominance, representation, power, will, value, security, of the state of being present (existence) and nothingness which as absence of the

state of being present “negates” without ever destroying it. Insofar as nothingness “negates,” it confirms itself rather as a distinguished state of being present and veils itself as such. In the basic words named, a kind of language prevails other than scientific assertions. To be sure, metaphysical thinking also knows concepts. These differ, however, from scientific concepts not only in regard to the degree of generality. Kant was the first one to see this in all its clarity (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A 843, B 871). Metaphysical concepts are in their essence of a different sort insofar as that which they comprehend and the comprehension itself remain the same in an original sense. Therefore, in the realm of the basic words of thinking it is even less a matter of indifference whether they are forgotten or whether one keeps on using them untested, and, moreover, uses them there where we should step out of the zone in which the “concepts” named by you say what is authoritative, in the zone of complete nihilism.

Your essay *Across the Line* speaks of nihilism as “fundamental power” (p. 60); it raises the question as to future “fundamental value” (p. 31); it again names the “*Gestalt*,” also the *Gestalt* of the worker” (p. 41). If I see correctly, this is no longer the only *Gestalt* “in which repose dwells” (*Ibid.*). You say rather that the realm of power of nihilism is of such a kind that “the regal appearance of man is lacking” there. Or is the *Gestalt* of the worker, nevertheless, that “new one” in which regal appearance is still concealed? Even for the realm of the crossed line it is a question of “security.” Even now pain remains the touchstone. The “metaphysical” also pervades in the new realm. Does the basic word “pain” still express here the same meaning which your treatise *Concerning Pain* circumscribes in which the position of *The Worker* is driven furthest forward? Does the metaphysical also retain the same meaning beyond the line as it does in *The Worker*, namely that of “formlike”? Or, in place of the representation of the *Gestalt* of a human essence as the previously unique form of the legitimation of the real, does not “transcending” become a “transcendence” and “Excellency” not of a human but of a divine kind? Is the theological element pervading all metaphysics putting in an appearance? (*Across the Line*, pp. 32, 39, 41). When in your *The Hourglass Book* (1954) p. 106 you say: “In pain *Gestalt* is preserved” then, as far as I can see, you are retaining the basic structure of your thinking but are letting the basic words “pain” and “*Gestalt*” speak in a changed, but not yet expressly elucidated meaning. Or am I mistaken?

This would be the place to enter into a discussion of your treatise *Concerning Pain* and bring to light the inner connection between “work” and “pain.” This connection points to metaphysical relations which are apparent to you from the metaphysical position of your work *The Worker*. In order to be able to delineate more clearly the relations which carry the connection between “work” and “pain,” nothing less would be necessary than to think through the basic fundamental structure of Hegel’s metaphysics, the uniting unity of the *Phenomenology of the Mind* and of the *Science of Logic*. The fundamental character is “absolute negativity” as the “eternal force” of reality, that is, of the “existing concept.” In the same (but not the equal) belonging to the negation of the negation, work and pain manifest their innermost metaphysical relationship. This reference already suffices to indicate what extensive discussions would be necessary here in order to do justice to the matter. If anyone would, indeed, dare to think through the relationship between “work” as the basic feature of being and “pain” via Hegel’s *Logic*, then the Greek word for pain, namely *algos* first becomes articulate for us. Presumably, *algos* is related to *alego* which, as an intensive of *lego* signifies intimate gathering. Then pain would be the most intimate of gatherings. Hegel’s concept of the “concept” and its properly understood “tension” say the same thing on the transformed level of the absolute metaphysics of subjectivity.

That you were led in other ways into metaphysical relationships between work and pain is a fine testimony as to how, in the manner of your metaphysical conception, you try to listen to the voice which becomes comprehensible out of those relationships.

In which language does the basic outline of thinking speak which indicates a crossing of the line? Is the language of the metaphysics of the will to power, of *Gestalt*, and of values to be rescued across the critical line? What if even the language of metaphysics and metaphysics itself, whether it be that of the living or of the dead God, as metaphysics, formed that barrier which forbids a crossing over of the line, that is, the overcoming of nihilism? If that were the case, would not then the crossing of the line necessarily become a transformation of language and demand a transformed relationship to the essence of language? And is not your own relation to language of a kind that it demands from you a different characterization of the concept-language of the sciences? If this language is often represented as nominalism, then we are still entangled in the logical-grammatical conception of the nature of language.

I am writing all of this in the form of questions; for, as far as I can see, thinking can do no more today than to consider unabatedly what calls for the above questions. Perhaps the moment will come when the essence of nihilism will be more clearly revealed in other ways in a brighter light. Until then I shall be satisfied with the assumption that we might think of the essence of nihilism only in that way that we first take the path which leads into a discussion of the essence of Being. Only in this way can the question as to nothingness be discussed. *However, the question as to the essence of Being dies off, if it does not surrender the language of metaphysics, because metaphysical conception forbids thinking the question as to the essence of Being.*

That the transformation of the language which contemplates the essence of Being is subject to other demands than the exchanging of an old terminology for a new one, seems to be clear. That an attempt to achieve that transformation presumably will still remain unsuccessful for a long time is not an adequate reason for giving up the attempt. The temptation is especially close at hand today to evaluate the thoughtfulness of thinking according to the tempo of calculating and planning which directly justifies its technical discoveries to everyone through economic successes. This evaluation of thinking asks too much of it by standards which are strange to it. At the same time, thinking is subjected to the presumptuous demand that it know the solution of the riddles and bring salvation. In face of this it deserves full agreement when you point out the necessity of letting all still untapped springs of power flow and of bringing every aid to bear in order to hold one's own "in the wake of nihilism."

In doing so we must, however, not hold lightly the discussion of the *essence* of nihilism, already for the reason alone that nihilism is concerned with disguising its own essence and thereby withdrawing from the all-deciding discussion. Only this might help to open up and prepare a free area in which that will be experienced which you call "a new" direction of Being (*Across the Line*, p. 32).

You write: "The moment in which the line is crossed brings a new direction of Being and with it there begins to shimmer what is real."

The sentence is easy to read but difficult to think. Above all I should like to ask whether, on the contrary, it is not rather the new direction of Being which first brings the moment for the crossing of the line. The question seems only to reverse your sentence. But mere

reversal is each time a risky procedure. The solution which it might offer remains involved in the question which has reversed it. Your sentence that "which is real," in other words, the real, which means that being begins to shimmer because Being takes a new direction. Therefore, we now ask more properly whether "Being" is something for itself and whether it also and at times turns in the direction of man. Presumably the turning itself, but still obscurely, is that which we embarrassedly enough, and vaguely call "Being." But does such turning-toward not also take place and, in a strange manner, under the dominance of nihilism, namely in such a way that "Being" turns away and withdraws into the state of absence? Turning away and withdrawal are, however, not nothing. They prevail perhaps even more urgently for man so that they pull him along, suck themselves fast to his thoughts and actions and, finally, suck them into the withdrawing wake in such a way that man can believe that he is only encountering himself. In truth, however, his self is no longer anything more than the using of his human reality into the dominance of what you characterize as the total character of work.

To be sure, the turning towards and away of Being, if we pay sufficient attention to them, never present themselves, just as if they touched man only occasionally and only momentarily. The essence of man rather depends on the fact that it endures and dwells for a time in either the turning towards or away. We always say *too little* of "Being itself" when in saying "Being," we leave out the being present *in* the essence of man and thereby fail to recognize that his essence itself helps to determine "Being." We also always say *too little* of man if, in saying "Being" (not being human), we set man apart and then only bring that which has thus been set apart into relationship with "Being." We also say *too much*, however, if we mean Being as the all-encompassing and thereby represent man only as a special being among others (plants, animals) and put both into the relationship; for there already lies in the essence of man the relationship to that which through the relation determines the relating as "Being" in the sense of using and it is thus deprived of its presumable "in and for itself." The talk of "Being" drives the conception from one embarrassment into another without revealing the source of this perplexity.

But, everything is at once in good order, so it seems, if we do not purposely disregard what has long since been thought of: the subject-object relationship. This means that to every subject (man)

belongs an object (Being) and vice versa. Certainly; if only this totality—the relationship, the subject, the object—did not already rest in the essence of that which, quite inadequately, as has been shown, we represent as the relationship between Being and man. Subjectivity and objectivity for their part already have their basis in a peculiar manifestation of “Being” and the “essence of man.” It establishes the conception on the level of differentiation of both as object and subject. This has since then been regarded as absolute and makes it impossible for thinking to find a way out. A determination of “Being” which would like to name “Being” out of consideration for the subject-object relationship, does not consider those matters it already leaves unthought of in that which it is worthy of being questioned. Thus the talk of a “turning-towards on the part of Being” is a makeshift and completely questionable because Being depends on the turning-towards so that this turning can never approach “Being” first.

Being present (“Being”) as being present always is a being present for the essence of man, insofar as being present is a demand which at times summons the essence of man. The essence of man as such is in a state of hearing because it belongs in the summoning demand, belongs in its being present. This belonging together of summoning and hearing, which is always the same, could that be “Being”? What am I saying? It is no longer “Being” at all if we try to think fully and completely of “Being” as it is fated to hold sway, namely as being present, in which way alone we refer to its destined essence. Then we should just as decidedly have to drop the singularizing and separating word “Being” as to drop the name “man.” The question as to the relationship of both revealed itself as inadequate because it never reaches into the realm of what it would like to question. In truth, we can then not even say any longer that “Being” and “man” “be” the same in the sense that *they* belong together; for in so saying we still let both be for themselves.

But why am I mentioning these involved and abstract matters in a letter about the essence of complete nihilism? First of all, in order to indicate that it is by no means easier to say “Being” than to speak of nothingness; but also, in order to show once more, how inevitably everything depends here on the proper wording, on that *Logos* whose essence logic and dialectics, which stem from metaphysics, are never able to experience.

Is it the fault of “Being”—may that word for the moment designate that questionable sameness in which the essence of Being and



the essence of man belong together—is it the fault of “Being” that our words fail in referring to it and only that remains on which suspicion is cast all too hastily as “mysticism”? Or is our language at fault for not yet speaking because it is not yet able to adapt itself to a reference to the essence of “Being”? Is it left to the arbitrariness of those who speak, which language of basic words they are going to speak at the moment of crossing over the line, that is, in traversing the critical zone of complete nihilism? Is it sufficient if this language is generally comprehensible or do other laws and standards prevail here which are just as unique as the world-historical moment of the planetary completion of nihilism and the discussion of its essence?

These are questions which no sooner begin to become worthy of question than we find ourselves at home in them and do not give them up any more, even at the risk of having to abandon old established habits of thinking in the sense of metaphysical conceptions and of being accused of disdain for all sound reason.

These are questions which exhibit a special sharpness while passing “across the line,” for this passage moves in the realm of nothingness. Does nothingness vanish with the completion, or at least with the overcoming of nihilism? Presumably, overcoming is only attained when, instead of the appearance of negative nothingness, the essence of nothingness which was once related to “Being” can arrive and be accepted by us mortals.

Where does this essence come from? Where do we have to look for it? What is the place of nothingness? We do not thoughtlessly ask too much when we look for the place and discuss the essence of the line. But is this any different from the attempt to achieve what you ask for, “a good definition of nihilism”? It looks as if thinking were continually being led, or driven like a fool, as though in a magic circle around the Sameness without ever being able to approach this Sameness. But perhaps the circle is a hidden spiral. Perhaps it has narrowed in the interim. This means that the ways in which we are approaching the essence of nihilism are changing. The “goodness” of the rightfully demanded “good definition” finds its confirmation in our giving up the wish to define in so far as this must be established on assertions in which thinking dies out. However, it is a gain, which is slight because it is only negative, if we learn to notice that no information can be given about nothingness and Being and nihilism, about their essence and about the essence (verbal) of the essence (nominal) which can be presented tangibly in the form of assertions.

It is a gain insofar as we learn that that to which the “good definition” is to apply the essence of nihilism, leads us into a realm which requires a different language. If turning-towards belongs to “Being” and in such a way that the latter is based on the former, then “Being” is dissolved in this turning. It now becomes questionable what Being which has reverted into and been absorbed by its essence is henceforth to be thought of. Accordingly, a thoughtful glance ahead into this realm of “Being” can only write it as ~~Being~~,\* The drawing of these crossed lines at first only repels, especially the almost ineradicable habit of conceiving “Being” as something standing by itself and only coming at times face to face with man. According to this conception it looks as if man were excluded from “Being.” However, he is not only not excluded, that is, he is not only encompassed into “Being” but “Being,” using the essence of man, is obliged to abandon the appearance of the for-itself, for which reason, it is also of a different nature than the conception of totality would like to have it, which encompasses the subject-object relationship.

The symbol of crossed lines can, to be sure, according to what has been said, not be a merely negative symbol of crossing out. Rather it points into the four areas of the quadrangle and of their gathering at the point of intersection (cf. *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 1954, pp. 145–204). The being present as such turns towards the essence of man in which the turning-toward is first completed, insofar as the human being remembers it. Man in his essence is the memory of Being, but of ~~Being~~. This means that the essence of man is a part of that which in the crossed intersected lines of Being puts thinking under the claim of an earlier demand. Being present is grounded in the turning-towards which as such turns the essence of man into it so that the latter may dissipate itself for it.

Nothingness would have to be written, and that means thought of, just like ~~Being~~. Inherent in this is that the essence of man which remembers belongs to nothingness and not only as something added. If, therefore, in nihilism nothingness attains dominance in a special manner, then man is not only affected by nihilism but has an essential share in it. But then the entire human “component realities” also do not stand somewhere on this side of the line in order to cross over it and to settle down on the other side next to Being. The essence of man itself belongs to the essence of nihilism and

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\*On this page and three of the following (pp. 143, 144, and 150), Heidegger crossed out the term “Being” whenever it alludes to the new concept of “Being,” “across the line” from the old metaphysics. In other parts of this anthology, this convention is rendered by *Beyng*. See also pp. 309–10.—Ed.

thereby to the phase of its completion. Man, as the essence put into use in *Being* helps to constitute the zone of *Being* and that means at the same time of nothingness. Man does not only stand *in* the critical zone of the line. He himself, but not he for himself and particularly not through himself alone, *is* this zone and thus the line. In no case is the line, thought of as a symbol of the zone of complete nihilism, like something impassable lying before man. Then the possibility of a *trans lineam* and its crossing also vanishes.

The more we think about "the line," the more does this directly accessible picture vanish without making it necessary for the thoughts which are enkindled by it to lose their meaning. In the article *Across the Line* you give a description of the location of nihilism and an estimation of the situation and of the possibility of man's movement in respect to the place described and designated by the picture of the line. A topography of nihilism, of its process, and of its overcoming is certainly needed. But the topography must be preceded by a topology: the discussion of that place which gathers *Being* and nothingness into its essence, determines the essence of nihilism, and thus makes known the paths on which the ways of a possible overcoming of nihilism are indicated.

Where do *Being* and nothingness belong between which nihilism easily unfolds its essence? In the article *Across the Line* (pp. 22ff.) you name "reduction" as a main characteristic of nihilistic currents: "The surplus is exhausted; man feels that he is exploited in many, not only economic, respects." You are right in adding: "that does not exclude the fact that it (reduction) is connected in wide areas with a growing development of force and striking power," just as cessation "is, of course, not merely cessation" (p. 23).

What else does this say other than that the movement of diminishing returns of abundance and of what is original within the being in totality is not only accompanied but is determined by a growth of the will to power. The will to power is the will that wills *itself*. As this will, and in its structures, there appears, pre-formed at an early stage and prevailing in manifold ways, that which, represented as coming from being, climbs past it and within this climb has a backward effect on being, whether it be as the basis of being or as its cause. The reduction determinable within being is based on a production of *Being*, namely on the unfolding of the will to power into the unconditioned will to will. Disappearance, absence, is determined from out of a state of presence and through it. It precedes everything which disappears, rises above it. Thus, also there whither being vanishes, not only the latter prevails for itself but something else does so previously in a decisive way. Everywhere the

rising above which comes back to being, “transcendence per se” (*Sein und Zeit*, § 7), is “the Being” of being. Transcendence is metaphysics itself, whereby this name now does not signify a doctrine and discipline of philosophy but signifies that “it” “gives” that transcendence (*Sein und Zeit*, § 43c). It is given in so far as it is brought, that is, sent, on the path of its prevailing. The incalculable abundance and suddenness of that which unfolds as transcendence is called the fate of (Gen. object.) metaphysics.

According to this fate, human conception itself becomes metaphysical. The metaphysical conceptions of being can, to be sure, be represented historically in their sequence as an event. But this event is not the history of Being but, on the contrary, the latter prevails as the fate of transcendence. That and how “it” “gives” the Being of being is metaphysics in the indicated sense.

Nothingness, even when we mean it only in the sense of the complete negative of what is present, in being absent, belongs to being present as one of its possibilities. If, therefore, nothingness prevails in nihilism and the essence of nothingness belongs to Being, although Being is the fate of transcendence, then the essence of metaphysics is shown to be the place of the essence of nihilism. This can be said only and as long as we experience the essence of metaphysics as the fate of transcendence.

On what is the overcoming of nihilism based? On the restoration of metaphysics. That is a repelling thought. We try to evade it. So much less is there any reason to soften it. Nevertheless, the acceptance of that idea will meet with less resistance if we note that in consequence of it the essence of nihilism is nothing nihilistic and through it nothing is taken from the old dignity of metaphysics if its own essence contains nihilism in it.

The zone of the critical line, that is, the locale of the essence of complete nihilism, would accordingly have to be sought where the essence of metaphysics unfolds its utmost possibilities and gathers itself together in them. That takes place where the will to will wills, that is, challenges, *places* everything present solely in the general and uniform placeability of its component parts. As the unconditioned gathering together of such placement Being does not disappear. It moves off in an unique estrangement. In the disappearance and in the reduction is shown only what was once present which the will to will has not yet grasped but has still left in the will of the spirit and its total self-movement, in which Hegel’s thinking moves.

The disappearance of what has once been present is no vanishing of the present. On the contrary, the latter does, indeed, withdraw.

However, the withdrawal remains hidden from the nihilistically determined conception. It seems as if what is present, in the sense of the component realities, is sufficient unto itself. Its state of stability and that which places it in such a state, the being present of what is present, appear, when they are mentioned, as an invention of unstable thinking which no longer is able to see being, which is presumably the only "reality," because of so much "Being."

In the phase of complete nihilism it looks as if there were no such thing as *Being of being*, as though there were no such thing as Being (in the sense of negative nothingness). Being is left out in a strange way. It conceals itself. It remains in a concealment which also conceals itself. In such concealing there is based, however, the essence of oblivion known to the Greeks. It is at the end, that is, from the beginning of its essence nothing negative, but as a concealment presumably a sheltering which still preserves what has not yet been revealed. For the ordinary conception, forgetting easily takes on the appearance of mere neglect, of a lack, of something disagreeable. Through habit we take forgetting and forgetfulness exclusively as an omission, which can be encountered frequently enough as a state of the man conceived of as himself. We are still far distant from a determination of the essence of oblivion. But even where we have caught sight of the essence of oblivion in its extensiveness we far too easily run the risk of understanding forgetting only as human commission and omission.

"Oblivion of Being" has frequently been so represented that, to put it graphically, Being is an umbrella which the forgetfulness of a professor of philosophy has left somewhere.

However, oblivion, as something apparently separated from it, does not *affect* only the essence of Being. It is an affair of Being itself, governs the fate of its essence. Properly considered oblivion, the concealment of the still unrevealed being (verbal) of Being, preserves untouched treasures and is the promise of a find which is only waiting for the proper search. In order to assume something of this sort, no prophetic gift is required and not the affectation of soothsayers, but only the decade-long attention paid to what has been, as evidenced in the metaphysical thinking of the West. This past is signaled by the unconcealedness of what is present. Unconcealedness is based on the concealment of the present. Remembrance applies to *this* concealment in which unconcealedness (*Alitheia*) [sic] is based. It thinks back to that which has been, which has not disappeared because it remains what is imperishable in all that is lasting which the event of Being ever grants.

The restoration of metaphysics is the restoration of the oblivion of Being. This restoration turns towards the essence of metaphysics. It entwines itself around it through that towards which this essence itself yearns, insofar as it summons that zone which lifted it into the freedom of its truth. For that reason, thinking, in order to refer to the restoration of metaphysics, must first clarify the essence of metaphysics. To such an attempt the restoration of metaphysics seems at first to be an overcoming, a conquest, which the exclusively metaphysical conception puts behind it in order to lead thinking into the open freedom of the restored essence of metaphysics. But in restoring, the enduring truth of the apparently rejected metaphysics now really returns to be henceforth its adopted *essence*.

Here something else takes place than a mere restoration of metaphysics. Besides, there is no restoration which could merely accept something handed down to it, as someone gathers the apples which have dropped from the tree. Every restoration is an interpretation of metaphysics. Whoever believes that he can penetrate and follow metaphysical questions more clearly today in the entirety of their nature and history, should, since he likes to feel so superior as he moves in clear regions, consider one day whence he has taken the light to enable him to see more clearly. It is hardly possible to surpass the grotesqueness of proclaiming my attempts at thinking as smashing metaphysics to bits and of sojourning at the same time, with the help of those attempts, on paths of thinking and in conceptions which have been derived—I do not say, to which one is indebted—from that alleged demolition. There is no gratitude needed here, but some reflection. However, the lack of reflection already began with the superficial misinterpretation of the “destruction” which was discussed in *Sein und Zeit* (1927) and which has no other desire than to win back the original experiences of metaphysics as conceptions having become current and empty in the process of abandonment.

In order, nevertheless, to rescue metaphysics in its essence, the share of mortals in this rescue must be content with just asking first, “What is metaphysics?” At the risk of becoming tedious and of repeating what has been said elsewhere, I should like to take the opportunity afforded by this letter in order to explain once more the meaning and the importance of that question. Why? Because your desire is also aimed at helping in your way in the overcoming of nihilism. Such overcoming, however, takes place in the area of the restoration of metaphysics. We enter this area with the question,

“What is metaphysics?” If thoughtfully asked, the question already contains the presentiment that its own way of putting the question begins to become shaky through itself. “What is . . . ?” indicates the way in which one is accustomed to question the “essence.” If, however, the question aims at discussing metaphysics as the transcendence of Being over being, then with the transcending “Being,” that which has been differentiated in that differentiation, in which the tenets of metaphysics have moved since time immemorial and from which they obtain the basic outline of their language becomes subject to question. This is the differentiation between essence and existence, “to be—what” and “to be—so that.”

The question, “What is metaphysics?” at first guilelessly makes use of this differentiation. Soon, however, there appears the consideration of the transcendence of Being over being as one of those questions which must stab themselves in the heart, not so that thinking should die from it but that it may live transformed. When I tried to discuss the question, “What is metaphysics?”—it occurred a year before the publication of your treatise *Total Mobilization*—I did not in advance strive for a definition of a discipline of school philosophy. Rather, in consideration of the determination of metaphysics, according to which the transcendence takes place over being as such, I discussed a question which considers the other side of being. But this question, too, was not picked up by mere chance and projected into vague and indefinite spaces.

After a quarter of a century the time may have come for once to point to a fact which is brushed aside even today, just as if it were an external circumstance. The question, “What is metaphysics?” was discussed at an opening philosophical lecture before the entire assembled faculties. It places itself, therefore, into the circle of all the sciences and speaks to them. But how? Not in the presumptuous intention of improving their work or, perhaps, of disparaging it.

The conception of the sciences is everywhere aimed at being and, indeed, at separated areas of being. It was necessary to start from this conception of being and, following it, to conform to an opinion close to the heart of the sciences. They believe that with the conception of being the entire field of what is explorable and subject to questioning has been exhausted, that except for being there is “nothing else.” This opinion of the sciences is tentatively taken up with the question about the essence of metaphysics and apparently shared with them. However, every thoughtful person must already know that a questioning about the essence of metaphysics can only

have in view what distinguishes metaphysics, and that is the transcendence: the *Being* of being. Within the horizon of scientific conception, which only knows being, that which is not being (namely Being) in any way at all can, on the other hand, present itself only as nothingness. Therefore, the lecture asks about “*this* nothingness.” It does not ask haphazardly and vaguely about “the” nothingness. It asks: how about this totally different other to each being, that which is not being? In this it is shown that man’s existence is “held into” “*this*” nothingness, into this completely other of being. Put differently, this means, and could only mean, “Man is the seat-holder for nothingness.” This sentence means that man is holding the place open for the complete other of being, so that in its openness there can be such a thing as being present (Being). This nothingness which is not being but *is* just the same, is nothing negative. It belongs to being present. Being and nothingness are not side by side. One intercedes on behalf of the other in a relationship, the amplitude of whose essence we have scarcely considered yet. Nor do we consider it as long as we refrain from asking which “it” is meant that “is” [giving] here. In what kind of giving does it give? In what respect does there belong to this “there is Being and nothingness” such a thing which submits to this gift of existence while preserving it? Lightly we say: there is. Being “is” just as little as nothingness, but both *are*.

Leonardo de Vinci writes: “Nothingness has no middle, and its boundaries are nothingness.”—“Among the great things which are to be found among us, the Being of nothingness is the greatest.” (*Diaries and Notes*. Translated from the Italian manuscripts and edited by Theodore Lücke, 1940, p. 4f.) The words of this great man cannot and are not supposed to prove anything; but they point to the questions: In which way is Being [given], is nothingness [given]? Whence does such giving arise? In which respect are we given up to it, in so far as we are the essence of man?

Because, in view of the opportunity at hand, the lecture *What is Metaphysics?* asks with intentional limitation out of the consideration for transcendence, that is, the *Being* of being asks about *that* nothingness which first arises for the scientific conception of being, *the* nothingness was picked out of the lecture and it was turned into a document of nihilism. After ample time has elapsed the question might now be permitted: where, in which sentence and in which turn of a phrase is it ever said that the nothingness named in the lecture is nothingness in the sense of negated nothingness and as such is the first and last goal of all conception and existence?



The lecture closes with the question: "Why is there being at all and not rather Nothingness? Here "Nothingness" is intentionally and, contrary to previous procedure, written with a capital. According to the wording the question is, to be sure, broached which Leibniz posed and Schelling took up. Both thinkers understand it as the question about the highest reason and the first existing cause for all being. Present-day attempts to restore metaphysics have a special liking for taking up the designated question.

But the lecture *What is Metaphysics?* in accordance with its differently constituted way through another area, also thinks this question in a transformed sense. It is now asked: what is the reason why everywhere being is given precedence, why the negative of being, "this nothingness," that is, Being in regard to its essence, is not rather considered? Whoever thinks through the lecture as a stretch of the road from *Sein und Zeit* can understand the question only in the sense mentioned. To attempt this was at first a strange and exacting demand. That is why the transformed question was expressly explained in the "Introduction" (pp. 20ff.), which precedes the fifth edition of *What Is Metaphysics* (1949).

What is the reference meant to do? It is supposed to indicate how slowly and haltingly thinking enters into a consideration which reflects on that which is also the concern of your article *Across the Line*, the essence of nihilism.

The question, "What is metaphysics?" only attempts the one thing: to induce the sciences to reflect that they necessarily, and, for that reason, always and everywhere encounter the complete other of being, the nothingness belonging to being. Even without *their* knowledge they are already in relation to Being. They received only from the occasionally prevailing truth of Being a light in order to be able first to see and observe *as such* the being conceived by them. The questioning as to what metaphysics, that is, the thinking coming from it, is, is no longer science. For thinking, however, transcendence as such, that is, *the Being of* being now becomes worthy of question in regard to its essence and therefore never worthless and negative. The apparently empty word "Being" is always thought of in the amplitude of the essence of those determinations which, beginning with the *thusis* and the *Logos*, point the way one after the other up to the "will to power" and everywhere show a basic characteristic which the word "being present" (*Sein und Zeit*, § 6) has attempted to designate. Only because the question, "What is metaphysics?" thinks from the beginning of the climbing above, the

transcendence, the *Being* of being, can it think of the negative of being, of *that* nothingness which just as originally is identical with Being.

Now, to be sure, whoever has never seriously considered the basic direction of the question about metaphysics, the outcome of its path, the occasion of its unfolding, and the circle of the sciences to which it is addressed, and has never considered it in association with all of these, must resort to the information that a philosophy of nothingness (in the sense of negative nihilism) is presented here.

The misinterpretation of the question, "What is metaphysics?" which apparently can not yet be stamped out, and the failure to recognize its stopping-place are to the smallest extent only consequences of an aversion to thinking. Their origin lies more deeply hidden. They belong, however, to the phenomena which illuminate the course of our history: we are still moving with all of our component realities within the zone of nihilism, assuming, to be sure, that the essence of nihilism is based on the oblivion of Being.

How about the crossing of the line? Does it lead out of the zone of complete nihilism? The attempt to cross the line remains inhibited in a conception which belongs in the area of dominance of the oblivion of Being. That is why it also speaks in the basic metaphysical concepts (*Gestalt*, value, transcendence).

Can the image of the line furnish an adequate illustration for the zone of complete nihilism? Is the image of the zone better?

Doubts are stirring whether such images are suited to illustrate the overcoming of nihilism, that is, the restoration of the oblivion of Being. However, presumably every image is subject to such doubts. Nevertheless, they are not able to touch the illuminating force of the images and their original and unavoidable presence. Such considerations only show how slight is our acquaintance with the language of thinking and our knowledge of its essence.

The essence of nihilism which finally is fulfilled in the dominance of the will to will, is based on the oblivion of Being. We seem to be related to it most easily when we forget it, and that means here, disregard it. But in so doing we do not pay attention to what oblivion as concealment of ~~Being~~ means. If we pay attention to it, then we experience the dismaying necessity that instead of wanting to overcome nihilism we must try first to enter into its *essence*. The entry into its essence is the first step by which we leave nihilism behind us. The path of this entry has the direction and manner of a going back. It does not, to be sure, mean a going backward to times

lived through in the past in order to refresh them tentatively in an artificial form. The “back” here designates the direction towards that locality (the oblivion of Being), from out of which metaphysics obtained and retains its origin.

In accordance with this origin, metaphysics is prevented from ever learning its essence as metaphysics because, for the transcendence, and within it, the *Being* of being *shows* itself to metaphysical conception. Appearing in such a fashion, it expressly lays claim to metaphysical conception. No wonder that the latter rebels against the thought that it is moving in the *oblivion* of Being.

And yet an adequate and persevering reflection succeeds in seeing that metaphysics never permits its essence after a human dwelling to settle purposely in the locality, that is, in the essence of the oblivion of Being. For that reason, thinking and speculation must return to where they have in a certain way always been and yet have never *built*. We can, however, only prepare for dwelling in a locality by building. Such building may scarcely have in mind the erection of the house for God and of the dwelling places for mortals. It must be content with constructing the *road* which leads into the locality of the restoration of metaphysics and thereby permits a walk through the destined phase of an overcoming of nihilism.

Whoever dares to say such things and what is more, in writing which is open to the public, knows only too well how prematurely and easily these words, which would only like to induce some reflection, are only shut off as murky rumblings or are rejected as arbitrary pronouncements. Regardless of this, he who is continually learning must think of testing the language of reflective thinking in a more original and more careful manner. One day he will reach the point of leaving in the realm of the mysterious this language as the highest gift and the greatest danger, as something rarely successful and often unsuccessful.

Here we recognize why every form of expression of this sort struggles on in awkwardness. It always goes through the essential meaning-fullness of words and phraseology. The meaning-fullness of language by no means consists in a mere accumulation of meanings cropping up haphazardly. It is based on a play which, the more richly it unfolds, the more strictly it is bound by a hidden rule. Through this, meaning-fullness plays a part in what has been selected and weighed in the scale whose oscillations we seldom experience. That is why what is said is bound by the highest law. That is the freedom which gives freedom to the all-playing structure of

never-resting transformation. The meaning-fullness of those words, which “originate like flowers” (Hölderlin, *Bread and Wine*), is the garden of the jungle, in which growth and cultivation harmonize with one another out of an incomprehensible intimacy. You should not be surprised that the discussion of the essence of nihilism unavoidably encounters at every point in the road something worthy of stimulating thinking which we awkwardly enough call the language of thinking. This language is not the expression of thinking, but is thinking itself, its stride and its voice.

What would this letter like to do? It is trying to lift into a higher meaning-fullness the title *Across the Line*, that is, everything which it writes about in your and in my sense and tries to say in written form. This meaning-fullness lets it be known in which way the overcoming of nihilism demands an entry into its essence, with which entry the desire to overcome breaks down. The restoration of metaphysics calls thinking into a more primordial demand.

Your *trans lineam* estimation of the situation and my discussion *de linea* are dependent upon one another. Together they are obliged not to give up the effort to practice planetary thinking along a stretch of the road, be it ever so short. Here too no prophetic talents and demeanor are needed to realize that there are in store for planetary building encounters to which participants are by no means equal today. This is equally true of the European and of the East Asiatic languages and, above all, for the area of a possible conversation between them. Neither of the two is able by itself to open up this area and to establish it.

Nietzsche, in whose light and shadow everyone today thinks and reflects with his “for him” or “against him,” heard a command which demands a preparation of man for taking over a world-domination. He saw and understood the conflict for domination about to be enkindled (XIV, p. 320; XVI, p. 337; XII, p. 208). This is not a war, but the *Polemos*, which causes gods and men, free men and serfs first to appear in their essence and brings about a setting-apart of *Being*. Compared with it, World Wars remain in the foreground. They are able to decide less and less the more technological their armament becomes.

Nietzsche heard that command to reflect on the essence of a planetary domination. He followed the call along the path of the metaphysical thinking with which he was endowed and he broke down on the way. So it seems, at least, to historical observation. Perhaps he did not collapse, however, but on the contrary, went as far as his thinking permitted.

That it left behind weighty and difficult matters, should remind us more strongly, and in a different way from before, from what a distant past stems the question which awakened in him as to the essence of nihilism. The question has not become any easier for us. For that reason, it must restrict itself to something more temporary: to reflect on old, venerable words the language of which gives us promise of the realm of the essence of nihilism and of its restoration. Is there a rescue of what is destined for us and of what has been handed down to us by destiny more worthy of effort than such reflection? None that I know of. But it seems revolutionary to those who do not ask whence comes what has come down to us. They regard what seems to look innocent as already absolutely valid. They demand that it appear in elaborate systems. When, on the other hand, reflection is always concerned only with drawing attention to the use thinking makes of language, this is of no value. But at times it does serve that which needs the thinking process.

*What* this letter is trying to demonstrate may prove all too soon to be inadequate.

*How* it would like, however, to cultivate reflection and discussion, Goethe says in the statement with which I should like to close this letter:

“If anyone regards words and expressions as sacred testimonials and does not put them, like currency and paper money, into quick and immediate circulation, but wants to see them exchanged in the intellectual trade and barter as true equivalents, then one can not blame him if he draws attention to the fact that traditional expressions, at which no one any longer takes offense, nevertheless exert a damaging influence, confuse opinions, distort understanding, and give entire fields of subject-matter a false direction.”

I send you my hearty greetings.

*Translated by William Kluback and Jean T. Wilde*

## EXISTENTIAL ANALYSIS

### Being-in-the-World as Being-with and Being a Self: The “They” (1927)

The analysis of the worldliness of the world continually brought the whole phenomenon of being-in-the-world into view without thereby delimiting all of its constitutive factors with the same phenomenal clarity as the phenomenon of world itself. The ontological interpretation of the world which discussed innerworldly things at hand came first not only because Da-sein in its everydayness is in a world in general and remains a constant theme with regard to that world, but because it relates itself to the world in a predominant mode of being. Initially and for the most part, Da-sein is taken in by its world. This mode of being, being absorbed in the world, and thus being-in which underlies it, essentially determine the phenomenon which we shall now pursue with the question: *Who* is it who is in the everydayness of Da-sein? All of the structures of being of Da-sein, thus also the phenomenon that answers to this question of who, are modes of its being. Their ontological characteristic is an existential one. Thus, we need to pose the question correctly and outline the procedure for bringing to view a broader phenomenal domain of the everydayness of Da-sein. By investigating in the direction of the phenomenon which allows us to answer the question of the who, we are led to structures of Da-sein which are equiprimordial with being-in-the-world: being-with *Mitda-sein*. In this kind of being, the mode of everyday being a self is grounded whose explication makes visible what we might call the “subject” of everydayness, the *they*. This chapter on the “who” of average Da-sein thus has the following structure: (1) The approach to the existential question of the who of Da-sein (section 25). (2) The *Mitda-sein* of the others and everyday being-with (section 26). (3) Everyday being a self and the they (section 27).

## The Approach to the Existential Question of the Who of Da-sein

The answer to the question of who this being actually is (Da-sein) seems to have already been given with the formal indication of the basic characteristics of Da-sein (cf. section 9). Da-sein is a being which I myself am, its being is in each case mine. This determination *indicates* an *ontological* constitution, but no more than that. At the same time, it contains an *ontic* indication, albeit an undifferentiated one, that an I is always this being, and not others. The who is answered in terms of the I itself, the "subject," the "self." The who is what maintains itself in the changes throughout its modes of behavior and experiences as something identical and is, thus, related to this multiplicity. Ontologically, we understand it as what is always already and constantly objectively present in a closed region and for that region, as that which lies at its basis in an eminent sense, as the *subjectum*. As something self-same in manifold otherness, this subject has the character of the *self*. Even if one rejects a substantial soul, the thingliness of consciousness and the objectivity of the person, ontologically one still posits something whose being retains the meaning of objective presence, whether explicitly or not. Substantiality is the ontological clue for the determination of beings in terms of whom the question of the who is answered. Da-sein is tacitly conceived in advance as objective presence. In any case, the indeterminacy of its being always implies this meaning of being. However, objective presence is the mode of being of beings unlike Da-sein.

The ontic obviousness of the statement that it is I who is in each case Da-sein must not mislead us into supposing that the way for an ontological interpretation of what is thus "given" has been unmistakably prescribed. It is even questionable whether the ontic content of the above statement reaches the phenomenal content of everyday Da-sein. It could be the case that the who of everyday Da-sein is precisely *not* I myself.

Even when we manage to gain ontic and ontological statements, if the phenomenal demonstration in terms of the mode of being of beings is to retain priority over the most obvious and usual answers and the problems arising from these, the phenomenological interpretation of Da-sein must be protected from a distortion of the problematic with regard to the question to be raised now.

But does it not go against the rules of a sound method when the approach to a problematic does not stick to the evident data of the

thematic realm? And what is less dubious than the givenness of the I? And (for the purpose of working this givenness out in a primordial way) does it not direct us to abstract from everything else that is "given," not only from an existing "world," but also from the being of the other "I"'s? Perhaps what gives this kind of giving, this simple, formal, reflective perception of the I, is indeed evident. This insight even opens access to an independent phenomenological problematic which has its fundamental significance in the framework known as "formal phenomenology of consciousness."

In the present context of an existential analytic of factual Da-sein, the question arises whether the way of the giving of the I which we mentioned discloses Da-sein in its everydayness, if it discloses it at all. Is it then *a priori* self-evident that the access to Da-sein must be simple perceiving reflection of the I of acts? What if this kind of "self-giving" of Da-sein were to lead our existential analytic astray and do so in a way grounded in the being of Da-sein itself? Perhaps when Da-sein addresses itself in the way which is nearest to itself, it always says it is I, and finally says this most loudly when it is "not" this being. What if the fact that Da-sein is so constituted that it is in each case mine, were the reason for the fact that Da-sein *is*, initially and for the most part, *not itself*? What if, with the approach mentioned above, the existential analytic fell into the trap, so to speak, of starting with the givenness of the I for Da-sein itself and its obvious self-interpretation? What if it should turn out that the ontological horizon for the determination of what is accessible in simple giving should remain fundamentally undetermined? We can probably always correctly say ontically of this being that "I" am it. However, the ontological analytic which makes use of such statements must have fundamental reservations about them. The "I" must be understood only in the sense of a noncommittal *formal indication* of something which perhaps reveals itself in the actual phenomenal context of being as that being's "opposite." Then "not I" by no means signifies something like a being which is essentially lacking "I-hood," but means a definite mode of being of the "I" itself; for example, having lost itself.

But even the positive interpretation of Da-sein that has been given up to now already forbids a point of departure from the formal givenness of the I if the intention is to find a phenomenally adequate answer to the question of value. The clarification of being-in-the-world showed that a mere subject without a world "is" not initially and is also never given. And, thus, an isolated I without the



others is in the end just as far from being given initially. But if the "others" are always already *there with us* in being-in-the-world, ascertaining this phenomenally, too, must not mislead us into thinking that the *ontological* structure of what is thus "given" is self-evident and not in need of an investigation. The task is to make this *Mitda-sein* of the nearest everydayness phenomenally visible and to interpret it in an ontologically adequate way.

Just as the ontic, self-evident character of being-in-itself of inner-worldly beings misleads us to the conviction of the ontological self-evident character of the meaning of this being and makes us overlook the phenomenon of world, the ontic, self-evident character that Da-sein is always my own also harbors the possibility that the ontological problematic indigenous to it might be led astray. *Initially* the who of Da-sein is not only a problem *ontologically*, it also remains concealed *ontically*.

But, then, is the existential analytical answer to the question of the who without any clues at all? By no means. To be sure, of the formal indications of the constitution of being of Da-sein given above (sections 9 and 12), it is not so much the one which we discussed which is functional, but rather, the one according to which the "essence" of Da-sein is grounded in its existence. *If the "I" is an essential determination of Da-sein, it must be interpreted existentially.* The question of the who can then be answered only by a phenomenal demonstration of a definite kind of being of Da-sein. If Da-sein is always only its self *in existing*, the constancy of the self as well as its possible "inconstancy" require an existential-ontological kind of questioning as the only adequate access to the problematic.

But if the self is conceived "only" as a way of the being of this being, then that seems tantamount to volatilizing the true "core" of Da-sein. But such fears are nourished by the incorrect preconception that the being in question really has, after all, the kind of being of something objectively present, even if one avoids attributing to it the massive element of a corporeal thing. However, the "*substance*" of human being is not the spirit as the synthesis of body and soul, but *existence*.

### The *Mitda-sein* of the Others and Everyday Being-with

The answer to the question of the who of everyday Da-sein is to be won through the analysis of *the* kind of being in which Da-sein,

initially and for the most part, lives. Our investigation takes its orientation from being-in-the-world. This fundamental constitution of *Da-sein* determines every mode of its being. If we justifiably stated that all other structure factors of being-in-the-world already came into view by means of the previous explication of the world, the answer to the question of the who must also be prepared by that explication.

The "description" of the surrounding world nearest to us, for example, the work-world of the handworker, showed that together with the useful things found in work, others are "also encountered" for whom the "work" is to be done. In the kind of being of these things at hand, that is, in their relevance, there lies an essential reference to possible wearers for whom they should be "cut to the figure." Similarly, the producer or "supplier" is encountered in the material used as one who "serves" well or badly. The field, for example, along which we walk "outside" shows itself as belonging to such and such a person who keeps it in good order, the book which we use is bought at such and such a place, given by such and such a person, and so on. The boat anchored at the shore refers in its being-in-itself to an acquaintance who undertakes his voyages with it, but as a "boat strange to us," it also points to others. The others who are "encountered" in the context of useful things in the surrounding world at hand are not somehow added on in thought to an initially merely objectively present thing, but these "things" are encountered from the world in which they are at hand for the others. This world is always already from the outset my own. In our previous analysis, the scope of what is encountered in the world was initially narrowed down to useful things at hand, or nature objectively present, thus to beings of a character unlike *Da-sein*. This restriction was not only necessary for the purpose of simplifying the explication; but, above all, because the kind of being of the existence of the others encountered within the surrounding world is distinct from handiness and objective presence. The world of *Da-sein* thus frees beings which are not only completely different from tools and things, but which themselves in accordance with their kind of being as *Da-sein* are themselves "in" the world as being-in-the-world in which they are at the same time encountered. These beings are neither objectively present nor at hand, but they *are like* the very *Da-sein* which frees them—*they are there, too, and there with it*. So, if one wanted to identify the world in general with innerworldly beings, one would have to say the "world" is also *Da-sein*.

But the characteristic of encountering the *others* is, after all, oriented toward one's *own* Da-sein. Does not it, too, start with the distinction and isolation of the "I," so that a transition from this isolated subject to the others must then be sought? In order to avoid this misunderstanding, we must observe in what sense we are talking about "the others." "The others" does not mean everybody else but me—those from whom the I distinguishes itself. They are, rather, those from whom one mostly does *not* distinguish oneself, those among whom one is, too. This being-there-too with them does not have the ontological character of being objectively present "with" them within a world. The "with" is of the character of Da-sein, the "also" means the sameness of being as circumspect, heedful being-in-the-world. "With" and "also" are to be understood *existentially*, not categorially. On the basis of this *like-with* being-in-the-world, the world is always already the one that I share with the others. The world of Da-sein is a *with-world*. Being-in is *being-with* others. The innerworldly being-in-itself of others is *Mitda-sein*.

The others are not encountered by grasping and previously discriminating one's own subject, initially objectively present, from other subjects also present. They are not encountered by first looking at oneself and then ascertaining the opposite pole of a distinction. They are encountered from the *world* in which Da-sein, heedful and circumspect, essentially dwells. As opposed to the theoretically concocted "explanations" of the objective presence of others which easily urge themselves upon us, we must hold fast to the phenomenal fact which we have indicated of their being encountered in the *surrounding world*. This nearest and elemental way of Da-sein of being encountered in the world goes so far that even one's *own* Da-sein *initially* becomes "discoverable" by *looking away* from its "experiences" and the "center of its actions" or by not yet "seeing" them all. Da-sein initially finds "itself" in *what* it does, needs, expects, has charge of, in the things at hand which it initially *takes care of* in the surrounding world.

And even when Da-sein explicitly addresses itself as "I here," the locative personal designation must be understood in terms of the existential spatiality of Da-sein. When we interpreted this (section 23), we already intimated that this I-here does not mean an eminent point of an I-thing, but as being-in is to be understood in terms of the over there of the world at hand where Da-sein dwells in *taking care*.

W. v. Humboldt has alluded to certain languages which express the "I" by "here," the "thou" by "there," and the "he" by "over

there,” thus rendering the personal pronouns by locative adverbs, to put it grammatically. It is controversial whether the primordial meaning of locative expressions is adverbial or pronominal. This dispute loses its basis if one notes that locative adverbs have a relation to the I qua Da-sein. The “here,” “over there,” and “there” are not primarily pure locative designations of innerworldly beings objectively present at positions in space, but, rather, characteristics of the primordial spatiality of Da-sein. The supposedly locative adverbs are determinations of Da-sein; they have primarily an existential, not a categorial, meaning. But they are not pronouns, either. Their significance is prior to the distinction of locative adverbs and personal pronouns. The true spatial meaning of these expressions for Da-sein, however, documents the fact that the theoretically undistorted interpretation of Da-sein sees the latter immediately in its spatial “being-together-with” the world taken care of, spatial in the sense of de-distancing and directionality. In the “here” Da-sein, absorbed in its world, does not address itself, but speaks away from itself, in circumspection, to the “over there” of something at hand and means, however, *itself* in its existential spatiality.

Da-sein understands itself, initially and for the most part, in terms of its world, and the *Mitda-sein* of others is frequently encountered from innerworldly things at hand. But when the others become, so to speak, thematic in their Da-sein, they are not encountered as objectively present thing-persons, but we meet them “at work,” that is, primarily in their being-in-the-world. Even when we see the other “just standing around,” he is never understood as a human-thing objectively present. “Standing around” is an existential mode of being, the lingering with everything and nothing which lacks heedfulness and circumspection. The other is encountered in his *Mitda-sein* in the world.

But, after all, the expression “Da-sein” clearly shows that this being is “initially” unrelated to others, that it can, of course, also be “with” others subsequently. But we must not overlook the fact that we are also using the term *Mitda-sein* as a designation of the being to which the existing others are freed within the world. The *Mitda-sein* of others is disclosed only within the world for a Da-sein and thus also for those who are *Mitda-sein*, because Da-sein in itself is essentially being-with. The phenomenological statement that Da-sein is essentially being-with has an existential-ontological meaning. It does not intend to ascertain ontically that I am factically not objectively present alone, rather that others of my kind

also are. If the statement that the being-in-the-world of Da-sein is essentially constituted by being-with meant something like this, being-with would not be an existential attribute that belongs to Da-sein of itself on the basis of its kind of being, but something which occurs at times on the basis of the existence of others. Being-with existentially determines Da-sein even when an other is not factually present and perceived. The being-alone of Da-sein, too, is being-with in the world. The other can be *lacking* only *in* and *for* a being-with. Being-alone is a deficient mode of being-with, its possibility is a proof for the latter. On the other hand, factual being alone is not changed by the fact that a second copy of a human being is “next to” me, or perhaps ten human beings. Even when these and still more are objectively present, Da-sein can be alone. Thus, being-with and the facticity of being-with-one-another are not based on the fact that several “subjects” are physically there together. Being alone “among” many, however, does not mean with respect to the being of others that they are simply objectively present. Even in being “among them,” they are *there with*. Their *Mitda-sein* is encountered in the mode of indifference and being alien. Lacking and “being away” are modes of *Mitda-sein* and are possible only because Da-sein as being-with lets the Da-sein of others be encountered in its world. Being-with is an attribute of one’s own Da-sein. *Mitda-sein* characterizes the Da-sein of others in that it is freed for a being-with by the world of that being-with. Only because it has the essential structure of being-with, is one’s own Da-sein *Mitda-sein* as encounterable by others.

If *Mitda-sein* remains existentially constitutive for being-in-the-world, it must be interpreted, as must also circumspect association with the innerworldly things at hand which we characterized by way of anticipation as taking care of things, in terms of the phenomenon of *care* which we used to designate the being of Da-sein in general. (Cf. chapter 6 of this division.) Taking care of things is a character of being which being-with cannot have as its own, although this kind of being is a *being toward* beings encountered in the world, as is taking care of things. The being to which Da-sein is related as being-with does not, however, have the kind of being of useful things at hand; it is itself Da-sein. This being is not taken care of, but is a matter of *concern*.

Even “taking care” of food and clothing, the nursing of the sick body is concern. But we understand this expression in a way which corresponds to our use of taking care of things as a term for an

existential. For example, "welfare work," as a factual social institution, is based on the constitution of being of *Da-sein* as being-with. Its factual urgency is motivated by the fact that *Da-sein* initially and, for the most part, lives in the deficient modes of concern. Being for-, against-, and without-one-another, passing-one-another-by, not-mattering-to-one-another, are possible ways of concern. And precisely the last named modes of deficiency and indifference characterize the everyday and average being-with-one-another. These modes of being show the characteristics of inconspicuousness and obviousness which belong to everyday inner-worldly *Mitda-sein* of others, as well as to the handiness of useful things taken care of daily. These indifferent modes of being-with-one-another tend to mislead the ontological interpretation into initially interpreting this being as the pure objective presence of several subjects. It seems as if only negligible variations of the same kind of being lie before us, and yet ontologically there is an essential distinction between the "indifferent" being together of arbitrary things and the not-mattering-to-one-another of beings who are with one another.

With regard to its positive modes, concern has two extreme possibilities. It can, so to speak, take the other's "care" away from him and put itself in his place in taking care, it can *leap in* for him. Concern takes over what is to be taken care of for the other. The other is thus displaced, he steps back so that afterwards, when the matter has been attended to, he can take it over as something finished and available or disburden himself of it completely. In this concern, the other can become one who is dependent and dominated even if this domination is a tacit one and remains hidden from him. This kind of concern which does the job and takes away "care" is, to a large extent, determinative for being with one another and pertain, for the most part, to our taking care of things at hand.

In contrast to this, there is the possibility of a concern which does not so much leap in for the other as *leap ahead* of him, not in order to take "care" away from him, but to first to give it back to him as such. This concern which essentially pertains to authentic care; that is, the existence of the other, and not to a *what* which it takes care of, helps the other to become transparent to himself *in* his care and *free for* it.

Concern proves to be constitutive of the being of *Da-sein* which, in accordance with its different possibilities, is bound up with its being toward the world taken care of and also with its authentic

being toward itself. Being-with-one-another is based initially and often exclusively on what is taken care of together in such being. A being-with-one-another which arises from one's doing the same thing as someone else not only keeps for the most part within outer limits but enters the mode of distance and reserve. The being-with-one-another of those who are employed for the same thing often thrives only on mistrust. On the other hand, when they devote themselves to the same thing in common, their doing so is determined by their *Da-sein*, which has been stirred. This *authentic* alliance first makes possible the proper kind of objectivity which frees the other for himself in his freedom.

Between the two extremes of positive concern—the one which does someone's job for him and dominates him, and the one which is in advance of him and frees him—everyday being-with-one-another maintains itself and shows many mixed forms whose description and classification lie outside of the limits of this investigation.

Just as *circumspection* belongs to taking care of things as a way of discovering things at hand, concern is guided by *considerateness* and *tolerance*. With concern, both can go through the deficient and indifferent modes up to the point of *inconsiderateness* and the tolerance which is guided by indifference.

The world not only frees things at hand as beings encountered within the world, but also *Da-sein*, the others in their *Mitda-sein*. But in accordance with its own meaning of being, this being which is freed in the surrounding world is being-in in the same world in which, as encounterable for others, it is there with them. Worldliness was interpreted (section 18) as the referential totality of significance. In being familiar with this significance and previously understanding it, *Da-sein* lets things at hand be encountered as things discovered in their relevance. The referential context of significance is anchored in the being of *Da-sein* toward its ownmost being—a being which cannot be in a relation of relevance, but which is rather the being *for the sake of which* *Da-sein* itself is as it is.

But, according to the analysis which we have now completed, being-with-others belongs to the being of *Da-sein*, with which it is concerned in its very being. As being-with, *Da-sein* "is" essentially for the sake of others. This must be understood as an existential statement as to its essence. But when actual, factual *Da-sein* does *not* turn to others and thinks that it does not need them, or misses them, it is in the mode of being-with. In being-with as the existen-

tial for-the-sake-of-others, these others are already disclosed in their Da-sein. This previously constituted disclosedness of others together with being-with thus helps to constitute significance, that is, worldliness. As this worldliness, disclosedness is anchored in the existential for-the-sake-of-which. Hence the worldliness of the world thus constituted in which Da-sein always already essentially is, lets things at hand be encountered in the surrounding world in such a sway that the *Mitda-sein* of others is encountered at the same time with them as circumspectly taken care of. The structure of the worldliness of the world is such that others are not initially objectively present as unattached subjects along with other things, but show themselves in their heedful being in the surrounding world in terms of the things at hand in that world.

The disclosedness of the *Mitda-sein* of others which belongs to being-with means that the understanding of others already lies in the understanding of being of Da-sein because its being is being-with. This understanding, like all understanding, is not a knowledge derived from cognition, but a primordially existential kind of being which first makes knowledge and cognition possible. Knowing oneself is grounded in primordially understanding being-with. It operates initially in accordance with the nearest kind of being of being-together-in-the-world in the understanding knowledge of what Da-sein circumspectly finds and takes care of with the others. Concernful taking care of things is understood in terms of what is taken care of and with an understanding of them. Thus the other is initially disclosed in the taking care of concern.

But because concern, initially and for the most part, dwells in the deficient or at least indifferent modes—in the indifference of passing-one-another-by—a nearest and essential knowing oneself is in need of a getting-to-know-oneself. And when even knowing oneself loses itself in aloofness, concealing oneself and misrepresenting oneself, being-with-one-another requires special ways in order to come near to the others or to “see through them.”

But just as opening oneself up or closing oneself off are grounded in the actual mode of being of being-with-one-another, in fact is nothing besides this mode itself, even the explicit disclosure of the other in concern grows only out of one’s primarily being-with him. Such a disclosure of the other which is indeed *thematic*, but not in the mode of theoretical psychology, easily becomes the phenomenon that first comes to view for the theoretical problematic of understanding the “psychical life of others.” What “initially” presents



phenomenally a way of being-with-one-another that understands—is at the same time, however, taken to mean that which “originally” and primordially makes possible and constitutes being toward others. This phenomenon, which is none too happily designated as “*empathy*,” is then supposed, as it were, to provide the first ontological bridge from one’s own subject, initially given by itself, to the other subject, which is initially quite inaccessible.

To be sure, being-toward-others is ontologically different from being toward objectively present things. The “other” being itself has the kind of being of Da-sein. Thus, in being with and toward others, there is a relation of being from Da-sein to Da-sein. But, one would like to say, this relation is, after all, already constitutive of one’s own Da-sein, which has an understanding of its own being and is thus related to Da-sein. The relation of being to others then becomes a projection of one’s own being toward oneself “into an other.” The other is a double of the self.

But it is easy to see that this seemingly obvious deliberation has little ground to stand on. The presupposition which this argument makes use of—that the being of Da-sein toward itself is a being toward another—is incorrect. As long as the presupposition has not been demonstrated clearly in its legitimacy, it remains puzzling how the relation of Da-sein to itself is to disclose the other as other.

Being toward others is not only an autonomous irreducible relation of being, as being-with it already exists with the being of Da-sein. Of course, it is indisputable that a lively mutual acquaintance-ship on the basis of being-with often depends on how far one’s own Da-sein has actually understood itself, but this means that it depends only upon how far one’s essential being with others has made it transparent and not disguised itself. This is possible only if Da-sein as being-in-the-world is always already with others. “*Empathy*” does not first constitute being-with, but is first possible on its basis, and is motivated by the prevailing modes of being-with in their inevitability.

But the fact that “*empathy*” is not an original existential phenomenon, any more than is knowing in general, does not mean that there is no problem here. Its special hermeneutic will have to show how the various possibilities of being of Da-sein themselves mislead and obstruct being-with-one-another and its self-knowledge, so that a genuine “understanding” is suppressed and Da-sein takes refuge in surrogates; this positive existential condition presupposes a correct understanding of the stranger for its possibility. Our analy-

sis has shown that being-with is an existential constituent of being-in-the-world. *Mitda-sein* has proved to be a manner of being which beings encountered within the world have as their own. In that *Da-sein* is at all, it has the kind of being of being-with-one-another. Being-with-one-another cannot be understood as a summative result of the occurrence of several "subjects." Encountering a number of "subjects" itself is possible only by treating the others encountered in their *Mitda-sein* merely as "numerals." This number is discovered only by a definite being with and toward one another. "Inconsiderate" being-with "reckons" with others without seriously "counting on them" or even wishing "to have anything to do" with them.

One's own *Da-sein*, like the *Mitda-sein* of others, is encountered, initially and for the most part, in terms of the world-together in the surrounding world taken care of. In being absorbed in the world of taking care of things, that is, at the same time in being-with toward others, *Da-sein* is not itself. *Who* is it, then, who has taken over being as everyday being-with-one-another?

### Everyday Being One's Self and the They

The *ontologically* relevant result of the foregoing analysis of being-with is the insight that the "subject character" of one's own *Da-sein* and of the others is to be defined existentially, that is, in terms of certain ways to be. In what is taken care of in the surrounding world, the others are encountered as what they are; they *are* what they do.

In taking care of the things which one has taken hold of, for, and against others, there is constant care as to the way one differs from them, whether this difference is to be equalized, whether one's own *Da-sein* has lagged behind others and wants to catch up in relation to them, whether *Da-sein* in its priority over others is intent on suppressing them. Being-with-one-another is, unknown to itself, disquieted by the care about this distance. Existentially expressed, being-with-one-another has the character of *distantiality*. The more inconspicuous this kind of being is to everyday *Da-sein* itself, all the more stubbornly and primordially does it work itself out.

But this distantiality which belongs to being-with is such that, as everyday being-with-one-another, *Da-sein* stands in *subservience* to the others. It itself *is* not; the others have taken its being away from

it. The everyday possibilities of being of Da-sein are at the disposal of the whims of the others. These others are not *definite* others. On the contrary, any other can represent them. What is decisive is only the inconspicuous domination by others that Da-sein as being-with has already taken over unawares. One belongs to the others oneself, and entrenches their power. "The others," whom one designates as such in order to cover over one's own essential belonging to them, are those who *are there* initially and for the most part in everyday being-with-one-another. The who is not this one and not that one, not oneself and not some and not the sum of them all. The "who" is the neuter, *the they*.

We have shown earlier how the public "surrounding world" is always already at hand and taken care of in the surrounding world nearest to us. In utilizing public transportation, in the use of information services such as the newspaper, every other is like the next. This being-with-one-another dissolves one's own Da-sein completely into the kind of being of "the others" in such a way that the others, as distinguishable and explicit, disappear more and more. In this inconspicuousness and unascertainability, the they unfolds its true dictatorship. We enjoy ourselves and have fun the way *they* enjoy themselves. We read, see, and judge literature and art the way *they* see and judge. But we also withdraw from the "great mass" the way *they* withdraw, we find "shocking" what *they* find shocking. The they, which is nothing definite and which all are, though not as a sum, prescribes the kind of being of everydayness.

The they has its own ways to be. The tendency of being-with which we called distantiality is based on the fact that being-with-one-another as such creates *averageness*. It is an existential character of the they. In its being, the they is essentially concerned with averageness. Thus, the they maintains itself factically in the averageness of what is proper, what is allowed, and what is not. Of what is granted success and what is not. This averageness, which prescribes what can and may be ventured, watches over every exception which thrusts itself to the fore. Every priority is noiselessly squashed. Overnight, everything primordial is flattened down as something long since known. Everything gained by a struggle becomes something to be manipulated. Every mystery loses its power. The care of averageness reveals, in turn, an essential tendency of Da-sein, which we call the *leveling down* of all possibilities of being.

Distantiality, averageness, and leveling down, as ways of being of the they, constitute what we know as "publicness." Publicness

initially controls every way in which the world and Da-sein are interpreted, and it is always right, not because of an eminent and primary relation of being to “things,” not because it has an explicitly appropriate transparency of Da-sein at its disposal, but because it does not get to “the heart of the matter,” because it is insensitive to every difference of level and genuineness. Publicness obscures everything, and then claims that what has been thus covered over is what is familiar and accessible to everybody.

The they is everywhere, but in such a way that it has always already stolen away when Da-sein presses for a decision. However, because the they presents every judgment and decision as its own, it takes the responsibility of Da-sein away from it. The they can, as it were, manage to have “them” constantly invoking it. It can most easily be responsible for everything because no one has to vouch for anything. The they always “did it,” and yet it can be said that “no one” did it. In the everydayness of Da-sein, most things happen in such a way that we must say “no one did it.”

Thus, the they *disburdens* Da-sein in its everydayness. Not only that; by disburdening it of its being, the they accommodates Da-sein in its tendency to take things easily and make them easy. And since the they constantly accommodates Da-sein, it retains and entrenches its stubborn dominance.

Everyone is the other, and no one is himself. The *they*, which supplies the answer to the *who* of everyday Da-sein, is the *nobody* to whom every Da-sein has always already surrendered itself, in its being-among-one-another.

In these characteristics of being which we have discussed—everyday being-among-one-another, distanciality, averageness, levelling down, publicness, disburdening of one’s being, and accommodation—lies the initial “constancy” of Da-sein. This constancy pertains not to the enduring objective presence of something, but to the kind of being of Da-sein as being-with. Existing in the modes we have mentioned, the self of one’s own Da-sein and the self of the other have neither found nor lost themselves. One is in the manner of dependency and inauthenticity. This way of being does not signify a lessening of the facticity of Da-sein, just as the they as the nobody is not nothing. On the contrary, in this kind of being Da-sein is an *ens realissimum*, if by “reality” we understand a being that is like Da-sein.

Of course, the they is as little objectively present as Da-sein itself. The more openly the they behaves, the more slippery and hidden it

is, but the less is it nothing at all. To the unprejudiced ontic-ontological "eye," it reveals itself as the "most real subject" of everydayness. And if it is not accessible like an objectively present stone, that is not in the least decisive about its kind of being. One may neither decree prematurely that this they is "really" nothing, nor profess the opinion that the phenomenon has been interpreted ontologically if one "explains" it as the result of the objective presence of several subjects which one has put together in hindsight. On the contrary, the elaboration of the concepts of being must be guided by these indubitable phenomena.

Nor is the they something like a "universal subject" which hovers over a plurality of subjects. One could understand it this way only if the being of "subjects" is understood as something unlike *Da-sein*, and if these are regarded as factually objectively present cases of an existing genus. With this approach, the only possibility ontologically is to understand everything which is not a case of this sort in the sense of genus and species. The they is not the genus of an individual *Da-sein*, nor can it be found in this being as an abiding characteristic. That traditional logic also fails in the face of the phenomena, cannot surprise us if we consider that it has its foundation in an ontology of objective presence—an ontology which is still rough at that. Thus, it fundamentally cannot be made more flexible no matter how many improvements and expansions might be made. These reforms of logic, oriented toward the "humanistic sciences," only increase the ontological confusion.

*The they is an existential and belongs as a primordial phenomenon to the positive constitution of Da-sein.* It itself has, in turn, various possibilities of concretion in accordance with *Da-sein*. The extent to which its dominance becomes penetrating and explicit may change historically.

The self of everyday *Da-sein* is the *they-self* which we distinguish from the *authentic self*, the self which has explicitly grasped itself. As the they-self, *Da-sein* is *dispersed* in the they and must first find itself. This dispersion characterizes the "subject" of the kind of being which we know as heedful absorption in the world nearest encountered. If *Da-sein* is familiar with itself as the they-self, this also means that the they prescribes the nearest interpretation of the world and of being-in-the-world. The they itself, for the sake of which *Da-sein* is every day, articulates the referential context of significance. The world of *Da-sein* frees the beings encountered for a totality of relevance which is familiar to the they in the limits which

are established with the averageness of the they. *Initially*, factual Da-sein is in the with-world, discovered in an average way. *Initially*, “I” “am” not in the sense of my own self, but I am the others in the mode of the they. In terms of the they, and as the they, I am initially “given” to “myself.” Initially, Da-sein is the they and for the most part of it remains so. If Da-sein explicitly discovers the world and brings it near, if it discloses its authentic being to itself, this discovering of “world” and disclosing of Da-sein always comes about by clearing away coverings and obscurities, by breaking up the disguises with which Da-sein cuts itself off from itself.

With this interpretation of being-with and being one’s self in the they, the question of the who in the everydayness of being-with-one-another is answered. These considerations have at the same time given us a concrete understanding of the basic constitution of Da-sein. Being-in-the-world became visible in its everydayness and averageness.

Everyday Da-sein derives the pre-ontological interpretation of its being from the nearest kind of being of the they. The ontological interpretation initially follows this tendency of interpretation, it understands Da-sein in terms of the world and finds it there as an innerworldly being. Not only this; the “nearest” ontology of Da-sein takes the meaning of being on the basis of which these existing “subjects” are understood also in terms of the “world.” But since the phenomenon of world itself is passed over in this absorption in the world, it is replaced by objective presence in the world, by things. The being of beings, which *is there, too*, is understood as objective presence. Thus, by showing the positive phenomenon of nearest, everyday being-in-the-world, we have made possible an insight into the root of missing the ontological interpretation of this constitution of being. It itself, in its everyday kind of being, is what initially misses itself and covers itself over.

If the being of everyday being-with-one-another, which seems ontologically to approach pure objective presence, is really fundamentally different from that kind of presence, still less can the being of the authentic self be understood as objective presence. *Authentic being one’s self* is not based on an exceptional state of the subject, a state detached from the they, *but is an existentiell modification of the they as an essential existential.*

But, then, the sameness of the authentically existing self is separated ontologically by a gap from the identity of the I maintaining itself in the multiplicity of its “experiences.”

# The Everyday Being of the There and the Falling Prey of Da-sein (1927)

## Curiosity

In the analysis of understanding and the disclosedness of the there in general, we referred to the *lumen naturale* and called the disclosedness of being-in the *clearing* of Da-sein in which something like sight first becomes possible. Sight was conceived with regard to the basic kind of disclosing characteristic of Da-sein, understanding in the sense of the genuine appropriation of beings to which Da-sein can be related in accordance with its essential possibilities of being.

The basic constitution of being of sight shows itself in a peculiar tendency of being which belongs to everydayness—the tendency toward “seeing.” We designate it with the term *curiosity* which is characteristically not limited to seeing and expresses the tendency toward a peculiar way of letting the world be encountered in perception. Our aim in interpreting this phenomenon is in principle existential and ontological. We do not restrict ourselves to an orientation toward cognition. Even in the early stages of Greek philosophy, and not by accident, cognition was conceived in terms of the “desire to see.” The treatise which stands first in the collection of Aristotle’s treatises on ontology begins with the sentence: *pantes anthrōpoi tou eidenai oregontai phusei*. The care for seeing is essential to the being of human being. Thus an inquiry is introduced which attempts to discover the origin of all scientific investigation of beings and their being by deriving it from the kind of being of Da-sein which we mentioned. This Greek interpretation of the existential genesis of science is not a matter of chance. It brings to an explicit understanding what was prefigured in the statement of Parmenides: *to gar auto noein estin te kai einai*. Being is what shows itself in pure, intuitive perception, and only this seeing discovers being. Primordial and genuine truth lies in pure intuition. This thesis henceforth remains the foundation of Western philosophy. The

Hegelian dialectic has its motivation in it, and only on its basis is that dialectic possible.

Above all, it was Augustine who noted the remarkable priority of “seeing” in conjunction with his interpretation of *concupiscentia*. *Ad oculos enim videre proprie pertinet*, seeing truly belongs to the eyes. *Utimur autem hoc verbo etiam in ceteris sensibus cum eos ad cognoscendum intendimus*. But we use this word “to see” for the other senses, too, when we use them in order to know. *Neque enim dicimus: audi quid rutillet; aut, olefac quam niteat; auc, gusta quam splendeat; aut, palpa quam fulgeat: videri enim dicuntur haec omnia*. For we do not say: hear how that glistens, or smell how that shines, or taste how that glows, or feel how that gleams; but we say of each: *see*, we say that all these things are seen. *Dicimus autem non solum, vide quid luceat, quod soli oculi sentire possunt*, nor do we just say: see how that glows when only the eyes can perceive it, *sed etiam, vide quid sonet; vide quid oleat, vide quid sapiat, vide quid durum sit*. We also say: see how that sounds, see how it smells, see how it tastes, see how hard that is. *Ideoque generalis experientia sensuum concupiscentia sicut dictum est oculorum vocatur, quia videndi officium in quo primatum oculi tenent, etiam ceteri sensus sibi de similitudine usurpant, cum aliquid cognitionis explorant*. Thus because of experience of the senses in general is called “the pleasure of the eyes” because the other senses, by a certain resemblance, take to themselves the function of seeing when it is a knowing something, a function in which the eyes have priority.

What is it with this tendency to just-perceive? Which existential constitution of Da-sein becomes intelligible in the phenomenon of curiosity?

Being-in-the-world is initially absorbed in the world taken care of. Taking care of things is guided by circumspection which discovers things at hand and preserves them in their discoveredness. Circumspection gives to all our teaching and performing its route of procedure, the means of doing something, the right opportunity, the proper moment. Taking care of things can rest in the sense of one’s interrupting the performance and taking a rest, or of one’s finishing something. Taking care of things does not disappear in rest, but circumspection becomes free, it is no longer bound to the work-world. When it rests, care turns into circumspection which has become free. The circumspect discovery of the work-world has the character of being de-distancing. Circumspection which has become free no longer has anything at hand which it has to bring near.



Essentially de-distancing, it provides new possibilities of de-distancing for itself, that is, it tends to leave the things nearest at hand for a distant and strange world. Care turns into taking care of possibilities, resting and staying to see the "world" only its *outward appearance*. Da-sein seeks distance solely to bring it near in its outward appearance. Da-sein lets itself be intrigued just by the outward appearance of the world, a kind of being in which it makes sure that it gets rid of itself as being-in-the-world, get rid of being with the nearest everyday things at hand.

When curiosity has become free, it takes care to see not in order to understand what it sees, that is, to come to a being toward it, but *only* in order to see. It seeks novelty only to leap from it again to another novelty. The care of seeing is not concerned with comprehending and knowingly being in the truth, but with possibilities of abandoning itself to the world. Thus curiosity is characterized by a specific *not-staying* with what is nearest. Consequently, it also does not seek the leisure of reflective staying, but rather restlessness and excitement from continual novelty and changing encounters. In not-staying, curiosity makes sure of the constant possibility of *distraction*.<sup>6</sup> Curiosity has nothing to do with the contemplation that wonders at being, *thaumazein*, it has no interest in wondering to the point of not understanding. Rather, it makes sure of knowing, but just in order to have known. The two factors constitutive for curiosity, *not-staying* in the surrounding world taken care of and *distraction* by new possibilities, are the basis of the third essential characteristic of this phenomenon, which we call *never dwelling anywhere*. Curiosity is everywhere and nowhere. This mode of being-in-the-world reveals a new kind of being of everyday *Da-sein*, one in which it constantly uproots itself.

Idle talk also controls the ways in which one may be curious. It says what one is to have read and seen. The being everywhere and nowhere of curiosity is entrusted to idle talk. These two everyday modes of being of discourse and sight are not only objectively present side by side in their uprooting tendency, but *one* way of being drags the *other* with it. Curiosity, for which nothing is closed off, and idle talk, for which there is nothing that is not understood, provide themselves (that is, the Da-sein existing in this way) with the guarantee of a supposedly genuine "lively life." But with this supposition a third phenomenon shows itself as characterizing the disclosedness of everyday Da-sein.

### Ambiguity

When in everyday being with one another, we encounter things that are accessible to everybody and about which everybody can say everything, we can soon no longer decide what is disclosed in genuine understanding and what is not. This ambiguity extends not only to the world, but likewise to being-with-one-another as such, even to the being of Da-sein toward itself.

Everything looks as if it were genuinely understood, grasped, and spoken whereas basically it is not, or it does not look that way, yet basically is. Ambiguity not only affects the way we avail ourselves of what is accessible for use and enjoyment, and the way we manage it, but it has already established itself in understanding as a potentiality for being, and in the way Da-sein projects itself and presents itself with possibilities. Not only does everyone know and talk about what is the case and what occurs, but everyone also already knows how to talk about what has to happen first, which is not yet the case, but “really” should be done. Everybody has always already guessed and felt beforehand what others also guess and feel. This being-on-the track is based upon hearsay—whoever is “on the track” of something in a genuine way does not talk about it—and this is the most entangling way in which ambiguity presents possibilities of Da-sein so that they will already be stifled in their power.

Even supposing that what *they* guessed and felt should one day be actually translated into deeds, ambiguity has already seen to it that the interest for what has been realized will immediately die away. This interest persists only, after all, in a kind of curiosity and idle talk, only as long as there is the possibility of a noncommittal just-guessing-with-someone. When one is on the track, and as long as one is on it, being “in on it” with someone precludes one’s allegiance when what was guessed at is carried out. For then Da-sein is actually forced back upon itself. Idle talk and curiosity lose their power. And they do take their revenge. In the light of the actualization of what they also guessed, idle talk is quick to ascertain that they could have done that, too, for, after all, they had guessed it, too. In the end, idle talk is indignant that what it guessed and constantly demanded now *actually* happens. After all, the opportunity to keep guessing is thus snatched away from it.

Since, however, the time span when Da-sein becomes involved in the reticence of carrying something out, and even of genuinely getting stranded, is different from that of idle talk which “lives at a

quicker pace," so that viewed publicly it is essentially slower, idle talk will have long since gone on to something else, to what is currently the very newest. That which had been surmised earlier, and has now been carried out, has come too late with regard to what is the very newest. In their ambiguity, curiosity and idle talk make sure that what is done in a genuine and new way is outdated as soon as it emerges before the public. Only then can it become free in its positive possibilities, when the idle talk covering it over has become ineffectual and the "common" interest has died out.

The ambiguity of the way things have been interpreted publicly passes off talking about things ahead of time and curious guessing as what is really happening, and stamps carrying things out and taking action as something subsequent and of no importance. The understanding of Da-sein in the they thus constantly *goes astray* in its projects with regard to the genuine possibilities of being. Da-sein is always ambiguously "there," that is, in *the* public disclosedness of being-with-one-another where the loudest idle talk and the most inventive curiosity keep the "business" going, where everything happens in an everyday way, and basically nothing happens at all.

Ambiguity is always tossing to curiosity what it seeks, and it gives to idle talk the illusion of having everything decided in it.

This kind of being of disclosedness of being-in-the-world, however, also dominates being-with-one-another as such. The other is initially "there" in terms of what they have heard about him, what they say and know about him. Idle talk initially intrudes itself into the midst of primordial being-with-one-another. Everyone keeps track of the other, initially and first of all, watching how he will behave, what he will say to something. Being-with-one-another in the they is not at all a self-contained, indifferent side-by-sidedness, but a tense, ambiguous keeping track of each other, a secretive, reciprocal listening-in. Under the mask of the for-one-another, the against-one-another is at play.

Here we must note that ambiguity does not first originate out of an explicit intention to deceive and distort, that it is not called forth by the individual Da-sein. It is already implied in being-with-one-another, as *thrown* being-with-one-another in a world. But publicly it is precisely concealed, and *they* will always protest the possibility that this interpretation of the kind of being of interpreting the they could be correct. It would be a misunderstanding if the explication of these phenomena were to seek to be confirmed by the approval of the they.

The phenomena of idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity were set forth in such a way as to indicate that they are already interconnected in their being. The kind of being of this connection must now be grasped existentially and ontologically. The basic kind of being of everydayness is to be understood in the horizon of the structures of the being of Da-sein hitherto obtained.

### Falling Prey and Thrownness

Idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity characterize the way in which Da-sein is its "there," the disclosedness of being-in-the-world, in an everyday way. As existential determinations, these characteristics are not objectively present in Da-sein; they constitute its being. In them and in the connectedness of their being, a basic kind of the being of everydayness reveals itself, which we call the *entanglement* of Da-sein.

This term, which does not express any negative value judgment, means that Da-sein is initially and for the most part *together with* the "world" that it takes care of. This absorption in . . . mostly has the character of being lost in the publicness of the they. As an authentic potentiality for being a self, Da-sein has initially always already fallen away from itself and fallen prey to the "world." Falling prey to the "world" means being absorbed in being-with-one-another as it is guided by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity. What we called the inauthenticity of Da-sein may now be defined more precisely through the interpretation of falling prey. But inauthentic and non-authentic by no means signify "not really," as if Da-sein utterly lost its being in this kind of being. Inauthenticity does not mean anything like no-longer-being-in-the-world, but rather it constitutes precisely a distinctive kind of being-in-the-world which is completely taken in by the world and the *Mitda-sein* of the others in the they. Not-being-its-self functions as a *positive* possibility of beings which are absorbed in a world, essentially taking care of that world. This *nonbeing* must be conceived as the kind of being of Da-sein nearest to it and in which it mostly maintains itself.

Thus neither must the entanglement of Da-sein be interpreted as a "fall" from a purer and higher "primordial condition." Not only do we not have any experience of this ontically, but also no possibilities and guidelines of interpretation ontologically.

As factual being-in-the-world, Da-sein, falling prey, has already fallen *away from itself*; and it has not fallen prey to some being which it first runs into in the course of its being, or perhaps does not, but it has fallen prey to the *world* which itself belongs to its being. Falling prey is an existential determination of Da-sein itself, and says nothing about Da-sein as something objectively present, or about objectively present relations to beings from which it is “derived” or to beings with which it has subsequently gotten into a *commercium*.

The ontological-existential structure of falling prey would also be misunderstood if we wanted to attribute to it the meaning of a bad and deplorable ontic quality which could perhaps be removed in the advanced stages of human culture.

Neither in our first reference to being-in-the-world as the fundamental constitution of Da-sein nor in our characterization of its constitutive structural factors, did we go beyond an analysis of the *constitution* of this kind of being, and note its character as a phenomenon. It is true that the possible basic kinds of being-in, taking care and concern, were described. But we did not discuss the question of the everyday kind of being of these ways of being. It also became evident that being-in is quite different from a confrontation which merely observes and acts, that is, the concurrent objective presence of a subject and an object. Still, it must have seemed that being-in-the-world functions as a rigid framework within which the possible relations of Da-sein to its world occur, without the “framework” itself belongs to the kind of being of Da-sein. An *existential mode* of being-in-the-world is documented in the phenomenon of falling prey.

Idle talk discloses to Da-sein a being toward its world, to others and to itself—a being in which these are understood, but in a mode of groundless floating. Curiosity discloses each and every thing, but in such a way that being-in is everywhere and nowhere. Ambiguity conceals nothing from the understanding of Da-sein, but only in order to suppress being-in-the-world in this uprooted everywhere and nowhere.

With the ontological clarification of the kind of being of everyday being-in-the-world discernible in these phenomena, we first gain an existentially adequate determination of the fundamental constitution of Da-sein. What structure does the “movement” of falling prey show?

Idle talk and the public interpretedness contained in it are constituted in being-with-one-another. Idle talk is not objectively present

for itself within the world, as a product detached from being-with-one-another. Nor can it be volatilized to mean something “universal” which, since it essentially belongs to no one, “really” is nothing and “actually” only occurs in individual Da-sein that speaks. Idle talk is the kind of being of being-with-one-another itself, and does not first originate through certain conditions which influence Da-sein “from the outside.” But when Da-sein itself presents itself with the possibility in idle talk and public interpretedness of losing itself in the they, of falling prey to groundlessness, that means that Da-sein prepares for itself the constant temptation of falling prey. Being-in-the-world is in itself *tempting*.

Having already become a temptation for itself in this way, the way in which things have been publicly interpreted holds fast to Da-sein in its falling prey. Idle talk and ambiguity, having-seen-everything and having-understood-everything, develop the supposition that the disclosedness of Da-sein thus available and prevalent could guarantee to Da-sein the certainty, genuineness, and fullness of all the possibilities of its being. In the self-certainty and decisiveness of the they, it gets spread abroad increasingly that there is no need of authentic, attuned understanding. The supposition of the they that one is leading and sustaining a full and genuine “life” brings a *tranquillization* to Da-sein, for which everything is in “the best order” and for whom all doors are open. Entangled being-in-the-world, tempting itself, is at the same time *tranquillizing*.

This tranquillization in inauthentic being, however, does not reduce one into stagnation and inactivity, but drives one to uninhibited “busyness.” Being entangled in the “world” does not somehow come to rest. Tempting tranquillization aggravates entanglement. With special regard to the interpretation of Da-sein, the opinion may now arise that understanding the most foreign cultures and “synthesizing” them with our own may lead to the thorough and first genuine enlightenment of Da-sein about itself. Versatile curiosity and restlessly knowing it all masquerade as a universal understanding of Da-sein. But fundamentally it remains undetermined and unasked *what* is then really to be understood; nor has it been understood that understanding itself is a potentiality for being which must become *free* solely in one’s *ownmost* Da-sein. When Da-sein, tranquillized and “understanding” everything, thus compares itself with everything, it drifts toward an alienation in which its ownmost potentiality for being-in-the-world is concealed. Entangled being-in-the-world is not only tempting and tranquillizing, it is at the same time *alienating*.

However, alienation cannot mean that Da-sein is factually torn away from itself. On the contrary, this alienation drives Da-sein into a kind of being intent upon the most exaggerated “self-dissection” which tries out all kinds of possibilities of interpretation, with the result that the “characterologies” and “typologies” which it points out are themselves too numerous to grasp. Yet this alienation, which *closes off* to Da-sein its authenticity and possibility, even if only that of genuinely getting stranded, still does not surrender it to beings which it itself is not, but forces it into its inauthenticity, into a possible kind of being of *itself*. The tempting and tranquillizing alienation of falling prey has its own kind of movement with the consequence that Da-sein gets *entangled* in itself.

The phenomena pointed out of temptation, tranquillizing, alienation, and self-entangling (entanglement) characterize the specific kind of being of falling prey. We call this kind of “movement” of Da-sein in its own being the *plunge*. Da-sein plunges out of itself into itself, into the groundlessness and nothingness of inauthentic everydayness. But this plunge remains concealed from it by the way things have been publicly interpreted so that it is interpreted as “getting ahead” and “living concretely.”

The kind of movement of plunging into and within the groundlessness of inauthentic being in the they constantly tears understanding away from projecting authentic possibilities, and into the tranquillized supposition of possessing or attaining everything. Since the understanding is thus constantly torn away from authenticity and into the they (although always with a sham of authenticity), the movement of falling prey is characterized by *eddying*.

Not only does falling prey determine being-in-the-world existentially; at the same time the eddy reveals the character of throwing and movement of thrownness which can force itself upon Da-sein in its attunement. Not only is thrownness not a “finished fact,” it is also not a self-contained fact. The facticity of Da-sein is such that Da-sein, *as long as* it is what it is, remains in the throw and is sucked into the eddy of the they’s inauthenticity. Thrownness, in which facticity can be seen phenomenally, belongs to Da-sein, which is concerned in its being about that being. Da-sein exists factually.

But now that falling prey has been exhibited, have we not set forth a phenomenon which directly speaks *against* the definition in which the formal idea of existence was indicated? Can Da-sein be conceived as a being whose being is concerned *with* potentiality for

being if this being *has lost itself* precisely in its everydayness and “lives” *away from itself* in falling prey? Falling prey to the world is, however, phenomenal “evidence” *against* the existentiality of Da-sein only if Da-sein is posited as an isolated I-subject, as a self-point from which it moves away. Then the world is an object. Falling prey to the world is then reinterpreted ontologically as objective presence in the manner of innerworldly beings. However, if we hold on to the being of Da-sein in the constitution indicated of *being-in-the-world*, it becomes evident that falling prey *as the kind of being of this being-in* rather represents the most elemental proof *for* the existentiality of Da-sein. In falling prey, nothing other than our potentiality for being-in-the-world is the issue, even if in the mode of inauthenticity. Da-sein *can* fall prey *only* because it is concerned with understanding, attuned being-in-the-world. On the other hand, *authentic* existence is nothing which hovers over entangled everydayness, but is existentially only a modified grasp of everydayness.

Nor does the phenomenon of falling prey give something like a “night view” of Da-sein, a property occurring ontically which might serve to round out the harmless aspect of this being. Falling prey reveals an *essential*, ontological structure of Da-sein itself. Far from determining its nocturnal side, it constitutes all of its days in their everydayness.

Our existential, ontological interpretation thus does not make any ontic statement about the “corruption of human nature,” not because the necessary evidence is lacking but because its problematic is *prior to* any statement about corruption or incorruption. Falling prey is an ontological concept of motion. Ontically, we have not decided whether human being is “drowned in sin,” in the *status corruptionis*, or whether he walks in the *status integritatis* or finds himself in an interim stage, the *status gratiae*. But faith and “world-view,” when they state such and such a thing and when they speak about Da-sein as being-in-the-world, must come back to the existential structures set forth, provided that their statements at the same time claim to be *conceptually* comprehensible.

The leading question of this chapter pursued the being of the there. Its theme was the ontological constitution of the disclosedness essentially belonging to Da-sein. The being of disclosedness is constituted in attunement, understanding, and discourse. Its everyday mode of being is characterized by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity. These show the kind of movement of falling prey with the



essential characteristics of temptation, tranquillization, alienation, and entanglement.

But with this analysis the totality of the existential constitution of Da-sein has been laid bare in its main features and the phenomenal-basis has been obtained for a “comprehensive” interpretation of the being of Da-sein as care.

*Translated by Joan Stambaugh*

# Care as the Being of Da-sein (1927)

## The Question of the Primordial Totality of the Structural Whole of Da-sein

Being-in-the-world is a structure that is primordial and constantly *whole*. In the previous chapters (division I, chapter II–V) this structure was clarified phenomenally as a whole and, always on this basis, in its constitutive moments. The preview given at the beginning of the whole of the phenomenon has not lost the emptiness of its first general prefiguration. However, the phenomenal *manifoldness* of the constitution of the structural whole and its everyday kind of being can now easily distort the *unified* phenomenological view of the whole as such. But this view must be held in readiness more freely and more securely when we now ask the question toward which the preparatory fundamental analysis of Da-sein was striving in general: *How is the totality of the structural whole that we pointed out to be determined existentially and ontologically?*

Da-sein exists factually. We are asking about the ontological unity of existentiality and facticity, namely, whether facticity belongs essentially to existentiality. On the basis of the attunement essentially belonging to it, Da-sein has a mode of being in which it is brought before itself and it is disclosed to itself in its thrownness. But thrownness is the mode of being of a being which always *is* itself its possibilities in such a way that it understands itself in them and from them (projects itself upon them). Being-in-the-world, to which being together with things at hand belongs just as primordially as being-with others, is always for the sake of itself. But the self is initially and for the most part inauthentic, the they-self. Being-in-the-world is always already entangled. *The average everydayness of Da-sein* can thus be determined as *entangled-disclosed, thrown-projecting being-in-the-world which is concerned with its ownmost potentiality in its being together with the "world" and in being-with the others.*

Can we succeed in grasping this structural whole of the everydayness of Da-sein in its totality? Can the being of Da-sein be delin-

eated in a unified way so that in terms of it the essential equiprimordiality of the structures pointed out becomes intelligible, together with the existential possibilities of modification which belong to it? Is there a way to attain this being phenomenally on the basis of the present point of departure of the existential analytic?

To put it negatively, it is beyond question that the totality of the structural whole is not to be reached phenomenally by means of cobbling together elements. This would require a blueprint. The being of Da-sein, which ontological supports the structural whole as such, becomes accessible by completely looking *through* this while *at a* primordially unified phenomenon which already lies in the whole in such a way that it is the ontological basis for every structural moment in its structural possibility. Thus a "comprehensive" interpretation cannot consist of a process of piecing together what we have hitherto gained. The question of Da-sein's existential character is essentially different from the question of the being of something objectively present. Everyday experience of the surrounding world, which is directed ontically and ontologically to innerworldly beings, cannot present Da-sein ontically and primordially for the ontological analysis. Similarly, our immanent perception of experiences is lacking an ontologically sufficient guideline. On the other hand, the being of Da-sein is not to be deduced from an idea of human being. Can we gather from our previous interpretation of Da-sein what ontic-ontological access to itself it requires, *from itself*, as the sole appropriate one?

An understanding of being belongs to the ontological structure of Da-sein. In existing, it is disclosed to itself in its being. Attunement and understanding constitute the kind of being of this disclosedness. Is there an understanding attunement in Da-sein in which it is disclosed to itself in a distinctive way?

If the existential analytic of Da-sein is to keep a fundamental clarity as to its basic ontological function, it must search for one of the *most far-reaching* and *most primordial* possibilities of disclosure which lie in Da-sein itself for mastering its preliminary task, that of setting forth the being of Da-sein. The kind of disclosure in which Da-sein brings itself before itself must be such that in it Da-sein becomes accessible to itself, so to speak, in a *simplified* way. Together with what has been disclosed to it, the structural whole of the being we seek must then come to light in an elemental way.

As a kind of attunement adequate for such methodical requirements, we shall take the phenomenon of *Angst* as the basis of analy-

sis. The elaboration of this fundamental kind of attunement and the ontological characteristics of what is disclosed in it as such take their point of departure from the phenomenon of entanglement, and distinguish *Angst* from the related phenomenon of fear analyzed earlier. As a possibility of being of Da-sein, together with the Da-sein itself disclosed in it, *Angst* provides the phenomenal basis for explicitly grasping the primordial totality of being of Da-sein. Its being reveals itself as *care*. The ontological development of this fundamental existential phenomenon demands that we differentiate it from phenomena which at first might seem to be identified with care. Such phenomena are will, wish, predilection, and urge. Care cannot be derived from them because they are themselves founded upon it.

Like any ontological analysis, the ontological interpretation of Da-sein as care, with whatever can be gained from the interpretation, is far removed from what is accessible to the pre-ontological understanding of being or even to our ontic acquaintance with beings. That the common understanding estranges what is known ontologically by referring it to that with which it is solely ontically acquainted, is not surprising. Nonetheless, even the ontic approach with which we have tried to interpret Da-sein ontologically as care might appear to be contrived in a far-fetched and theoretical way; not to speak of the act of violence which one might discern in the exclusion of the traditional and cherished definition of human being. Thus we need a pre-ontological confirmation of the existential interpretation of Da-sein as care. It lies in demonstrating that as soon as Da-sein expressed anything about itself, it has already interpreted itself as *care (cura)*, although only pre-ontologically.

The analytic of Da-sein which penetrates to the phenomenon of care is to prepare the way for the fundamental, ontological problematic, *the question of the meaning of being in general*. In order to direct our view explicitly to this in the light of what we have gained, and go beyond the special task of an existential, *a priori* anthropology, *the* phenomena which are most intimately connected with the leading question of being must be grasped more precisely in hindsight. They are the modes of being explained hitherto: handiness and objective presence which determine innerworldly beings unlike Da-sein. Because the ontological problematic has hitherto understood being primarily in the sense of objective presence ("reality," "world"-actuality), while the being of Da-sein remained ontological undetermined, we need to discuss the ontological connection of

care, worldliness, handiness, and objective presence (reality). That leads to a more exact determination of the concept of *reality* in the context of a discussion of the epistemological questions oriented toward this idea which have been raised by realism and idealism.

Beings *are* independently of the experience, cognition, and comprehension through which they are disclosed, discovered, and determined. But being “is” only in the understanding of that being to whose being something like an understanding of being belongs. Thus being can be unconceptualized, but it is never completely uncomprehended. In ontological problematics, *being and truth* have been brought together since ancient times, if not even identified. This documents the necessary connection of being and understanding, although perhaps concealed in its primordial grounds. Thus for an adequate preparation of the question of being, we need an ontological clarification of the phenomenon of *truth*. This will be accomplished initially on the basis of that which our interpretation hitherto has gained with the phenomena of disclosedness and discoveredness, interpretation and statement.

The conclusion of the preparatory fundamental analysis of *Da-sein* thus has as its theme the fundamental attunement of *Angst* as a distinctive disclosedness of *Da-sein* (section 40), the being of *Da-sein* as care (section 41), the confirmation of the existential interpretation of *Da-sein* as care in terms of the pre-ontological self-interpretation of *Da-sein* (section 42), *Da-sein*, worldliness, and reality (section 43), *Da-sein*, disclosedness, and truth (section 44).

### The Fundamental Attunement of *Angst* as an Eminent Disclosedness of *Da-sein*

One possibility of being of *Da-sein* is to give ontic “information” about itself as a being. Such information is possible only in the disclosedness belonging to *Da-sein* which is based on attunement and understanding. To what extent is *Angst* a distinctive attunement? How is *Da-sein* brought before itself in it through its own being so that phenomenologically the being disclosed in *Angst* is defined as such in its being, or adequate preparations can be made for doing so?

With the intention of penetrating to the being of the totality of the structural whole, we shall take our point of departure from the concrete analysis of entanglement carried out in the last chapter. The absorption of *Da-sein* in the they and in the “world” taken care

of reveals something like a *flight* of Da-sein from itself as an authentic potentiality for being itself. This phenomenon of the flight of Da-sein *from itself* and its authenticity seems, however, to be least appropriate to serve as a phenomenal foundation for the following inquiry. In this flight, Da-sein precisely does not bring itself before itself. In accordance with its ownmost trait of entanglement, this turning away leads *away from* Da-sein. But in investigating such phenomena, our inquiry must guard against conflating ontic-existential characteristics with ontological-existential interpretation, and must not overlook the positive, phenomenal foundations provided for this interpretation by such a characterization.

It is true that existentially the authenticity of being a self is closed off and repressed in entanglement, but this closing off is only the *privation* of a disclosedness which reveals itself phenomenally in the fact that the flight of Da-sein is a flight *from itself*. That from which Da-sein flees is precisely what Da-sein comes up "behind." Only because Da-sein is ontological and essentially brought before itself by the disclosedness belonging to it, *can* it flee *from* that from which it flees. Of course, in this entangled turning away, that from which it flees is *not grasped*, nor is it experienced in a turning toward it. But in turning away *from* it, it is "there," disclosed. On account of its character of being disclosed, this existentially-ontic turning away makes it phenomenally possible to grasp existentially and ontologically what the flight is from. Within the ontic "away from" which lies in turning away, that from which Da-sein flees can be understood and conceptualized by "turning toward" in a way which is phenomenologically interpretive.

Thus the orientation of our analysis toward the phenomenon of entanglement is not condemned in principle to be without any prospect of ontological experiencing something about the Da-sein disclosed in that phenomenon. On the contrary, it is just here that our interpretation is the least likely to be surrendered to an artificial self-conception of Da-sein. It only carries the explication of what Da-sein itself discloses ontically. The possibility of penetrating to the being of Da-sein by going along with it and pursuing it interpretatively in an attuned understanding increases, the more primordially that phenomenon is which functions methodologically as disclosive attunement. To say that *Angst* accomplishes something like this is only an assertion for now.

We are not completely unprepared for the analysis of *Angst*. It is true that we are still in the dark as to how it is ontologically con-

nected with fear. Obviously they are kindred phenomena. What tells us this is the fact that both phenomena remain mostly undifferentiated, and we designate as *Angst* what is really fear and call fear what has the character of *Angst*. We shall attempt to penetrate to the phenomenon of *Angst* step by step.

The falling prey of Da-sein to the they and the "world" taken care of, we called a "flight" from itself. But not every shrinking back from . . . , not every turning away from . . . is necessarily flight. Shrinking back from what fear discloses, from what is threatening, is founded upon fear and has the character of flight. Our interpretation of fear as attunement showed that what we fear is always a detrimental innerworldly being, approaching nearby from a definite region, which may remain absent. In falling prey, Da-sein turns away from itself. What it shrinks back from must have a threatening character; yet this being has the same kind of being as the one which shrinks back from it—it is Da-sein itself. What it shrinks back from cannot be grasped as something "fearsome"; because anything fearsome is always encountered as an innerworldly being. The only threat which can be "fearsome" and which is discovered in fear always comes from innerworldly beings.

The turning away of falling prey is thus not a flight which is based on a fear of innerworldly beings. Any flight based on that kind of fear belongs still less to turning away, as turning away precisely *turns toward* innerworldly beings while absorbing itself in them. *The turning away of falling prey is rather based on Angst which in turn first makes fear possible.*

In order to understand this talk about the entangled flight of Da-sein from itself, we must recall that being-in-the-world is the basic constitution of Da-sein. *That about which one has Angst is being-in-the-world as such.* How is what *Angst* is anxious about phenomenally differentiated from what fear is afraid of? What *Angst* is about is not an innerworldly being. Thus it essentially cannot be relevant. The threat does not have the character of a definite detrimentality which concerns what is threatened with a definite regard to a particular factual potentiality for being. What *Angst* is about is completely indefinite. This indefiniteness not only leaves factually undecided which innerworldly being is threatening us, but also means that innerworldly beings in general are not "relevant." Nothing of that which is at hand and objectively present within the world, functions as what *Angst* is anxious about. The totality of relevance discovered within the world of things at hand and objec-

tively present is completely without importance. It collapses. The world has the character of complete insignificance. In *Angst* we do not encounter this or that thing which, as threatening, could be relevant.

Thus neither does *Angst* “see” a definite “there” and “over here” from which what is threatening approaches. The fact that what is threatening is *nowhere* characterizes what *Angst* is about. *Angst* “does not know” what it is about which it is anxious. But “nowhere” does not mean nothing; rather, region in general lies therein, and disclosedness of the world in general for essentially spatial being-in. Therefore, what is threatening cannot approach from a definite direction within nearness, it is already “there”—and yet nowhere. It is so near that it is oppressive and stifles one’s breath—and yet it is nowhere.

In what *Angst* is about, the “it is nothing and nowhere” becomes manifest. The recalcitrance of the innerworldly nothing and nowhere means phenomenally that *what Angst is about is the world as such*. The utter insignificance which makes itself known in the nothing and nowhere does not signify the absence of world, but means that innerworldly beings in themselves are so completely unimportant that, on the basis of this *insignificance* of what is innerworldly, the world is all that obtrudes itself in its worldliness.

What oppresses us is not this or that, nor is it everything objectively present together as a sum, but the *possibility* of things at hand in general, that is, the world itself. When *Angst* has quieted down, in our everyday way of talking we are accustomed to say “it was really nothing.” This way of talking, indeed, gets at *what* it was ontically. Everyday discourse aims at taking care of things at hand and talking about them. That about which *Angst* is anxious is none of the innerworldly things at hand. But this “none of the things at hand,” which is all that everyday, circumspect discourse understands, is not a total nothing. The nothing of handiness is based on the primordial “something,” on the *world*. The world, however, ontologically belongs essentially to the being of Da-sein as being-in-the-world. So if what *Angst* is about exposes nothing, that is, the world as such, this means that *that about which Angst is anxious is being-in-the-world itself*.

Being anxious discloses, primordially and directly, the world as world. It is not the case that initially we deliberately look away from innerworldly beings and think only of the world about which *Angst* arises, but *Angst* as a mode of attunement first discloses the



*world as world*. However, that does not mean that the worldliness of the world is conceptualized in *Angst*.

*Angst* is not only *Angst* about . . . , but is at the same time, as attunement, *Angst* for. . . . That for which *Angst* is anxious is not a *definite* kind of being and possibility of Da-sein. The threat itself is, after all, indefinite and thus cannot penetrate threateningly to this or that factually concrete potentiality of being. What *Angst* is anxious for is being-in-the-world itself. In *Angst*, the things at hand in the surrounding world sink away, and so do innerworldly beings in general. The "world" can offer nothing more, nor can the *Mitda-sein* of others. Thus *Angst* takes away from Da-sein the possibility of understanding itself, falling prey, in terms of the "world" and the public way of being interpreted. It throws Da-sein back upon that for which it is anxious, its authentic potentiality-for-being-in-the-world. *Angst* individuates Da-sein to its ownmost being-in-the-world which, as understanding, projects itself essentially upon possibilities. Thus along with that for which it is anxious, *Angst* discloses Da-sein as *being-possible*, and indeed as what can be individualized in individuation of its own accord.

*Angst* reveals in Da-sein its *being toward* its ownmost potentiality of being, that is, *being free* for the freedom of choosing and grasping itself. *Angst* brings Da-sein *before its being free* for . . . (*propensio in*), the authenticity of its being as possibility which it always already is. But at the same time, it is this being to which Da-sein as being-in-the-world is entrusted.

That *about which* *Angst* is anxious reveals itself as that *for which* it is anxious: being-in-the-world. The identity of that about which and that for which one has *Angst* extends even to anxiousness itself. For as attunement, anxiousness is a fundamental mode of being-in-the-world. *The existential identity of disclosing and what is disclosed so that in what is disclosed the world is disclosed as world, as being-in, individualized, pure, thrown potentiality for being, makes it clear that with the phenomenon of Angst a distinctive kind of attunement has become the theme of our interpretation.* *Angst* individualizes and thus discloses Da-sein as "*solus ipse*." This existential "solipsism," however, is so far from transposing an isolated subject-thing into the harmless vacuum of a worldless occurrence that it brings Da-sein in an extreme sense precisely before its world as world, and thus itself before itself as being-in-the-world.

Again, everyday discourse and the everyday interpretation of Da-sein furnish the most unbiased evidence that *Angst* as a basic

attunement is disclosive in this way. We said earlier that attunement reveals "how one is." In *Angst* one has an "uncanny" feeling. Here the peculiar indefiniteness of that which Da-sein finds itself involved in with *Angst* initially finds expression: the nothing and nowhere. But uncanniness means at the same time not-being-at-home. In our first phenomenal indication of the fundamental constitution of Da-sein and the clarification of the existential meaning of being-in in contradistinction to the categorial signification of "insideness," being-in was defined as dwelling with . . . , being familiar with. . . . This characteristic of being-in was then made more concretely visible through the everyday publicness of the they which brings tranquillized self-assurance, "being-at-home" with all its obviousness, into the average everydayness of Da-sein. *Angst*, on the other hand, fetches Da-sein back out of its entangled absorption in the "world." Everyday familiarity collapses. Da-sein is individuated, but *as* being-in-the-world. Being-in enters the existential "mode" of *not-being-at-home*. The talk about "uncanniness" means nothing other than this.

Now, however, what falling prey, as flight, is fleeing from becomes phenomenally visible. It is not a flight *from* innerworldly beings, but precisely *toward* them as the beings among which taking care of things, lost in the they, can linger in tranquillized familiarity. Entangled flight *into* the being-at-home of publicness is flight *from* not-being-at-home, that is, from the uncanniness which lies in Da-sein as thrown, as being-in-the-world entrusted to itself in its being. This uncanniness constantly pursues Da-sein and threatens its everyday lostness in the they, although not explicitly. This threat can factually go along with complete security and self-sufficiency of the everyday way of taking care of things. *Angst* can arise in the most harmless situations. Nor does it have any need for darkness, in which things usually become uncanny to us more easily. In the dark there is emphatically "nothing" to see, although the world is *still* "there" *more obtrusively*.

If we interpret the uncanniness of Da-sein existentially and ontologically as a threat which concerns Da-sein itself and which comes from Da-sein itself, we are not asserting that uncanniness has always already been understood in factual *Angst* in this sense. The everyday way in which Da-sein understands uncanniness is the entangled turning away which "phases out" not-being-at-home. The everydayness of this fleeing, however, shows phenomenally that *Angst* as a fundamental kind of attunement belongs to the essential

constitution of Da-sein of being-in-the-world which, as an existential one, is never objectively present, but *is* itself always in the mode of factual Da-sein, that is, in the mode of an attunement. Tranquilized, familiar being-in-the-world is a mode of the uncanniness of Da-sein, not the other way around. *Not-being-at-home must be conceived existentially and ontologically as the more primordial phenomenon.*

And only because *Angst* always already latently determines being-in-the-world, can being-in-the-world, as being together with the "world" taking care of things and attuned, be afraid. Fear is *Angst* which has fallen prey to the "world." It is inauthentic and concealed from itself as such.

Factually, the mood of uncanniness remains for the most part existentially uncomprehended. Moreover, with the dominance of falling prey and publicness, "real" *Angst* is rare. Often, *Angst* is "physiologically" conditioned. This fact is an *ontological* problem in its facticity, not only with regard to its ontic causes and course of development. The physiological triggering of *Angst* is possible only because Da-sein is anxious in the very ground of its being.

Still more rare than the existentiell fact of real *Angst* are the attempts to interpret this phenomenon in its fundamental, existential-ontological constitution and function. The reasons for this lie partly in the general neglect of the existential analytic of Da-sein, particularly in the failure to recognize the phenomenon of attunement. The factual rarity of the phenomenon of *Angst*, however, cannot deprive it of its suitability for taking over a methodical function *in principle* for the existential analytic. On the contrary, the rarity of the phenomenon is an indication of the fact that Da-sein, which mostly remains concealed from itself in its authenticity on account of the public way of being interpreted of the they, can be disclosed in a primordial sense in its fundamental attunement.

It is true that it is the nature of every kind of attunement to disclose complete being-in-the-world in all its constitutive factors (world, being-in, self). However, in *Angst* there lies the possibility of a distinctive disclosure, since *Angst* individualizes. This individualizing fetches Da-sein back from its falling prey and reveals to it authenticity and inauthenticity as possibilities of its being. The fundamental possibilities of Da-sein, which are always my own, show themselves in *Angst* as they are, undistorted by innerworldly beings to which Da-sein, initially and for the most part, clings.

To what extent has this existential interpretation of *Angst*, gained a phenomenal basis for the answering the leading question of the being of the totality of the structural whole of Da-sein?

### The Being of Da-sein as Care

With the intention of grasping the totality of the structural whole ontologically, we must first ask whether the phenomenon of *Angst* and what is disclosed in it are able to give the whole of Da-sein in a way that is phenomenally equiprimordial, so that our search for totality can be fulfilled in this givenness. The total content of what lies in it can be enumerated: As attunement, being anxious is a way of being-in-the-world; that about which we have *Angst* is thrown being-in-the-world; that for which we have *Angst* is our potentiality-for-being-in-the-world. The complete phenomenon of *Angst* thus shows Da-sein as factual, existing being-in-the-world. The fundamental, ontological characteristics of this being are existentiality, facticity, and falling prey. These existential determinations are not pieces belonging to something composite, one of which might sometimes be missing, but a primordial content is woven in them which constitutes the totality of the structural whole that we are seeking. In the unity of the determinations of being of Da-sein that we have mentioned, this being becomes ontologically comprehensible as such. How is this unity itself to be characterized?

Da-sein is a being which is concerned in its being about that being. The "is concerned about . . ." has become clearer in the constitution of being of understanding as self-projective being toward its ownmost potentiality-for-being. This potentiality is that for the sake of which any Da-sein is as it is. Da-sein has always already compared itself, in its being, with a possibility of itself. Being free for its ownmost potentiality-for-being, and thus for the possibility of authenticity and inauthenticity, shows itself in a primordial, elemental concretion in *Angst*. But ontologically, being toward one's ownmost potentiality-for-being means that Da-sein is always already *ahead* of itself in its being. Da-sein is always already "beyond itself," not as a way of behaving toward beings which it is *not*, but as being toward the potentiality-for-being which it itself is. This structure of being of the essential "being concerned about" we formulate as the *being-ahead-of-itself* of Da-sein.

But this structure concerns the whole of the constitution of Da-sein. Being-ahead-of-itself does not mean anything like an isolated tendency in a worldless "subject," but characterizes being-in-the-world. But to being-in-the-world belongs the fact that it is entrusted to itself, that it is always already thrown *into a world*. The fact that Da-sein is entrusted to itself shows itself primordially and concretely in *Angst*. More completely formulated, being-ahead-of-itself means *being-ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-in-a-world*. As soon as this essentially unitary structure is seen phenomenally, what we worked out earlier in the analysis of worldliness also becomes clearer. There we found that the referential totality of significance (which is constitutive for worldliness) is "anchored" in a for-the-sake-of-which. The fact that this referential totality, of the manifold relations of the in-order-to, is bound up with that which Da-sein is concerned about, does not signify that an objectively present "world" of objects is welded together with a subject. Rather, it is the phenomenal expression of the fact that the constitution of Da-sein, whose wholeness is now delineated explicitly as being-ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-in . . . is primordially a whole. Expressed differently: existing is always factual. Existentiality is essentially determined by facticity.

Furthermore, the factual existing of Da-sein is not only in general and indifferently a thrown potentiality-for-being-in-the-world, but is always already also absorbed in the world taken care of. In this entangled being-together-with, fleeing from uncanniness (which mostly remains covered over by latent *Angst* because the publicness of the they suppresses everything unfamiliar) announces itself, whether it does so explicitly or not, and whether it is understood or not. In being-ahead-of-oneself-already-being-in-the-world, entangled *being-together-with* innerworldly things at hand taken care of lies essentially included.

The formal existential totality of the ontological structural whole of Da-sein must thus be formulated in the following structure: The being of Da-sein means being-ahead-of-oneself-already-in (the world) as being-together-with (innerworldly beings encountered). This being fills in the significance of the term *care*, which is used in a purely ontological and existential way. Any ontically intended tendency of being, such as worry or carefreeness, is ruled out.

Since being-in-the-world is essentially care, being-together-with things at hand could be taken in our previous analyses as *taking*

*care* of them, being with the *Mitda-sein* of others encountered within the world as *concern*. Being-together-with is taking care of things, because as a mode of being-in it is determined by its fundamental structure, care. Care not only characterizes existentiality, abstracted from facticity and falling prey, but encompasses the unity of these determinations of being. Nor does care mean primarily and exclusively an isolated attitude of the ego toward itself. The expression "care for oneself," following the analogy of taking care and concern, would be a tautology. Care cannot mean a special attitude toward the self, because the self is already characterized ontologically as being-ahead-of-itself; but in this determination the other two structural moments of care, already-being-in . . . and being-together-with, are *also posited*.

In being-ahead-of-oneself as the being toward one's ownmost potentiality-of-being lies the existential and ontological condition of the possibility of *being free for* authentic existentiell possibilities. It is the potentiality-for-being for the sake of which Da-sein always is as it factually is. But since this being toward the potentiality-for-being is itself determined by freedom, Da-sein *can* also be related to its possibilities *unwillingly*, it *can* be inauthentic, and it is so factually initially and for the most part. The authentic for-the-sake-of-which remains ungrasped, the project of one's potentiality-of-being is left to the disposal of the they. Thus in being-ahead-of-itself, the "self" actually means the self in the sense of the they-self. Even in inauthenticity, Da-sein remains essentially ahead-of-itself, just as the entangled feeling of Da-sein from itself still shows *the* constitution of being of a being that *is concerned about its being*.

As a primordial structural totality, care lies "before" every factual "attitude" and "position" of Da-sein, that is, it is always already *in* them as an existential *a priori*. Thus this phenomenon by no means expresses a priority of "practical" over theoretical behavior. When we determine something objectively present by merely looking at it, this has the character of care just as much as a "political action," or resting and having a good time. "Theory" and "praxis" are possibilities of being for a being whose being must be defined as care.

The phenomenon of care in its totality is essentially something that cannot be split up; thus any attempts to derive it from special acts or drives such as willing and wishing or urge and predilection, or of constructing it out of them, will be unsuccessful.

Willing and wishing are necessarily rooted ontologically in Da-sein as care, and are not simply ontologically undifferentiated expe-

riences which occur in a "stream" that is completely indeterminate as to the meaning of its being. This is no less true for predilection and urge. They, too, are based upon care insofar as they are purely demonstrable in Da-sein in general. This does not exclude the fact that urge and predilection are ontologically constitutive even for beings which are only "alive." The basic ontological constitution of "living," however, is a problem in its own right and can be developed only reductively and privatively in terms of the ontology of Da-sein.

Care is ontologically "prior" to the phenomena we mentioned, which can, of course, always be adequately "described" within certain limits without the complete ontological horizon needing to be visible or even known as such. For the present fundamental ontological study, which neither aspires to a thematically complete ontology of Da-sein nor even to a concrete anthropology, it must suffice to suggest how these phenomena are existentially based in care.

The potentiality-for-being for the sake of which Da-sein is, has itself the mode of being of being-in-the-world. Accordingly, the relation to innerworldly beings lies in it ontologically. Even if only privatively, care is always taking care of things and concern. In willing, a being that is understood, that is, projected upon its possibility, is grasped as something to be taken care of or to be brought to its being through concern. *For this reason*, something willed always belongs to willing, something which has already been determined in terms of a for-the-sake-of-which. If willing is to be possible ontologically, the following factors are constitutive for it: the previous disclosedness of the for-the-sake-of-which in general (being-ahead-of-oneself), the disclosedness of what can be taken care of (world as the wherein of already-being), and the understanding self-projection of Da-sein upon a potentiality-for-being toward a possibility of the being "willed." The underlying totality of care shows through in the phenomenon of willing.

As something factual, the understanding self-projection of Da-sein is always already together with a discovered world. From this world it takes its possibilities, initially in accordance with the interpretedness of the they. This interpretation has from the outset restricted the possible options of choice to the scope of what is familiar, attainable, feasible, to what is correct and proper. The levelling down of the possibilities of Da-sein to what is initially available in an everyday way at the same time results in a phasing out of

the possible as such. The average everydayness of taking care of things becomes blind to possibility and gets tranquillized with what is merely "real." This tranquillization not only does not rule out a high degree of busyness in taking care of things, it arouses it. It is not the case that positive, new possibilities are then willed, but what is available is "tactically" changed in such a way that there is an illusion of something happening.

All the same, under the leadership of the they, this tranquillized "willing" does not signify that being toward one's potentiality-for-being has been extinguished, but only that it has been modified. Being toward possibilities then shows itself for the most part as mere *wishing*. In the wish, Da-sein projects its being toward possibilities which not only remain ungrasped in taking care of things, but whose fulfillment is not even thought about and expected. On the contrary, the predominance of being-ahead-of-itself in the mode of mere wishing brings with it a lack of understanding of factual possibilities. Being-in-the-world whose world is primarily projected as a wish-world has lost itself utterly in what is available, but in such a way that in the light of what is wished for, what is available (all the things at hand) is never enough. Wishing is an existential modification of understanding self-projection which, having fallen prey to thrownness, solely *hankers after* possibilities. This hankering after *closes off* possibilities; what is "there" in such wishful hankering becomes the "real world." Ontologically, wishing presupposes care.

In hankering, being-in-the-world-already-among . . . has priority. Being-ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-in is modified accordingly. Entangled hankering reveals the *predilection* of Da-sein to be "lived" by the world in which it actually is. Predilection shows the character of being out for something. Being-ahead-of-itself has gotten lost in a just-always-already-among. The "toward" of predilection lets itself be attracted by what predilection hankers after. When Da-sein, so to speak, sinks down into predilection, a predilection is not just objectively present, but the complete structure of care is modified. Blinded, it puts all possibilities in the services of the predilection.

On the other hand, the *urge* "to live" is a "toward" which brings its own drive along with it. It is "toward at any cost." Urge seeks to crowd out other possibilities. Here, too, being-ahead-of-oneself is inauthentic if one is invaded by an urge coming from the very thing that is urging one on. The urge can outrun one's actual at-



tunement and understanding. But then Da-sein is not—and never is—a “mere urge” to which other relations of dominating and leading are sometimes added, but as a modification of complete being-in-the-world, it is always already care.

In pure urge, care has not yet become free, although it first makes it ontologically possible for Da-sein to be urged on by itself. On the other hand, in predilection care is always already bound. Predilection and urge are possibilities rooted in the thrownness of Da-sein. The urge “to live” is not to be destroyed; the predilection to be “lived” by the world is not to be eradicated. But because and only because they are ontologically based in care, both are to be modified ontically and existentially by care as something authentic.

The expression “care” means an existential and basic ontological phenomenon which is as yet *not simple* in its structure. This ontologically elemental totality of the care structure cannot be reduced to an ontic “primal element,” just as being certainly cannot be “explained” in terms of beings. Finally, we shall see that the idea of being in general is no more “simple” than the being of Da-sein. The characterization of care as “being-ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-in”—as being-together-with—makes it clear that this phenomenon, too, is yet structurally *articulated* in itself. But is that not a phenomenal indication that the ontological question must be pursued still further until we can set forth a *still more primordial* phenomenon which ontologically supports the unit and totality of the structural manifold of care? Before we follow up this question, we need to appropriate in hindsight and more precisely what has been interpreted up to now with the intention of seeing the fundamental ontological question of the meaning of being in general. But first we must show that what is ontologically “new” in this interpretation is ontically rather old. The explication of the being of Da-sein as care does not force Da-sein under a contrived idea, but brings us existentially nearer to the concept of what has already been disclosed ontically and existentially.

### **Confirmation of the Existential Interpretation of Da-sein as Care in Terms of the Pre-ontological Self-interpretation of Da-sein**

In the foregoing interpretations, which finally led to exposing care as the being of Da-sein, the most important thing was to arrive at

the appropriate *ontological* foundations of the being which we ourselves actually are and which we call "human being." For this purpose, it was necessary from the outset to change the direction of our analysis from the approach presented by the traditional definition of human being, which is an approach ontologically unclarified and fundamentally questionable. In comparison with this definition, the existential and ontological interpretation might seem strange, especially if "care" is understood just ontically as "worry" and "troubles." Accordingly, we shall cite a document that is pre-ontological in character, even though its demonstrative power is "only historical."

Let us bear in mind, however, that in this document Da-sein expresses itself about itself "primordially," unaffected by any theoretical interpretation and without aiming to propose any. Furthermore, let us observe that the being of Da-sein is characterized by historicity, though this must first be demonstrated ontologically. If Da-sein is "historical" in the basis of its being, a statement that comes from its history and goes back to it and that, moreover, is *prior* to any scientific knowledge takes on a special importance which, however, is never purely ontological. The understanding of being which lies in Da-sein itself expresses itself pre-ontologically. What is cited in the following document is to make clear the fact that our existential interpretation is not a mere fabrication, but as an ontological "construction" it is well grounded and has been sketched out beforehand in elemental ways.

The following self-interpretation of Da-sein as "care" is preserved in an old fable:

Cura cum fluvium transiret, videt cretosum lutum sustulitque cogitabunda atque coepit fingere. dum deliberat quid iam fecisset. Jovis intervententi. rogat eum Cura ut det spiritum, et facile impetrat. cui cum vellet Cura nomen ex sese ipsa imponere, Jovis prohibuit suumque nomen ei dandum esse dictitat. dum Cura et Jovis disceptant, Tellus surrexit simul suumque nomen esse volt cui corpus praeberit suum. sumpserunt Saturnum iudicem, is sic aecus iudicat; "tu Jovis quia spiritum dedisti, in morte spiritum, tuque Tellus, quia dedisti corpus, corpus recipito, Cura enim quia prima finxit, teneat quamdiu vixerit. sed quae nunc de nomine eius vobis controversia est, homo vocetur, quia videtur esse factus ex humo.

Once when "Care" was crossing a river, she saw some clay; she thoughtfully took a piece and began to shape it. While she was think-

ing about what she had made, Jupiter came by. "Care" asked him to give it spirit, and this he gladly granted. But when she wanted her name to be bestowed upon it, Jupiter forbade this and demanded that it be given his name instead. While "Care" and Jupiter were arguing, Earth (Tellus) arose, and desired that her name be conferred upon the creature, since she had offered it part of her body. They asked Saturn to be the judge. And Saturn gave them the following decision, which seemed to be just: "Since you, Jupiter, have given its spirit, you should receive that spirit at death; and since you, Earth, have given its body, you shall receive its body. But since 'Care' first shaped this creature, she shall possess it as long as it lives. And because there is a dispute among you as to its name, let it be called 'homo,' for it is made out of humus (earth)."

This pre-ontological document becomes especially significant not only in that "care" is here seen as that to which human Da-sein belongs "for its lifetime," but also because this priority of "care" emerges in connection with the familiar interpretation of human being as a compound of body (earth) and spirit. *Cura prima finxit*. This being has the "origin" of its being in care. *Cura teneat, quamdiu vixerit*: this being is not released from its origin, but retained, dominated by it as long as this being "is in the world." "Being-in-the-world" has the character of being of "care." It does not get its name (*homo*) with regard to its being, but in relation to that of which it consists (*humus*). The decision as to wherein the "primordial, being of this creature is to be seen is left to Saturn, 'time.'" The pre-ontological characterization of the essence of human being expressed in this fable thus has envisaged from the very beginning *the mode of being which rules its temporal sojourn in the world.*

The history of the signification of the ontic concept of "*cura*" permits us to see still further fundamental structures of Da-sein. Burdach calls our attention to an ambiguity of the term "*cura*," according to which it means not only "anxious effort," but also "carefulness," "dedication." Thus Seneca writes in his last letter (*Ep.* 124): "Of the four existing natures (tree, animal, human being, God), the last two, which alone are endowed with reason, are distinguished in that God is immortal, human being mortal. The good of the One, namely of God, is fulfilled by its nature; but that of the other, human being, is fulfilled by *care (cura)*: *unius bonum natura perficit, dei scilicet, alterius cura, hominis.*"

The *perfectio* of human being—becoming what one can be in being free for one's ownmost possibilities (project)—is an "accom-

plishment” of “care.” But, equiprimordially, care determines the fundamental mode of this being according to which it is delivered over (thrownness) to the world taken care of. The “ambiguity” of “care” means a *single* basic constitution in its essentially twofold structure of thrown project.

As compared with the ontic interpretation, the existential and ontological interpretation is not only a theoretical and ontic generalization. That would only signify that ontically all the human being’s behavior is “full of care” and guided by his “dedication” to something. The “generalization” is an *a priori-ontological* one. It does not mean ontic qualities that constantly keep emerging, but a constitution of being which always already underlies. This constitution first makes it ontologically possible that this being can be addressed ontically as *cura*. The existential condition of the possibility of “the cares of life” and “dedication” must be conceived in a primordial, that is, ontological sense as care.

The transcendental “universality” of the phenomenon of care and all fundamental existentials has, on the other hand, that broad scope through which the basis is given on which *every* ontic interpretation of Da-sein with a worldview moves, whether it understands Da-sein as “the cares of life” and need, or in an opposite manner.

The “emptiness” and “generality” of the existential structures which obtrude themselves ontically have their *own* ontological definiteness and fullness. The whole of the constitution of Da-sein itself is not simple in its unity, but shows a structural articulation which is expressed in the existential concept of care.

Our ontological interpretation of Da-sein has brought the pre-ontological self-interpretation of this being as “care” to the *existential concept* of care. The analytic of Da-sein does not aim, however, at an ontological basis for anthropology; it has a fundamental, ontological goal. This is the purpose that has inexplicitly determined the course of our considerations, our choice of phenomena, and the limits to which our analysis may penetrate. With regard to our leading question of the meaning of being and its development, our inquiry must now, however, *explicitly* secure what has been gained so far. But something like this cannot be attained by an external synopsis of what has been discussed. Rather, what could only be roughly indicated at the beginning of the existential analytic must be sharpened to a more penetrating understanding of the problem with the help of what we have gained.

# The Possible Being-a-Whole of Da-sein and Being-toward-Death (1927)

## The Seeming Impossibility of Ontologically Grasping and Determining Da-sein as a Whole

The inadequacy of the hermeneutical situation from which the foregoing analysis originated must be overcome. With regard to the fore-having, which must necessarily be obtained, of the whole of Da-sein, we must ask whether this being, as something existing, can become accessible at all in its being. There seem to be important reasons that speak against the possibility of our required task, reasons that lie in the constitution of Da-sein itself.

Care, which forms the totality of the structural whole of Da-sein, obviously contradicts a possible being whole of this being according to its ontological sense. The primary factor of care, "being ahead of itself," however, means that Da-sein always exists for the sake of itself. "As long as it is," up until its end, it is related to its potentially-of-being. Even when it, still existing, has nothing further "ahead of it," and has "settled its accounts," its being is still influenced by "being ahead of itself." Hopelessness, for example, does not tear Da-sein away from its possibilities. Even when one is without illusions and "is ready *for* anything," the "ahead of itself" is there. This structural factor of care tells us unambiguously that something is always still *outstanding* in Da-sein which has not yet become "real" as a potentiality-of-its-being. A *constant unfinished quality* thus lies in the essence of the constitution of Da-sein. This lack of totality means that there is still something outstanding in one's potentiality-for-being.

However, if Da-sein "exists" in such a way that there is absolutely nothing more outstanding for it, it has also already thus become no-longer-being-there. Eliminating what is outstanding in its being is equivalent to annihilating its being. As long as Da-sein *is* as a being, it has never attained its "wholeness." But if it does, this gain becomes the absolute loss of being-in-the-world. It is then never again to be experienced *as a being*.

The reason for the impossibility of experiencing Da-sein ontically as an existing whole and thus of defining it ontologically in its wholeness does not lie in any imperfection of our *cognitive faculties*. The hindrance lies on the side of the *being* of this being. What cannot even *be* in *such a way* that an experience of Da-sein could pretend to grasp it, fundamentally eludes being experienced. But is it not then a hopeless undertaking to try to discern the ontological wholeness of being of Da-sein?

As an essential structural factor of care, “being ahead of itself” cannot be eliminated. But is what we concluded from this tenable? Did we not conclude in a merely formal argumentation that it is impossible to grasp the whole of Da-sein? Or did we not at bottom inadvertently posit Da-sein as something objectively present ahead of which something not yet objectively present constantly moves along? Did our argumentation grasp not-yet-being and the “ahead-of-itself” in a genuinely *existential* sense? Did we speak about “end” and “totality” in a way phenomenally appropriate to Da-sein? Did the expression “death” have a biological significance or one that is existential and ontological, or indeed was it sufficiently and securely defined at all? And have we actually exhausted all the possibilities of making Da-sein accessible in its totality?

We have to answer these questions before the problem of the wholeness of Da-sein can be dismissed as nothing. The question of the wholeness of Da-sein, both the existentiell question about a possible potentiality-for-being-a-whole, as well as the existential question about the constitution of being of “end” and “wholeness,” contain the task of a positive analysis of the phenomena of existence set aside up to now. In the center of these considerations we have the task of characterizing ontologically the being-toward-the-end of Da-sein and of achieving an existential concept of death. Our inquiry related to these topics is structured in the following way: The possibility of experiencing the death of others, and the possibility of grasping the whole of Da-sein (section 47); what is outstanding, end and wholeness (section 48); how the existential analysis of death is distinguished from other possible interpretations of this phenomenon (section 49); preliminary sketch of the existential and ontological structure of death (section 50); being toward death and the everydayness of Da-sein (section 51); everyday being toward death and the complete existential concept of death (section 52); the existential project of an authentic being toward death (section 53).

## The Possibility of Experiencing the Death of Others and the Possibility of Grasping Da-sein as a Whole

When Da-sein reaches its wholeness in death, it simultaneously loses the being of the there. The transition to no-longer-being-there lifts Da-sein right out of the possibility of experiencing this transition and of understanding it as something experienced. This kind of thing is denied to actual Da-sein in relation to itself. The death of others, then, is all the more penetrating. In this way, an end of Da-sein becomes “objectively” accessible. Da-sein can gain an experience of death, all the more because it is essentially being-with others. This “objective” givenness of death must then make possible an ontological analysis of the totality of Da-sein.

Thus from the kind of being that Da-sein possesses as being-with-one-another, we might glean the fairly obvious information that when the Da-sein of others has come to an end, it might be chosen as a substitute theme for our analysis of the totality of Da-sein. But does this lead us to our intended goal?

Even the Da-sein of others, when it has reached its wholeness in death, is a no-longer-being-there in the sense of no-longer-being-in-the-world. Does not dying mean going-out-of-the-world and losing being-in-the-world? Yet, the no-longer-being-in-the-world of the deceased (understood in an extreme sense) is still a being in the sense of the mere objective presence of a corporeal thing encountered. In the dying of others that remarkable phenomenon of being can be experienced that can be defined as the transition of a being from the kind of being of Da-sein (or of life) to no-longer-being-there. The *end* of the being qua Da-sein is the *beginning* of this being qua something objectively present.

This interpretation of the transition from Da-sein to something merely objectively present, however, misses the phenomenal content in that the being still remaining does not represent a mere corporeal thing. Even the objectively present corpse is, viewed theoretically, still a possible object for pathological anatomy whose understanding is oriented toward the idea of life. Merely-being-objectively-present is “more” than a *lifeless*, material thing. In it we encounter something *unliving* which has lost its life.

But even this way of characterizing what still remains does not exhaust the complete phenomenal findings with regard to Da-sein.

The “deceased,” as distinct from the dead body, has been torn away from “those remaining behind,” and is the object of “being

taken care of” in funeral rites, the burial, and the cult of graves. And that is so because he is “still more” in his kind of being than an innerworldly thing at hand to be taken care of. In lingering together with him in mourning and commemorating, those remaining behind *are with* him, in a mode of concern which honors him. Thus the relation of being to the dead must not be grasped as a being together with something at hand which *takes care of it*.

In such being-with with the dead, the deceased *himself* is no longer factually “there.” However, being-with always means being-with-one-another in the same world. The deceased has abandoned our “world” and left it behind. It is *in terms of this world* that those remaining can still *be with him*.

The more appropriately the no-longer-being-there of the deceased is grasped phenomenally, the more clearly it can be seen that in such being-with with the dead, the real having-come-to-an-end of the deceased is precisely *not* experienced. Death does reveal itself as a loss, but as a loss experienced by those remaining behind. However, in suffering the loss, the loss of being as such which the dying person “suffers” does not become accessible. We do not experience the dying of others in a genuine sense; we are at best always just “there” too.

And even if it were possible and feasible to clarify “psychologically” the dying of others, this would by no means let us grasp the way of being we have in mind, namely, coming-to-an-end. We are asking about the ontological meaning of the dying of the person who dies, as a potentiality-of-being of *his being*, and not about the way of being-with and the still-being-there of the deceased with those left behind. If death as experienced in others is to be the theme of our analysis of the end of Da-sein and its totality, this cannot give us what it presumes to give, either ontically or ontologically.

After all, taking the dying of others as a substitute theme for the ontological analysis of the finished character of Da-sein and its totality rests on an assumption that demonstrably fails altogether to recognize the kind of being of Da-sein. That is what one presupposes when one is of the opinion that any Da-sein could arbitrarily be replaced by another, so that what cannot be experienced in one’s own Da-sein is accessible in another Da-sein. But is this assumption really so groundless?

Indubitably, the fact that one Da-sein *can be represented* by another belongs to the possibilities-of-being of being-with-one-another in the world. In the everydayness of taking care of things,



constant use of such representability is made in many ways. Any going to . . . , any fetching of . . . , is representable in the scope of the "surrounding world" initially taken care of. The broad multiplicity of ways of being-in-the-world in which one person can be represented by another extends not only to the used-up modes of public being with one another, but concerns as well the possibilities of taking care of things limited to definite circles, tailored to professions, social classes, and stages of life. But the very meaning of such representation is such that it is always a representation "in" and "together with" something, that is, in taking care of something. Everyday Da-sein understands itself initially and for the most part, however, in terms of *what* it is accustomed to take care of. "One is" what one does. With regard to this being (the everyday being-absorbed-with-one-another in the "world" taken care of), representability is not only possible in general, but is even constitutive for being-with-one-another. *Here* one Da-sein can and must, within certain limits, "*be*" another Da-sein.

However, this possibility of representation gets completely stranded when it is a matter of representing the possibility of being that constitutes the coming-to-an-end of Da-sein and gives it its totality as such. *No one can take the other's dying away from him.* Someone can go "to his death for an other." However, that always means to sacrifice oneself for the other "*in a definite matter.*" Such dying for . . . can never, however, mean that the other has thus had his death in the least taken away. Every Da-sein must itself actually take dying upon itself. Insofar as it "is," death is always essentially my own. And it indeed signifies a peculiar possibility of being in which it is absolutely a matter of the being of my own Da-sein. In dying, it becomes evident that death is ontologically constituted by mineness and existence. Dying is not an event, but a phenomenon to be understood existentially in an eminent sense still to be delineated more closely.

But if "ending," as dying, constitutes the totality of Da-sein, the being of the totality itself must be conceived as an existential phenomenon of my own Da-sein. In "ending," and in the totality thus constituted of Da-sein, there is essentially no representation. The way out suggested fails to recognize this existential fact when it proposes the dying of others as a substitute theme for the analysis of totality.

Thus the attempt to make the totality of Da-sein phenomenally accessible in an appropriate way gets stranded again. But the result

of these considerations is not just negative. They were oriented toward the phenomena, even if rather crudely. We have indicated that death is an existential phenomenon. Our inquiry is thus forced into a purely existential orientation toward my own Da-sein. For the analysis of death as dying, there remains only the possibility of bringing this phenomenon either to a purely *existential* concept or, on the other hand, of renouncing ontological understanding of it.

Furthermore, it was evident in our characterization of the transition from Da-sein to no-longer-being-there as no-longer-being-in-the-world that the going-out-of-the-world of Da-sein in the sense of dying must be distinguished from a going-out-of-the-world of what is only alive. The ending of what is only alive we formulate terminologically as perishing. The distinction can become visible only by distinguishing the ending characteristic of Da-sein from the ending of a living thing. Dying can, of course, also be conceived physiologically and biologically. But the medical concept of “*exitus*” does not coincide with that of perishing.

From the previous discussion of the ontological possibility of conceiving of death, it becomes clear at the same time that substructures of beings of a different kind of being (objective presence or life) thrust themselves to the fore unnoticeably and threaten to confuse the interpretation of the phenomenon, even the *first* appropriate *presentation* of it. We can cope with this problem only by looking for an ontologically adequate way of defining constitutive phenomena for our further analysis, such as end and totality.

### What Is Outstanding, End, and Totality

Our ontological characterization of end and totality can only be preliminary in the scope of this inquiry. To perform this task adequately we must not only set forth the *formal* structure of end in general and totality in general. At the same time, we must disentangle the structural variations possible for them in different realms, that is, deformed variations which are related to definite beings with content and structurally determined in terms of their being. This task again presupposes a sufficiently unequivocal and positive interpretation of the kinds of being that require a regional separation of the whole of beings. The understanding of these ways of being, however, requires a clarified idea of being in general. The task of adequately carrying out the ontological analysis of end and

totality gets stranded not only because the theme is so far-reaching, but because there is a difficulty in principle: in order to master this task, we must presuppose that precisely what we are seeking in this inquiry (the meaning of being in general) is something that we have found already and with which we are quite familiar.

In the following considerations, the “variations” in which we are chiefly interested are those of end and totality; these are ontological determinations of Da-sein which are to lead to a primordial interpretation of the being. With constant reference to the existential constitution of Da-sein already developed, we must initially try to decide how ontologically inappropriate to Da-sein are the concepts of end and totality initially forcing themselves upon us, no matter how indefinite they are categorically. The rejection of such concepts must be further developed to a positive *directive* to their specific realms. Thus our understanding of end and totality in their variant forms as existentials will be strengthened, and this guarantees the possibility of an ontological interpretation of death.

But if the analysis of the end and totality of Da-sein takes an orientation of such broad scope, this nevertheless cannot mean that the existential concepts of end and totality are to be gained by way of a deduction. On the contrary, it is a matter of taking the existential meaning of the coming-to-an-end of Da-sein from Da-sein itself and of showing how this “ending” can constitute a *being whole* of that being that *exists*.

What has been discussed up to now about death can be formulated in three theses:

- (1) As long as Da-sein is, a not-yet belongs to it, which it will be—what is constantly outstanding.
- (2) The coming-to-its-end of what is not-yet-at-an-end (in which what is outstanding is liquidated with regard to its being) has the character of no-longer-being-there.
- (3) Coming-to-an-end implies a mode of being in which the actual Da-sein absolutely cannot be represented by someone else.

In Da-sein there is inevitably a constant “fragmentariness” which finds its end in death. But may we interpret the phenomenal fact that this not-yet “belongs” to Da-sein as long as it is to mean that it is something *outstanding*? With regard to what kind of beings do we speak of something outstanding? The expression means indeed what “belongs” to a being, but is still lacking. Outstanding,

as lacking, is based on a belongingness. For example, the remainder of a debt still to be paid is outstanding. What is outstanding is not yet available. Liquidating the “debt” as paying off what is outstanding means that the money “comes in,” that is, the remainder is paid in sequence, whereby the not-yet is, so to speak, filled out until the sum owed is “all together.” Thus, to be outstanding means that what belongs together is not yet together. Ontologically, this implies the unhandiness of portions to be brought in which have the same kind of being of those already at hand. The latter in their turn do not have their kind of being modified by having the remainder come in. The existing untogetherness is liquidated by a cumulative placing together. *The being for which something is outstanding has the kind of being of something at hand.* We characterize the together, or the untogether based on it, as a *sum*.

The untogether belonging to such a mode of the together, lacking as something outstanding, can, however, by no means ontologically define the not-yet that belongs to Da-sein as its possible death. Da-sein does not have the kind of being of a thing at hand in the world at all. The together of the being that Da-sein is “in running its course” until it has completed “its course” is not constituted by a “progressive” piecing-on of beings that, somehow and somewhere, are already at hand in their own right. That Da-sein should *be* together only when its not-yet has been filled out is so far from being the case that precisely then it no longer is. Da-sein always already exists in such a way that its not-yet *belongs* to it. But are there not beings which are as they are and to which a not-yet can belong, without these beings necessarily having the kind of being of Da-sein?

For example, one can say that the last quarter of the moon is outstanding until it is full. The not-yet decreases with the disappearance of the shadow covering it. And yet the moon is, after all, always already objectively present as a whole. Apart from the fact that the moon is never *wholly* to be grasped even when it is full, the not-yet by no means signifies a not-yet-*being-together* of parts belonging together, but rather pertains only to the way we *grasp* it perceptually. The not-yet that belongs to Da-sein, however, not only remains preliminarily and at times inaccessible to one’s own or to others’ experience, it “is” not yet “real” at all. The problem does not pertain to the *grasp* of the not-yet of the character of Da-sein, but rather its possible *being* or *nonbeing*. Da-sein, as itself, has to *become*, that is, *be*, what it is not yet. In order to thus be able,

by comparison, to define the *being of the not-yet of the character of Da-sein*, we must reflect on beings to whose kind of being becoming belongs.

For example, the unripe fruit moves toward its ripeness. In ripening, what it not yet is by no means pieced together as something not-yet-objectively-present. The fruit ripens itself, and this ripening characterizes its being as fruit. Nothing we can think of which could be added on could remove the unripeness of the fruit, if this being did not ripen *of itself*. The not-yet of unripeness does not mean something other which is outstanding that could be objectively present in and with it in a way indifferent to the fruit. It means the fruit itself in its specific kind of being. The sum that is not yet complete is, as something at hand, "indifferent" to the unhandy remainder that is lacking. Strictly speaking, it can be neither indifferent to it nor not indifferent. The ripening fruit, however, is not only not indifferent to its unripeness as an other to itself, but, ripening, it *is* the unripeness. The not-yet is already included in its own being, by no means as an arbitrary determination, but as a constituent. Correspondingly, Da-sein, too, *is always already its not-yet as long as it is*.

What constitutes the "unwholeness" in Da-sein, the constant being-ahead-of-itself, is neither a summative together which is outstanding, nor even a not-yet-having-become-accessible, but rather a not-yet that any Da-sein always has to be, given the being that it is. Still, the comparison with the unripeness of the fruit does show essential differences despite some similarities. To reflect on these differences means that we shall recognize how indefinite our previous discussion of end and ending has hitherto been.

Ripening is the specific being of the fruit. It is also a kind of being of the not-yet (unripeness), and is formally analogous to Da-sein in that the latter, as well as the former, always already *is* its not-yet in a sense yet to be defined. But even then, this does not mean that ripeness as "end" and death as "end" coincide with regard to their ontological structure as ends. With ripeness, the fruit *fulfills* itself. But is the death at which Da-sein arrives a fulfillment in this sense? It is true that Da-sein has "completed its course" with its death. Has it thus necessarily exhausted its specific possibilities? Rather, are these not precisely what gets taken from it? Even "unfulfilled" Da-sein ends. On the other hand, Da-sein so little needs to ripen only with its death that it can already have gone beyond that ripeness before the end. For the most part, it ends in unfulfillment, or else disintegrated and used up.

Ending does not necessarily mean fulfilling oneself. It thus becomes more urgent to ask *in what sense, if any, death must be grasped as the ending of Da-sein.*

Initially, ending means *stopping*, and it means this in senses that are ontologically different. The rain stops. It is no longer objectively present. The road stops. This ending does not cause the road to disappear, but this stopping rather determines the road as this objectively present one. Hence ending, as stopping, can mean either to change into the absence of objective presence or, however, to be objectively present only when the end comes. The latter kind of ending can again be determinative for an *unfinished* thing objectively present, as a road under construction breaks off, or it may rather constitute the “finishedness” of something objectively present—the painting is finished with the last stroke of the brush.

But ending as getting finished does not include fulfillment. On the other hand, whatever has got to be fulfilled must reach its possible finishedness. Fulfillment is the mode of “finishedness,” and is founded upon it. Finishedness is itself possible only as a determination of something objectively present or at hand.

Even ending in the sense of disappearing can still be modified according to the kind of being of the being. The rain is at an end, that is, it has disappeared. The bread is at an end, that is, used up, no longer available as something at hand.

*None of these modes of ending are able to characterize death appropriately as the end of Da-sein.* If dying were understood as being-at-an-end in the sense of an ending of the kind discussed, Da-sein would be posited as something objectively present or at hand. In death, Da-sein is neither fulfilled nor does it simply disappear; it has not become finished or completely available as something at hand.

Rather, just as Da-sein constantly already *is* its not-yet as long as it is, it also always already *is* its end. The ending that we have in view when we speak of death, does not signify a being-at-an-end of Da-sein, but rather a *being toward the end* of this being. Death is a way to be that Da-sein takes over as soon as it is. “As soon as a human being is born, he is old enough to die right away.”

Ending, as being toward the end, must be clarified ontologically in terms of the kind of being of Da-sein. And supposedly the possibility of an existing being of the not-yet that lies “before” the “end” will become intelligible only if the character of ending has been determined existentially. The existential clarification of being toward

the end first provides the adequate basis for defining the possible meaning of our discussion of a totality of Da-sein, if indeed this totality is to be constituted by death as an "end."

The attempt to reach an understanding of the totality of Da-sein by starting with a clarification of the not-yet and proceeding to a characterization of ending has not yet attained its goal. It showed only *negatively* that the not-yet which Da-sein always *is* resists an interpretation as something outstanding. The end *toward* which Da-sein *is*, as existing, remains inappropriately defined by being-at-an-end. At the same time, however, our reflections should make it clear that their course must be reversed. A positive characterization of the phenomena in question (not-yet-being, ending, totality) can be successful only when it is unequivocally oriented toward the constitution of being of Da-sein. This unequivocal character, however, is protected in a negative way from being side-tracked when we have an insight into the regional belonging together of the structures of end and totality which belong to Da-sein ontologically.

The positive, existential, and ontological interpretation of death and its character of end are to be developed following the guideline of the fundamental constitution of Da-sein, attained up to now—the phenomenon of care.

### How the Existential Analysis of Death Differs from Other Possible Interpretations of This Phenomenon

The unequivocal character of the ontological interpretation of death should be made more secure by explicitly bringing to mind what this interpretation can *not* ask about and where it would be useless to expect information and instructions.

In the broadest sense, death is a phenomenon of life. Life must be understood as a kind of being to which belongs a being-in-the-world. It can only be defined in a privative orientation to Da-sein. Da-sein, too, can be considered as pure life. For the biological and physiological line of questioning, it then moves into the sphere of being which we know as the world of animals and plants. In this field, dates and statistics about the life-span of plants, animals, and human beings can be ontically ascertained. Connections between the life-span, reproduction, and growth can be known. The "kinds" of death, the causes, "arrangements," and ways of its occurrence can be investigated.

An ontological problematic underlies this biological and ontic investigation of death. We must still ask how the essence of death is defined in terms of the essence of life. The ontic inquiry into death has always already decided about this. More or less clarified pre-conceptions of life and death are operative in it. These preliminary concepts need to be sketched out in the ontology of Da-sein. Within the ontology of Da-sein, which has priority over an ontology of life, the existential analytic of death is subordinate to the fundamental constitution of Da-sein. We called the ending of what is alive *perishing*. Da-sein, too, “has” its physiological death of the kind appropriate to anything that lives and has it not ontically in isolation, but as also determined by its primordial kind of being. Da-sein, too, can end without authentically dying, though on the other hand, qua Da-sein, it does not simply perish. We call this intermediate phenomenon its *demise*. Let the term *dying* stand for the *way of being* in which Da-sein is *toward* its death. Thus we can say that Da-sein never perishes. Da-sein can only demise as long as it dies. The medical and biological inquiry into demising can attain results which can also become significant ontologically if the fundamental orientation is ensured for an existential interpretation of death. Or must sickness and death in general—even from a medical point of view—be conceived primarily as existential phenomena?

The existential interpretation of death is prior to any biology and ontology of life. But it also is the foundation for any biographico-historical or ethnologico-psychological inquiry into death. A “typology” of “dying” characterizing the states and ways in which a demise is “experienced,” already presupposes the concept of death. Moreover, a psychology of “dying” rather gives information about the “life” of the “dying person” than about dying itself. That is only a reflection of the fact that when Da-sein dies—and even when it dies authentically—it does not have to do so with an experience of its factual demise, or in such an experience. Similarly, the interpretations of death in primitive peoples, of their behavior toward death in magic and cult, throw light primarily on the understanding of *Da-sein*; but the interpretation of this understanding already requires an existential analytic and a corresponding concept of death.

The ontological analysis of being toward-the-end, on the other hand, does not anticipate any existentiell stance toward death. If death is defined as the “end” of Da-sein, that is, of being-in-the-world, no ontic decision has been made as to whether “after death” another being is still possible, either higher or lower, whether Da-



sein “lives on” or even, “outliving itself,” is “immortal.” Nor is anything decided ontically about the “otherworldly” and its possibility any more than about the “this-worldly”; as if norms and rules for behavior toward death should be proposed for “edification.” But our analysis of death remains purely “this-worldly” in that it interprets the phenomenon solely with respect to the question of how it *enters into* actual Da-sein as its possibility-of-being. We cannot even *ask* with any methodological assurance about what “*is after death*” until death is understood in its full ontological essence. Whether such a question presents a possible *theoretical* question at all is not to be decided here. The this-worldly, ontological interpretation of death comes before any ontic, other-worldly speculation.

Finally, an existential analysis of death lies outside the scope of what might be discussed under the rubric of a “metaphysics of death.” The questions of how and when death “came into the world,” what “meaning” it can and should have as an evil and suffering in the whole of beings—these are questions that necessarily presuppose an understanding not only of the character of being of death, but the ontology of the whole of beings as a whole and the ontological clarification of evil and negativity in particular.

The existential analysis is methodically prior to the questions of a biology, psychology theodicy, and theology of death. Taken ontically, the results of the analysis show the peculiar *formality* and emptiness of any ontological characterization. However, that must not make us blind to the rich and complex structure of the phenomenon. Since Da-sein never becomes accessible at all as something objectively present, because being possible belongs in its own way to its kind of being, even less may we expect to simply read off the ontological structure of death, if indeed death is an eminent possibility of Da-sein.

On the other hand, our analysis cannot be supported by an idea of death that has been devised arbitrarily and at random. We can restrain this arbitrariness only by giving beforehand an ontological characterization of the kind of being in which the “end” enters into the average everydayness of Da-sein. For this we need to envisage fully the structures of everydayness worked out earlier. The fact that existentiell possibilities of being toward death have their resonance in an existential analysis of death, is implied by the essence of any ontological inquiry. All the more explicitly, then, must an existentiell neutrality go together with the existential conceptual definition, especially with regard to death, where the character of

possibility of Da-sein can be revealed most clearly of all. The existential problematic aims solely at developing the ontological structure of the being-toward-the-end of Da-sein.

### A Preliminary Sketch of the Existential and Ontological Structure of Death

From our considerations of something outstanding, end, and totality there has resulted the necessity of interpreting the phenomenon of death as being-toward-the-end in terms of the fundamental constitution of Da-sein. Only in this way can it become clear how a wholeness constituted by being-toward-the-end is possible in Da-sein itself, in accordance with its structure of being. We have seen that care is the fundamental constitution of Da-sein. The ontological significance of this expression was expressed in the "definition": being-ahead-of-itself-already-being-in (the world) as being-together-with beings encountered (within the world). Thus the fundamental characteristics of the being of Da-sein are expressed: in being-ahead-of-itself, existence, in already-being-in . . . facticity, in being-together-with . . . , falling prey. Provided that death belongs to the being of Da-sein in an eminent sense, it (or being-toward-the-end) must be able to be defined in terms of these characteristics.

We must, in the first instance, make it clear in a preliminary sketch how the existence, facticity, and falling prey of Da-sein are revealed in the phenomenon of death.

The interpretation of the not-yet, and thus also of the most extreme not-yet, of the end of Da-sein in the sense of something outstanding was rejected as inappropriate. For it included the ontological distortion of Da-sein as something objectively present. Being-at-an-end means existentially being-toward-the-end. The most extreme not-yet has the character of something *to which Da-sein relates*. The end is imminent for Da-sein. Death is not something not yet objectively present, nor the last outstanding element reduced to a minimum, but rather an *imminence*.

However, many things can be imminent for Da-sein as being-in-the-world. The character of imminence is not in itself distinctive for death. On the contrary, this interpretation could even make us suspect that death would have to be understood in the sense of an imminent event to be encountered in the surrounding world. For example, a thunderstorm can be imminent, remodeling a house, the

arrival of a friend, accordingly, beings which are objectively present, at hand or Da-sein-with. Imminent death does not have this kind of being.

But a journey, for example, can also be imminent for Da-sein, or a discussion with others, or a renouncing something which Da-sein itself can be—its own possibilities-of-being which are founded in being-with others.

Death is a possibility of being that Da-sein always has to take upon itself. With death, Da-sein stands before itself in its ownmost potentiality-of-being. In this possibility, Da-sein is concerned about its being-in-the-world absolutely. Its death is the possibility of no-longer-being-able-to-be-there. When Da-sein is imminent to itself as this possibility, it is *completely* thrown back upon its ownmost potentiality-of-being. Thus imminent to itself, all relations to other Da-sein are dissolved in it. This nonrelational ownmost possibility is at the same time the most extreme one. As a potentiality of being, Da-sein is unable to bypass the possibility of death. Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Da-sein. Thus *death* reveals itself as the *ownmost nonrelational possibility not to be bypassed*. As such, it is *an eminent* imminence. Its existential possibility is grounded in the fact that Da-sein is essentially disclosed to itself, in the way of being-ahead-of-itself. This structural factor of care has its most primordial concretion in being-toward-death. Being-toward-the-end becomes phenomenally clearer as being toward the eminent possibility of Da-sein which we have characterized.

The ownmost nonrelational possibility not to be bypassed is not created by Da-sein subsequently and occasionally in the course of its being. Rather, when Da-sein exists, it is already *thrown* into this possibility. Initially and for the most part, Da-sein does not have any explicit or even theoretical knowledge of the fact that it is delivered over to its death, and that death thus belongs to being-in-the-world. Thrownness into death reveals itself to it more primordially and penetratingly in the attunement of *Angst*. *Angst* in the face of death is *Angst* “in the face of” the ownmost nonrelational potentiality-of-being not to be bypassed. What *Angst* is about is being-in-the-world itself. What *Angst* is about is the potentiality-of-being of Da-sein absolutely. *Angst* about death must not be confused with a fear of one’s demise. It is not an arbitrary and chance “weak” mood of the individual, but, as a fundamental attunement of Da-sein, the disclosedness of the fact that Da-sein exists as thrown being-

toward-its-end. Thus the existential concept of dying is clarified as thrown being toward the ownmost nonrelational potentiality-of-being not to be bypassed. Precision is gained by distinguishing this from pure disappearance, and also from merely perishing, and finally from the “experience” of a demise.

Being-toward-the-end does not first arise through some attitude which occasionally turns up, rather it belongs essentially to the thrownness of Da-sein which reveals itself in attunement (mood) in various ways. The factual “knowledge” or “lack of knowledge” prevalent in Da-sein as to its ownmost being-toward-the-end is only the expression of the existentiell possibility of maintaining itself in this being in different ways. The fact that factually many people initially and for the most part do not know about death must not be used to prove that being-toward-death does not “generally” belong to Da-sein, but only proves that Da-sein, fleeing *from* it, initially and for the most part covers over its ownmost being-toward-death. Da-sein dies factually as long as it exists, but initially and for the most part in the mode of *falling prey*. For factual existing is not only generally and without further differentiation a thrown potentiality-for-being-in-the-world, but it is always already absorbed in the “world” taken care of. In this entangled being together with . . . , the flight from uncanniness makes itself known, that is, the flight *from* its ownmost being-toward-death. Existence, facticity, falling prey characterize being-toward-the-end, and are accordingly constitutive for the existential concept of death. *With regard to its ontological possibility, dying is grounded in care.*

But if being toward death belongs primordially and essentially to the being of Da-sein, it must also be demonstrated in everydayness, although initially in an inauthentic way. And if being-toward-the-end is even supposed to offer the existential possibility for an existentiell wholeness of Da-sein, this would give the phenomenal confirmation for the thesis that care is the ontological term for the wholeness of the structural totality of Da-sein. However, for the complete phenomenal justification of this statement, a *preliminary sketch* of the connection between being toward-death and care is not sufficient. Above all, we must be able to see this connection in the *concretion* nearest to Da-sein, its everydayness.

### Being-toward-Death and the Everydayness of Da-sein

The exposition of everyday, average being-toward-death was oriented toward the structures of everydayness developed earlier. In

being-toward-death. Da-sein is related to *itself* as an eminent potentiality-of-being. But the self of everydayness is the they which is constituted in public interpretedness which expresses itself in idle talk. Thus, idle talk must make manifest in what way everyday Da-sein interprets its being-toward-death. Understanding, which is also always attuned, that is, mooded, always forms the basis of this interpretation. Thus we must ask how the attuned understanding laying in the idle talk of the they has disclosed being-toward-death. How is the they related in an understanding way to its ownmost nonrelational possibility not-to-be-bypassed of Da-sein? What attunement discloses to the they that it has been delivered over to death, and in what way?

The publicness of everyday being-with-one-another “knows” death as a constantly occurring event, as a “case of death.” Someone or another “dies,” be it a neighbor or a stranger. People unknown to us “die” daily and hourly. “Death” is encountered as a familiar event occurring within the world. As such, it remains in the inconspicuousness characteristic of everyday encounters. The they has also already secured an interpretation for this event. The “fleeting” talk about this which is either expressed or else mostly kept back says: One also dies at the end, but for now one is not involved.

The analysis of “one dies” reveals unambiguously the kind of being of everyday being toward death. In such talk, death is understood as an indeterminate something which first has to show up from somewhere, but which right now is *not yet objectively present* for oneself, and is thus no threat. “One dies” spreads the opinion that death, so to speak, strikes the they. The public interpretation of Da-sein says that “one dies” because in this way everybody can convince him/herself that in no case is it I myself, for this one is *no one*. “Dying” is levelled down to an event which does concern Da-sein, but which belongs to no one in particular. If idle talk is always ambiguous, so is this way of talking about death. Dying, which is essentially and irreplaceably mine, is distorted into a publicly occurring event which the they encounters. Characteristic talk speaks about death as a constantly occurring “case.” It treats it as something always already “real,” and veils its character of possibility and concomitantly the two factors belonging to it, that it is nonrelational and cannot-be-bypassed. With such ambiguity, Da-sein puts itself in the position of losing itself in the they with regard to an eminent potentiality-of-being that belongs to its own self. The they justifies and aggravates the *temptation* of covering over for itself its ownmost being-toward-death.

The evasion of death which covers over, dominates everydayness so stubbornly that, in being-with-one-another, the “neighbors” often try to convince the “dying person” that he will escape death and soon return again to the tranquillized everydayness of his world taken care of. This “concern” has the intention of thus “comforting” the “dying person.” It wants to bring him back to Da-sein by helping him to veil completely his ownmost nonrelational possibility. Thus, the they makes sure of a *constant tranquillization about death*. But, basically, this tranquillization is not only for the “dying person,” but just as much for “those who are comforting him.” And even in the case of a demise, publicness is still not to be disturbed and made uneasy by the event in the carefreeness it has made sure of. Indeed, the dying of others is seen often as a social inconvenience, if not a downright tactlessness, from which publicness should be spared.

But along with this tranquillization, which keeps Da-sein away from its death, the they at the same time justifies itself and makes itself respectable by silently ordering the way in which *one* is supposed to behave toward death in general. Even “thinking about death” is regarded publicly as cowardly fear, a sign of insecurity on the part of Da-sein and a dark flight from the world. *The they does not permit the courage to have Angst about death*. The dominance of the public interpretedness of the they has already decided what attunement is to determine our stance toward death. In *Angst* about death, Da-sein is brought before itself as delivered over to its possibility not-to-be-bypassed. The they is careful to distort this *Angst* into the fear of a future event. *Angst*, made ambiguous as fear, is, moreover, taken as a weakness which no self-assured Da-sein is permitted to know. What is “proper” according to the silent decree of the they is the indifferent calm as to the “fact” that one dies. The cultivation of such a “superior” indifference *estranges* Da-sein from its ownmost nonrelational potentiality-of-being.

Temptation, tranquillization, and estrangement, however, characterize the kind of being of *falling prey*. Entangled, everyday being-toward-death is a constant *flight from death*. Being toward the end has the mode of *evading that end*—reinterpreting it, understanding it inauthentically, and veiling it. Factually one’s own Da-sein is always already dying, that is, it is in a being-toward-its-end. And it conceals this fact from itself by reinterpreting death as a case of death occurring every day with others, a case which always assures us still more clearly that “one oneself” is still “alive.” But in

the entangled flight *from* death, the everydayness of Da-sein bears witness to the fact that the they itself is always already determined *as being toward death*, even when it is not explicitly engaged in “thinking about death.” *Even in average everydayness, Da-sein is constantly concerned with its ownmost nonrelational potentiality-of-being not-to-be-bypassed, if only in the mode of taking care of things in a mode of untroubled indifference toward the most extreme possibility of its existence.*

The exposition of everyday being-toward-death, however, gives us at the same time a directive to attempt to secure a complete existential concept of being-toward-the-end, by a more penetrating interpretation in which entangled being-toward-death is taken as an evasion of death. *That from which* one flees has been made visible in a phenomenally adequate way. We should now be able to project phenomenologically how evasive Da-sein itself understands its death.

### Everyday Being-toward-Death and the Complete Existential Concept of Death

Being-toward-the-end was determined in a preliminary existential sketch as being toward one's ownmost nonrelational potentiality-of-being not-to-be-bypassed. Existing being toward this possibility brings itself before the absolute impossibility of existence. Beyond this seemingly empty characteristic of being-toward-death, the concretion of this being revealed itself in the mode of everydayness. In accordance with the tendency toward falling prey essential to everydayness, being-toward-death proved to be an evasion of it, an evasion that covers over. Whereas previously our inquiry made the transition from the formal preliminary sketch of the ontological structure of death to the concrete analysis of everyday being-toward-the-end, we now wish to reverse the direction and attain the complete existential concept of death with a supplementary interpretation of everyday being-toward-the-end.

The explication of everyday being-toward-death stayed with the idle talk of the they: one also dies sometime, but for the time being not yet. Up to now we solely interpreted the “one dies” as such. In the “also sometime, but for the time being not yet,” everydayness acknowledges something like a *certainty* of death. Nobody doubts that one dies. But this “not doubting” need not already imply that

kind of being-certain that corresponds to the way death—in the sense of the eminent possibility characterized above—enters into Da-sein. Everydayness gets stuck in this ambiguous acknowledgment of the “certainty” of death—in order to weaken the certainty by covering dying over still more and alleviating its own thrownness into death.

By its very meaning, this evasive covering over of death can *not* be authentically “certain” of death, and yet it *is*. How does it stand with this “certainty of death”?

To be certain of a being means to *hold* it for true as something true. But truth means discoveredness of beings. All discoveredness, however, is ontologically based in the most primordial truth, in the disclosedness of Da-sein. As a being that is disclosed and disclosing, and one that discovers, Da-sein is essentially “in the truth.” *But certainty is based in truth or belongs to it equiprimordially.* The expression “certainty,” like the expression “truth,” has a double meaning. Primordially, truth means the same as being-disclosive as a mode of behavior of Da-sein. From this comes the derivative meaning: disclosedness of beings. Accordingly, certainty is primordially tantamount to being-certain as a kind of being of Da-sein. However, in a derivative significance, any being of which Da-sein can be certain is also called “certain.”

One mode of certainty is *conviction*. In conviction, Da-sein lets the testimony of the thing itself that has been discovered (the true thing itself) be the sole determinant for its being toward that thing understandingly. Holding-something-for-true is adequate as a way of keeping oneself in the truth, if it is based on the discovered beings themselves, and as a being toward the beings thus discovered, has become transparent to itself with regard to its appropriateness to them. Something like this is lacking in any arbitrary invention or in the mere “opinion” about a being.

The adequacy of holding-for-true is measured by the truth claim to which it belongs. This claim gets its justification from the kind of being of the beings to be disclosed, and from the direction of the disclosure. The kind of truth and, along with it, the certainty, changes with the various kinds of beings, and accords with the leading tendency and scope of the disclosure. Our present considerations are limited to an analysis of being-certain with regard to death; and this being-certain will, in the end, present us with an eminent *certainty of Da-sein*.

For the most part, everyday Da-sein covers over its ownmost nonrelational possibility of being not-to-be-bypassed. This factual



tendency to cover over confirms our thesis that Da-sein, as factual, is in "untruth." Thus the certainty which belongs to such a covering over of being-toward-death must be an inappropriate way of holding-for-true, and not an uncertainty in the sense of doubting. Inappropriate certainty keeps that of which it is certain covered over. If "one" understands death as an event encountered in the surrounding world, the certainty related to this does not get at being-toward-the-end.

They say that it is certain that "death" comes. *They* say it and overlook the fact that, in order to be able to be certain of death, Da-sein itself must always be certain of its ownmost nonrelational potentiality-of-being not-to-be-bypassed. They say that death is certain, and thus entrench in Da-sein the illusion that it is *itself* certain of its own death. And what is the ground of everyday being-certain? Evidently it is not just mutual persuasion. Yet one experiences daily the "dying" of others. Death is an undeniable "fact of experience."

The way in which everyday being-toward-death understands the certainty thus grounded, betrays itself when it tries to "think" about death, even when it does so with critical foresight—that is to say, in an appropriate way. So far as one knows, all human beings "die." Death is probable to the highest degree for every human being, yet it is not "unconditionally" certain. Strictly speaking, "only" an *empirical* certainty may be attributed to death. Such certainty falls short of the highest certainty, the apodictical one, which we attain in certain areas of theoretical knowledge.

In this "critical" determination of the certainty of death and its imminence, what is manifested in the first instance is, once again, the failure to recognize the kind of being of Da-sein and the being-toward-death belonging to it, a failure characteristic of everydayness. *The fact that demise, as an event that occurs, is "only" empirically certain, in no way decides about the certainty of death.* Cases of death may be the factual occasion for the fact that Da-sein initially notices death at all. But, remaining within the empirical certainty which we characterized, Da-sein cannot become certain at all of death as it "is." Although in the publicness of the they Da-sein seemingly "talks" only of this "empirical" certainty of death, *basically* it does *not* keep exclusively and primarily to those cases of death that merely occur. *Evading its death*, everyday being-toward-the-end is indeed certain of death in another way than it itself would like to realize in purely theoretical considerations. For the most part, everydayness veils this from itself "in another way." It

does not dare to become transparent to itself in this way. We have already characterized the everyday attunement that consists in an air of superiority with regard to the certain “fact” of death—a superiority that is “anxiously” concerned while seemingly free of *Angst*. In this attunement, everydayness acknowledges a “higher” certainty than the merely empirical one. One *knows* about the certainty of death, and yet “*is*” not really certain about it. The entangled everydayness of Da-sein knows about the certainty of death, and yet avoids *being-certain*. But in the light of what it evades, this evasion bears witness phenomenally to the fact that death must be grasped as the ownmost nonrelational, *certain* possibility not-to-be-bypassed.

One says that death certainly comes, but not right away. With this “but . . . ,” the they denies that death is certain. “Not right away” is not a purely negative statement, but a self-interpretation of the they with which it refers itself to what is initially accessible to Da-sein to take care of. Everydayness penetrates to the urgency of taking care of things, and divests itself of the fetters of a weary, “inactive thinking about death.” Death is postponed to “sometime later,” by relying on the so-called “general opinion.” Thus the they covers over what is peculiar to the certainty of death, *that it is possible in every moment*. Together with the certainty of death goes the *indefiniteness* of its when. Everyday being-toward-death evades this indefiniteness by making it something definite. But this procedure cannot mean calculating when the demise is due to arrive. Da-sein rather flees from such definiteness. Everyday taking care of things makes definite for itself the indefiniteness of certain death by interposing before it those manageable urgencies and possibilities of the everyday matters nearest to us.

But covering over this indefiniteness also covers over certainty. Thus the ownmost character of the possibility of death gets covered over: a possibility that is certain, and yet indefinite, that is, possible at any moment.

Now that we have completed our interpretation of the everyday talk of the they about death and the way death enters Da-sein, we have been led to the characteristics of certainty and indefiniteness. The full existential and ontological concept of death can now be defined as follows: *As the end of Da-sein, death is the ownmost nonrelational, certain, and, as such, indefinite and not to be bypassed possibility of Da-sein*. As the end of Da-sein, *death* is in the being of this being-toward-its-end.

The delineation of the existential structure of being-toward-the-end helps us to develop a kind of being of Da-sein in which it can be *wholly as Da-sein*. The fact that even everyday Da-sein is always already *toward* its end, that is, is constantly coming to grips with its own death, even though “fleetingly,” shows that this end, which concludes and defines being-whole, is not something which Da-sein ultimately arrives at only in its demise. In Da-sein, existing toward its death, its most extreme not-yet which everything else precedes is always already included. So if one has given an ontologically inappropriate interpretation of the not-yet of Da-sein as something outstanding, any formal inference from this to the lack of totality of Da-sein will be incorrect. *The phenomenon of the not-yet has been taken from the ahead-of-itself; no more than the structure of care in general, can it serve as a higher court that would rule against a possible, existent wholeness; indeed, this ahead-of-itself first makes possible such a being-toward-the-end.* The problem of the possible wholeness of the being which we ourselves actually are exists justifiably if care, as the fundamental constitution of Da-sein, “is connected” with death as the most extreme possibility of this being.

Yet it remains questionable whether this problem has been as yet adequately developed. Being-toward-death is grounded in care. As thrown being-in-the-world, Da-sein is always already delivered over to its death. Being toward its death, it dies factually and constantly as long as it has not reached its demise. That Da-sein dies factually means at the same time that it has always already decided in this or that way in its being-toward-death. Everyday, entangled evasion of death is an *inauthentic* being toward it. Inauthenticity has possible authenticity as its basis. Inauthenticity characterizes the kind of being in which Da-sein diverts itself and for the most part has always diverted itself, too, but it does not have to do this necessarily and constantly. Because Da-sein exists, it determines itself as the kind of being it is, and it does so always in terms of a possibility which it itself *is* and understands.

Can Da-sein *authentically understand* its ownmost, nonrelational, certain possibility not-to-be-bypassed that is, as such, indefinite? That is, can it maintain itself in an authentic being-toward-its-end? As long as this authentic being-toward-death has not been set forth and ontologically determined, there is something essentially lacking in our existential interpretation of being-toward-the-end.

Authentic being-toward-death signifies an existentiell possibility of Da-sein. This ontic potentiality-of-being must in its turn be onto-

logically possible. What are the existential conditions of this possibility? How are they themselves to become accessible?

### Existential Project of an Authentic Being-toward-Death

Factically, Da-sein maintains itself initially and for the most part in an inauthentic being-toward-death. How is the ontological possibility of an *authentic* being-toward-death to be characterized “objectively,” if, in the end, Da-sein is never authentically related to its end, or if this authentic being must remain concealed from others in accordance with its meaning? Is not the project of the existential possibility of such a questionable existentiell potentiality-of-being a fantastical undertaking? What is needed for such a project to get beyond a merely poetizing, arbitrary construction? Does Da-sein itself provide directives for this project? Can the grounds for its phenomenal justification be taken from Da-sein itself? Can our analysis of Da-sein up to now give us any prescriptions for the ontological task we have now formulated, so that what we have before us can be kept on a secure path?

The existential concept of death has been established, and thus we have also established that to which an authentic being-toward-the-end should be able to relate itself. Furthermore, we have also characterized inauthentic being-toward-death and thus we have prescribed how authentic being-toward-death cannot be in a negative way. The existential structure of an authentic being-toward-death must let itself be projected with these positive and prohibitive instructions.

Da-sein is constituted by disclosedness, that is, by attuned understanding. *Authentic* being-toward-death cannot *evade* its ownmost nonrelational possibility or *cover* it *over* in this flight and *reinterpret* it for the common sense of the they. The existential project of an authentic being-toward-death must thus set forth the factors of such a being which are constitutive for it as an understanding of death-in the sense of being toward this possibility without fleeing it or covering it over.

First of all, we must characterize being-toward-death as a being *toward a possibility*, toward an eminent possibility of Da-sein itself. Being toward a possibility, that is, toward something possible, can mean to be out for something possible, as in taking care of its actualization. In the field of things at hand and objectively present, we

constantly encounter such possibilities: what is attainable, manageable, viable, and so forth. Being out for something possible and taking care of it has the tendency of *annihilating* the *possibility* of the possible by making it available. The actualization of useful things at hand in taking care of them (producing them, getting them ready, readjusting them, etc.), is, however, always merely relative, in that what has been actualized still has the character of being relevant. Even when actualized, as something actual it remains possible for . . . , it is characterized by an in-order-to. Our present analysis should simply make clear how being out for something and taking care of it, is related to the possible. It does so not in a thematic and theoretical reflection on the possible as possible, or even with regard to its possibility as such, but rather in such a way that it *circumspcctly* looks *away* from the possible to what it is possible for.

Evidently being-toward-death, which is now in question, cannot have the character of being out for something and taking care of it with a view toward its actualization. For one thing, death as something possible is not a possible thing at hand or objectively present, but a possibility-of-being of *Da-sein*. Then, however, taking care of the actualization of what is thus possible would have to mean bringing about one's own demise. Thus *Da-sein* would precisely deprive itself of the very ground for an existing being-toward-death.

Thus if being-toward-death is not meant as an "actualization" of death, neither can it mean to dwell near the end in its possibility. This kind of behavior would amount to "thinking about death," thinking about this possibility, how and when it might be actualized. Brooding over death does not completely take away from it its character of possibility. It is always brooded over as something coming, but we weaken it by calculating how to have it at our disposal. As something possible, death is supposed to show as little as possible of its possibility. On the contrary, if being-toward-death has to disclose understandingly the possibility which we have characterized as *such*, then in such being-toward-death this possibility must not be weakened, it must be understood *as possibility*, cultivated *as possibility*, and *endured as possibility* in our relation to it.

However, *Da-sein* relates to something possible in its possibility, by *expecting* it. Anyone who is intent on something possible, may encounter it unimpeded and undiminished in its "whether it comes or not, or whether it comes after all." But with this phenomenon of expecting has our analysis not reached the same kind of being toward the possible which we already characterized as being out

for something and taking care of it? To expect something possible is always to understand and “have” it with regard to whether and when and how it will really be objectively present. Expecting is not only an occasional looking away from the possible to its possible actualization, but essentially a *waiting for that actualization*. Even in expecting, one leaps away from the possible and gets a footing in the real. It is for its reality that what is expected is expected. By the very nature of expecting, the possible is drawn into the real, arising from it and returning to it.

But being toward this possibility, as being-toward-death, should relate itself to that *death* so that it reveals itself, in this being and for it, as *possibility*. Terminologically, we shall formulate this being toward possibility as *anticipation of this possibility*. But does not this mode of behavior contain an approach to the possible, and does not its actualization emerge with its nearness? In this kind of coming near, however, one does not tend toward making something real available and taking care of it, but as one comes nearer understandingly, the possibility of the possible only becomes “greater.” *The nearest nearness of being-toward-death as possibility is as far removed as possible from anything real*. The more clearly this possibility is understood, the more purely does understanding penetrate to it *as the possibility of the impossibility of existence in general*. As possibility, death gives Da-sein nothing to “be actualized” and nothing which it itself could *be* as something real. It is the possibility of the impossibility of every mode of behavior toward . . . , of every way of existing. In running ahead to this possibility, it becomes “greater and greater,” that is, it reveals itself as something which knows no measure at all, no more or less, but means the possibility of the measureless impossibility of existence. Essentially, this possibility offers no support for becoming intent on something, for “spelling out” the real thing that is possible and so forgetting its possibility. As anticipation of possibility, being-toward-death first *makes* this possibility *possible* and sets it free as possibility.

Being-toward-death is the anticipation of a potentiality-of-being of *that* being whose kind of being is anticipation itself. In the anticipatory revealing of this potentiality-of-being, Da-sein discloses itself to itself with regard to its most extreme possibility. But to project oneself upon one’s ownmost potentiality of being means to be able to understand oneself in the being of the being thus revealed: to exist. Anticipation shows itself as the possibility of un-

derstanding one's *ownmost* and extreme potentiality-of-being, that is, as the possibility of *authentic existence*. Its ontological constitution must be made visible by setting forth the concrete structure of anticipation of death. How is the phenomenal definition of this structure to be accomplished? Evidently by defining the characteristics of anticipatory disclosure which must belong to it so that it can become the pure understanding of the ownmost nonrelational possibility not-to-be-bypassed which is certain and, as such, indefinite. We must remember that understanding does not primarily mean staring at a meaning, but understanding oneself in the potentiality-of-being that reveals itself in the project.

Death is the *ownmost* possibility of Da-sein. Being toward it discloses to Da-sein its *ownmost* potentiality-of-being in which it is concerned about the being of Da-sein absolutely. Here the fact can become evident to Da-sein that in the eminent possibility of itself it is torn away from the they, that is, anticipation can always already have torn itself away from the they. The understanding of this "ability," however, first reveals its factual lostness in the everydayness of the they-self.

The ownmost possibility is *nonrelational*. Anticipation lets Da-sein understand that it has to take over solely from itself the potentiality-of-being in which it is concerned absolutely about its ownmost being. Death does not just "belong" in an undifferentiated way to one's own Da-sein, but it *lays claim* on it as something *individual*. The nonrelational character of death understood in anticipation individualizes Da-sein down to itself. This individualizing is a way in which the "there" is disclosed for existence. It reveals the fact that any being-together-with what is taken care of and any being-with the others fails when one's ownmost potentiality-of-being is at stake. Da-sein can *authentically* be *itself* only when it makes that possible of its own accord. But if taking care of things and being concerned fail us, this does not, however, mean at all that these modes of Da-sein have been cut off from its authentic being a self. As essential structures of the constitution of Da-sein they also belong to the condition of the possibility of existence in general. Da-sein is authentically itself only if it projects itself, *as* being-together with things taken care of and concerned being-with . . . , primarily upon its ownmost potentiality-of-being, rather than upon the possibility of the they-self. Anticipation of its nonrelational possibility forces the being that anticipates into the possibility of taking over its ownmost being of its own accord.

The ownmost nonrelational possibility is *not to be bypassed*. Being toward this possibility lets Da-sein understand that the most extreme possibility of existence is imminent, that of giving itself up. But anticipation does not evade the impossibility of bypassing death, as does inauthentic being-toward-death, but *frees* itself for it. Becoming free for one's own death in anticipation frees one from one's lostness in chance possibilities urging themselves upon us, so that the factual possibilities lying before the possibility not-to-be-bypassed can first be authentically understood and chosen. Anticipation discloses to existence that its extreme inmost possibility lies in giving itself up and thus shatters all one's clinging to whatever existence one has reached. In anticipation, Da-sein guards itself against falling back behind itself, or behind the potentiality-for-being that it has understood. It guards against "becoming too old for its victories" (Nietzsche). Free for its ownmost possibilities, that are determined by the *end*, and so understood as *finite*, Da-sein prevents the danger that it may, by its own finite understanding of existence, fail to recognize that it is getting overtaken by the existence-possibilities of others, or that it may misinterpret these possibilities, thus divesting itself of its ownmost factual existence. As the nonrelational possibility, death individualizes, but only, as the possibility not-to-be-bypassed, in order to make Da-sein as being-with understand the potentialities-of-being of the others. Because anticipation of the possibility not-to-be-bypassed also disclosed all the possibilities lying before it, this anticipation includes the possibility of taking the *whole* of Da-sein in advance in an existentiell way, that is, the possibility of existing as a *whole potentiality-of-being*.

The ownmost nonrelational possibility not-to-be-bypassed is *certain*. The mode of *being* certain of it is determined by the truth (disclosedness) corresponding to it. But Da-sein discloses the certain possibility of death as possibility only by making this possibility as its ownmost potentiality-of-being *possible* in anticipating it. The disclosedness of this possibility is grounded in a making possible that anticipates. Holding oneself in this truth, that is, being certain of what has been disclosed, lays claim all the more upon anticipation. The certainty of death cannot be calculated in terms of ascertaining cases of death encountered. This certainty by no means holds itself in the truth of something objectively present. When something objectively present has been discovered, it is encountered most purely by just looking at it and letting it be encountered in itself. Da-sein must first have lost itself in the factual circumstances



(this can be one of care's own tasks and possibilities) if it is to gain the pure objectivity, that is, the indifference of apodictic evidence. If being-certain in relation to death does not have this character, that does not mean it is of a lower grade, but that *it does not belong at all to the order of degrees of evidence about things objectively present.*

Holding death for true (death *is* always just one's own) shows a different kind of certainty, and is more primordial than any certainty related to beings encountered in the world or to formal objects, for it is certain of being-in-the-world. As such, it claims not only *one* definite kind of behavior of Da-sein, but claims Da-sein in the complete authenticity of its existence. In anticipation, Da-sein can first make certain of its ownmost being in its totality not-to-be-bypassed. Thus, the evidence of the immediate givenness of experience, of the ego or of consciousness, necessarily has to lag behind the certainty contained in anticipation. And yet this is not because the kind of apprehension belonging to it is not strict enough, but because at bottom it cannot hold *for true* (disclosed) something that it basically insists upon "having there" as true: namely, the Da-sein which I myself *am* and can be as potentiality-of-being authentically only in anticipation.

The ownmost nonrelational possibility not-to-be-bypassed is *indefinite* with regard to its certainty. How does anticipation disclose this character of the eminent possibility of Da-sein? How does understanding, anticipating, project itself upon a definite potentiality-of-being which is constantly possible in such a way that the when in which the absolute impossibility of existence becomes possible remains constantly indefinite? In anticipating the indefinite certainty of death, Da-sein opens itself to a constant *threat* arising from its own there. Being-toward-the-end must hold itself in this very threat, and can so little phase it out that it rather has to cultivate the indefiniteness of the certainty. How is the genuine disclosing of this constant threat existentially possible? All understanding is attuned. Mood brings Da-sein before the thrownness of its "that-it-is-there." *But the attunement which is able to hold open the constant and absolute threat to itself arising from the ownmost individualized being of Da-sein is Angst.* In *Angst*, Da-sein finds itself *faced* with the nothingness of the possible impossibility of its existence. *Angst* is anxious *about* the potentiality-of-being of the being thus determined, and thus discloses the most extreme possibility. Because the anticipation of Da-sein absolutely individualizes and lets

it, in this individualizing of itself, become certain of the wholeness of its potentiality-of-being, the fundamental attunement of *Angst* belongs to this self-understanding of Da-sein in terms of its ground. Being-toward-death is essentially *Angst*. This is attested unmistakably, although “only” indirectly, by being-toward-death as we characterized it, when it distorts *Angst* into cowardly fear and, in overcoming that fear, only makes known its own cowardliness in the face of *Angst*.

What is characteristic about authentic, existentially projected being-toward-death can be summarized as follows: *Anticipation reveals to Da-sein its lostness in the they-self, and brings it face to face with the possibility to be itself, primarily unsupported by concern taking care of things, but to be itself in passionate anxious freedom toward death which is free of the illusions of the they, factual, and certain of itself.*

All relations, belonging to being-toward-death, to the complete content of the most extreme possibility of Da-sein, constitute an anticipation which they combine in revealing, unfolding, and holding fast, as that which makes this possibility possible. The existential project in which anticipation has been delimited, has made visible the *ontological* possibility of an existentiell, authentic being-toward-death. But with this, the possibility then appears of an authentic potentiality-for-being-a-whole—but *only as an ontological possibility*. Of course, our existential project of anticipation stayed with those structures of Da-sein gained earlier and let Da-sein itself, so to speak, project itself upon this possibility, without proffering to Da-sein the “content” of an ideal of existence forced upon it “from the outside.” And yet this existentially “possible” being-toward-death remains, after all, existentially a fantastical demand. The ontological possibility of an authentic potentiality-for-being-a-whole of Da-sein means nothing as long as the corresponding ontic potentiality-of-being has not been shown in terms of Da-sein itself. Does Da-sein ever project itself factually into such a being-toward-death? Does it even *demand*, on the basis of its ownmost being, an authentic potentiality of being which is determined by anticipation?

Before answering these questions, we must investigate to what extent *at all* and in what way Da-sein *bears witness* to a possible *authenticity* of its existence from its ownmost potentiality-of-being, in such a way that it not only makes this known as *existentially* possible, but *demands* it of itself.

The question hovering over us of an authentic wholeness of Da-sein and its existential constitution can be placed on a viable, phe-

nomenal basis only if that question can hold fast to a possible authenticity of its being attested by Da-sein itself. If we succeed in discovering phenomenologically such an attestation and what is attested to in it, the problem arises again of *whether the anticipation of death projected up to now only in its ontological possibility has an essential connection with that authentic potentiality-of-being attested to.*

*Translated by Joan Stambaugh*

## The Existentially Authentic Potentiality- for-Being-a-Whole of Da-sein as Anticipatory Resoluteness (1927)

How does resoluteness, “thought out” in accordance with its ownmost tendency of being, lead us to authentic being-toward-death? How is the connection between wanting to have a conscience and the existentially projected, authentic potentiality-of-being-a-whole of Da-sein to be conceived? Does welding the two together result in a new phenomenon? Or are we left with the resoluteness attested in its existentiell possibility in such a way that it can undergo an *existentiell modalization* through being-toward-death? But what does it mean “to think out” the phenomenon of resoluteness existentially?

Resoluteness was characterized as the reticent self-projecting upon one’s ownmost being-guilty, and as demanding *Angst* of oneself. Being-guilty belongs to Da-sein and means: null *being* the ground of a nullity. The “guilty” that belongs to the being of Da-sein admits neither of increase nor decrease. It lies *before* all quantification, if the latter has any meaning at all. Being essentially guilty, Da-sein is not just guilty *occasionally* and *other times not*. Wanting-to-have-a-conscience resolves itself for this being-guilty. The intrinsic sense of resoluteness is to project upon itself this being-guilty that Da-sein is *as long as it is*. Taking over this “guilt” existentiell in resoluteness occurs authentically only if resoluteness in its disclosing of Da-sein has become so transparent that it understands being-guilty *as something constant*. But this understanding is made possible only in such a way that Da-sein discloses to itself its potentiality-of-being “up to its end.” The *being-at-an-end* of Da-sein, however, means existentially being-toward-the-end. Resoluteness becomes authentically what it can be as *being-toward-the-end-that-understands*, that is, as anticipation of death. Resoluteness does not simply “have” a connection with anticipation as something other than itself. *It harbours in itself authentic being-toward-death as the*

*possible existentiell modality of its own authenticity.* We want now to clarify this “connection” phenomenally.

Resoluteness means: letting oneself be called forth to one’s ownmost *being-guilty*. *Being-guilty* belongs to the being of Da-sein itself, which we defined primarily as potentiality-of-being. The statement that Da-sein “is” constantly guilty can only mean that it always maintains itself in this being either as authentic or inauthentic existence. *Being-guilty* is not just a lasting quality of something constantly objectively present, but the *existentiell possibility of being* authentically or inauthentically guilty. “Guilty” *is* always only in the actual factual potentiality-of-being. Thus, being-guilty must be conceived as a potentiality-for-being-guilty, because it belongs to the *being* of Da-sein. Resoluteness projects itself upon this potentiality-of-being, that is, understands itself in it. Thus, this understanding stays in a primordial possibility of Da-sein. It stays *in it authentically* when resoluteness is primordially what it tends to be. But we revealed the primordial being of Da-sein toward its potentiality-of-being as being-toward-death, that is, toward the eminent possibility of Da-sein which we characterized. Anticipation disclosed this possibility as possibility. Thus, resoluteness becomes a primordial being toward the ownmost potentiality-of-being of Da-sein only *as anticipatory*. Resoluteness understands the “can” of its potentiality-for-being-guilty only when it “qualifies” itself as being-toward-death.

Resolutely, Da-sein takes over authentically in its existence the fact that it *is* the null ground of its nullity. We conceived of death existentially as what we characterized as the possibility of the *impossibility* of existence, that is, as the absolute nothingness of Da-sein. Death is not pieced on to Da-sein as its “end,” but, as care, Da-sein is the thrown (that is, null) ground of its death. The nothingness primordially dominant in the being of Da-sein is revealed to it in authentic being-toward-death. Anticipation makes being-guilty evident only on the basis of the *whole* being of Da-sein. Care contains death and guilt equiprimordially. Only anticipatory resoluteness understands the potentiality-for-being-guilty *authentically and wholly*, that is, *primordially*.

Understanding the call of conscience reveals the lostness in the they. Resoluteness brings Da-sein back to its ownmost potentiality-of-being-a-self. One’s own potentiality-of-being becomes authentic and transparent in the understanding being-toward-death as the *ownmost* possibility.

The call of conscience passes over all “worldly” status and abilities of Da-sein in its summons. Disregarding those, it individualizes Da-sein down to its potentiality-for-being-guilty which it expects it to be authentically. The unwavering trenchancy with which Da-sein is thus essentially individualized down to its ownmost potentiality-of-being discloses anticipation of death as the *nonrelational* possibility. Anticipatory resoluteness lets the potentiality-for-being-guilty, as its ownmost nonrelational possibility, completely strike into its conscience.

Wanting-to-have-a-conscience signifies the readiness for the summons to one’s ownmost being-guilty that always already determined factual Da-sein *before* any factual indebtedness and *after* that indebtedness has been settled. This prior and constant being guilty, which is constantly with us, does not show itself without being covered over in its character as prior until that priority is placed in the possibility which is for Da-sein absolutely *not to be bypassed*. When resoluteness, anticipating, has caught up with the possibility of death in its potentiality-of-being, the authentic existence of Da-sein can no longer be *left behind* by anything.

With the phenomenon of resoluteness we were led to the primordial *truth* of existence. Resolute, Da-sein is revealed to itself in its actual factual potentiality-of-being in such a way that it itself *is* this revealing and being revealed. To any truth, there belongs a corresponding holding-for-true. The explicit appropriation of what is disclosed or discovered is *being-certain*. The primordial truth of existence requires an equiprimordial being-certain in which one holds oneself in what resoluteness discloses. It *gives* itself the actual factual situation and *brings* itself into that situation. The situation cannot be calculated in advance and pre-given like something objectively present waiting to be grasped. It is disclosed only in a free act of resolve that has not been determined beforehand, but is open to the possibility of such determination. *What, then, does the certainty belonging to such resoluteness mean?* This certainty must hold itself in what is disclosed in resolution. But this means that it simply cannot become *rigid* about the situation, but must understand that the resolution must be *kept* free and *open* for the actual factual possibility in accordance with its own meaning as a disclosure. The certainty of the resolution means *keeping oneself free* for the possibility of *taking it back*, a possibility that is always factually necessary. This holding-for-true in resoluteness (as the truth of existence), however, by no means lets us fall back into irresolute-

ness. On the contrary, this holding-for-true, as a resolute holding oneself free for taking back, is the *authentic resoluteness to retrieve itself*. But thus one's very lostness in irresoluteness is existentially undermined. The holding-for-true that belongs to resoluteness tends, in accordance with its meaning, toward *constantly* keeping itself free, that is, to keep itself free for the *whole* potentiality-of-being of Da-sein. This constant certainty is guaranteed to resoluteness only in such a way that it relates to that possibility of which it can *be* absolutely certain. In its death, Da-sein must absolutely "take itself back." Constantly certain of this, that is, *anticipating*, resoluteness gains its authentic and whole certainty.

But Da-sein is equiprimordially in untruth. Anticipatory resoluteness at the same time gives Da-sein the primordial certainty of its being closed off. In anticipatory resoluteness, Da-sein *holds* itself open for its constant lostness in the irresoluteness of the they—a lostness which is possible from the very ground of its own being. As a constant possibility of Da-sein, irresoluteness, is *also certain*. Resoluteness, transparent to itself, understands that the *indefiniteness* of its potentiality-of-being is always determined only in a resolution with regard to the actual situation. It knows about the indefiniteness that prevails in a being that exists. But this knowledge must itself arise from an authentic disclosure if it is to correspond to authentic resoluteness. Although it always becomes certain in resolution, the *indefiniteness* of one's own potentiality-of-being, however, always reveals itself *completely* only in being-toward-death. Anticipation brings Da-sein face to face with a possibility that is constantly certain and yet remains indefinite at every moment as to when this possibility becomes impossibility. Anticipation makes evident the fact that this being has been thrown into the indefiniteness of its "borderline situation," when, resolved upon the latter, Da-sein gains its authentic potentiality-of-being-a-whole. The indefiniteness of death discloses itself primordially in *Angst*. But this primordial *Angst* strives to expect resoluteness of itself. It clears away every covering over of the fact that Da-sein is left to itself. The nothingness before which *Angst* brings us reveals the nullity that determines Da-sein in its *ground*, which itself is as thrownness into death.

Our analysis revealed in order the *moments of modalization* toward which resoluteness tends of itself and which stem from authentic being-toward-death as the ownmost nonrelational possibil-

ity not-to-be-bypassed, certain and yet indefinite. It is authentically and completely what it can be only as *anticipatory resoluteness*.

But, conversely, our interpretation of the “connection” between resoluteness and anticipation first attained the complete existential understanding of anticipation itself. Until now, it was valid only as an ontological project. Now we see that anticipation is not a fictitious possibility that we have forced upon Da-sein, but rather a *mode* of a potentiality-of-being existentially attested in Da-sein which it expects of itself, if indeed it understands itself authentically as resolute. Anticipation “is” not some kind of unattached behavior, but must rather be conceived of as *the possibility of the authenticity of that resoluteness existentially attested to in such resoluteness—a possibility concealed and thus also attested*. Authentic “thinking about death” is wanting to have a conscience, which has become existentially transparent to itself.

If authentic resoluteness tends toward the mode defined by anticipation, and if anticipation constitutes the authentic potentiality-of-being-a-whole of Da-sein; then an authentic potentiality-of-being-a-whole of Da-sein is also attested in resoluteness existentially attested. *The question of the potentiality-of-being-a-whole is a factual, existentiell one. It is answered by Da-sein as resolute*. The question of the potentiality-of-being-a-whole of Da-sein has now completely cast off the character which we initially pointed out when we treated it as if were just a theoretical, methodical question of the analytic of Da-sein, arising from the attempt to have the whole of Da-sein completely “given.” The question of the totality of Da-sein, initially discussed only with regard to ontological method, has its justification, but only because the ground for that justification goes back to an ontic possibility of Da-sein.

Our clarification of the “connection” between anticipation and resoluteness in the sense of a possible modalization of resoluteness by anticipation, turned into the phenomenal demonstration of an authentic potentiality-of-being-a-whole of Da-sein. If with this phenomenon a mode of being of Da-sein has been grasped in which it brings itself to and before itself, it must remain ontically and ontologically unintelligible to the everyday, commonsense interpretation of Da-sein by the they. It would be a misunderstanding to put this existentiell possibility aside as being “unproven” or to want to “prove” it theoretically. Nevertheless, the phenomenon must be shielded from the crudest distortions.

Anticipatory resoluteness is not a way out fabricated for the purpose of “overcoming” death, but it is rather the understanding that



follows the call of conscience and that frees for death the possibility of *gaining power over* the *existence* of Da-sein and of basically dispersing every fugitive self-covering-over. Nor does wanting to have a conscience, which we defined as being-toward-death, mean a detachment in which one flees from the world, but brings one without illusions to the resoluteness of "acting." Nor does anticipatory resoluteness stem from "idealistic" expectations soaring above existence and its possibilities; but arises from the sober understanding of the basic factual possibilities of Da-sein. Together with the sober *Angst* that brings us before our individualized potentiality-of-being, goes the unshakable joy in this possibility. In it Da-sein becomes free of the entertaining "incidentals" that busy curiosity provides for itself, primarily in terms of the events of the world. However, the analysis of these fundamental moods goes beyond the limits drawn for our present inquiry by aiming toward fundamental ontology.

*Translated by Joan Stambaugh*

## PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE AND POETRY

### Understanding, Interpretation, Discourse, Language, Idle Talk (1927)

Attunement is *one* of the existential structures in which the being of the "there" dwells. Equiprimordially with it, *understanding* constitutes this being. Attunement always has its understanding, even if only by suppressing it. Understanding is always attuned. If we interpret understanding as a fundamental existential, we see that this phenomenon is conceived as a fundamental mode of the *being* of Da-sein. In contrast, "understanding" in the sense of one possible kind of cognition among others, let us say distinguished from "explanation," must be interpreted along with that as an existential derivative of the primary understanding which constitutes the being of the there in general.

Our previous inquiry already encountered this primordial understanding, but without explicitly taking it up in the theme under consideration. The statement that Da-sein, existing, is its there means: World is "there"; its *Da-sein* is being-in. Being-in is "there" as that for the sake of which Da-sein is. Existing being-in-the-world as such is disclosed in the for-the-sake-of-which, and we called this disclosedness understanding. In understanding the for-the-sake-of-which, the significance grounded therein is also disclosed. The disclosure of understanding, as that of the for-the-sake-of-which and of significance, is equiprimordially concerned with complete being-in-the-world. Significance is that for which world as such is disclosed. The statement that the for-the-sake-of-which and significance are disclosed in Da-sein means that Da-sein is a being which, as being-in-the-world, is concerned about itself.

Speaking ontically, we sometimes use the expression "to understand something" to mean "being able to handle a thing," "being up to it," "being able to do something." In understanding as an existential, the thing we are able to do is not a what, but being as existing. The mode of being of Da-sein as a potentiality of being lies

existentially in understanding. Da-sein is not something objectively present which then has as an addition the ability to do something, but is rather primarily being-possible. Da-sein is always what it can be and how it is its possibility. The essential possibility of Da-sein concerns the ways of taking care of the "world" which we characterized, of concern for others and, always already present in all of this, the potentiality of being itself, for its own sake. The being-possible, which Da-sein always is existentially, is also distinguished from empty, logical possibility and from the contingency of something objectively present, where this or that can "happen" to it. As a modal category of objective presence, possibility means what is *not yet* real and *not always* necessary. It characterizes what is *only* possible. Ontologically, it is less than reality and necessity. In contrast, possibility as an existential is the most primordial and the ultimate positive ontological determination of Da-sein; as is the case with existentiality, it can initially be prepared for solely as a problem. Understanding as a potentiality of being disclosive offers the phenomenal ground to see it at all.

As an existential, possibility does not refer to a free-floating potentiality of being in the sense of the "liberty of indifference" (*libertas indifferentiae*). As essentially attuned, Da-sein has always already got itself into definite possibilities. As a potentiality for being which it *is*, it has let some go by; it constantly adopts the possibilities of its being, grasps them, and goes astray. But this means that Da-sein is a being-possible entrusted to itself, *thrown possibility* throughout. Da-sein is the possibility of being free *for* its ownmost potentiality of being. Being-possible is transparent for it in various possible ways and degrees.

Understanding is the being of such a potentiality of being which is never still outstanding as something not yet objectively present, but as something essentially never objectively present, *is* together with the being of Da-sein in the sense of existence. Da-sein is in the way that it actually understands or has not understood to be in this or that way. As this understanding, it "knows" *what* is going on, that is, what its potentiality of being is. This "knowing" does not first come from an immanent self-perception, but belongs to the being of the there which is essentially understanding. And only *because* Da-sein, in understanding is its there, *can* it go astray and fail to recognize itself. And since understanding is attuned and attunement is existentially surrendered to thrownness, Da-sein has always already gone astray and failed to recognize itself. In its potentiality

of being, it is thus delivered over to the possibility of first finding itself again in its possibilities.

*Understanding is the existential being of the ownmost potentiality of being of Da-sein in such a way that this being discloses in itself what its very being is about.* The structure of this existential must be grasped more precisely.

As disclosing, understanding always concerns the whole fundamental constitution of being-in-the-world. As a potentiality of being, being-in is always a potentiality of being-in-the-world. Not only is the world, qua world, disclosed in its possible significance, but innerworldly beings themselves are freed, these beings are freed for *their own* possibilities. What is at hand is discovered as such in its *serviceability usability, detrimentality*. The totality of relevance reveals itself as the categorial whole of a *possibility* of the connection of things at hand. But the “unity,” too, of manifold objective presence, nature, is discoverable only on the basis of the disclosedness of one of its *possibilities*. Is it a matter of chance that the question of the *being* of nature aims at the “conditions of its *possibility*?” On what is this questioning based? It cannot omit the question: *Why* are beings unlike Da-sein understood in their being if they are disclosed in terms of the conditions of their possibility? Kant presupposed something like this, perhaps correctly so. But this presupposition itself cannot be left without demonstrating how it is justified.

Why does understanding always penetrate into possibilities according to all the essential dimensions of what can be disclosed to it? Because understanding in itself has the existential structure which we call *project*. It projects the being of Da-sein upon its for-the-sake-of-which just as primordially as upon significance as the worldliness of its actual world. The project character of understanding constitutes being-in-the-world with regard to the disclosedness of its there as the there of a potentiality of being. Project is the existential constitution of being in the realm of factual potentiality of being. And, as thrown, Da-sein is thrown into the mode of being of projecting. Projecting has nothing to do with being related to a plan thought out, according to which Da-sein arranges its being, but, as Da-sein, it has always already projected itself and is, as long as it is, projecting. As long as it is, Da-sein always has understood itself and will understand itself in terms of possibilities. Furthermore, the project character of understanding means that understanding does not thematically grasp that upon which it pro-

jects, the possibilities themselves. Such a grasp precisely takes its character of possibility away from what is projected, it degrades it to the level of a given, intended content, whereas in projecting project throws possibility before itself as possibility, and as such lets it *be*. As projecting, understanding is the mode of being of Da-sein in which it *is* its possibilities as possibilities.

Because of the kind of being which is constituted by the existential-of projecting, Da-sein is constantly "more" than it actually is, if one wanted to and if one could register it as something objectively present in its content of being. But it is never more than it factually is because its potentiality of being belongs essentially to its facticity. But, as being-possible, Da-sein is also never less. It is existentially that which it is *not yet* in its potentiality of being. And only because the being of the there gets its constitution through understanding and its character of project, only because it *is* what it becomes or does not become, can it say understandingly to itself: "become what you are!"

Project always concerns the complete disclosedness of being-in-the-world. As a potentiality of being, understanding itself has possibilities which are prefigured by the scope of what can be essentially disclosed to it. Understanding *can* turn primarily to the disclosedness of the world, that is, Da-sein can understand itself initially and for the most part in terms of the world. Or else understanding throws itself primarily into the for-the-sake-of-which, which means Da-sein exists as itself. Understanding is either authentic, originating from its own self as such, or else inauthentic. The "in" does not mean that Da-sein cuts itself off from itself and understands "only" the world. World belongs to its being a self as being-in-the-world. Again, authentic as well as inauthentic understanding *can* be either genuine or not genuine. As a potentiality of being understanding is altogether permeated with possibility. Turning to one of these fundamental possibilities of understanding, however, does not dispense with the other. *Rather, because understanding always has to do with the complete disclosedness of Da-sein as being-in-the-world, the involvement of understanding is an existential modification of project as a whole.* In understanding the world, being-in is always also understood. Understanding of existence as such is always an understanding of world.

As factual, Da-sein has always already transferred its potentiality of being into a possibility of understanding.

In its character of project, understanding constitutes existentially what we call the *sight* of Da-sein. In accordance with the funda-

mental modes of its being which we characterized as the circumspection of taking care of things, the considerateness of concern, as the sight geared toward being as such for the sake of which Da-sein is as it is, Da-sein is equiprimordially the sight existentially existing together with the disclosedness of the there. We shall call the sight which is primarily and as a whole related to existence *transparency*. We choose this term to designate correctly understood “self-knowledge” in order to indicate that it is not a matter here of perceptually finding and gazing at a point which is the self, but of grasping and understanding the full disclosedness of being-in-the-world *throughout all* its essential constitutive factors. Existent beings glimpse “themselves” only when they have become transparent to themselves equiprimordially in their being with the world, in being together with others as the constitutive factors of their existence.

Conversely, the opacity of Da-sein is not solely and primarily rooted in “egocentric” self-deception, but also in lack of knowledge about the world.

We must, of course, guard against a misunderstanding of the expression “sight.” It corresponds to the clearedness characterizing the disclosedness of the there. “Seeing” not only does not mean perceiving with the bodily eyes, neither does it mean the pure, nonsensory perception of something objectively present in its objective presence. *The* only peculiarity of seeing which we claim for the existential meaning of sight is the fact that it lets the beings accessible to it be encountered in themselves without being concealed. Of course, every “sense” does this within its genuine realm of discovery. But the tradition of philosophy has been primarily oriented from the very beginning toward “seeing” as the mode of access to beings *and to being*. To preserve the connection, one can formalize sight and seeing to the point of gaining a universal term which characterizes every access as access whatsoever to beings and to being.

By showing how all sight is primarily based on understanding—the circumspection of taking care of things is understanding as *common sense* [*Verständigkeit*]*—*we have taken away from pure intuition its priority which noetically corresponds to the traditional ontological priority of objective presence. “Intuition” and “thought” are both already remote derivatives of understanding. Even the phenomenological “intuition of essences” is based on existential understanding. We can decide about this kind of seeing only when we have gained the explicit concepts of being and the structure of being, which only phenomena in the phenomenological sense can become.

The disclosedness of the there in understanding is itself a mode of the potentiality-of-being of Da-sein. In the projectedness of its being upon the for-the-sake-of-which together with that upon significance (world) lies the disclosedness of being in general. An understanding of being is already anticipated in the projecting upon possibilities. Being is understood in the project, but not ontologically grasped. Beings which have the kind of being of the essential project of being-in-the-world have as the constituent of their being the understanding of being. What we asserted earlier dogmatically is now demonstrated in terms of the constitution of the being in which Da-sein, as understanding, is its there. In accordance with the limits of this whole inquiry, a satisfactory clarification of the existential meaning of this understanding of being can only be attained on the basis of the temporal interpretation of being.

As existentials, attunement and understanding characterize the primordial disclosedness of being-in-the-world. In the mode of "being-attuned" Da-sein "sees" possibilities in terms of which it is. In the projective disclosure of such possibilities, it is always already attuned. The project of its ownmost potentiality of being is delivered over to the fact of thrownness into the there. With the explication of the existential constitution of the being of the there in the sense of thrown project does not the being of Da-sein become still more mysterious? Indeed. We must first let the full mysteriousness of this being emerge, if only to be able to get stranded in a genuine way in its "solution" and to raise the question anew of the being of thrown-projecting being-in-the-world.

In order to sufficiently bring even only the everyday mode of being of attuned understanding phenomenally to view, a concrete development of these existentials is necessary.

### Understanding and Interpretation

As understanding, Da-sein projects its being upon possibilities. This *being toward possibilities* that understands is itself a potentiality for being because of the way these disclosed possibilities come back to Da-sein. The project of understanding has its own possibility of development. We shall call the development of understanding *interpretation*. In interpretation understanding appropriates what it has understood in an understanding way. In interpretation understanding does not become something different, but rather itself. Interpre-

tation is existentially based in understanding, and not the other way around. Interpretation is not the acknowledgment of what has been understood, but rather the development of possibilities projected in understanding. In accordance with the train of these preparatory analyses of everyday Da-sein, we shall pursue the phenomenon of interpretation in the understanding of the world, that is, in inauthentic understanding in the mode of its genuineness.

In terms of the significance of what is disclosed in understanding the world, the being of taking care of what is at hand learns to understand what the relevance can be with what is actually encountered. Circumspection discovers, that is, the world which has already been understood is interpreted. What is at hand comes *explicitly* before sight that understands. All preparing, arranging, setting right, improving, rounding out, occur in such a way that things at hand for circumspection are interpreted in their in-order-to and are taken care of according to the interpretedness which has become visible. What has been circumspectly interpreted with regard to its in-order-to as such, what has been *explicitly* understood, has the structure of *something as something*. The circumspectly interpretive answer to the circumspect question of what this particular thing at hand is runs: it is for . . . . Saying what it is for is not simply naming something, but what is named is understood *as* that *as* which what is in question is to be taken. What is disclosed in understanding, what is understood is always already accessible in such a way that in it its “as what” can be explicitly delineated. The “as” constitutes the structure of the explicitness of what is understood; it constitutes the interpretation. The circumspect, interpretive association with what is at hand in the surrounding world which “sees” this *as* a table, a door, a car, a bridge does not necessarily already have to analyze what is circumspectly interpreted in a particular *statement*. Any simple prepredicative seeing of what is at hand is in itself already understanding and interpretative. But does not the lack of this “as” constitute the simplicity of a pure perception of something? The seeing of this sight is always already understanding and interpreting. It contains the explicitness of referential relation (of the in-order-to) which belongs to the totality of relevance in terms of which what is simply encountered is understood. The articulation of what is understood in the interpreting approach to beings guided by the “something as something” lies *before* a thematic statement about it. The “as” does not first show up in the statement, but is only first stated, which is possible only because it is



there as something to be stated. The fact that the explicitness of a statement can be lacking in simply looking, does not justify us in denying every articulate interpretation, and thus the as-structure, to this simple seeing. The simple seeing of things nearest to us in our having to do with . . . contains the structure of interpretation so primordially that a grasping of something which is, so to speak, *free of the as* requires a kind of reorientation. When we just stare at something, our just-having-it-before-us lies before us *as a failure to understand* it any more. This grasping which is free of the as is a privation of *simple* seeing, which understands; it is not more primordial than the latter, but derived from it. The ontic inexplicitness of the "as" must not mislead us into overlooking it as the *a priori* existential constitution of understanding.

But if any perception of useful things at hand always understands and interprets them, letting them be circumspectly encountered as something, does this not then mean that initially something merely objectively present is experienced which then is understood *as a door, as a house*? That would be a misunderstanding of the specific disclosive function of interpretation. Interpretation does not, so to speak, throw a "significance" over what is nakedly objectively present and does not stick a value on it, but what is encountered in the world is always already in a relevance which is disclosed in the understanding of world, a relevance which is made explicit by interpretation.

Things at hand are always already understood in terms of a totality of relevance. This totality need not be explicitly grasped by a thematic interpretation. Even if it has undergone such an interpretation, it recedes again into an undifferentiated understanding. This is the very mode in which it is the essential foundation of everyday, circumspect interpretation. This is always based on a *fore-having*. As the appropriation of understanding in being that understands, the interpretation operates in being toward a totality of relevance which has already been understood. When something is understood but still veiled, it becomes unveiled by an act of appropriation and this is always done under the guidance of a perspective which fixes that with regard to which what has been understood is to be interpreted. The interpretation is grounded in a *foresight* that "approaches" what has been taken in fore-having with a definite interpretation in view. What is held in the fore-having and understood in a "fore-seeing" view becomes comprehensible through the interpretation. The interpretation can draw the conceptuality be-

longing to the beings to be interpreted from these themselves or else force them into concepts to which beings are opposed in accordance with their kind of being. The interpretation has always already decided, finally or provisionally, upon a definite conceptuality; it is grounded in a *fore-conception*.

The interpretation of something as something is essentially grounded in fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception. Interpretation is never a presuppositionless grasping of something previously given. When the particular concretion of the interpretation in the sense of exact text interpretation likes to appeal to what "is there," what is initially "there" is nothing else than the self-evident, undisputed prejudice of the interpreter, which is necessarily there in each point of departure of the interpretation as what is already "posited" with interpretation as such, that is, pre-given with fore-having, fore-sight, fore-conception.

How are we to conceive the character of this "fore"? Have we done this when we formally say "*a priori*"? Why is this structure appropriate to understanding which we have characterized as a fundamental existential of Da-sein? How is the structure of the "as" which belongs to what is interpreted as such related to the fore-structure? This phenomenon is obviously not to be dissolved "into pieces." But is a primordial analytic to be ruled out? Should we accept such phenomena as "finalities"? Then the question would remain, why? Or do the fore-structure of understanding and the as-structure of interpretation show an existential-ontological connection with the phenomenon of project? And does this phenomenon refer back to a primordial constitution of being of Da-sein?

Before answering these questions for which the preparation up to this point is not at all sufficient, we must inquire whether what is visible as the fore-structure of understanding and qua the as-structure of interpretation does not itself already represent a unitary phenomenon which is used copiously in philosophical problematics, though what is used so universally falls short of the primordiality of ontological explication.

In the projecting of understanding, beings are disclosed in their possibility. The character of possibility always corresponds to the kind of being of the beings understood. Innerworldly beings in general are projected toward the world, that is, toward a totality of significance in whose referential relations taking care, as being-in-the-world, has rooted itself from the beginning. When with the being of Da-sein innerworldly beings are discovered, that is, have

come to be understood, we say that they have *meaning*. But strictly speaking, what is understood is not the meaning, but beings, or being. Meaning is that wherein the intelligibility of something maintains itself. What can be articulated in disclosure that understands we call meaning. The *concept of meaning* includes the formal framework of what necessarily belongs to what interpretation that understands articulates. *Meaning, structured by fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception, is the upon which of the project in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something.* Since understanding and interpretation constitute the existential constitution of the being of the there, meaning must be understood as the formal, existential framework of the disclosedness belonging to understanding. Meaning is an existential of Da-sein, not a property which is attached to beings, which lies "behind" them or floats somewhere as a "realm between." Only Da-sein "has" meaning in that the disclosedness of being-in-the-world can be "fulfilled" through the beings discoverable in it. *Thus only Da-sein can be meaningful or meaningless.* This means that its own being and the beings disclosed with that being can be appropriated in understanding or they can be confined to incomprehensibility.

If we adhere to this interpretation of the concept of "meaning," that is in principle ontological-existential, all beings whose mode of being is unlike Da-sein must be understood as *unmeaningful*, as essentially bare of meaning as such. "Unmeaningful" does not mean here a value judgment, but expresses an ontological determination. *And only what is unmeaningful can be absurd.* Objectively present things encountered in Da-sein can, so to speak, run against its being, for example, events of nature which break in on us and destroy us.

And when we ask about the meaning of being, our inquiry does not become profound and does not brood on anything which stands behind being, but questions being itself in so far as it stands within the intelligibility of Da-sein. The meaning of being can never be contrasted with beings or with being as the supporting "ground" of beings because "ground" is only accessible as meaning, even if that meaning itself is an abyss of meaninglessness.

As the disclosedness of the there, understanding always concerns the whole of being-in-the-world. In every understanding of world, existence is also understood, and vice versa. Furthermore, every interpretation operates within the fore-structure which we characterized. Every interpretation which is to contribute some under-

standing must already have understood what is to be interpreted. This fact has always already been noticed, if only in the realm of derivative ways of understanding and interpretation, in philological interpretation. The latter belongs to the scope of scientific cognition. Such cognition demands the rigor of demonstration giving reasons. Scientific proof must not already presuppose what its task is to found. But if interpretation always already has to operate within what is understood and nurture itself from this, how should it then produce scientific results without going in a circle, especially when the presupposed understanding still operates in the common knowledge of human being and world? But according to the most elementary rules of logic, the *circle* is a *circulus vitiosus*. But the business of historical interpretation is thus banned *a priori* from the realm of exact knowledge. If the fact of the circle in understanding is not removed, historiography must be content with less strict possibilities of knowledge. It is permitted more or less to replace this lack with the "spiritual significance" of its "objects." It would be more ideal, of course, moreover according to the opinion of the historiographers themselves, if the circle could be avoided and if there were the hope for once of creating a historiography which is as independent of the standpoint of the observer as the knowledge of nature is supposed to be.

*But to see a vitiosum in this circle and to look for ways to avoid it, even to "feel" that is an inevitable imperfection, is to misunderstand understanding from the ground up.* It is not a matter of assimilating understanding and interpretation to a particular ideal of knowledge which is itself only a degeneration of understanding which has strayed into the legitimate grasping what is objectively present in its essential unintelligibility. The fulfillment of the fundamental conditions of possible interpretation rather lies in not mistaking interpretation beforehand with regard to the essential conditions of its being done. What is decisive is not to get out of the circle, but to get in it in the right way. This circle of understanding is not a circle in which any random kind of knowledge operates, but it is rather the expression of the existential *fore-structure* of *Da-sein* itself. The circle must not be degraded to a *vitiosum*, not even to a tolerated one. A positive possibility of the most primordial knowledge is hidden in it which, however, is only grasped in a genuine way when interpretation has understood that its first, constant, and last task is not to let fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception be given to it by chance ideas and popular conceptions, but to

guarantee the scientific theme by developing these in terms of the things themselves. Because in accordance with its existential meaning, understanding is the potentiality for being of Da-sein itself, the ontological presuppositions of historiographical knowledge transcend in principle the idea of rigor of the most exact sciences. Mathematics is not more exact than history, but only narrower with regard to the scope of the existential foundations relevant to it.

The "circle" in understanding belongs to the structure of meaning, and this phenomenon is rooted in the existential constitution of Da-sein, in interpretive understanding. Beings which, as being-in-the-world, are concerned about their being itself have an ontological structure of the circle. However, if we note that the "circle" belongs ontologically to a kind of being of objective presence (subsistence), we shall in general have to avoid characterizing something like Da-sein ontologically with this phenomenon.

### Statement as a Derivative Mode of Interpretation

All interpretation is grounded in understanding. What is articulated as such in interpretation and is prefigured as articulable in understanding in general is meaning. Since the statement (the "judgment") is based on understanding and represents a derivative form of interpretation, it *also* "has" a meaning. Meaning, however, cannot be defined as what occurs "in" a judgment along with the act of judgment. The explicit analysis of the statement has several goals in our context.

On the one hand, we can demonstrate in the statement in what way the structure of the "as," which is constitutive for understanding and interpretation, can be modified. Understanding and interpretation thus come into sharper focus. Then, the analysis of the statement has a distinctive place in the fundamental-ontological problematic because in the decisive beginnings of ancient ontology the *logos* functioned as the sole guide for the access to true beings and for the determination of the being of beings. Finally, the statement has been regarded from ancient times as the primary and true "locus" of *truth*. This phenomenon is so intimately connected with the problem of being that our inquiry necessarily runs into the problem of truth as it proceeds; it already lies within the dimension of that problem, although not explicitly. The analysis of the statement is to make way for this problematic.

In what follows we shall assign to the term *statement* three significations which are drawn from the phenomenon thus characterized. They are interconnected and delineate in their unity the full structure of the statement.

(1) Primarily, statement means *pointing out*. With this we adhere to the primordial meaning of *logos* as *apophansis*: to let beings be seen from themselves. In the statement "the hammer is too heavy," what is discovered for sight is not a "meaning," but a being in the mode of its being at hand. Even when this being is not near enough to be grasped and "seen," pointing out designates the being itself, not a mere representation of it, neither something "merely represented" nor even a psychical condition of the speaker, his representing of this being.

(2) Statement is tantamount to *prediction*. A "predicate" is "stated" about a "subject," the latter is *determined* by the former. What is stated in this signification of statement is not the predicate, but the "hammer itself." What does the stating, that is, the determining, on the other hand, lies in the "too heavy." What is stated in the second signification of statement, what is determined as such, has been narrowed down in its content as opposed to what is stated in the first signification of this term. Every predication is what it is only as a pointing out. The second signification of statement has its foundation in the first. The elements which are articulated in predication, subject-predicate, originate within the pointing out. Determining does not first discover, but as a mode of pointing out initially *limits* seeing precisely to what shows itself—hammer—as such, in order to manifest *explicitly* what is manifest in its determinacy through, the explicit *limitation* of looking. When confronted with what is already manifest, with the hammer which is too heavy, determining must first take a step back. "Positing the subject" dims beings down to focus on "the hammer there" in order to let what is manifest be seen *in* its determinable definite character through this dimming down. Positing the subject, positing the predicate, and positing them together are thoroughly "apophantic" in the strict sense of the word.

(3) Statement means *communication*, speaking forth. As such it has a direct relation to statement in the first and second meanings. It is letting someone see with us what has been pointed out in its definite character. Letting someone see with us shares with the others the beings pointed out in their definiteness. What is "shared" is the *being toward* what is pointed out which has a way of seeing

common to all. We must keep in mind that this being-toward is being-in-the-world, namely, in *the* world from which what is pointed out is encountered. Any statement, as a communication understood existentially, must have been expressed. As something communicated, what is spoken can be “shared” by the others with the speaker even when they themselves do not have the beings pointed out and defined in a palpable and visible range. What is spoken can be “passed along” in further retelling. The scope of communication which sees is broadened. But at the same time what is pointed out can become veiled again in this further retelling, although the knowledge and cognition growing in such hearsay always means beings themselves and does not “affirm” a “valid meaning” passed around. Even hearsay is a being-in-the-world and a being toward what is heard.

The theory of “judgment” prevalent today that is oriented toward the phenomenon of “validity” shall not be discussed at any length here. It is sufficient to refer to the very questionable character of this phenomenon of “validity” which, ever since Lotze, people have been fond of passing off as a “primal phenomenon” not to be traced further back. It owes this role only to its ontological lack of clarity. The “problematic” which has entrenched itself around this idolatry of the word is just as opaque. On the one hand, validity means the “*form*” of *the reality* which belongs to the content of the judgment since it has an unchangeable existence as opposed to the changeable “psychic” act of judgment. In the light of the position of the question of being in general characterized in the introduction to this inquiry, we can hardly expect that “validity” as “ideal being” is going to be distinguished by any special ontological clarity. Then, at the same time, validity means the validity of the meaning of the judgment which is valid for the “object” it has in view and thus receives the significance of “*objective validity*” and objectivity in general. The meaning thus “valid” for beings, and which is valid “timelessly” in itself, is said to be “valid” also in the sense of being valid for every person who judges rationally. Now validity means *bindingness*, “universal validity.” If one then advocates a “critical” epistemological theory, according to which the subject does not “truly” “come out” to the object, then this valid character, as the validity of an object, objectivity, is based on the valid content of true (!) meaning. The three meanings of “validity” set forth, the way of being of the ideal, as objectivity and as bindingness, are not only in themselves opaque, but constantly get con-

fused with one another. Methodological caution requires we do not choose such unstable concepts as the guide for our interpretation. We make no advance restriction on the concept of meaning which would confine it to a signification of a "content of judgment," but we understand it as the existential phenomenon characterized in which the formal framework of what can be disclosed in understanding and articulated in interpretation becomes visible as such.

When we collect the three meanings of "statement" analyzed here in a unitary view of the complete phenomenon, the definition reads: *Statement is a pointing out which communicates and defines.* Now we must ask: what right do we have at all to conceive the statement as a mode of interpretation? If it is something of this sort, the essential structures of interpretation must be repeated in it. The statement's pointing out is accomplished on the basis of what is already disclosed in understanding, or what is circumspectively discovered. The statement is not an unattached kind of behavior which could of itself primarily disclose beings in general, but always already maintains itself on the basis of being-in-the-world. What we showed earlier with regard to world cognition is just as true of the statement. It needs a fore-having of something disclosed in general which it points out in the mode of determining. Furthermore, when one begins to determine something, one has a directed viewpoint of what is to be stated. The function of determining takes over the direction in which beings that have been presented are envisaged in the act of determining. The statement needs a fore-sight in which the predicate which is to be delineated and attributed is itself loosened, so to speak, in its inexplicit enclosure in beings themselves. A significant articulation of what is pointed out always belongs to the statement as communication that defines, it operates within a definite set of concepts. The hammer is heavy, heaviness belongs to the hammer, the hammer has the property of heaviness. The fore-conception always also contained in the statement remains mostly inconspicuous because language always already contains a developed set of concepts. Like interpretation in general, the statement necessarily has its existential foundations in fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception.

But how does the statement become a *derivative* mode of interpretation? What has been modified in it? We can point out the modification by sticking with limiting cases of statements which function in logic as normal cases and examples of the most "simple" phenomena of statement. What logic makes thematic with the



categorical statement, for example, “the hammer is heavy,” it has always already understood “logically” before any analysis. As the “meaning” of the sentence, it has already presupposed without noticing it the following: this thing, the hammer, has the property of heaviness. “Initially” there are no such statements in heedful circumspection. But it does have its specific ways of interpretation which can read as follows as compared with the “theoretical judgment” just mentioned and may take some such form as “the hammer is too heavy” or, even better, “too heavy, the other hammer!” The primordial act of interpretation lies not in a theoretical sentence, but in circumspectly and heedfully putting away or changing the inappropriate tool “without wasting words.” From the fact that words are absent, we may not conclude that the interpretation is absent. On the other hand, the circumspectly *spoken* interpretation is not already necessarily a statement in the sense defined. *Through what existential ontological modifications does the statement originate from circumspect interpretation?*

The being held in fore-having, for example the hammer, is initially at hand as a useful thing. If this being is the “object” of a statement, as soon as we begin the statement, a transformation in the fore-having is already brought about beforehand. Something *at hand with which* we have to do or perform something, turns into something “about which” the statement that points it out is made. Fore-sight aims at something objectively present in what is at hand. Both *by* and *for* the way of looking, what is at hand is veiled as something at hand. Within this discovering of objective presence which covers over handiness, what is encountered as objectively present is determined in its being objectively present in such and such a way. Now the access is first available for something like *qualities*. That *as* which the statement determines what is objectively present is drawn *from* what is objectively present as such. The *as*-structure of interpretation has undergone a modification. The “*as*” no longer reaches out into a totality of relevance in its function of appropriating what is understood. It is cut off with regard to its possibilities of the articulation of referential relations of significance which constitute the character of the surrounding world. The “*as*” is forced back to the uniform level of what is merely objectively present. It dwindles to the structure of just letting what is objectively present be seen by way of determination. This levelling down of the primordial “*as*” of circumspect interpretation to the *as* of the determination of objective presence is the speciality of the

statement. Only in this way does it gain the possibility of a pointing something out in a way that we sheerly look at it.

Thus the statement cannot deny its ontological provenance from an interpretation that understands. We call primordial the “as” of circumspect interpretation that understands (*hermēneia*), the existential-hermeneutical “as” in distinction from the *apophantical* “as” of the statement.

There are many interim stages between interpretation which is quite enveloped in heedful understanding and the extreme opposite case of a theoretical statement about objectively present things: statements about events in the surrounding world, descriptions of what is at hand, “reports on situations,” noting and ascertaining a “factual situation,” describing a state of affairs, telling about what has happened. These “sentences” cannot be reduced to theoretical propositional statements without essentially distorting their meaning. Like the latter, they have their “origin” in circumspect interpretation.

With the progress of knowledge about the structure of the *logos*, it was inevitable that this phenomenon of the apophantical “as” came to view in some form. The way in which it was initially seen is not a matter of chance, nor did it fail to have its influence on the history of logic to come.

When considered philosophically, the *logos* is itself a being and, in accordance with the orientation of ancient ontology, something objectively present. What is initially objectively present, that is, what can be found like things, are words and the succession of words in which the *logos* is spoken. When we first seek for the structure of the *logos* thus objectively present, we find an *objective presence together* of several words. What constitutes the unity of this together? As Plato knew, it consists in the fact that the *logos* is always *logos tinos*. With regard to the beings manifest in the *logos*, the words are combined to form one totality of words. Aristotle had a more radical view; every *logos* is *synthesis* and *diairesis* at the same time, not either the one—say, as a “positive judgment”—or the other—as a “negative judgment.” Rather, every statement, whether affirmative or negative, whether false or true, is equiprimordially *synthesis* and *diairesis*. Pointing out is putting together and taking apart. However, Aristotle did not pursue this analytical question further to a problem: What phenomenon is it then within the structure of the *logos* that allows and requires us to characterize every statement as *synthesis* and *diairesis*? What is to be got at phe-

nomenally with the formal structures of “binding” and “separating,” more precisely, with the unity of the two, is the phenomenon of “something as something.” In accordance with this structure, something is understood with regard to something else, it is taken together with it, so that this confrontation that *understands, interprets*, and articulates, at the same time takes apart what has been put together. If the phenomenon of the “as” is covered over and above all veiled in its existential origin from the hermeneutical “as,” Aristotle’s phenomenological point of departure disintegrates to the analysis of *logos* in an external “theory of judgment,” according to which judgment is a binding or separating of representations and concepts.

Thus binding and separating can be further formalized to mean a “relating.” Logistically, the judgment is dissolved into a system of “ coordinations,” it becomes the object of “calculation,” but not a theme of ontological interpretation. The possibility and impossibility of the analytical understanding of *synthesis* and *diairesis*, of “relation” in the judgment in general, is closely bound up with the actual state of the fundamental ontological problematic.

To what extent this problematic has an effect on the interpretation of the *logos* and, on the other hand, to what extent the concept of “judgment” has, by a remarkable counter-movement, an effect on the ontological problematic, is shown by the phenomenon of the copula. It becomes evident in this “bond” that the structure of synthesis is initially posited as a matter of course and that it has also maintained the decisive interpretative function. But if the formal characteristics of “relation” and “binding” cannot contribute anything phenomenally to the factual structural analysis of the *logos*, the phenomenon intended with the term copula finally has nothing to do with bond and binding. Whether expressed explicitly in language or indicated in the verbal ending, the “is” and its interpretation are moved into the context of problems of the existential analytic if statements and an understanding of being are existential possibilities of being of *Da-sein* itself. The development of the question of being (cf. division I, section 3) will then encounter again this peculiar phenomenon of being within the *logos*.

For the time being, we wanted to clarify with this demonstration of the derivation of the statement from interpretation and understanding the fact that the “logic” of *logos* is rooted in the existential analytic of *Da-sein*. Recognizing the ontologically insufficient interpretation of the *logos* at the same time sharpens our insight into

the lack of primordially of the methodical basis on which ancient ontology developed. The *logos* is experienced as something objectively present and interpreted as such, and the beings which it points out have the meaning of objective presence as well. This meaning being itself is left undifferentiated and uncontrasted with other possibilities of being so that being in the sense of a formal being-something is at the same time fused with it and we are unable to obtain a clear-cut division between these two realms.

### Da-sein and Discourse: Language

The fundamental existentials which constitute the being of the there, the disclosedness of being-in-the-world, are attunement and understanding. Understanding harbors in itself the possibility of interpretation, that is, the appropriation of what is understood. To the extent that attunement is equiprimordial with understanding, it maintains itself in a certain understanding. A certain possibility of interpretation also belongs to it. An extreme derivative of interpretation was made visible with the statement. The clarification of the third meaning of statement as communication (speaking forth) led us to the concept of saying and speaking, to which we purposely paid no attention up to now. The fact that language *only now* becomes thematic should indicate that this phenomenon has its roots in the existential constitution of the disclosedness of Da-sein. *The existential-ontological foundation of language is discourse.* In our previous interpretation of attunement, understanding, interpretation, and statement we have constantly made use of this phenomenon, but have, so to speak, suppressed it in the thematic analysis.

*Discourse is existentially equiprimordial with attunement and understanding.* Intelligibility is also always already articulated before its appropriative interpretation. Discourse is the articulation of intelligibility. Thus it already lies at the basis of interpretation and statement. We called what can be articulated in interpretation, and thus more primordially in speech, meaning. What is articulated in discoursing articulation as such, we call the totality of significations. This totality can be dissolved into significations. As what is articulated of what can be articulated, significations are always bound up with meaning. If discourse, the articulation of the intelligibility of the there, is the primordial existential of disclosedness and if disclosedness is primarily constituted by being-in-the-world,

discourse must also essentially have a specifically *worldly* mode of being. The attuned intelligibility of being-in-the-world is expressed as discourse. The totality of significations of intelligibility is put into words. Words accrue to significations. But word-things are not provided with significations.

The way in which discourse gets expressed is language. This totality of words in which discourse has its own "worldly" being can thus be found as an innerworldly being, like something at hand. Language can be broken up into word-things objectively present. Discourse is existential language because the beings whose disclosedness it significantly articulates have the kind of being of being-in-the-world which is thrown and reliant upon the "world."

As the existential constitution of the disclosedness of Da-sein, discourse is constitutive for the existence of Da-sein. *Hearing* and *keeping silent* are possibilities belonging to discoursing speech. The constitutive function of discourse for the existentially of existence first becomes completely clear in these phenomena. First of all, we must develop the structure of discourse as such.

Discoursing is the "significant" articulation of the intelligibility of being-in-the-world, to which belongs being-with, and which maintains itself in a particular way of heedful being-with-one-another. Being-with-one-another talks in assenting, refusing, inviting, warming, as talking things through, as getting back to someone, interceding, furthermore as "making statements" and as talking in "giving a talk." Discourse is discourse about. . . . That which discourse is *about* does not necessarily have the character of the theme of a definite statement; in fact, mostly it does not have it. Even command is given about something; a wish is about something. And so is intercession. Discourse necessarily has this structural factor because it also constitutes the disclosedness of being-in-the-world and is prestructured in its own structure by this fundamental constitution of Da-sein. What is talked about in discourse is always "addressed" in a particular view and within certain limits. In all discourse there is *what is spoken* as such, what is said as such when one actually wishes, asks, talks things over about. . . . In this "something said," discourse communicates.

As the analysis has already indicated, the phenomenon of *communication* must be understood in an ontologically broad sense. "Communication" in which one makes statements, for example, giving information, is a special case of the communication that is grasped in principle existentially. Here the articulation of being-

with-one-another understandingly is constituted. It brings about the “sharing” of being attuned together and of the understanding of being-with. Communication is never anything like a conveying of experiences, for example, opinions and wishes, from the inside of one subject to the inside of another. *Mitda-sein* is essentially already manifest in attunement-with and understanding-with. Being-with is “explicitly” *shared* in discourse, that is, it already *is*, only unshared as something not grasped and appropriated.

All discourse about . . . which communicates in what it says has at the same time the character of *expressing itself*. In talking, *Da-sein* expresses itself not because it has been initially cut off as “something internal” from something outside, but because as being-in-the-world it is already “outside” when it understands. What is expressed is precisely this being outside, that is, the actual mode of attunement (of mood) which we showed to pertain to the full disclosedness of being-in. Being-in and its attunement are made known in discourse and indicated in language by intonation, modulation, in the tempo of talk, “in the way of speaking.” The communication of the existential possibilities of attunement, that is, the disclosing of existence, can become the true aim of “poetic” speech.

Discourse is the articulation in accordance with significance of the attuned intelligibility of being-in-the-world. Its constitutive factors are: what discourse is about (what is discussed), what is said as such, communication, and making known. These are not properties which can be just empirically snatched from language, but are existential characteristics rooted in the constitution of being of *Da-sein* which first make something like language ontologically possible. Some of these factors can be lacking or remain unnoticed in the factual linguistic form of a particular discourse. The fact that they often are *not* “verbally” expressed is only an indication of a particular kind of discourse which, insofar as it is discourse, must always lie within the totality of these structures.

Attempts to grasp the “essence of language” have always taken their orientation toward a single one of these factors and have understood language guided by the idea of “expression,” “symbolical forms,” communication as “statement,” “making known” experiences or the “form” of life. But nothing would be gained for a completely sufficient definition of language if we were to put these different fragmentary definitions together in a syncretistic way. What is decisive is to develop the ontological-existential totality of the structure of discourse beforehand on the basis of the analytic of *Da-sein*.

The connection of discourse with understanding and intelligibility becomes clear through an existential possibility which belongs to discourse itself, hearing. It is not a matter of chance that we say, when we have not heard "rightly," that we have not "understood." Hearing is constitutive for discourse. And just as linguistic utterance is based on discourse, acoustic perception is based on hearing. Listening to . . . is the existential being-open of Da-sein as being-with for the other. Hearing even constitutes the primary and authentic openness of Da-sein for its own-most possibility of being, as in hearing the voice of the friend whom every Da-sein carries with it. Da-sein hears because it understands. As being-in-the-world that understands, with the others, it "listens to" itself and to *Mitda-sein*, and in this listening belongs to these. Listening to each other, in which being-with is developed, has the possible ways of following, going along with, and the privative modes of not hearing, opposition, defying, turning away.

On the basis of this existentially primary potentiality for hearing, something like *hearkening* becomes possible. Harkening is itself phenomenally more primordial than what the psychologist "initially" defines as hearing, the sensing of tones and the perception of sounds. Harkening, too, has the mode of being of a hearing that understands. "Initially" we never hear noises and complexes of sound, but the creaking wagon, the motorcycle. We hear the column on the march, the north wind, the woodpecker tapping, the crackling fire.

It requires a very artificial and complicated attitude in order to "hear" a "pure noise." The fact that we initially hear motorcycles and wagons is, however, the phenomenal proof that Da-sein, as being-in-the-world, always already maintains itself *together with* innerworldly things at hand and initially not at all with "sensations" whose chaos would first have to be formed to provide the springboard from which the subject jumps off finally to land in a "world." Essentially understanding, Da-sein is initially together with what is understood.

In the explicit hearing of the discourse of the other, too, we initially understand what is said: more precisely, we are already together with the other beforehand, with the being which the discourse is about. We do not, on the contrary, first hear what is expressed in the utterance. Even when speaking is unclear or the language is foreign, we initially hear *unintelligible* words, and not a multiplicity of tone data.

When what the discourse is about is heard “naturally,” however, we can at the same time hear the way in which it is said, the “diction,” but this, too, only by previously understanding what is spoken. Only thus is there a possibility of estimating whether the way in which it is said is appropriate to what the discourse is about thematically.

Similarly, speaking in turn as an answer initially arises directly from understanding what the discourse is about, which is already “shared” in being-with.

Only when the existential possibility of discourse and hearing are given, can someone hearken. He who “cannot hear” and “must feel” can perhaps hearken very well precisely for this reason. Just listening around is a privation of the hearing that understands. Discourse and hearing are grounded in understanding. Understanding comes neither from a lot of talking nor from busy listening around. Only he who already understands is able to listen.

Another essential possibility of discourse has the same existential foundation, *keeping silent*. In talking with one another the person who is silent can “let something be understood,” that is, he can develop an understanding more authentically than the person who never runs out of words. Speaking a lot about something does not in the least guarantee that understanding is thus furthered. On the contrary, talking at great length about something covers things over and gives a false impression of clarity to what is understood, that is, the unintelligibility of the trivial. But to keep silent does not mean to be dumb. On the contrary, if a person is dumb, he still has the tendency to “speak.” Such a person has not only not proved that he can keep silent, he even lacks the possibility of proving this. And the person who is by nature accustomed to speak little is no better able to show that he can be silent and keep silent. He who never says anything is also unable to keep silent at a given moment. Authentic silence is possible only in genuine discourse. In order to be silent, Da-sein must have something to say, that is, must be in command of an authentic and rich disclosedness of itself. Then reticence makes manifest and puts down “idle talk.” As a mode of discourse, reticence articulates the intelligibility of Da-sein so primordially that it gives rise to a genuine potentiality for hearing and to a being-with-one-another that is transparent.

Since discourse is constitutive for the being of the there, that is, attunement and understanding, and since Da-sein means being-in-the-world, Da-sein as discoursing being-in has already expressed it-



self. Da-sein has language. Is it a matter of chance that the Greeks, whose everyday existence lay predominantly in speaking with one another and who at the same time "had eyes" to see, determined the essence of human being as *zoon logon echon* in the pre-philosophical as well as in the philosophical interpretation of Da-sein? The later interpretation of this definition of human being in the sense of the *animal rationale*, "rational living being," is not "false," but it covers over the phenomenal basis from which this definition of Da-sein is taken. The human being shows himself as a being who speaks. This does not mean that the possibility of vocal utterance belongs to him, but that this being is in the mode of discovering world and Da-sein itself. The Greeks do not have a word for language, they "initially" understood this phenomenon as discourse. However, since the *logos* came into their philosophical view predominantly as statement, the development of the fundamental structures of the forms and constituents of discourse was carried out following the guideline of *this logos*. Grammar searched for its foundation in the "logic" of this *logos*. But this logic is based on the ontology of objective presence. The basic stock of "categories of significance" which were passed over in subsequent linguistics and are fundamentally still accepted as the criterion today is oriented toward discourse as statement. If, however, we take this phenomenon in principle to have the fundamental primordially and scope of an existential, the necessity arises of reestablishing the linguistics on an ontologically more primordial foundation. The task of *freeing* grammar from logic requires *in advance a positive* understanding of the *a priori* fundamental structure of discourse in general as an existential and cannot be carried out subsequently by improving and supplementing the tradition. Bearing this in mind, we must inquire into the basic forms in which it is possible to articulate what is intelligible in general, not only of the innerworldly beings that can be known in theoretical observation and expressed in propositions. A doctrine of significance will not emerge automatically from a comprehensive comparison of as many languages as possible and those that are most exotic. Nor is it sufficient to adopt the philosophical horizon within which W. von Humboldt took language as a problem. The doctrine of significance is rooted in the ontology of Da-sein. Whether it prospers or decays depends upon the fate of this ontology.

In the end, philosophical research must for once decide to ask what mode of being belongs to language in general. Is it an inner-

worldly useful thing at hand or does it have the mode of being of Da-sein or neither of the two? What kind of being does language have if there can be a “dead” language? What does it mean ontologically that a language grows or declines? We possess a linguistics, and the being of beings which it has as its theme is obscure; even the horizon for any investigative question about it is veiled. Is it a matter of chance that initially and for the most part significations are “worldly,” prefigured beforehand by the significance of the world, that they are indeed often predominantly “spatial”? Or is this “fact” existentially and ontologically necessary and why? Philosophical research will have to give up the “linguistics” if it is to ask about the “things themselves” and attain the status of a problematic that has been clarified conceptually.

The foregoing interpretation of language has the sole function of pointing out the ontological “place” for this phenomenon in the constitution of being of Da-sein and above all of preparing the way for the following analysis, in which, taking as our guideline a fundamental kind of being belonging to discourse, in connection with other phenomena, we shall try to bring the everydayness of Da-sein into view in a way that is ontologically more primordial.

### Idle Talk\*

In returning to the existential structures of the disclosedness of being-in-the-world, our interpretation has in a way lost sight of the everydayness of Da-sein. The analysis must again regain this phenomenal horizon that was our thematic point of departure. Now the question arises: What are the existential characteristics of the disclosedness of being-in-the-world, to the extent that the latter, as something everyday, maintains itself in the mode of being of the they? Is a specific attunement, a special understanding, discourse, and interpretation appropriate to the they? The answer to this question becomes all the more urgent when we remember that Da-sein initially and for the most part is immersed in the they and mastered by it. Is not Da-sein, as thrown being-in-the-world, initially thrown

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\*In *Being and Time*, the chapter “Idle Talk” appears with “Curiosity” and “Ambiguity” in the section “The Everyday Being of the There and the Falling Prey of Da-sein” (see pp. 169ff., above). I have placed it here because of its central importance in Heidegger’s early theory of language.”—Ed.

into the publicness of the they? And what else does this publicness mean than the specific disclosedness of the they?

If understanding must be conceived primarily as the potentiality-for-being of Da-sein, we shall be able to gather from an analysis of the understanding and interpretation belonging to the they which possibilities of its being Da-sein as the they has disclosed and appropriated to itself. These possibilities themselves, however, reveal an essential tendency of being of everydayness. And everydayness must finally, when explicated in an ontologically sufficient way, unveil a primordial mode of being of Da-sein in such a way that from it the phenomenon of thrownness which we have pointed out can be exhibited in its existential concreteness.

What is initially required is to make visible the disclosedness of the they, that is, the everyday mode of being of discourse, sight, and interpretation, in specific phenomena. With regard to these, the remark may not be superfluous that our interpretation has a purely ontological intention and is far removed from any moralizing critique of everyday Da-sein and from the aspirations of a "philosophy of culture." The expression "idle talk" is not being used here in a disparaging sense. Terminologically, it means a positive phenomenon which constitutes the mode of being of the understanding and interpretation of everyday Da-sein. For the most part, discourse expresses itself and has always already expressed itself. It is language. But then understanding and interpretation are always already contained in what is expressed. As expression, language harbors in itself an interpretedness of the understanding of Da-sein. This interpretedness is no more merely objectively present than language is, but rather its being is itself of the character of Da-sein. Da-sein is initially and in certain limits constantly entrusted to this interpretedness that directs and apportions the possibilities of the average understanding and the attunement belonging to it. In the totality of its articulated contexts of signification, expression preserves an understanding of the disclosed world and thus equiprimordially an understanding of the *Mitda-sein* of the others and of one's own being-in. The understanding already deposited in expression concerns the discoveredness of beings actually reached and handed down, as well as the actual understanding of being and the possibilities and horizons available to fresh interpretation and conceptual articulation. But above and beyond a mere reference to the fact of this interpretedness of Da-sein, we must now ask about the existential mode of being of the discourse which is expressed and

expressing itself. If it cannot be conceived as something objectively present, what is its being, and what does this being say in principle about the everyday mode of being of Da-sein? Discourse expressing itself is communication. Its tendency of being aims at bringing the hearer to participate in disclosed being toward what is talked about in discourse.

In the language that is spoken when one expresses oneself, there already lies an average intelligibility; and in accordance with this intelligibility, the discourse communicated can be understood to a large extent without the listener coming to a being toward what is talked about in discourse so as to have a primordial understanding of it. One understands not so much the beings talked about, but one does listen to what is spoken about as such. This is understood, what is talked about is understood, only approximately and superficially. One means *the same thing* because it is in the *same* average-ness that we have a common understanding of what is said.

Hearing and understanding have attached themselves beforehand to what is spoken about as such. Communication does not “impart” the primary relation of being to the being spoken about, but being-with-one-another takes place in talking with one another and in heeding what is spoken about. What is important to it is that one speaks. The being-said, the *dictum*, the pronouncement provide a guarantee for the genuineness and appropriateness of the discourse and the understanding belonging to it. And since this discoursing has lost the primary relation of being to the being talked about, or else never achieved it, it does not communicate in the mode of a primordial appropriation of this being, but communicates by *gossiping* and *passing the word along*. What is spoken about as such spreads in wider circles and takes on an authoritative character. Things are so because one says so. Idle talk is constituted in this gossiping and passing the word along, a process by which its initial lack of grounds to stand on increases to complete groundlessness. And this is not limited to vocal gossip, but spreads to what is written, as “scribbling.” In this latter case, gossiping is based not so much on hearsay. It feeds on sporadic superficial reading: the average understanding of the reader will *never be able* to decide what has been drawn from primordial sources with a struggle, and how much is just gossip. Moreover, the average understanding will not even want such a distinction, will not have need of it, since, after all, it understands everything.

The groundlessness of idle talk is no obstacle to its being public, but encourages it. Idle talk is the possibility of understanding every-

thing without any previous appropriation of the matter. Idle talk already guards against the danger of getting stranded in such an appropriation. Idle talk, which everyone can snatch up, not only divests us of the task of genuine understanding, but develops an indifferent intelligibility for which nothing is closed off any longer.

Discourse, which belongs to the essential constitution of being of Da-sein, and also constitutes its disclosedness, has the possibility of becoming idle talk, and as such of not really keeping being-in-the-world open in an articulated understanding, but of closing it off and covering over innerworldly beings. To do this, one need not aim to deceive. Idle talk does not have the kind of being of *consciously passing off* something as something else. The fact that one has said something groundlessly and then passes it along is in further retelling sufficient to turn disclosing around into a closing off. For what is said is initially always understood as "saying," that is, as discovering. Thus, by its very nature, idle talk is a closing off since it *omits* going back to the foundation of what is being talked about.

This closing off is aggravated anew by the fact that idle talk, in which an understanding of what is being talked about is supposedly reached, holds any new questioning and discussion at a distance because it presumes it has understood and in a peculiar way it suppresses them and holds them back.

This interpretedness of idle talk has always already settled itself down in Da-sein. We get to know many things initially in this way, and some things never get beyond such an average understanding. Da-sein can never escape the everyday way of being interpreted into which Da-sein has grown initially. All genuine understanding, interpreting and communication, rediscovery and new appropriation come about in it and out of it and against it. It is not the case that a Da-sein, untouched and unseduced by this way of interpreting, was ever confronted by the free land of a "world," merely to look at what it encounters. The domination of the public way in which things have been interpreted has already decided upon even the possibilities of being attuned, that is, about the basic way in which Da-sein lets itself be affected by the world. The way they prescribe that attunement, it determines what and how one "sees."

Idle talk, which closes off in the way we described, is the mode of being of the uprooted understanding of Da-sein. However, it does not occur as the objectively present condition of something objectively present, but it is existentially uprooted, and this uproot-

ing is constant. Ontologically, this means that when Da-sein maintains itself in idle talk, it is—as being-in-the-world—cut off from the primary and primordially genuine relations of being toward the world, toward *Mitda-sein*, toward being-in itself. It keeps itself in suspension and yet in doing so it is still always together with the “world,” with the others, and toward itself. Only those beings whose disclosedness is constituted by attuned and understanding discourse, that is, who are in the ontological constitution their there, who are “in-the-world,” have the possibility of being of such uprooting which, far from constituting a nonbeing of Da-sein, rather constitutes its most everyday and stubborn “reality.”

However, it is in the nature of the obviousness and self-assurance of the average way of being interpreted that under its protection, the uncanniness of the suspension in which Da-sein can drift toward an increasing groundlessness remains concealed to actual Da-sein itself.

*Translated by Joan Stambaugh*

## “ . . . Poetically, Man Dwells . . . ” (1951)

The phrase is taken from a late poem by Hölderlin, which comes to us by a curious route. It beings: “In lovely blueness blooms the steeple with metal roof.” (Stuttgart edition 2, 1, pp. 372 ff.; Hellingrath VI, pp. 24 ff.) If we are to hear the phrase “poetically man dwells” rightly, we must restore it thoughtfully to the poem. For that reason let us give thought to the phrase. Let us clear up the doubts it immediately arouses. For otherwise we should lack the free readiness to respond to the phrase by following it.

“ . . . poetically man dwells . . . ” If need be, we can imagine that poets do on occasion dwell poetically. But how is “man”—and this means every man and all the time—supposed to dwell poetically? Does not all dwelling remain incompatible with the poetic? Our dwelling is harassed by the housing shortage. Even if that were not so, our dwelling today is harassed by work, made insecure by the hunt for gain and success, bewitched by the entertainment and recreation industry. But when there is still room left in today’s dwelling for the poetic, and time is still set aside, what comes to pass is at best a preoccupation with aestheticizing, whether in writing or on the air. Poetry is either rejected as a frivolous mooning and vaporizing into the unknown, and a flight into dreamland, or is counted as a part of literature. And the validity of literature is assessed by the latest prevailing standard. The prevailing standard, in turn, is made and controlled by the organs for making public civilized opinions. One of its functionaries—at once driver and driven—is the literature industry. In such a setting poetry cannot appear otherwise than as literature. Where it is studied entirely in educational and scientific terms, it is the object of literary history. Western poetry goes under the general heading of “European literature.”

But if the sole form in which poetry exists is literary to start with, then how can human dwelling be understood as based on the poetic? The phrase, “man dwells poetically,” comes indeed from a mere poet, and in fact from one who, we are told, could not cope with life. It is the way of poets to shut their eyes to actuality. Instead of acting, they dream. What they make is merely imagined. The

things of imagination are merely made. Making is, in Greek, *poiesis*. And man's dwelling is supposed to be poetry and poetic? This can be assumed, surely, only by someone who stands aside from actuality and does not want to see the existent condition of man's historical-social life today—the sociologists call it the collective.

But before we so bluntly pronounce dwelling and poetry incompatible, it may be well to attend soberly to the poet's statement. It speaks of man's dwelling. It does not describe today's dwelling conditions. Above all, it does not assert that to dwell means to occupy a house, a dwelling place. Nor does it say that the poetic exhausts itself in an unreal play of poetic imagination. What thoughtful man, therefore, would presume to declare, unhesitatingly and from a somewhat dubious elevation, that dwelling and the poetic are incompatible? Perhaps the two can bear with each other. This is not all. Perhaps one even bears the other in such a way that dwelling rests on the poetic. If this is indeed what we suppose, then we are required to think of dwelling and poetry in terms of their essential nature. If we do not balk at this demand, we think of what is usually called the existence of man in terms of dwelling. In doing so, we do of course give up the customary notion of dwelling. According to that idea, dwelling remains merely one form of human behavior alongside many others. We work in the city, but dwell outside it. We travel, and dwell now here, now there. Dwelling so understood is always merely the occupying of a lodging.

When Hölderlin speaks of dwelling, he has before his eyes the basic character of human existence. He sees the "poetic," moreover, by way of its relation to this dwelling, thus understood essentially.

This does not mean, though, that the poetic is merely an ornament and bonus added to dwelling. Nor does the poetic character of dwelling mean merely that the poetic turns up in some way or other in all dwelling. Rather, the phrase "poetically man dwells" says: poetry first causes dwelling to be dwelling. Poetry is what really lets us dwell. But through what do we attain to a dwelling place? Through building. Poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building.

Thus we confront a double demand: for one thing, we are to think of what is called man's existence by way of the nature of dwelling; for another, we are to think of the nature of poetry as a letting-dwell, as a—perhaps even *the*—distinctive kind of building.



If we search out the nature of poetry according to this viewpoint, then we arrive at the nature of dwelling.

But where do we humans get our information about the nature of dwelling and poetry? Where does man generally get the claim to arrive at the nature of something? Man can make such a claim only where he receives it. He receives it from the telling of language. Of course, only when and only as long as he respects language's own nature. Meanwhile, there rages round the earth an unbridled yet clever talking, writing, and broadcasting of spoken words. Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man. When this relation of dominance gets inverted, man hits upon strange maneuvers. Language becomes the means of expression. As expression, language can decay into a mere medium for the printed word. That even in such employment of language we retain a concern for care in speaking is all to the good. But this alone will never help us to escape from the inversion of the true relation of dominance between language and man. For, strictly, it is language that speaks. Man first speaks when, and only when, he responds to language by listening to its appeal. Among all the appeals that we human beings, on our part, may help to be voiced, language is the highest and everywhere the first. Language beckons us, at first and then again at the end, toward a thing's nature. But that is not to say, ever, that in any word-meaning picked up at will language supplies us, straight away and definitively, with the transparent nature of the matter as if it were an object ready for use. But the responding in which man authentically listens to the appeal of language is that which speaks in the element of poetry. The more poetic a poet is—the freer (that is, the more open and ready for the unforeseen) his saying—the greater is the purity with which he submits what he says to an ever more painstaking listening, and the further what he says is from the mere propositional statement that is dealt with solely in regard to its correctness or incorrectness.

“ . . . *poetically, man dwells . . .* ”

says the poet. We hear Hölderlin's words more clearly when we take them back into the poem in which they belong. First, let us listen only to the two lines from which we have detached and thus clipped the phrase. They run:

*Full of merit, yet poetically, man  
Dwells on this earth.*

The keynote of the lines vibrates in the word "poetically." This word is set off in two directions: by what comes before it and by what follows.

Before it are the words: "Full of merit, yet. . . ." They sound almost as if the next word, "poetically," introduced a restriction on the profitable, meritorious dwelling of man. But it is just the reverse. The restriction is denoted by the expression "Full of merit," to which we must add in thought a "to be sure." Man, to be sure, merits and earns much in his dwelling. For he cultivates the growing things of the earth and takes care of his increase. Cultivating and caring (*colere, cultura*) are a kind of building. But man not only cultivates what produces growth out of itself; he also builds in the sense of *aedificare*, by erecting things that cannot come into being and subsist by growing. Things that are built in this sense include not only buildings but all the works made by man's hands and through his arrangements. Merits due to this building, however, can never fill out the nature of dwelling. On the contrary, they even deny dwelling its own nature when they are pursued and acquired purely for their own sake. For in that case these merits, precisely by their abundance, would everywhere constrain dwelling within the bounds of this kind of building. Such building pursues the fulfillment of the needs of dwelling. Building in the sense of the farmer's cultivation of growing things, and of the erecting of edifices and works and the production of tools, is already a consequence of the nature of dwelling, but it is not its ground, let alone its grounding. This grounding must take place in a different building. Building of the usual kind, often practiced exclusively and therefore the only one that is familiar, does of course bring an abundance of merits into dwelling. Yet man is capable of dwelling only if he has already built, is building, and remains disposed to build, in another way.

"Full of merit (to be sure), yet poetically, man dwells. . . ." This is followed in the text by the words: "on this earth." We might be inclined to think the addition superfluous; for dwelling, after all, already means man's stay on earth—on "this" earth, to which every mortal knows himself to be entrusted and exposed.

But when Hölderlin ventures to say that the dwelling of mortals is poetic, this statement, as soon as it is made, gives the impression that, on the contrary, "poetic" dwelling snatches man away from

the earth. For the "poetic," when it is taken as poetry, is supposed to belong to the realm of fantasy. Poetic dwelling flies fantastically above reality. The poet counters this misgiving by saying expressly that poetic dwelling is a dwelling "on this earth." Hölderlin thus not only protects the "poetic" from a likely misinterpretation, but by adding the words "on this earth" expressly points to the nature of poetry. Poetry does not fly above and surmount the earth in order to escape it and hover over it. Poetry is what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling.

*Full of merit, yet poetically, man  
Dwells on this earth.*

Do we know now why man dwells poetically? We still do not. We now even run the risk of intruding foreign thoughts into Hölderlin's poetic words. For Hölderlin indeed speaks of man's dwelling and his merit, but still he does not connect dwelling with building, as we have just done. He does not speak of building, either in the sense of cultivating and erecting, or in such a way as even to represent poetry as a special kind of building. Accordingly, Hölderlin does not speak of poetic dwelling as our own thinking does. Despite all this, we are thinking the same thing that Hölderlin is saying poetically.

It is, however, important to take note here of an essential point. A short parenthetical remark is needed. Poetry and thinking meet each other in one and the same only when, and only as long as, they remain distinctly in the distinctness of their nature. The same never coincides with the equal, not even in the empty indifferent oneness of what is merely identical. The equal of identical always moves toward the absence of difference, so that everything may be reduced to a common denominator. The same, by contrast, is the belonging together of what differs, through a gathering by way of the difference. We can only say "the same" if we think difference. It is in the carrying out and settling of differences that the gathering nature of sameness comes to light. The same banishes all zeal always to level what is different into the equal or identical. The same gathers what is distinct into an original being-at-one. The equal, on the contrary, disperses them into the dull unity of mere uniformity. Hölderlin, in his own way, knew of these relations. In an epigram which bears the title "Root of All Evil" (Stuttgart edition, I, 1, p. 305) he says:

*Being at one is godlike and good; whence, then  
this craze among men that there should exist only  
One, why should all be one?*

When we follow in thought Hölderlin’s poetic statement about the poetic dwelling of man, we divine a path by which, through what is thought differently, we come nearer to thinking the same as what the poet composes in his poem.

But what does Hölderlin say of the poetic dwelling of man? We seek the answer to the question by listening to lines 24 to 38 of our poem. For the two lines on which we first commented are spoken from their region. Hölderlin says:

*May, if life is sheer toil, a man  
Lift his eyes and say: so  
I too wish to be? Yes. As long as Kindness,  
The Pure, still stays with his heart, man  
Not unhappily measures himself  
Against the godhead. Is God unknown?  
Is he manifest like the sky? I’d sooner  
Believe the latter. It’s the measure of man.  
Full of merit, yet poetically, man  
Dwells on this earth. But no purer  
Is the shade of the starry night,  
If I might put it so, than  
Man, who’s called an image of the godhead.  
Is there a measure on earth? There is  
None.*

We shall think over only a few points in these lines, and for the sole purpose of hearing more clearly what Hölderlin means when he calls man’s dwelling a “poetic” one. The first lines (24 to 26) give us a clue. They are in the form of a question that is answered confidently in the affirmative. The question is a paraphrase of what the lines already expounded utter directly: “Full of merit, yet poetically, man dwells on this earth.” Hölderlin asks:

*May, if life is sheer toil, a man  
Lift his eyes and say: so  
I too wish to be? Yes.*

Only in the realm of sheer toil does man toil for “merits.” There he obtains them for himself in abundance. But at the same time, in this realm, man is allowed to look up, out of it, through it, toward the divinities. The upward glance passes aloft toward the sky, and yet it remains below on the earth. The upward glance spans the between of sky and earth. This between is measured out for the dwelling of man. We now call the span thus meted out the dimension. This dimension does not arise from the fact that sky and earth are turned toward one another. Rather, their facing each other itself depends on the dimension. Nor is the dimension a stretch of space as ordinarily understood; for everything spatial, as something for which space is made, is already in need of the dimension, that is, that into which it is admitted.

The nature of the dimension is the meting out—which is lightened and so can be spanned—of the between: the upward to the sky as well as the downward to earth. We leave the nature of the dimension without a name. According to Hölderlin’s words, man spans the dimension by measuring himself against the heavenly. Man does not undertake this spanning just now and then; rather, man is man at all only in such spanning. This is why he can indeed block this spanning, trim it, and disfigure it, but he can never evade it. Man, as man, has always measured himself with and against something heavenly. Lucifer, too, is descended from heaven. Therefore we read in the next lines (28 to 29): “Man measures himself against the godhead.” The godhead is the “measure” with which man measures out his dwelling, his stay on the earth beneath the sky. Only insofar as man takes the measure of his dwelling in this way is he able to *be* commensurately with his nature. Man’s dwelling depends on an upward-looking measure-taking of the dimension, in which the sky belongs just as much as the earth.

This measure-taking not only takes the measure of the earth, *ge*, and accordingly it is no mere geo-metry. Just as little does it ever take the measure of heaven, *ouranos*, for itself. Measure-taking is no science. Measure-taking gauges the between, which brings the two, heaven and earth, to one another. This measure-taking has its own *metron*, and thus its own metric.

Man’s taking measure in the dimension dealt out to him brings dwelling into its ground plan. Taking the measure of the dimension is the element within which human dwelling has its security, by which it securely endures. The taking of measure is what is poetic in dwelling. Poetry is a measuring. But what is it to measure? If

poetry is to be understood as measuring, then obviously we may not subsume it under just any idea of measuring and measure.

Poetry is presumably a high and special kind of measuring. But there is more. Perhaps we have to pronounce the sentence, “Poetry is a *measuring*,” with a different stress. “*Poetry* is a measuring.” In poetry there takes place what all measuring is in the ground of its being. Hence it is necessary to pay heed to the basic act of measuring. That consists in man’s first of all taking the measure which then is applied in every measuring act. In poetry the taking of measure occurs. To write poetry is measure-taking, understood in the strict sense of the word, by which man first receives the measure for the breadth of his being. Man exists as a mortal. He is called mortal because he can die. To be able to die means: to be capable of death as death. Only man dies—and indeed continually, so long as he stays on this earth, so long as he dwells. His dwelling, however, rests in the poetic. Hölderlin sees the nature of the “poetic” in the taking of the measure by which the measure-taking of human being is accomplished.

Yet how shall we prove that Hölderlin thinks of the nature of poetry as taking measure? We do not need to prove anything here. All proof is always only a subsequent undertaking on the basis of presuppositions. Anything at all can be proved, depending only on what presuppositions are made. But we can here pay heed only to a few points. It is enough, then, if we attend to the poet’s own words. For in the next lines Hölderlin inquires, before anything else and in fact exclusively, as to man’s measure. That measure is the godhead against which man measures himself. The question begins in line 29 with the words: “Is God unknown?” Manifestly not. For if he were unknown, how could he, being unknown, ever be the measure? Yet—and this is what we must now listen to and keep in mind—for Hölderlin God, as the one who he is, is unknown and it is just as *this Unknown One* that he is the measure for the poet. This is also why Hölderlin is perplexed by the exciting question: how can that which by its very nature remains unknown ever become a measure? For something that man measures himself by must after all impart itself, must appear. But if it appears, it is known. The god, however, is unknown, and he is the measure nonetheless. Not only this, but the god who remains unknown, must by showing *himself* as the one he is, appear as the one who remains unknown. God’s *manifestness*—not only he himself—is mysterious. Therefore the poet immediately asks the next question: “Is he manifest like the sky?” Hölderlin answers: “I’d sooner/Believe the latter.”

Why—so *we* now ask—is the poet’s surmise inclined in that way? The very next words give the answer. They say tersely: “It’s the measure of man.” What is the measure for human measuring? God? No. The sky? No. The manifestness of the sky? No. The measure consists in the way in which the god who remains unknown, is revealed *as* such by the sky. God’s appearance through the sky consists in a disclosing that lets us see what conceals itself, but lets us see it not by seeking to wrest what is concealed out of its concealedness, but only by guarding the concealed in its self-concealment. Thus the unknown god appears as the unknown by way of the sky’s manifestness. This appearance is the measure against which man measures himself.

A strange measure, perplexing it would seem to the common notions of mortals, inconvenient to the cheap omniscience of everyday opinion, which likes to claim that it is the standard for all thinking and reflection.

A strange measure for ordinary and in particular also for all merely scientific ideas, certainly not a palpable stick or rod but in truth simpler to handle than they, provided our hands do not abruptly grasp but are guided by gestures befitting the measure here to be taken. This is done by a taking which at no time clutches at the standard but rather takes it in a concentrated perception, a gathered taking-in, that remains a listening.

But why should this measure, which is so strange to us men of today, be addressed to man and imparted by the measure-taking of poetry? Because only this measure gauges the very nature of man. For man dwells by spanning the “on the earth” and the “beneath the sky.” This “on” and “beneath” belong together. Their interplay is the span that man traverses at every moment insofar as he *is* as an earthly being. In a fragment (Stuttgart edition, 2, 1, p. 334) Hölderlin says:

*Always, love! The earth  
moves and heaven holds.*

Because man *is*, in his enduring the dimension, his being must now and again be measured out. That requires a measure which involves at once the whole dimension in one. To discern this measure, to gauge it as the measure, and to accept it as the measure, means for the poet to make poetry. Poetry is this measure-taking—its taking, indeed, for the dwelling of man. For immediately after the words

“It’s the measure of man” there follow the lines: “Full of merit, yet poetically, man dwells on this earth.”

Do we now know what the “poetic” is for Hölderlin? Yes and no. Yes, because we receive an intimation about how poetry is to be thought of: namely, it is to be conceived as a distinctive kind of measuring. No, because poetry, as the gauging of that strange measure, becomes ever more mysterious. And so it must doubtless remain, if we are really prepared to make our stay in the domain of poetry’s being.

Yet it strikes us as strange that Hölderlin thinks of poetry as a measuring. And rightly so, as long as we understand measuring only in the sense current *for us*. In this sense, by the use of something known—measuring rods and their number—something unknown is stepped off and thus made known, and so is confined within a quantity and order which can always be determined at a glance. Such measuring can vary with the type of apparatus employed. But who will guarantee that this customary kind of measuring, merely because it is common, touches the nature of measuring? When we hear of measure, we immediately think of number and imagine the two, measure and number, as quantitative. But the *nature* of measure is no more a quantum than is the *nature* of number. True, we can reckon with numbers—but not with the nature of number. When Hölderlin envisages poetry as a measuring, and above all himself achieves poetry as taking measure, then we, in order to think of poetry, must ever and again first give thought to the measure that is taken in poetry; we must pay heed to the kind of taking here, which does not consist in a clutching or any other kind of grasping, but rather in a letting come of what has been dealt out. What is the measure for poetry? The godhead; God, therefore? Who is the god? Perhaps this question is too hard for man, and asked too soon. Let us therefore first ask what may be said about God. Let us first ask merely: What is God?

Fortunately for us, and helpfully, some verses of Hölderlin’s have been preserved which belong in substance and time to the ambience of the poem “In lovely blueness. . .” They begin (Stuttgart edition, 2, 1, p. 210):

*What is God? Unknown, yet  
Full of his qualities is the  
Face of the sky. For the lightnings  
Are the wrath of a god. The more something  
Is invisible, the more it yields to what’s alien.*



What remains alien to the god, the sight of the sky—this is what is familiar to man. And what is that? Everything that shimmers and blooms in the sky and thus under the sky and thus on earth, everything that sounds and is fragrant, rises and comes—but also everything that goes and stumbles, moans and falls silent, pales and darkens. Into this, which is intimate to man but alien to the god, the unknown imparts himself, in order to remain guarded within it as the unknown. But the poet calls all the brightness of the sights of the sky and every sound of its courses and breezes into the singing word and there makes them shine and ring. Yet the poet, if he is a poet, does not describe the mere appearance of sky and earth. The poet calls, in the sights of the sky, that which in its very self-disclosure causes the appearance of that which conceals itself, and indeed *as* that which conceals itself. In the familiar appearances, the poet calls the alien as that to which the invisible imparts itself in order to remain what it is—unknown.

The poet makes poetry only when he takes the measure, by saying the sights of heaven in such a way that he submits to its appearances as to the alien element to which the unknown god has “yielded.” Our current name for the sight and appearance of something is “image.” The nature of the image is to let something be seen. By contrast, copies and imitations are already mere variations on the genuine image which, as a sight or spectacle, lets the invisible be seen and so imagines the invisible in something alien to it. Because poetry takes that mysterious measure, to wit, in the face of the sky, therefore it speaks in “images.” This is why poetic images are imaginings in a distinctive sense: not mere fancies and illusions but imaginings that are visible inclusions of the alien in the sight of the familiar. The poetic saying of images gathers the brightness and sound of the heavenly appearances into one with the darkness and silence of what is alien. By such sights the god surprises us. In this strangeness he proclaims his unfaltering nearness. For that reason Hölderlin, after the lines “Full of merit, yet poetically, man Dwells on this earth,” can continue:

. . . *Yet no purer  
Is the shade of the starry night,  
If I might put it so, than  
Man, who's called an image of the godhead.*

“The shade of the night”—the night itself is the shade, that darkness which can never become a mere blackness because as shade it

is wedded to light and remains cast by it. The measure taken by poetry yields, imparts itself—as the foreign element in which the invisible one preserves his presence—to what is familiar in the sights of the sky. Hence, the measure is of the same nature as the sky. But the sky is not sheer light. The radiance of its height is itself the darkness of its all-sheltering breadth. The blue of the sky’s lovely blueness is the color of depth. The radiance of the sky is the dawn and dusk of the twilight, which shelters everything that can be proclaimed. This sky is the measure. This is why the poet must ask:

*Is there a measure on earth?*

And he must reply: “There is none.” Why? Because what we signify when we say “on the earth” exists only insofar as man dwells on the earth and in his dwelling lets the earth be as earth.

But dwelling occurs only when poetry comes to pass and is present, and indeed in the way whose nature we now have some idea of, as taking a measure for all measuring. This measure-taking is itself an authentic measure-taking, no mere gauging with ready-made measuring rods for the making of maps. Nor is poetry building in the sense of raising and fitting buildings. But poetry, as the authentic gauging of the dimension of dwelling, is the primal form of building. Poetry first of all admits man’s dwelling into its very nature, its presencing being. Poetry is the original admission of dwelling.

The statement, *Man dwells in that he builds*, has now been given its proper sense. Man does not dwell in that he merely establishes his stay on the earth beneath the sky, by raising growing things and simultaneously raising buildings. Man is capable of such building only if he already builds in the sense of the poetic taking of measure. Authentic building occurs so far as there are poets, such poets as take the measure for architecture, the structure of dwelling.

On March 12, 1804 Hölderlin writes from Nürtingen to his friend Leo von Seckendorf: “At present I am especially occupied with the fable, the poetic view of history, and the architectonics of the skies, especially of our nation’s, so far as it differs from the Greek.”

*“ . . . poetically, man dwells. . . ”*

Poetry builds up the very nature of dwelling. Poetry and dwelling not only do not exclude each other; on the contrary, poetry and dwelling belong together, each calling for the other. "Poetically man dwells." Do *we* dwell poetically? Presumably we dwell altogether unpoetically. If that is so, does it give the lie to the poet's words; are they untrue? No. The truth of his utterance is confirmed in the most unearthly way. For dwelling can be unpoetic only because it is in essence poetic. For a man to be blind, he must remain a being by nature endowed with sight. A piece of wood can never go blind. But when man goes blind, there always remains the question whether his blindness derives from some defect and loss or lies in an abundance and excess. In the same poem that meditates on the measure for all measuring, Hölderlin says (lines 75–76): "King Oedipus has perhaps one eye too many." Thus it might be that our unpoetic dwelling, its incapacity to take the measure, derives from a curious excess of frantic measuring and calculating.

That we dwell unpoetically, and in what way, we can in any case learn only if we know the poetic. Whether, and when, we may come to a turning point in our unpoetic dwelling is something we may expect to happen only if we remain heedful of the poetic. How and to what extent our doings can share in this turn we alone can prove, if we take the poetic seriously.

The poetic is the basic capacity for human dwelling. But man is capable of poetry at any time only to the degree to which his being is appropriate to that which itself has a liking for man and therefore needs his presence. Poetry is authentic or inauthentic according to the degree of this appropriation.

That is why authentic poetry does not come to light appropriately in every period. When and for how long does authentic poetry exist? Hölderlin gives the answer in verses 26–69, already cited. Their explication has been purposely deferred until now. The verses run:

*. . . As long as Kindness,  
The Pure, still stays with his heart, man  
Not unhappily measures himself  
Against the Godhead. . . .*

"Kindness"—what is it? A harmless word, but described by Hölderlin with the capitalized epithet "the Pure." "Kindness"—this word, if we take it literally, is Hölderlin's magnificent translation

for the Greek word *charis*. In his *Ajax*, Sophocles says of *charis* (verse 522):

*Charis charin gar estin he tiktous aei.*

For kindness it is, that ever calls forth kindness.

“As long as Kindness, the Pure, still stays with his heart. . . .” Hölderlin says in an idiom he liked to use: “with his heart,” not “in his heart.” That is, it has come to the dwelling being of man, come as the claim and appeal of the measure to the heart in such a way that the heart turns to give heed to the measure.

As long as this arrival of kindness endures, so long does man succeed in measuring himself not unhappily against the godhead. When this measuring appropriately comes to light, man creates poetry from the very nature of the poetic. When the poetic appropriately comes to light, then man dwells humanly on this earth, and then—as Hölderlin says in his last poem—“the life of man” is a “dwelling life” (Stuttgart edition, 2, 1, p. 312).

#### *Vista*

When far the dwelling life of man into the distance goes,  
Where, in that far distance, the grapevine's season glows,  
There too are summer's fields, emptied of their growing,  
And forest looms, its image darkly showing.  
That Nature paints the seasons so complete,  
That she abides, but they glide by so fleet,  
Comes of perfection; then heaven's radiant height.  
Crowns man, as blossoms crown the trees, with light.

*Translated by Albert Hofstadter*

# CRITIQUE OF TECHNOLOGY

## The Question Concerning Technology (1949)

In what follows we shall be *questioning* concerning technology. Questioning builds a way. We would be advised, therefore, above all to pay heed to the way, and not to fix our attention on isolated sentences and topics. The way is a way of thinking. All ways of thinking, more or less perceptibly, lead through language in a manner that is extraordinary. We shall be questioning concerning *technology*, and in so doing we should like to prepare a free relationship to it. The relationship will be free if it opens our human existence to the essence of technology. When we can respond to this essence, we shall be able to experience the technological within its own bounds.

Technology is not equivalent to the essence of technology. When we are seeking the essence of "tree," we have to become aware that That which pervades every tree, as tree, is not itself a tree that can be encountered among all the other trees.

Likewise, the essence of technology is by no means anything technological. Thus we shall never experience our relationship to the essence of technology so long as we merely conceive and push forward the technological, put up with it, or evade it. Everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it. But we are delivered over to it in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral; for this conception of it, to which today we particularly like to do homage, makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology.

According to ancient doctrine, the essence of a thing is considered to be *what* the thing is. We ask the question concerning technology when we ask what it is. Everyone knows the two statements that answer our question. One says: Technology is a means to an end. The other says: Technology is a human activity. The two definitions of technology belong together. For to posit ends and pro-

cure and utilize the means to them is a human activity. The manufacture and utilization of equipment, tools, and machines, the manufactured and used things themselves, and the needs and ends that they serve, all belong to what technology is. The whole complex of these contrivances is technology. Technology itself is a contrivance, or, in Latin, an *instrumentum*.

The current conception of technology, according to which it is a means and a human activity, can therefore be called the instrumental and anthropological definition of technology.

Who would ever deny that it is correct? It is in obvious conformity with what we are envisioning when we talk about technology. The instrumental definition of technology is indeed so uncannily correct that it even holds for modern technology, of which, in other respects, we maintain with some justification that it is, in contrast to the older handwork technology, something completely different and therefore new. Even the power plant with its turbines and generators is a man-made means to an end established by man. Even the jet aircraft and the high-frequency apparatus are means to ends. A radar station is of course less simple than a weather vane. To be sure, the construction of a high-frequency apparatus requires the interlocking of various processes of technical-industrial production. And certainly a sawmill in a secluded valley of the Black Forest is a primitive means compared with the hydroelectric plant in the Rhine River.

But this much remains correct: modern technology too is a means to an end. That is why the instrumental conception of technology conditions every attempt to bring man into the right relation to technology. Everything depends on our manipulating technology in the proper manner as a means. We will, as we say, "get" technology "spiritually in hand." We will master it. The will to mastery becomes all the more urgent the more technology threatens to slip from human control.

But suppose now that technology were no mere means, how would it stand with the will to master it? Yet we said, did we not, that the instrumental definition of technology is correct? To be sure. The correct always fixes upon something pertinent in whatever is under consideration. However, in order to be correct, this fixing by no means needs to uncover the thing in question in its essence. Only at the point where such an uncovering happens does the true come to pass. For that reason the merely correct is not yet the true. Only the true brings us into a free relationship with that which concerns

us from out of its essence. Accordingly, the correct instrumental definition of technology still does not show us technology's essence. In order that we may arrive at this, or at least come close to it, we must seek the true by way of the correct. We must ask: What is the instrumental itself? Within what do such things as means and end belong? A means is that whereby something is effected and thus attained. Whatever has an effect as its consequence is called a cause. But not only that by means of which something else is effected is a cause. The end in keeping with which the kind of means to be used is determined is also considered a cause. Wherever ends are pursued and means are employed, wherever instrumentality reigns, there reigns causality.

For centuries philosophy has taught that there are four causes: (1) the *causa materialis*, the material, the matter out of which, for example, a silver chalice is made; (2) the *causa formalis*, the form, the shape into which the material enters; (3) the *causa finalis*, the end, for example, the sacrificial rite in relation to which the chalice required is determined as to its form and matter; (4) the *causa efficiens*, which brings about the effect that is the finished, actual chalice, in this instance, the silversmith. What technology is, when represented as a means, discloses itself when we trace instrumentality back to fourfold causality.

But suppose that causality, for its part, is veiled in darkness with respect to what it is? Certainly for centuries we have acted as though the doctrine of the four causes had fallen from heaven as a truth as clear as daylight. But it might be that the time has come to ask, Why are there just four causes? In relation to the aforementioned four, what does "cause" really mean? From whence does it come that the causal *character* of the four causes is so unifiedly determined that they belong together?

So long as we do not allow ourselves to go into these questions, causality, and with it instrumentality, and with the latter the accepted definition of technology, remain obscure and groundless.

For a long time we have been accustomed to representing cause as that which brings something about. In this connection, to bring about means to obtain results, effects. The *causa efficiens*, but one among the four causes, sets the standard for all causality. This goes so far that we no longer even count the *causa finalis*, telic finality, as causality. *Causa, casus*, belongs to the verb *cadere*, "to fall," and means that which brings it about that something falls out as a result in such and such a way. The doctrine of the four causes goes back

to Aristotle. But everything that later ages seek in Greek thought under the conception and rubric "causality," in the realm of Greek thought and for Greek thought per se has simply nothing at all to do with bringing about and effecting. What we call cause [*Ursache*] and the Romans call *causa* is called *aition* by the Greeks, that to which something else is indebted [*das, was ein anderes verschuldet*]. The four causes are the ways, all belonging at once to each other, of being responsible for something else. An example can clarify this.

Silver is that out of which the silver chalice is made. As this matter (*hyle*), it is co-responsible for the chalice. The chalice is indebted to, i.e., owes thanks to, the silver for that out of which it consists. But the sacrificial vessel is indebted not only to the silver. As a chalice, that which is indebted to the silver appears in the aspect of a chalice and not in that of a brooch or a ring. Thus the sacrificial vessel is at the same time indebted to the aspect (*eidos*) of chalice-ness. Both the silver into which the aspect is admitted as chalice and the aspect in which the silver appears are in their respective ways co-responsible for the sacrificial vessel.

But there remains yet a third that is above all responsible for the sacrificial vessel. It is that which in advance confines the chalice within the realm of consecration and bestowal. Through this the chalice is circumscribed as sacrificial vessel. Circumscribing gives bounds to the thing. With the bounds the thing does not stop; rather from out of them it begins to be what, after production, it will be. That which gives bounds, that which completes, in this sense is called in Greek *telos*, which is all too often translated as "aim" or "purpose," and so misinterpreted. The *telos* is responsible for what as matter and for what as aspect are together co-responsible for the sacrificial vessel.

Finally there is a fourth participant in the responsibility for the finished sacrificial vessel's lying before us ready for use, i.e., the silversmith but not at all because he, in working, brings about the finished sacrificial chalice as if it were the effect of a making; the silversmith is not a *causa efficiens*.

The Aristotelian doctrine neither knows the cause that is named by this term nor uses a Greek word that would correspond to it.

The silversmith considers carefully and gathers together the three aforementioned ways of being responsible and indebted. To consider carefully [*überlegen*] is in Greek *legein*, *logos*. *Legein* is rooted in *apophainesthai*, to bring forward into appearance. The silversmith is co-responsible as that from whence the sacrificial vessel's



bringing forth and resting-in-self take and retain their first departure. The three previously mentioned ways of being responsible owe thanks to the pondering of the silversmith for the “that” and the “how” of their coming into appearance and into play for the production of the sacrificial vessel.

Thus four ways of being responsible hold sway in the sacrificial vessel that lies ready before us. They differ from one another, yet they belong together. What unites them from the beginning? In what does this playing in unison of the four ways of being responsible play? What is the source of the unity of the four causes? What, after all, does this owing and being responsible mean, thought as the Greeks thought it?

Today we are too easily inclined either to understand being responsible and being indebted moralistically as a lapse, or else to construe them in terms of effecting. In either case we bar to ourselves the way to the primal meaning of that which is later called causality. So long as this way is not opened up to us we shall also fail to see what instrumentality, which is based on causality, actually is.

In order to guard against such misinterpretations of being responsible and being indebted, let us clarify the four ways of being responsible in terms of that for which they are responsible. According to our example, they are responsible for the silver chalice’s lying ready before us as a sacrificial vessel. Lying before and lying ready (*hypokeisthai*) characterize the presencing of something that presences. The four ways of being responsible bring something into appearance. They let it come forth into presencing [*An-wesen*]. They set it free to that place and so start it on its way, namely, into its complete arrival. The principal characteristic of being responsible is this starting something on its way into arrival. It is in the sense of such a starting something on its way into arrival that being responsible is an occasioning or an inducing to go forward [*Ver-an-lassen*]. On the basis of a look at what the Greeks experienced in being responsible, in *aitia*, we now give this verb “to occasion” a more inclusive meaning, so that it now is the name for the essence of causality thought as the Greeks thought it. The common and narrower meaning of “occasion” in contrast is nothing more than striking against and releasing, and means a kind of secondary cause within the whole of causality.

But in what, then, does the playing in unison of the four ways of occasioning play? They let what is not yet present arrive into pre-

sencing. Accordingly, they are unifiedly ruled over by a bringing that brings what presences into appearance. Plato tells us what this bringing is in a sentence from the *Symposium* (205b): *hē gar toi ek tou mē onton eis to on ionti hotōioun aitia pasa esti poiēsis*. “Every occasion for whatever passes over and goes forward into presencing from that which is not presencing is *poiēsis*, is bringing-forth [*Her- vor-bringen*].

It is of utmost importance that we think bringing-forth in its full scope and at the same time in the sense in which the Greeks thought it. Not only handcraft manufacture, not only artistic and poetical bringing into appearance and concrete imagery, is a bringing-forth, *poiēsis*. *Physis* also, the arising of something from out of itself, is a bringing-forth, *poiēsis*. *Physis* is indeed *poiēsis* in the highest sense. For what presences by means of *physis* has the bursting open belonging to bringing-forth, e.g., the bursting of a blossom into bloom, in itself (*en heautōi*). In contrast, what is brought forth by the artisan or the artist, e.g., the silver chalice, has the bursting open belonging to bringing-forth not in itself, but in another (*en alloi*), in the craftsman or artist.

The modes of occasioning, the four causes, are at play, then, within bringing-forth. Through bringing-forth, the growing things of nature as well as whatever is completed through the crafts and the arts come at any given time to their appearance.

But how does bringing-forth happen, be it in nature or in handwork and art? What is the bringing-forth in which the fourfold way of occasioning plays? Occasioning has to do with the presencing [*Anwesen*] of that which at any given time comes to appearance in bringing-forth. Bringing-forth brings hither out of concealment forth into unconcealment. Bringing-forth comes to pass only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment. This coming rests and moves freely within what we call revealing [*das Entbergen*]. The Greeks have the word *alētheia* for revealing. The Romans translate this with *veritas*. We say “truth” and usually understand it as the correctness of an idea.

But where have we strayed to? We are questioning concerning technology, and we have arrived now at *alētheia*, at revealing. What has the essence of technology to do with revealing? The answer: everything. For every bringing-forth is grounded in revealing. Bringing-forth, indeed, gathers within itself the four modes of occasioning—causality—and rules them throughout. Within its domain belong end and means, belongs instrumentality. Instrumental-

ity is considered to be the fundamental characteristic of technology. If we inquire, step by step, into what technology, represented as means, actually is, then we shall arrive at revealing. The possibility of all productive manufacturing lies in revealing.

Technology is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing. If we give heed to this, then another whole realm for the essence of technology will open itself up to us. It is the realm of revealing, i.e., of truth.

This prospect strikes us as strange. Indeed, it should do so, should do so as persistently as possible and with so much urgency that we will finally take seriously the simple question of what the name "technology" means. The word stems from the Greek. *Technikon* means that which belongs to *technē*. We must observe two things with respect to the meaning of this word. One is that *technē* is the name not only for the activities and skills of the craftsman, but also for the arts of the mind and the fine arts. *Technē* belongs to bringing-forth, to *poiēsis*; it is something poietic.

The other point that we should observe with regard to *technē* is even more important. From earliest times until Plato the word *technē* is linked with the word *epistēmē*. Both words are names for knowing in the widest sense. They mean to be entirely at home in something, to understand and be expert in it. Such knowing provides an opening up. As an opening up it is a revealing. Aristotle, in a discussion of special importance (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VI, chaps. 3 and 4), distinguishes between *epistēmē* and *technē* and indeed with respect to what and how they reveal. *Technē* is a mode of *alētheuein*. It reveals whatever does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie here before us, whatever can look and turn out now one way and now another. Whoever builds a house or a ship or forges a sacrificial chalice reveals what is to be brought forth, according to the perspectives of the four modes of occasioning. This revealing gathers together in advance the aspect and the matter of ship or house, with a view to the finished thing envisioned as completed, and from this gathering determines the manner of its construction. Thus what is decisive in *technē* does not lie at all in making and manipulating nor in the using of means, but rather in the aforementioned revealing. It is as revealing, and not as manufacturing, that *technē* is a bringing-forth.

Thus the clue to what the word *technē* means and to how the Greeks defined it leads us into the same context that opened itself to us when we pursued the question of what instrumentality as such in truth might be.

Technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence [*weset*] in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where *alētheia*, truth, happens.

In opposition to this definition of the essential domain of technology, one can object that it indeed holds for Greek thought and that at best it might apply to the techniques of the craftsman, but that it simply does not fit modern machine-powered technology. And it is precisely the latter and it alone that is the disturbing thing, that moves us to ask the question concerning technology per se. It is said that modern technology is something incomparably different from all earlier technologies because it is based on modern physics as an exact science. Meanwhile we have come to understand more clearly that the reverse holds true as well: Modern physics, as experimental, is dependent upon technical apparatus and upon progress in the building of apparatus. The establishing of this mutual relationship between technology and physics is correct. But it remains a merely historiographical establishing of facts and says nothing about that in which this mutual relationship is grounded. The decisive question still remains: Of what essence is modern technology that it happens to think of putting exact science to use?

What is modern technology? It too is a revealing. Only when we allow our attention to rest on this fundamental characteristic does that which is new in modern technology show itself to us.

And yet the revealing that holds sway throughout modern technology does not unfold into a bringing-forth in the sense of *poiēsis*. The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging [*Herausfordern*], which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such. But does this not hold true for the old windmill as well? No. Its sails do indeed turn in the wind; they are left entirely to the wind's blowing. But the windmill does not unlock energy from the air currents in order to store it.

In contrast, a tract of land is challenged into the putting out of coal and ore. The earth now reveals itself as a coal mining district, the soil as a mineral deposit. The field that the peasant formerly cultivated and set in order [*bestellte*] appears differently than it did when to set in order still meant to take care of and to maintain. The work of the peasant does not challenge the soil of the field. In the sowing of the grain it places the seed in the keeping of the forces of growth and watches over its increase. But meanwhile even the cultivation of the field has come under the grip of another kind of

setting-in-order, which *sets* upon [*stellt*] nature. It sets upon it in the sense of challenging it. Agriculture is now the mechanized food industry. Air is now set upon to yield nitrogen, the earth to yield ore, ore to yield uranium, for example; uranium is set upon to yield atomic energy, which can be released either for destruction or for peaceful use.

This setting-upon that challenges forth the energies of nature is an expediting [*Fördern*], and in two ways. It expedites in that it unlocks and exposes. Yet that expediting is always itself directed from the beginning toward furthering something else, i.e., toward driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense. The coal that has been hauled out in some mining district has not been supplied in order that it may simply be present somewhere or other. It is stockpiled; that is, it is on call, ready to deliver the sun's warmth that is stored in it. The sun's warmth is challenged forth for heat, which in turn is ordered to deliver steam whose pressure turns the wheels that keep a factory running.

The hydroelectric plant is set into the current of the Rhine. It sets the Rhine to supplying its hydraulic pressure, which then sets the turbines turning. This turning sets those machines in motion whose thrust sets going the electric current for which the long-distance power station and its network of cables are set up to dispatch electricity. In the context of the interlocking processes pertaining to the orderly disposition of electrical energy, even the Rhine itself appears as something at our command. The hydroelectric plant is not built into the Rhine River as was the old wooden bridge that joined bank with bank for hundreds of years. Rather the river is dammed up into the power plant. What the river is now, namely, a water power supplier, derives from out of the essence of the power station. In order that we may even remotely consider the monstrousness that reigns here, let us ponder for a moment the contrast that speaks out of the two titles, "The Rhine" as dammed up into the *power* works, and "The Rhine" as uttered out of the *art* work, in Hölderlin's hymn by that name. But, it will be replied, the Rhine is still a river in the landscape, is it not? Perhaps. But how? In no other way than as an object on call for inspection by a tour group ordered there by the vacation industry.

The revealing that rules throughout modern technology has the character of a setting-upon, in the sense of a challenging-forth. That challenging happens in that the energy concealed in nature is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is

stored up, what is stored up is, in turn, distributed, and what is distributed is switched about ever anew. Unlocking, transforming, storing, distributing, and switching about are ways of revealing. But the revealing never simply comes to an end. Neither does it run off into the indeterminate. The revealing reveals to itself its own manifoldly interlocking paths, through regulating their course. This regulating itself is, for its part, everywhere secured. Regulating and securing even become the chief characteristics of the challenging revealing.

What kind of unconcealment is it, then, that is peculiar to that which comes to stand forth through this setting-upon that challenges? Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it the standing-reserve [*Bestand*]. The word expresses here something more, and something more essential, than mere "stock." The name "standing-reserve" assumes the rank of an inclusive rubric. It designates nothing less than the way in which everything presences that is wrought upon by the challenging revealing. Whatever stands by in the sense of standing-reserve no longer stands over against us as object.

Yet an airliner that stands on the runway is surely an object. Certainly. We can represent the machine so. But then it conceals itself as to what and how it is. Revealed, it stands on the taxi strip only as standing-reserve, inasmuch as it is ordered to ensure the possibility of transportation. For this it must be in its whole structure and in every one of its constituent parts, on call for duty, i.e., ready for takeoff. (Here it would be appropriate to discuss Hegel's definition of the machine as an autonomous tool. When applied to the tools of the craftsman, his characterization is correct. Characterized in this way, however, the machine is not thought at all from out of the essence of technology within which it belongs. Seen in terms of the standing-reserve, the machine is completely unautonomous, for it has its standing only from the ordering of the orderable.)

The fact that now, wherever we try to point to modern technology as the challenging revealing, the words "setting-upon," "ordering," "standing-reserve," obtrude and accumulate in a dry, monotonous, and therefore oppressive way, has its basis in what is now coming to utterance.

Who accomplishes the challenging setting-upon through which what we call the real is revealed as standing-reserve? Obviously,

man. To what extent is man capable of such a revealing? Man can indeed conceive, fashion, and carry through this or that in one way or another. But man does not have control over unconcealment itself, in which at any given time the real shows itself or withdraws. The fact that the real has been showing itself in the light of Ideas ever since the time of Plato, Plato did not bring about. The thinker only responded to what addressed itself to him.

Only to the extent that man for his part is already challenged to exploit the energies of nature can this ordering revealing happen. If man is challenged, ordered, to do this, then does not man himself belong even more originally than nature within the standing-reserve? The current talk about human resources, about the supply of patients for a clinic, gives evidence of this. The forester who, in the wood, measures the felled timber and to all appearances walks the same forest path in the same way as did his grandfather is today commanded by profit-making in the lumber industry, whether he knows it or not. He is made subordinate to the orderability of cellulose, which for its part is challenged forth by the need for paper, which is then delivered to newspapers and illustrated magazines. The latter, in their turn, set public opinion to swallowing what is printed, so that a set configuration of opinion becomes available on demand. Yet precisely because man is challenged more originally than are the energies of nature, i.e., into the process of ordering, he never is transformed into mere standing-reserve. Since man drives technology forward, he takes part in ordering as a way of revealing. But the unconcealment itself, within which ordering unfolds, is never a human handiwork, any more than is the realm through which man is already passing every time he as a subject relates to an object.

Where and how does this revealing happen if it is no mere handiwork of man? We need not look far. We need only apprehend in an unbiased way that which has already claimed man and has done so, so decisively that he can only be man at any given time as the one so claimed. Wherever man opens his eyes and ears, unlocks his heart, and gives himself over to meditating and striving, shaping and working, entreating and thanking, he finds himself everywhere already brought into the unconcealed. The unconcealment of the unconcealed has already come to pass whenever it calls man forth into the modes of revealing allotted to him. When man, in his way, from within unconcealment reveals that which presences, he merely responds to the call of unconcealment even when he contradicts it.

Thus when man, investigating, observing, ensnares nature as an area of his own conceiving, he has already been claimed by a way of revealing that challenges him to approach nature as an object of research, until even the object disappears into the objectlessness of standing-reserve.

Modern technology as an ordering revealing is, then, no merely human doing. Therefore we must take that challenging that sets upon man to order the real as standing-reserve in accordance with the way in which it shows itself. That challenging gathers man into ordering. This gathering concentrates man upon ordering the real as standing-reserve.

That which primordially unfolds the mountains into mountain ranges and courses through them in their folded togetherness is the gathering that we call "Gebirg [mountain chain].

That original gathering from which unfold the ways in which we have feelings of one kind or another we name "Gemüt" [disposition].

We now name that challenging claim which gathers man thither to order the self-revealing as standing-reserve: "Ge-stell" [Enframing].

We dare to use this word in a sense that has been thoroughly unfamiliar up to now.

According to ordinary usage, the word *Gestell* [frame] means some kind of apparatus, e.g., bookrack. *Gestell* is also the name for a skeleton. And the employment of the word *Ge-stell* [Enframing] that is now required of us seems equally eerie, not to speak of the arbitrariness with which words of a mature language are thus misused. Can anything be more strange? Surely not. Yet this strangeness is an old usage of thinking. And indeed thinkers accord with this usage precisely at the point where it is a matter of thinking that which is highest. We, late born, are no longer in a position to appreciate the significance of Plato's daring to use the word *eidos* for that which in everything and in each particular thing endures as present. For *eidos*, in the common speech, meant the outward aspect [*Ansicht*] that a visible thing offers to the physical eye. Plato exacts of this word, however, something utterly extraordinary: that it name what precisely is not and never will be perceivable with physical eyes. But even this is by no means the full extent of what is extraordinary here. For *idea* names not only the nonsensuous aspect of what is physically visible. Aspect (*idea*) names and is, also, that which constitutes the essence in the audible, the tasteable, the



tactile, in everything that is in any way accessible. Compared with the demands that Plato makes on language and thought in this and other instances, the use of the word *Gestell* as the name for the essence of modern technology, which we now venture here, is almost harmless. Even so, the usage now required remains something exacting and is open to misinterpretation.

Enframing means the gathering together of that setting-upon which sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve. Enframing means that way of revealing which holds sway in the essence of modern technology and which is itself nothing technological. On the other hand, all those things that are so familiar to us and are standard parts of an assembly, such as rods, pistons, and chassis, belong to the technological. The assembly itself, however, together with the aforementioned stockparts, falls within the sphere of technological activity; and this activity always merely responds to the challenge of Enframing, but it never comprises Enframing itself or brings it about.

The word *stellen* [to set upon] in the name *Ge-stell* [Enframing] not only means challenging. At the same time it should preserve the suggestion of another *Stellen* from which it stems, namely, that producing and presenting [*Her- und Dar-stellen*] which, in the sense of *poiēsis*, lets what presences come forth into unconcealment. This producing that brings forth—e.g., the erecting of a statue in the temple precinct—and the challenging ordering now under consideration are indeed fundamentally different, and yet they remain related in their essence. Both are ways of revealing, of *alētheia*. In Enframing, that unconcealment comes to pass in conformity with which the work of modern technology reveals the real as standing-reserve. This work is therefore neither only a human activity nor a mere means within such activity. The merely instrumental, merely anthropological definition of technology is therefore in principle untenable. And it cannot be rounded out by being referred back to some meta-physical or religious explanation that undergirds it.

It remains true, nonetheless, that man in the technological age is, in a particularly striking way, challenged forth into revealing. That revealing concerns nature, above all, as the chief storehouse of the standing energy reserve. Accordingly, man's ordering attitude and behavior display themselves first in the rise of modern physics as an exact science. Modern science's way of representing pursues and entraps nature as a calculable coherence of forces. Modern physics

is not experimental physics because it applies apparatus to the questioning of nature. Rather the reverse is true. Because physics, indeed already as pure theory, sets nature up to exhibit itself as a coherence of forces calculable in advance, it therefore orders its experiments precisely for the purpose of asking whether and how nature reports itself when set up in this way.

But after all, mathematical physics arose almost two centuries before technology. How, then, could it have already been set upon by modern technology and placed in its service? The facts testify to the contrary. Surely technology got under way only when it could be supported by exact physical science. Reckoned chronologically, this is correct. Thought historically, it does not hit upon the truth.

The modern physical theory of nature prepares the way first not simply for technology but for the essence of modern technology. For already in physics the challenging gathering-together into ordering revealing holds sway. But in it that gathering does not yet come expressly to appearance. Modern physics is the herald of Enframing, a herald whose origin is still unknown. The essence of modern technology has for a long time been concealing itself, even where power machinery has been invented, where electrical technology is in full swing, and where atomic technology is well under way.

All coming to presence, not only modern technology, keeps itself everywhere concealed to the last. Nevertheless, it remains, with respect to its holding sway, that which precedes all: the earliest. The Greek thinkers already knew of this when they said: That which is earlier with regard to the arising that holds sway becomes manifest to us men only later. That which is primarily early shows itself only ultimately to men. Therefore, in the realm of thinking, a painstaking effort to think through still more primally what was primally thought is not the absurd wish to revive what is past, but rather the sober readiness to be astounded before the coming of what is early.

Chronologically speaking, modern physical science begins in the seventeenth century. In contrast, machine-power technology develops only in the second half of the eighteenth century. But modern technology, which for chronological reckoning is the later, is, from the point of view of the essence holding sway within it, the historically earlier.

If modern physics must resign itself ever increasingly to the fact that its realm of representation remains inscrutable and incapable of being visualized, this resignation is not dictated by any commit-

tee of researchers. It is challenged forth by the rule of Enframing, which demands that nature be orderable as standing-reserve. Hence physics, in all its retreating from the representation turned only toward objects that has alone been standard till recently, will never be able to renounce this one thing: that nature reports itself in some way or other that is identifiable through calculation and that it remains orderable as a system of information. This system is determined, then, out of a causality that has changed once again. Causality now displays neither the character of the occasioning that brings forth nor the nature of the *causa efficiens*, let alone that of the *causa formalis*. It seems as though causality is shrinking into a reporting—a reporting challenged forth—of standing-reserves that must be guaranteed either simultaneously or in sequence. To this shrinking would correspond the process of growing resignation that Heisenberg's lecture depicts in so impressive a manner.

Because the essence of modern technology lies in Enframing, modern technology must employ exact physical science. Through its so doing, the deceptive illusion arises that modern technology is applied physical science. This illusion can maintain itself only so long as neither the essential origin of modern science nor indeed the essence of modern technology is adequately found out through questioning.

We are questioning concerning technology in order to bring to light our relationship to its essence. The essence of modern technology shows itself in what we call Enframing. But simply to point to this is still in no way to answer the question concerning technology, if to answer means to respond, in the sense of correspond, to the essence of what is being asked about.

Where do we find ourselves brought to, if now we think one step further regarding what Enframing itself actually is? It is nothing technological, nothing on the order of a machine. It is the way in which the real reveals itself as standing-reserve. Again we ask: Does this revealing happen somewhere beyond all human doing? No. But neither does it happen exclusively *in* man, or decisively *through* man.

Enframing is the gathering together that belongs to that setting-upon which sets upon man and puts him in position to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve. As the one who is challenged forth in this way, man stands within the essential realm of Enframing. He can never take up a relationship to it only

subsequently. Thus the question as to how we are to arrive at a relationship to the essence of technology, asked in this way, always comes too late. But never too late comes the question as to whether we actually experience ourselves as the ones whose activities everywhere, public and private, are challenged forth by Enframing. Above all, never too late comes the question as to whether and how we actually admit ourselves into that wherein Enframing itself comes to presence.

The essence of modern technology starts man upon the way of that revealing through which the real everywhere, more or less distinctly, becomes standing-reserve. "To start upon a way" means "to send" in our ordinary language. We shall call that sending-that-gathers [*versammelndes Schicken*] which first starts man upon a way of revealing, *destining* [*Geschick*]. It is from out of this destining that the essence of all history [*Geschichte*] is determined. History is neither simply the object of written chronicle nor simply the fulfillment of human activity. That activity first becomes history as something destined. And it is only the destining into objectifying representation that makes the historical accessible as an object for historiography, i.e., for a science, and on this basis makes possible the current equating of the historical with that which is chronicled.

Enframing, as a challenging-forth into ordering, sends into a way of revealing. Enframing is an ordaining of destining, as is every way of revealing. Bringing-forth, *poiēsis*, is also a destining in this sense.

Always the unconcealment of that which is goes upon a way of revealing. Always the destining of revealing holds complete sway over man. But that destining is never a fate that compels. For man becomes truly free only insofar as he belongs to the realm of destining and so becomes one who listens and hears [*Hörender*], and not one who is simply constrained to obey [*Höriger*].

The essence of freedom is *originally* not connected with the will or even with the causality of human willing.

Freedom governs the open in the sense of the cleared and lighted up, i.e., of the revealed. It is to the happening of revealing, i.e., of truth, that freedom stands in the closest and most intimate kinship. All revealing belongs within a harboring and a concealing. But that which frees—the mystery—is concealed and always concealing itself. All revealing comes out of the open, goes into the open, and brings into the open. The freedom of the open consists neither in unfettered arbitrariness nor in the constraint of mere laws. Freedom is that which conceals in a way that opens to light, in whose clear-

ing there shimmers that veil that covers what comes to presence of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils. Freedom is the realm of the destining that at any given time starts a revealing upon its way.

The essence of modern technology lies in Enframing. Enframing belongs within the destining of revealing. These sentences express something different from the talk that we hear more frequently, to the effect that technology is the fate of our age, where "fate" means the inevitableness of an unalterable course.

But when we consider the essence of technology, then we experience Enframing as a destining of revealing. In this way we are already sojourning within the open space of destining, a destining that in no way confines us to a stultified compulsion to push on blindly with technology or, what comes to the same thing, to rebel helplessly against it and curse it as the work of the devil. Quite to the contrary, when we once open ourselves expressly to the *essence* of technology, we find ourselves unexpectedly taken into a freeing claim.

The essence of technology lies in Enframing. Its holding sway belongs within destining. Since destining at any given time starts man on a way of revealing, man, thus under way, is continually approaching the brink of the possibility of pursuing and pushing forward nothing but what is revealed in ordering, and of deriving all his standards on this basis. Through this the other possibility is blocked, that man might be admitted more and sooner and ever more primally to the essence of that which is unconcealed and to its unconcealment, in order that he might experience as his essence his needed belonging to revealing.

Placed between these possibilities, man is endangered from out of destining. The destining of revealing is as such, in every one of its modes, and therefore necessarily, *danger*.

In whatever way the destining of revealing may hold sway, the unconcealment in which everything that is shows itself at any given time harbors the danger that man may quail at the unconcealed and may misinterpret it. Thus where everything that presences exhibits itself in the light of a cause-effect coherence, even God can, for representational thinking, lose all that is exalted and holy, the mysteriousness of his distance. In the light of causality, God can sink to the level of a cause, of *causa efficiens*. He then becomes, even in theology, the god of the philosophers, namely, of those who define the unconcealed and the concealed in terms of the causality of making, without ever considering the essential origin of the causality.

In a similar way the unconcealment in accordance with which nature presents itself as a calculable complex of the effects of forces can indeed permit correct determinations; but precisely through these successes the danger can remain that in the midst of all that is correct the true will withdraw.

The destining of revealing is in itself not just any danger, but danger as such.

Yet when destining reigns in the mode of Enframing, it is the supreme danger. This danger attests itself to us in two ways. As soon as what is unconcealed no longer concerns man even as object, but does so, rather, exclusively as standing-reserve, and man in the midst of objectlessness is nothing but the orderer of the standing-reserve, then he comes to the very brink of a precipitous fall; that is, he comes to the point where he himself will have to be taken as standing-reserve. Meanwhile man, precisely as the one so threatened, exalts himself to the posture of lord of the earth. In this way the impression comes to prevail that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct. This illusion gives rise in turn to one final delusion: It seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself. Heisenberg has with complete correctness pointed out that the real must present itself to contemporary man in this way. *In truth, however, precisely nowhere does man today any longer encounter himself, i.e., his essence.* Man stands so decisively in attendance on the challenging-forth of Enframing that he does not apprehend Enframing as a claim, that he fails to see himself as the one spoken to, and hence also fails in every way to hear in what respect he ek-sists, from out of his essence, in the realm of an exhortation or address, and thus *can never* encounter only himself.

But Enframing does not simply endanger man in his relationship to himself and to everything that is. As a destining, it banishes man into that kind of revealing which is an ordering. Where this ordering holds sway, it drives out every other possibility of revealing. Above all, Enframing conceals that revealing which, in the sense of *poiēsis*, lets what presences come forth into appearance. As compared with that other revealing, the setting-upon that challenges forth thrusts man into a relation to that which is, that is at once antithetical and rigorously ordered. Where Enframing holds sway, regulating and securing of the standing-reserve mark all revealing. They no longer even let their own fundamental characteristic appear, namely, this revealing as such.

Thus the challenging Enframing not only conceals a former way of revealing, bringing-forth, but it conceals revealing itself and with it That wherein unconcealment, i.e., truth, comes to pass.

Enframing blocks the shining-forth and holding-sway of truth. The destining that sends into ordering is consequently the extreme danger. What is dangerous is not technology. There is no demonry of technology, but rather there is the mystery of its essence. The essence of technology, as a destining of revealing, is the danger. The transformed meaning of the word "Enframing" will perhaps become somewhat more familiar to us now if we think Enframing in the sense of destining and danger.

The threat to man does not come in the first instance from the potentially lethal machines and apparatus of technology. The actual threat has already affected man in his essence. The rule of Enframing threatens man with the possibility that it could be denied to him to enter into a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth.

Thus, where Enframing reigns, there is *danger* in the highest sense.

*But where danger is, grows  
The saving power also.*

Let us think carefully about these words of Hölderlin. What does it mean "to save"? Usually we think that it means only to seize hold of a thing threatened by ruin, in order to secure it in its former continuance. But the verb "to save" says more. "To save" is to fetch something home into its essence, in order to bring the essence for the first time into its genuine appearing. If the essence of technology, Enframing, is the extreme danger, and if there is truth in Hölderlin's words, then the rule of Enframing cannot exhaust itself solely in blocking all lighting-up of every revealing, all appearing of truth. Rather, precisely the essence of technology must harbor in itself the growth of the saving power. But in that case, might not an adequate look into what Enframing is as a destining of revealing bring into appearance the saving power in its arising?

In what respect does the saving power grow there also where the danger is? Where something grows, there it takes root, from thence it thrives. Both happen concealedly and quietly and in their own time. But according to the words of the poet we have no right whatsoever to expect that there where the danger is we should be able to

lay hold of the saving power immediately and without preparation. Therefore we must consider now, in advance, in what respect the saving power does most profoundly take root and thence thrive even in that wherein the extreme danger lies, in the holding sway of Enframing. In order to consider this, it is necessary, as a last step upon our way, to look with yet clearer eyes into the danger. Accordingly, we must once more question concerning technology. For we have said that in technology's essence roots and thrives the saving power.

But how shall we behold the saving power in the essence of technology so long as we do not consider in what sense of "essence" it is that Enframing is actually the essence of technology?

Thus far we have understood "essence" in its current meaning. In the academic language of philosophy, "essence" means *what* something is; in Latin, *quid*. *Quidditas*, whatness, provides the answer to the question concerning essence. For example, what pertains to all kinds of trees—oaks, beeches, birches, firs—is the same "treeness." Under this inclusive genus—the "universal"—fall all real and possible trees. Is then the essence of technology, Enframing, the common genus for everything technological? If that were the case then the steam turbine, the radio transmitter, and the cyclotron would each be an Enframing. But the word "Enframing" does not mean here a tool or any kind of apparatus. Still less does it mean the general concept of such resources. The machines and apparatus are no more cases and kinds of Enframing than are the man at the switchboard and the engineer in the drafting room. Each of these in its own way indeed belongs as stockpart, available resource, or executer, within Enframing; but Enframing is never the essence of technology in the sense of a genus. Enframing is a way of revealing having the character of destining, namely, the way that challenges forth. The revealing that brings forth (*poiësis*) is also a way that has the character of destining. But these ways are not kinds that, arrayed beside one another, fall under the concept of revealing. Revealing is that destining which, ever suddenly and inexplicably to all thinking, apportions itself into the revealing that brings forth and that also challenges, and which allots itself to man. The challenging revealing has its origin as a destining in bringing-forth. But at the same time Enframing, in a way characteristic of a destining, blocks *poiësis*.

Thus Enframing, as a destining of revealing, is indeed the essence of technology, but never in the sense of genus and *essentia*. If we



pay heed to this, something astounding strikes us: It is technology itself that makes the demand on us to think in another way what is usually understood by "essence." But in what way?

If we speak of the "essence of a house" and the "essence of a state," we do not mean a generic type; rather we mean the ways in which house and state hold sway, administer themselves, develop and decay—the way in which they "essence" [*Wesen*]. Johann Peter Hebel in a poem, "Ghost on Kanderer Street," for which Goethe had a special fondness, uses the old word *die Weserei*. It means the city hall inasmuch as there the life of the community gathers and village existence is constantly in play, i.e., comes to presence. It is from the verb *wesen* that the noun is derived. *Wesen* understood as a verb is the same as *währen* [to last or endure], not only in terms of meaning, but also in terms of the phonetic formation of the word. Socrates and Plato already think the essence of something as what essences, what comes to presence, in the sense of what endures. But they think what endures as what remains permanently [*das Fortwährende*] (*aei on*). And they find what endures permanently in what, as that which remains, tenaciously persists throughout all that happens. That which remains they discover, in turn, in the aspect [*Aussehen*] (*eidos, idea*), for example, the Idea "house."

The Idea "house" displays what anything is that is fashioned as a house. Particular, real, and possible houses, in contrast, are changing and transitory derivatives of the Idea and thus belong to what does not endure.

But it can never in any way be established that enduring is based solely on what Plato thinks as *idea* and Aristotle thinks as *to ti ên einai* (that which any particular thing has always been), or what metaphysics in its most varied interpretations thinks as *essentia*.

All essencing endures. But is enduring only permanent enduring? Does the essence of technology endure in the sense of the permanent enduring of an Idea that hovers over everything technological, thus making it seem that by technology we mean some mythological abstraction? The way in which technology essences lets itself be seen only from out of that permanent enduring in which Enframing comes to pass as a destining of revealing. Goethe once uses the mysterious word *fortgewähren* [to grant permanently] in place of *fortwähren* [to endure permanently]. He hears *währen* [to endure] and *gewähren* [to grant] here in one unarticulated accord. And if we now ponder more carefully than we did before what it is that actually endures and perhaps alone endures, we may venture to say

*Only what is granted endures. That which endures primally out of the earliest beginning is what grants.*

As the essencing of technology, Enframing is that which endures. Does Enframing hold sway at all in the sense of granting? No doubt the question seems a horrendous blunder. For according to everything that has been said, Enframing is, rather a destining that gathers together into the revealing that challenges forth. Challenging is anything but a granting. So it seems, so long as we do not notice that the challenging-forth into the ordering of the real as standing-reserve still remains a destining that starts man upon a way of revealing. As this destining, the coming to presence of technology gives man entry into That which, of himself, he can neither invent nor in any way make. For there is no such thing as a man who, solely of himself, is only man.

But if this destining, Enframing, is the extreme danger, not only for man's coming to presence, but for all revealing as such, should this destining still be called a granting? Yes, most emphatically, if in this destining the saving power is said to grow. Every destining of revealing comes to pass from out of a granting and as such a granting. For it is granting that first conveys to man that share in revealing which the coming-to-pass of revealing needs. As the one so needed and used, man is given to belong to the coming-to-pass of truth. The granting that sends in one way or another into revealing is as such the saving power. For the saving power lets man see and enter into the highest dignity of his essence. This dignity lies in keeping watch over the unconcealment—and with it, from the first, the concealment—of all coming to presence on this earth. It is precisely in Enframing, which threatens to sweep man away into ordering as the supposed single way of revealing, and so thrusts man into the danger of the surrender of his free essence—it is precisely in this extreme danger that the innermost indestructible belongingness of man within granting may come to light, provided that we, for our part, begin to pay heed to the coming to presence of technology.

Thus the coming to presence of technology harbors in itself what we least suspect, the possible arising of the saving power.

Everything, then, depends upon this: that we ponder this arising and that, recollecting, we watch over it. How can this happen? Above all through our catching sight of what comes to presence in technology, instead of merely staring at the technological. So long as we represent technology as an instrument, we remain held fast in the will to master it. We press on past the essence of technology.

When, however, we ask how the instrumental comes to presence as a kind of causality, then we experience this coming to presence as the destining of a revealing.

When we consider, finally, that the coming to presence of the essence of technology comes to pass in the granting that needs and uses man so that he may share in revealing, then the following becomes clear:

The essence of technology is in a lofty sense ambiguous. Such ambiguity points to the mystery of all revealing, i.e., of truth.

On the one hand, Enframing challenges forth into the frenziedness of ordering that blocks every view into the coming-to-pass of revealing and so radically endangers the relation to the essence of truth.

On the other hand, Enframing comes to pass for its part in the granting that lets man endure—as yet unexperienced, but perhaps more experienced in the future—that he may be the one who is needed and used for the safekeeping of the coming to presence of truth. Thus does the arising of the saving power appear.

The irresistibility of ordering and the restraint of the saving power draw past each other like the paths of two stars in the course of the heavens. But precisely this, their passing by, is the hidden side of their nearness.

When we look into the ambiguous essence of technology, we behold the constellation, the stellar course of the mystery.

The question concerning technology is the question concerning the constellation in which revealing and concealing, in which the coming to presence of truth, comes to pass.

But what help is it to us to look into the constellation of truth? We look into the danger and see the growth of the saving power.

Through this we are not yet saved. But we are thereupon summoned to hope in the growing light of the saving power. How can this happen? Here and now and in little things, that we may foster the saving power in its increase. This includes holding always before our eyes the extreme danger.

The coming to presence of technology threatens revealing, threatens it with the possibility that all revealing will be consumed in ordering and that everything will present itself only in the unconcealedness of standing-reserve. Human activity can never directly counter this danger. Human achievement alone can never banish it. But human reflection can ponder the fact that all saving power must be of a higher essence than what is endangered, though at the same time kindred to it.

But might there not perhaps be a more primally granted revealing that could bring the saving power into its first shining forth in the midst of the danger, a revealing that in the technological age rather conceals than shows itself?

There was a time when it was not technology alone that bore the name *technē*. Once that revealing that brings forth truth into the splendor of radiant appearing also was called *technē*.

Once there was a time when the bringing-forth of the true into the beautiful was called *technē*. And the *poiēsis* of the fine arts also was called *technē*.

In Greece, at the outset of the destining of the West, the arts soared to the supreme height of the revealing granted them. They brought the presence [*Gegenwart*] of the gods, brought the dialogue of divine and human destinings, to radiance. And art was simply called *technē*. It was a single, manifold revealing. It was pious, *promos*, i.e., yielding to the holding-sway and the safekeeping of truth.

The arts were not derived from the artistic. Art works were not enjoyed aesthetically. Art was not a sector of cultural activity.

What, then, was art—perhaps only for that brief but magnificent time? Why did art bear the modest name *technē*? Because it was a revealing that brought forth and hither, and therefore belonged within *poiēsis*. It was finally that revealing which holds complete sway in all the fine arts, in poetry, and in everything poetical that obtained *poiēsis* as its proper name.

The same poet from whom we heard the words

*But where danger is, grows  
The saving power also.*

says to us:

. . . *poetically dwells man upon this earth.*

The poetical brings the true into the splendor of what Plato in the *Phaedrus* calls to *ekphanestaton*, that which shines forth most purely. The poetical thoroughly pervades every art, every revealing of coming to presence into the beautiful.

Could it be that the fine arts are called to poetic revealing? Could it be that revealing lays claim to the arts most primally, so that they for their part may expressly foster the growth of the saving power,

may awaken and found anew our look into that which grants and our trust in it?

Whether art may be granted this highest possibility of its essence in the midst of the extreme danger, no one can tell. Yet we can be astounded. Before what? Before this other possibility: that the frenziedness of technology may entrench itself everywhere to such an extent that someday, throughout everything technological, the essence of technology may come to presence in the coming-to-pass of truth.

Because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it.

Such a realm is art. But certainly only if reflection on art, for its part, does not shut its eyes to the constellation of truth after which we are *questioning*.

Thus questioning, we bear witness to the crisis that in our sheer preoccupation with technology we do not yet experience the coming to presence of technology, that in our sheer aesthetic-mindedness we no longer guard and preserve the coming to presence of art. Yet the more questioningly we ponder the essence of technology, the more mysterious the essence of art becomes.

The closer we come to the danger, the more brightly do the ways into the saving power begin to shine and the more questioning we become. For questioning is the piety of thought.

*Translated by William Lovitt*



## NOTES

The majority of the translations selected for this anthology provide a number of explanatory footnotes. We have decided to drop those in most instances, in order to let the texts speak for themselves and leave the explanations, where necessary, to the course instructor. Only in those cases where the footnotes have become an integral part of the way the texts have come to be read (i.e., part of their “*Rezeptions- und Wirkungsgeschichte*”) in the English-speaking world, have we kept them in their entirety.

English-speaking students and scholars of Heidegger have, by now, a considerable number of translations, anthologies, and commentaries at their disposal. For Heidegger’s early “magnum opus,” *Being and Time*, there are two authoritative translations available, complete with English–German, German–English glossary or lexicon, and indexes of Latin and Greek terms used by Heidegger. Michael Inwood (see bibliography) has published a *Heidegger-Dictionary*, which is really an extended glossary with long textual passages for illustration. For the present Anthology, we have exclusively used the more recent of the two full translations of *Sein und Zeit*, that by Joan Stambaugh, SUNY Press, Albany, 1996.

Whenever possible, we rely on the volumes of the edition of Heidegger’s collected works—the *Heidegger Gesamtausgabe (HGA)*—as sources for the texts included in this anthology. The *HGA*, projected to have 102 volumes, is currently being completed by Klostermann Verlag, Frankfurt a.M.

### The Man—Politics and Ideology

*Brief an Victor Schworer vom 02.10. 1929*, in: Ulrich Sieg, “Die Verjüngung des deutschen Geistes,” *Die Zeit*, nr. 52 vom 22. Dezember 1989, p. 50, translated for this volume by Manfred Stassen, with permission of *Die Zeit*.

The letter is to Victor Schworer. He had been well known to Heidegger in his capacity as a high-ranking official in the Ministry of Education and Science in Baden (Heidegger’s and the University of Freiburg’s home state) before becoming Deputy Secretary General of the *Notgemeinschaft der*

*deutschen Wissenschaft*, the self-governing “emergency” association of German universities in the Weimar Republic, forerunner of today’s German Research Society (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*).

The candidate being recommended for a scholarship to do postdoctoral studies in American pragmatism at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Baumgarten, is a nephew of Max Weber’s, the famous sociologist, and Heidegger’s assistant. Heidegger wants to make sure that no Jewish candidate is preferred in the selection process.

“The Self-Assertion of the German University,” translated by Karsten Harries, in *Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 38 (1985), pp. 470–80.

This inaugural address on the occasion of Heidegger’s assuming the post as Rector (President) of the University of Freiburg on May 27, 1933—four months after the Nazis came to power—has been available since 1983, in an edition by Heidegger’s son—complete with an apologetic article explaining his father’s involvement with the powers of the day—and is now included as *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (Rede gehalten bei der feierlichen Übernahme des Rektorats der Universität Freiburg* i. Br. am 27. Mai 1933, in *Reden und andere Zeugnisse seines Lebensweges*, HGA, I. Abtlg., *Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1975*, Bd. 16 (hrsg. von Hermann Heidegger), Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 2000, pp. 107–17.

“Follow the Führer!, translated by D. D. Runes, in *German Existentialism*, Dagobert D. Runes, ed., Wisdom Library, New York, 1965, pp. 37–42.

This address of a university president to members of a municipal “emergency labor force” is no exercise in “town/gown” relations, but a duty in compliance with the Nazi directive to merge the “workers of the hand” with those “of the head” (*Arbeiter der Faust und Arbeiter der Stirn*) through *Nationalsozialistische Wissensschulung* (national-socialist competency training).

It is now available in German as *Zur Eröffnung der Schulungskurse für die Notstandsarbeiter der Stadt an der Universität* (Rede vom 22. Januar 1934), in *Reden und andere Zeugnisse seines Lebensweges*, op. cit. pp. 232–37.

“Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?,” translated by T. J. Sheehan, in *Listening: Journal of Religion and Culture*, vol. 12, no. 3 (1977), pp. 122–24.

This 1934 text was written in response to demands on Heidegger to explain his rejection of two—prestigious—invitations, in 1929 and 1933, respectively, to assume a professorship at the Humboldt University of Berlin. Note the marked combination of city-phobia, provincialism, and “kitsch.”

The German text: *Schöpferische Landschaften—Warum bleiben wir in der Provinz?*, in *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens, Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe* (HGA), I. Abtlg.: *Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976*, Bd. 13, hrsg. v. Hermann Heidegger, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M., 1983, pp. 9–13.



“The Thinker as Poet,” translated by Albert Hofstadter, in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper and Row, New York, 1971, pp. 8–9.

Throughout his life, Heidegger has written poetry. Given the position that poetry occupies in his universe of genuine and authentic discourse, his poems need to be taken seriously. Just as in the case of the poetry by other poets that Heidegger interprets, it is not the aesthetic quality or intrinsic beauty of the poems that matters, but only their philosophical “content.”

They were first presented in a private printing of only fifty numbered copies, then published by Neske, Pfullingen 1954 and augmented in a second edition in 1981. The poems included here are accessible in the original in *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*, op.cit., pp. 80–81.

“Only a God Can Save Us,” translated by M. P. Alter and J. D. Caputo, in *Philosophy Today*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Winter 1976), pp. 268–84.

Widely considered to be Heidegger’s philosophico-political testament, this carefully prepared interview with, and meticulously orchestrated publication, by the German (investigative) weekly *Der Spiegel* in 1966 could, at Heidegger’s express request, only be published posthumously. It appeared in 1976. Heidegger leaves it open, whether the “saving God” is a God of the Greeks, Hölderlin’s God, or the Christian God of his Catholic youth.

It is now available in German (with a lengthy commentary on the circumstances of its publication), in *Reden und andere Zeugnisse seines Lebensweges*, op.cit., pp. 652–83 (text)/815–25 (commentary).

## The Method—Philosophy from Phenomenology to “Thanking”

### *De(con)struction and Phenomenology*

“The Task of a Destructuring of the History of Ontology,” and “The Phenomenological Method of the Investigation” in *Being and Time*, translated by Joan Stambaugh, SUNY Press, Albany, 1996, §§ 6–8, pp. 17–35.

This is Heidegger’s explanation of his “method” and the structural design in *Being and Time*. The two texts are background reading for the understanding of Heidegger as the “father” of deconstructionism and for his alternative (i.e., non-Husserlian, non-“scientific”) way of going about “phenomenology.” Note that the Second Part of *Being and Time*, announced in the outline of §8, never appeared.

In German, they are now available as *Die Aufgabe einer Destruktion der Geschichte der Ontologie, Die Phänomenologische Methode der Untersuchung, and Der Abriß der Abhandlung*, §§6–8, in *Sein und Zeit*, HGA I. Abtlg.: *Veröffentlichte Schriften 1914–1970*, Bd. 2, hrsg. v. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 1977, pp. 27–53.

“My Way to Phenomenology,” translated by Joan Stambaugh, in *On Time and Being*, Harper and Row, New York, 1972, pp. 74–82.

Interesting autobiographical account of Heidegger’s “path” to his variety of phenomenology. Available in German in the Niemeyer Verlag publication mentioned in *Zur Sache des Denkens*, Tübingen, 1969 (4. Aufl., 2000, with explanations), pp. 81–92.

### *Thinking/Thanking*

“The Pathway,” translated by T. F. O’Meara, in *Listening: Journal of Religion and Culture*, vol. 2 (1967), pp. 88–91.

This little piece first appeared in 1949, before the constitution of a German government. Its publication had to be authorized by the (French) military government for the State of Baden. It is a telling testimony to Heidegger’s linking the labor of thinking to that of the peasant and the forester. The only “intellectual” who is acceptable as a co-wanderer on this path is the German mystic Meister Eckehardt (1260–1327).

It is published in German as *Der Feldweg*, in *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*, op. cit., pp. 87–90.

“What Is Called, What Calls for Thinking?,” translated by Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray, Harper and Row, New York, 1968, Part II, Summary and Transition of Lectures I, III, and IX and end of Lecture XI, pp. 122–25, 143–47, 214–15, 244.

These are transcripts of a lecture series the methodological principle and spontaneity of which are kept by the appended summaries of each lecture and the transitions between them. They represent an extensive elaboration on the double meaning of the German word *heißen* and its consequences for the way in which thinking is to be conceived: the “first” interpretation of *heißen* (meaning) would lead to “philosophizing” by way of dealing critically and creatively (*Auseinandersetzung*) with the history of philosophy, with everything that thinking has “meant” in the history of thought. The second interpretation, which is the important one for Heidegger, postulates two things: there are phenomena in the world that “call for thinking” but, more importantly, there is an agency, *Beyng*, which demands, orders thinking as a way of being-in-the-world and of developing an adequate “response” (*Ant-wort*) to it.

The German title is *Was heißt denken?* and is available as Bd. 8, HGA, I. Abtl.: *Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976*.

“Discourse on Thinking,” translated by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund, Harper and Row, New York, 1966, pp. 43–57.

This 1955 text is really a commemorative address for a local musician of Heidegger’s home region. He uses the occasion to develop his philosophical way of dealing with the world—“let be” and be open to the phenom-

ena and their secret (*Geheimnis*)—in counter-distinction to the technological imperative of the atomic age. True creativity requires an autochthonous “grounding” (*Bodenständigkeit*), the artist or thinker must occupy a defined “space” in the fourfold “open” between human beings, and the Gods, heaven, and earth. The privileged “space” is their *Heimat* (home province).

The German text is now available as *Gelassenheit* (Rede vom 30. Oktober 1955), in *Reden und andere Zeugnisse seines Lebensweges*, op.cit., pp. 517–29.

## The Message—From “Being” to “Beyng”

### *Fundamental Ontology*

“Analysis of Environmentality and Wordliness in General,” in *Being and Time*, op.cit., §§ 15–18, pp. 67–83.

This is the famous *Zeuganalyse*—Heidegger’s “phenomenological” analysis of his “environment,” as part of what he calls the “hermeneutics of facticity”—one of the “oldest” parts of *Being and Time* (going back to lectures held in 1919–20). Heidegger analyzes the environmentality of his office as well as of his preindustrial, rural home region. In it, he arrives at a new ontological classification of “beings”: those present-at-hand (*Vorhandenes*)—objects of scientific inquiry (such as iron and wood as manifestations of chemical compositions or the wind as a meteorological datum); those “ready-to-hand” (*Zuhandenes Zeug*)—objects of our daily use—*Zeug* = gear, tools, equipment (like the hammer, which may be of iron and steel, but which is used “to hang up a picture on the office wall,” or the wind in the sails); and finally: “Da-sein,” which is ontologically different from the previous two in that its “essence” is not its specific “makeup” of physical properties, nor its functionality, but its “existence.” It “is” by way of understanding the phenomena in the world as either “present-at-hand” or “ready-to-hand.”

This is a clear break from the ontological tradition, especially the one established by Descartes, for whom all phenomena, including human beings, were “things” (which he distinguished further by declaring that some are “extended things”—*res extensa*—and others “thinking things”—*res cogitans*). Heidegger’s *Zeuganalyse* is the first manifestation of an “ontological difference”: that between objects and human beings.

The German text: *Die Analyse der Umweltlichkeit und Weltlichkeit überhaupt*, §§ 15–18 of *Sein und Zeit*, op. cit., pp. 90–120.

“The Question of Being (Letter to Ernst Jünger ‘Concerning “The Line”’), translated by William Kluback and Jean T. Wilde (Twayne) College & University Press, New Haven 1958, pp. 33–109 (bilingual edition).

This text first appeared in a Festschrift for the writer Ernst Jünger to whom Heidegger had nurtured what Goethe called an “elective affinity” early on in his own career as a philosopher. It is an account on having overstepped “the line,” from traditional metaphysics to a new way of corresponding to the call of *Beyng*. The *Sein* of the old metaphysics is crossed out, until such time as a new language will have been found, adequate to the realm of thought on the other side of the line. This is the second “ontological difference,” between “the being of beings” of traditional metaphysics, and *Beyng*. Jünger had characterized the “line” as the “zero meridian” of thought and developed his theory of nihilism around it. Heidegger’s analysis is a response to both Nietzsche’s and Jünger’s theory of nihilism and an exposition of his own theory in which nihilism is an integral, necessary part of the unfolding of *Beyng* in its new, nonmetaphysical meaning.

The German text has been available since 1976 as: *Zur Seinsfrage (Brief an Ernst Jünger “Über die ‘Linie’”)*, in *Wegmarken*, HGA, I. Abtlg.: *Veröffentlichte Schriften 1914–1970*, Bd. 9, hrsg. v. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M., 176 (1996, 2. Aufl.), pp. 385–426.

### *Existential Analysis*

“Being-in-the-World as Being-with and Being a Self: The ‘They’”; “The Everyday Being of the There and The Falling Prey of Da-sein”; “Care as the Being of Da-sein”; “The Possible Being-a-Whole of Da-sein and Being-toward-Death”; “The Existentially Authentic Potentiality-for-Being-a-Whole of *Da-sein* as Anticipatory Resoluteness,” in *Being and Time*, op.cit., §§ 25–27, 35–38, 39–42, 46–53, 62, pp. 107–22, 156–68, 169–86, 219–46, 282–87.

These five sections are taken from *Being and Time* and constitute what is, arguably, the center of Heidegger’s existential analysis that has influenced a myriad of other thinkers and writers, in Germany and abroad, mostly in France. Much of Western literature had either been anticipatory of, or respondent to, the existential “categories” that Heidegger developed here (and for the “derivation” of which he himself has recourse to literary texts): angst, authenticity/inauthenticity, being-unto-death, resoluteness, and so forth. The writers that have frequently been linked to this “existential analysis” range from Dostoevsky and Tolstoy via Kafka and Hesse, to Camus, Sartre, and Simone de Beauvoir, even to Nelson Algren, Faulkner, Hemingway, Richard Wright, and Ralph Ellison.

Heidegger’s texts in these sections are perhaps the most accessible of his work to nonspecialists. Attention should be drawn to his treatment of “Care” (*Sorge*): this is a term of mythical and early literary origin, with a special meaning for German literature, since Goethe introduces the allegorical—female—character of *Sorge* in his *Faust*. The only feminist interpretation of *Being and Time* to date takes its clues from the Cura-fable and

Heidegger's interpretation of it. It is by: Susanne Lettow, *Die Macht der Sorge. Die philosophische Artikulation von Geschlechterverhältnissen in Heidegger's "Sein und Zeit,"* Reihe Perspektiven, Bd. 20, edition discord, Tübingen 2001. To my knowledge, it has not yet been translated into English. (the title is: *The Power of Care: The Philosophical Articulation of Gender Relations in Heidegger's 'Being and Time.'*)

For the German text see *Sein und Zeit*, augmented by Heidegger's own remarks (glosses) in the margins of the original edition, now available as: Band 2, HGA, Abtlg. I: *Veröffentlichte Schriften 1914–1970*, hrsg. v. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 1977.

### *Philosophy of Language and Poetry*

“Understanding, Interpretation, Discourse, Language, Idle Talk” in *Being and Time*, op.cit., §§ 31–34, pp. 134–56.

This section is the basis for Heidegger's hermeneutics (the theory of understanding and interpretation) and his early philosophy of language. In this early theory, it is the *Dasein* that “ex-presses” itself (*spricht sich selbst aus*), in the various “modes” possible. (See my introduction for a diagram and a short discussion of its implications.)

The German text, *Verstehen, Auslegung, Aussage, Rede, Sprache*, is to be found in *Sein und Zeit*, §§ 31–34, op. cit., pp. 190–221.

“. . . Poetically, Man Dwells . . .,” translated by Albert Hofstadter, in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper and Row, New York, 1975, pp. 213–20.

This text is the transcription of a lecture given between 1951 and 1954 in various German and Swiss cities, initially before a group of leading German industrialists at their traditional gathering place, the *Bühler Höhe*. The *genus loci* is not unimportant: it signifies a coming together between capital and “spirit.” In interpreting a famous poem by Hölderlin, Heidegger, does three things at once: he demonstrates that the lasting interpretations of our being in this world come from the poets and how to read them; he introduces his theory of ontometrics, the “taking measure” of being in the world; and he demonstrates that the “industrial-technological complex” leads to a form of “building” that makes man's true “dwelling” in this world impossible. Poets and original thinkers are the architects of man's adequate dwelling, which is in language, the House of *Beyng*. In this later “theory” of language, it is no longer *Dasein* that speaks, but language itself: *Die Sprache spricht*. Language is the medium of *Beyng*, the poets and original thinkers are mouthpieces of Language.

The German text is now available as: *Dichterisch wohnt der Mensch . . .*, in: *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, HGA, I. Abtlg.: *Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976*, Bd. 7, hrsg. v. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M., 2000, pp. 191–208.

*Critique of Technology*

“The Question Concerning Technology,” translated by William Lovitt, Harper and Row, New York, 1977, pp. 3–35.

This text goes back to a lecture at the Technical University in Munich in 1953. It is Heidegger’s most vociferous indictment of modern technology and, on the level of abstract thought, a plea for rethinking our relationship to our planet. Rather than “letting the phenomena be,” technology objectifies them, it takes a stand against them (*Gegen-stand*) and “frames” them (*Gestell*). Framing is the opposite of discovering, technology is not in the service of truth, but the expression of the highest form of “error.” However, technology may serve to “call” human beings back into their ownmost destiny, i.e., the re-discovery of their authentic dwelling in the House of Being, poetry.

The German text, *Die Frage nach der Technik*, is included in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, op. cit., pp. 7–36.

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