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Source: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Mar., 1948), pp. 337-371

Published by: [International Phenomenological Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2103208>

Accessed: 22-04-2015 21:43 UTC

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## ON THE PSEUDO-CONCRETENESS OF HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHY

### I. HEIDEGGER CUTS ACROSS THE ALTERNATIVE "NATURALISM-SUPRANATURALISM"

If there is a formula apt to define the locus of Heidegger's Existential Philosophy and to clarify the cause of its intricacy and its power of attraction, the formula would read: *Heidegger's philosophy cuts across the traditional alternatives "Naturalism-Supranaturalism."* It matters little that no such characterization can be found in Heidegger's works. What do we mean by "cutting across"?

Setting aside intermezzos, the history of modern philosophy, particularly that of the post-Hegelian period, had been a history of "Naturalizations"—of naturalization of man, of morals, of the state, and so on. The provinces won from Christian philosophy automatically had accrued to the realm of "Nature." Yet in the last century "atheism" and "naturalism" were interchangeable terms.

Not so for Heidegger. Although he inherited atheism from naturalism, particularly from its nineteenth century variant, he keeps his distance from naturalism—a distance barely shorter than the gulf that exists between Christian anthropology and materialism. True, the "Dasein"<sup>1</sup>—the topic of Heidegger's philosophy—is "hiesig," belongs to *τοῦτω τῷ κόσμῳ*, but it is not "nature," much less "life" in its biological sense: for in Heidegger's philosophy the word "Nature" already designates a "Seinsweise," i.e., a *modus existendi* among other *modi*, and Nature "is" only "for" a "Dasein."<sup>2</sup>

Though not nature, "Dasein" is far from being something of the supra-natural order: there is just as little "Beyond" in Heidegger's philosophy as there is in modern science or in historical materialism. Even in that disguised form which the philosophy of bourgeois society had invented: in the form of "Ought to be" or as "world of values" the "Beyond" does not

<sup>1</sup> This term (see below) designates the specific *modum existendi* of man, the "being there"; not the *fact* of his existence. Being untranslatable the German term will be adopted throughout this article.

<sup>2</sup> It may seem superfluous to stress that this "for" is not identical with the classical "for" in the "Genesis" according to which Nature has been created for man. We consider it, however, important to emphasize the influence of the Jewish-Christian "For" in the history of philosophy. As a matter of fact, it represents the ultimate, though secret, basis for all variants of "Transcendental Philosophy" according to which man is not "pars inter partes mundi"; but the world rather a "correlate" or a "product" or a "Datum" (derived from "dare"! ) or a "property" of man.

enter his dimension "Dasein." His objective seems to be a new plane—a plane that requires a new approach, a new vocabulary, new categories

Let us admit from the outset: The philosophical "draught," ("Tiefgang") and the effects of his philosophy "outside the customary alternatives" have to be taken most seriously. Heidegger's philosophy must not be compared with those merely verbal "syntheses," all those "Real-Idealisms" or "Ideal-Realisms" which had accumulated in the course of the last century.

First of all: from the purely logical angle, his "neutrality" has its merits. Once one part of a logical alternative is abandoned, its counterpart, owing its meaning to its very counterposition, cannot claim to a meaning either. Once the concept of "Supra-natural" is dropped, the concept "Natural" cannot remain intact either. Obviously the philosophers of the last century had not drawn this necessary conclusion. By stressing "naturalism," they were preserving a system of concepts that still depended on the counterconcept they had abolished.

It is needless to say that Heidegger's step out of the alternative was not an absolutely first step. It had its pre-history, or rather its pre-histories of very diverse ancestries.

The one attempt to start "outside" the alternative was the post-Hegelian "Philosophy of Mind" (example: Dilthey) according to which the life of "Mind" or "History" was not any longer directed by Providence, although they were not conceded as belonging to the realm of "Nature" either. In his already thoroughly forgotten book on the *Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*, Rickert, in a wholly epigonic and insufficient way, had tried to give this dimension its logical articulation.

Furthermore, in all his phenomenological works, Husserl had undertaken the task of exploring a "region" outside the alternative: when, after his attack on "Psychologism," i.e., naturalism in psychology and logic, he started to describe the so-called "intentionalen Strukturen," he neither aimed at "Metaphysics of Mind" (although his attempt was temporarily, even by himself, mistaken as a sort of new Platonism) nor at a psychology; but, as it is sufficiently known, at some "neutral" province, which he was right in giving a new label, namely "phenomenology." After all, Husserl had started from mathematics, whose subjects, though not supranatural, do not belong to the realm of Nature either. He had been absolutely consistent when he never tired in requiring from his readers an unc customary approach (all too often misrepresented as "Mysticism") without which they would be utterly unable to focus the objects or to verify the truth of his descriptions. The strange fact, that despite its programmatic soberness and the drabness of its subjects ("Meaning," "Perception," "Memory," etc.) Husserl's phenomenology could exert such a fascination upon his philosophical contemporaries, is easily explained by this very fact that he

opened a province beyond metaphysics as well as beyond empirical research: the "life" or "stream" of consciousness that he described in his analyses of the "acts meaning or having their objects," was so neutral, that he believed he could methodically consolidate his descriptions by means of the *ἐποχή*, thus, by the suspension of the question as to whether his objects "are or are not."

This emphasis on *ἐποχή* may cause the impression that Husserl had cut off the ontological question altogether, and that the jump from Husserl to Heidegger is nothing short of a miracle—which impression, however, will arise only if one understands by "Sein" ("being") exclusively Reality, as meant in Natural Science. Although he safeguarded his "Gegenstandsbereich," the "province of intentional objects," by means of the *ἐποχή*, he certainly did not mean his objects to be phantoms. Somehow he meant his objects as *ὄντα*, to speak with Plato's Parmenides. What, however was the meaning of "ὄν" here?

It was Heidegger's, or more correctly, one of Heidegger's tasks to answer this question, at least, to formulate the question of the "Seins-Sinn" and the meaning of "being" in the intentional acts. As a matter of fact, despite the wholly different mood and purpose of Heidegger's philosophy, to a large extent his "thematic field" had been pre-tilled by Husserl: for the "Dasein"<sup>3</sup> which Heidegger contrasts with the "Vorhandensein"<sup>4</sup> (which already had been bracketed in by Husserl by means of the *ἐποχή*), is defined by Heidegger as "*Sorge*."<sup>5</sup> Now, "*Sorge*" meaning "being after something" ("Aussein auf etwas"), differing from this "something" in the same way as Husserl's "intentional act" had differed from its "object," represents to a certain degree the common denominator of Husserl's and Heidegger's philosophies. Strange as it may sound, English readers may understand the transition from Husserl to Heidegger more easily than German readers, because of the connotations, "tendency," or "intention" conjured up by the word "Intentionality": Husserl, however, when using the famous term, had implied nothing whatsoever akin to "tendency" or "intention"—and this all the less, as the model-acts which he used for his characterization of "intentionality" (as the acts of "perception," "recollection," or "thinking," borrowed from traditional psychology), reveal the "relation" between "act" and its "object" in a purely "structural," a wholly unpragmatic way.

Had Husserl chosen hunger as model of "intentional acts"—of course, a purely academic assumption considering his place in the history of science

<sup>3</sup> V.S. footnote 1.

<sup>4</sup> This equals the naked "esse" of objects of Nature; resp. *res existentes*.

<sup>5</sup> This term which combines the connotations of "cura," "worrying," "caring for . . ." and "taking care of," would be best translated by "interest," if understood in its broadest meaning although the word, unfortunately, lacks the gloomy nuance of the German original. Thus we will keep Heidegger's word again.

and his "polemic dependence" on the psychology of perception and recollection around 1895—phenomenology would have looked very different. Had he chosen "hunger" as "Modellakt" and its adequation (or better "satisfaction") instead of "imagination" and its "adequation" or "fulfillment," he would have been compelled to engage in the discussion of strictly "ontological" problems instead of embarking upon the description of the "pure" and "bracketed in" flux or context of "intentional relations" in which, from the time of his book *Ideen* on, he saw the field of his research; he would have been forced into asking the following questions: "Is ἐποχή still legitimate in face of an intentional act as 'hunger' which (although *structurally* "containing" its "immanent" object) is what it is, because it precisely *does not contain* its object (food)? Is the ontological neutrality of the intentional act's "immanent" object a genuine "immanence" and "neutrality"? Does not "neutrality" rather indicate the "not-having"? Could the ἐποχή be maintained in face of an act whose "agent" (the living being or man) has no other interest but to actually seize and literally consume his object? Could it be maintained in face of an "act" whose agent cannot bear living or live without it?"

These, of course, were not Husserl's questions. Had he focussed this problem of "without," the problem of actual "want" and "incorporation," they would have drawn him out of the transcendental sphere; they would have forced him into an exploration of what "being" means in face of the first "absent" and then, materialistically speaking, "immanent" object; and finally into the interpretation of what "being" means in face of the "agent" of the act: the hungry one, for whom the object (food) is a question of "being" or "not being." In short, Husserl would have been compelled to resume the classical problem of "want" or "need," the discussion of which no smaller idealists than Plato (in his *Philebos*) and Hegel (from his *Jenenser Logic* on) had prepared in a most profound way.

We admit that Husserl could not ask these questions; after all, his ultimate interest centered in theoretical structures, exactly as that of Neo-Kantianism had; it was theoretical acts that he used as models for his theory of acts in general, and it is from the Theory of Science that he had started out as a philosopher. It is this "defect," this dent, into which Heidegger drove his axe, although—we have to stress that point from the very outset—he cautiously abstained from splitting the trunk: Heidegger took over at the boundary line of Husserl's province without actually reaching or even wishing to reach the problem just sketched, in which the "battle of the books," the discussion between idealism and materialism, becomes really acute. We will see later on, that he knew what he was doing when he took a long run, but made but a short jump which landed him only on the ground of Existentialism.

But we are anticipating. Heidegger rightly felt that dealing exclusively with theoretical acts represented an unbearable narrowing of the philosophical task. No one can deny that Heidegger was drawn into philosophizing not by academic "problems," but by the most elementary philosophical terms; besides, the broad problems of classical philosophy and theology whose horizons embraced far more than the problems of "meaning," "perception," and "evidence," had been his daily food from his student days on. Thus, when he recognized Husserl's "intentionality," this peculiar form of a "living relation," he had to see it as a structure of far broader, of even universal application; he had to take it out of the dimension which Husserl, following the tradition, still had labelled "consciousness." True, Scheler had preceded him by examining non-theoretical acts (as those of "evaluating," or those of "sympathy"); but, despite undeniably profound insights, he had just dealt with other "species" of acts; though he even utilized his results for his "Metaphysics," he certainly had not revised his concept of "being" on the strength of his findings. That is where Heidegger differs from him.

As a matter of fact, Heidegger saw the structure of "intentionality" in the whole of pre-theoretical life," in the entire *πραξις*, in the "making" of things, in "dealing" with them, in using them—not only in "imagining" or "meaning" or "perceiving" them; and it would have amounted to a complete annihilation of the "meaning" of the term "consciousness," had he classified "making" or "dealing with" as "acts of consciousness."<sup>6</sup> By rightly universalizing the Husserlian "intentionality," he suddenly found himself dropped on *terra incognita*: what he was describing was the way, "one is in the world"—not or not exclusively in acts of consciousness,<sup>7</sup> but in all those acts of everyday life which, usually unfit for the society of philosophical themes, at best are casually touched upon by this or that science. In short, he found himself in that province that he called "Dasein." Since, however, this "Dasein"—not any longer classifiable as consciousness—was marked by "intentionality," thus as a type of "Sein,"<sup>8</sup> distinguished by its "Aus-sein-auf-etwas" (its "being after something")—after something, that is not this being itself—"world" became for him something like an ontological attribute of "Dasein." While "nature" (as far as something like "nature" occurs in Heidegger's philosophy) just "is,"

<sup>6</sup> Thus, even the term "act" has been abandoned by Heidegger. We used it here solely to clarify the transition from Husserl to Heidegger.

<sup>7</sup> Just as little in "subconscious" acts. Heidegger's position cuts across this dubious alternative, too.

<sup>8</sup> In Heidegger's ontology the distinction between *είναι* and *ὄν*, "Sein" and "Seiendem," is of capital importance; while the English language disposes but of the one participle "being," we will have to keep this German term, too, at least where he substantiation of the verb "to be" is in question.



sentenced, as it were, to just dumb being, "Dasein" is a sort of "to be in the world," which finds its actuality as "Sorge" and "Besorgnis," i.e., in a thousand dealings with the world. However, Heidegger would argue, the fact of "in der Welt sein," is not due to the world-relation of our acts (of doing, dealing, communicating, taking care of . . . perceiving . . .) but the other way round: only because our "Sein," as distinguished from things just "being," is "in der Welt sein" or "Sorge," our acts are aiming at "world." The examination of this "Sein," called "Dasein," thus "Hermeneutik des Daseins" is the task of his, or according to him, of philosophy *tout simple*. Why the examination of just this type of "Sein"? Because, Heidegger may reply, *we are* this type of "Sein," which fact might incur that any other type of "Sein" is, what it is, only *sub specie* Dasein, only "for" the Dasein. On the other hand, Heidegger continues, just because Dasein is a sort of "Being in . . ." ("In-sein") it is so exclusively made for and concerned with the field *in* which it moves (world, objects, etc.) that it is sort of blindfolded when faced with its own specific difference—just as the eye, that sees everything, is not made for seeing the object "seeing." Since however, "Dasein" is not just a sort of "to be," but a "being there," a "being present"; since it says "here I am" or "I am there"; since it is living in the light of this "I am" and not only "exists about," (*herum existiert*) obscurely and unmentioned, the factor which formerly was called "Bewusstsein," now becomes the *specificum* of this *modus existendi*; in a traditional and, we admit, still insufficient way we could put it: consciousness is embedded by him into being.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted here that Heidegger introduces a plurality of "Seinsarten" (*modorum existendi*), while in traditional philosophy "plurality," is used to apply only to "Seiendem" (to genera, species, *individua rerum existentium*). In *Sein und Zeit* occur (a.e.) the following "Seinsarten":

- 1) The "facticity" which is the contingent fact that there is something like "there is."
- 2) The "Zuhandensein" (being at man's disposal), the *modus existendi* of the "Zeug" ("stuff" the everyday tools of the "Sorge").
- 3) The "Vorhandensein" (of Nature, not elaborated on by H).
- 4) The "Dasein" (with its variants):
  - a) "Uneigentlichsein" (being unauthentically), "man."
  - b) "Eigentlichsein" (being authentically) which equals *Selbstsein*.

It is obvious that the introduction of *modi existendi* incurs the abandonment of the philosophical idea of one world (Universe), which implication, however, must not necessarily be wrong. Since, however, "Dasein" is not an *elementum mundi*, rather *mundus*, an element of the "In der Welt sein," it is obvious that Heidegger maintains, though in ontological terms, the division into specific provinces, on which division Neo-Kantianism (disguising the division of labor, i.e., of methods) had insisted so emphatically. Thus, the idea of a philosophical system, as it had existed from the *Timaios* on, as image of the Cosmos, is given up in Heidegger's philosophy too, again not a necessarily false step. No doubt Heidegger was fully aware of this fact; yet

By embracing all practical dealings in the horizon of intentionality called "Sorge," Heidegger obviously was cast into the vicinity of naturalistic

its philosophical implications are not properly taken into account, and this all the less as he furnishes something like a "system" himself though without clarifying the question what "system" could mean after the abandonment of the concept of Cosmos. As to the peculiar substantivation "das Dasein" which designates a *modus existendi* as well as something that is, originally Heidegger had introduced it for positive, to be more precise, for prophylactic reasons, namely, in order to make a start without such ontologically unverified terms as "Ego," or "individual," or "consciousness," and the like, all of which still conceal a dubious concept of substance, exactly that concept of *ousia* which Heidegger wishes to revise through his new ontology. If we may express it in classical terminology, in that of Plato and Parmenides, Heidegger used the deliberately foggy terms in order to suspend the decision of the question as to whether *εἶναι* must necessarily be embodied in individual *δύναμις* or egos. As a matter of fact, Heidegger, instead of starting out, as it is usually done, from the "Ich," opens with the question: who is the Dasein? As long as this question is not answered, the substantiv verb "Dasein" (3) means the amorphousness and anonymity of everyday life, the so-called "man": what one thinks, does, says; in short, what sociology insufficiently had labelled "public opinion" or what Kierkegaard, moralistically and anti-democratically had fought as "Publikum." As we will see later on, this "man," although being a first stage of "Dasein" is far from representing "Dasein's" highest degree; it is rather the background, the "Unmittelbarkeit," for a second stage in which the "Dasein" makes itself identical with itself: for Heidegger's philosophy (thereby sharply differing from Hegel's) knows only of two stages, very understandably so, for the hidden motor of the whole is Moralism that cannot know but of the duality of evil and good.

However, by introducing the "man" as an aprioric modality of the "Dasein," Heidegger saves himself the trouble of exploring the historical causes responsible for this strange phenomenon of an *εἶναι* without an identifiable *δύναμις*. Nor does he ask whether the relations that in other societies or civilizations may exist between the collective "Dasein" and the individual one comply with his schema of "man" and "Self." Finally, he does not even touch upon the capital question of whether the "Dasein" called "man" (i.e., average man, living in the *doxa* and feeding on average and pre-chewed vocabulary and emotion) could be abolished or changed. It does not enter his mind that what he calls "man" might be a deteriorated remnant of genuine "mores," genuine sociality; or whether it could be just a by-product of mass production. He is opposed to mores (without supplanting them by "morality" as classical German Philosophy had done), and economic considerations would fall short of his high ontological standards. Consequently, his interest centers exclusively around the question of, how "Dasein" or he, Heidegger himself, could escape the "man." Moreover, this question of how to escape replaces in his philosophy all classical problems of "individuation" which formerly had pertained to philosophy of Nature. Never does he formulate the question of how "Dasein" becomes "Daseiende" (*εἶναι* becomes *δύναμις*), this question is being avoided like all questions that border on biology. The only individuation he knows of is the "existential" one in which the "Dasein" raises itself, transforms itself into a Self. Therefore "Dasein" very often has the by-meaning of the pre-self-stage.

The fact that the word simultaneously contains those different meanings, one



theories—of pragmatism, operationalism, historical materialism. Yet, as mentioned above, all his relations to naturalism are of a somehow equivocal nature. Wherever Heidegger introduces a quasi-pragmatic concreteness, he gets stuck in the very introduction. As a matter of fact, he starts with a detailed description of the relation that exists between the “Dasein” and its “Zeug,” i.e., the tools, by means of which it runs the household of his world. And he is still on the right track when he considers those practical dealings as promoting or “revealing” truth: not by staring at a hammer do we know what it is, but by hammering. And only in “Sorge”—acts the world “reveals itself.” So far, so good. It sounds extremely concrete. But what with the application of this insight to the tools of today? Are modern machines really “revealing” themselves by their operation? Is their product their purpose? Is not their purpose to be seen only by making transparent much more than the machines themselves? Does not an illegitimate idea of directness lie at the bottom of Heidegger’s thesis? As a matter of fact, self-revelation of “Zeug” occurs only in those acts whose “Vermittlung” (“mediation”) is of extreme simplicity, i.e., where the producing and the product, the “dealer” and the “dealt with,” the consumer and the good, form one simple, transparent, functional unit, as it may be the case in shoemaking or in apple-eating. Operating a modern machine, does not reveal it at all; its “alienation” is obviously reckoned with in present-day society and in its division of labor. Already this preliminary example proves that at the point where Heidegger seems to become “concrete” or “pragmatic,” he is most obsolete, shows, so to speak, a machine-smashing attitude, for all his examples are taken from the provincial shoemaker workshop. The alienation produced precisely by those tools that are supposed to be revealing, is alien to him. All the more puzzling is the fact that in a way “alienation” plays a fundamental role in his experiences; but, wherever it appears, it does so in a harmless disguise, as a “metaphysical alienation,” e.g., as so-called “Nichten” of the world.<sup>10</sup>

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blending into the other, is an extraordinary chance for making obscure statements, of which chance Heidegger never fails to take advantage.

<sup>10</sup> There is no such intransitive word as “Nichten,” only the transitive one “vernichten.” What Heidegger means is: to become nothing, to vanish. Likely his new word is just his translation of Pascal’s “s’anéantir.” The metaphysical brimming of the phenomenon of “reification” or “alienation” can be traced back to Bergson who moored the phenomenon in his theory of matter, whereby “matter” is the element resisting the “élan vital.” Thus he described the alien character of the metaphysical raw material instead of the alienation of life’s own products. It is hardly a coincidence that Bergson, by making “alienation” a metaphysical character, arrived at the discussion of the “Neant” long before Heidegger or Sartre did. (*L’idée de Néant*, 1901, later used in *Evolution Créatrice*.) Incidentally,

II. THE FACT "HUNGER." TIME AS "FALL" BETWEEN NOT-HAVING  
AND HAVING. THE PROBLEM OF "CONSTITUTION"

Far more important, however, that the emission of the "self-alienating" Zeug whose context forms our world, is the ambiguity of the concept "Sorge" itself, which concept is supposed to give Heidegger's philosophy its very concreteness.

We had called "Sorge" the central Heideggerian category of "Dasein." By that formula we mean that "Sorge" designates both: "Dasein's relation to itself: it is a "Sein," "dem es um es selbst geht" (a "*modus existendi*" characterized by its concern for itself"); as well as its relation to its world of "Umgang" ("dealing" and communications). Thus it is "*interest*" in the broadest sense of the word that is made the fundamental feature of "Dasein." It certainly is no coincidence that the "Being in the world" or "being in" ("In-sein") almost literally renders the latin word "*interesse*." We said "*interest* in its broadest sense," for, what Heidegger has in mind, is neither that form of "*interest*" which Marx, standing up for the "*interest*" of an unprivileged class, considered the motor of history; nor the interest in the "moral situation," Kierkegaard's sole object; nor simply the biological "*interest*" of the living being in self-preservation. While in the works of Marx or Kierkegaard the term "*interest*" designates their actual interest in their actual cause, Heidegger's original equation of "Dasein" and "*Interest*" at first is but a rather disinterested ontological statement, meant neither in its purely moral nor in its merely economic sense. Its economic meaning particularly remains utterly vague. *The simple question: why the Dasein throws itself in all its "Sorge" occupations, why it busies around day and night, this question* whose concern is not the "*Bedingung der Möglichkeit*," but the "*Bedingung der Nötigkeit*" (der Sorge), *is simply embezzled.* No wonder, for this question would have pulled Heidegger out of the allegedly concrete analysis of practical "Umgang" into an analysis of hunger and want, thus into problems connected with materialism.

Heidegger was discreet enough not to betray Bergson in whose work much of his own thoughts were unduly anticipated. Of course, Heidegger's emphasis on "alienation" has social roots too, although reasons far different from the usual ones. Since, as we will see later on, Heidegger retires into the cloister of his own Self, in order to become "authentic Dasein"; since he does not know of any way of becoming "authentic" within a definite world, a society; since, on the other hand he can't help continuing to live in this world which, so to speak, continues "in spite," it is bound to become "alien" to him: i.e., again and again it will have to "nichten" (vanish). All the same it is remarkable that his theory of the metaphysical and ontological (at least not economically motivated) "alienation" of the world, was recognized by the world. As a matter of fact, it was Heidegger and Kafka who conjured up that apothotic affirmation of "Weltfremdheit" which French Existentialism has made the program of nihilism.

This seems to be a rather sharp reproof. Are we entitled to it? After all, does not Heidegger deny his "Dasein" any Hegelian absoluteness? Does he not limit the Dasein soberly to its *proportio humana*? Is not his philosophy a Kantianizing "critique" of the "Daseins Grenzen"?

It is and it is not. Why not? Because wherever he describes man's limitations, he is doing it in a harmless way by denying him divine qualities. True, "Dasein" is finite—thus not eternal: its experience is no *intuitus originarius*, thus not creative. For the fact however, that "Dasein" is hungry, or, in more customary words, that *men are hungry*, we are looking in vain.<sup>11</sup> If Husserl did not take "hunger" into account, he was right in his deliberately confined province. Heidegger is not, for his whole criticism of philosophy centers around this problem. Husserl was standing outside it. Heidegger, although constantly moving in its vicinity, is suppressing it, and thereby leaves his whole architecture basisless; for "hunger" or "want" in its broadest sense, *dependence* on the world," *starving for the world*"—that actually defines "Dasein's" finiteness. As a matter of fact, it is not only "Sorge" which by this omission remains incomprehensible, but many other fundamental features of Heidegger's "Dasein" with it. To mention just a few: "Intentionality" = prosecution of the prey; the "nothingness" (=standing *vis à vis de rien*)—are evidently "rooted" in hunger. Even man's *λόγος* must remain a puzzle to us, as long as we fail to retrace its underlying *conditio sine qua non*, "want": for the first "generality of notion" is the correlate of "hunger" (or "want" or "need"). Obviously the intentional object of hunger is a "such," (not *hoc*, but *tale*); hunger "means" something to eat *in general*, something to drink *in general*. The "this" (*hoc*) does not become a "such" by means of the *λόγος* or the *λόγος*—articulated perception, not by means of the "*Etwas als etwas ansprechen*," as Heidegger puts it, but in the course of hunger-propelled process of chase, capture, and consumption. Though broadening the concept of "Intentionality," though transforming it into that of "Sorge," Heidegger does not retrace "Sorge" to its last basis, or to the last basislessness of the living being. If he had done so, he would have been led to the actual genealogy of *λέγειν* from need, to a sort of "naturalistic logic" or "idealistic materialism"—thus to a step from which a thousand social considerations had to hold him back.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> It is, of course, far more than coincidence that "hunger" is not Heidegger's sole omission. All want is wanting; thus sex, too. It would be worthwhile to examine which features of "Dasein" Heidegger admitted as fit for ontological society, which criteria he chose for the omissions of a philosophy are its earmarks.

<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, no variant of materialism has ever taken this step either, and, considering its far from articulated concept of "reality," materialism would not have been able to take this step either for "Hunger" is not a piece of

Thus, although seeing through the dependence of the concept of "world" or "object" ("Zeug") on the *πρᾶξις*, Heidegger did not call the spade a spade; neither did he call the motor of "Sorge," "Hunger," by its name, nor the main-made "Sorge-tools" of today, the economic systems, industry, machines. The province of Heidegger's concreteness begins behind hunger and ends before economy and machine: in the middle "Dasein" is sitting around, hammering its "Zeug" and thereby demonstrating "Sorge" and the renaissance of ontology.

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There exists a very close connection between Heidegger's omission of "want" and the intertwined lines of his philosophy of time. As everyone knows, Heidegger's main opus is entitled *Sein und Zeit*. As a matter of fact, "time" quite legitimately plays such an important rôle in his ontology that it could appear in the title, connected with "Sein" by just an "and." Thus "time" is not, as in many varieties of transcendental philosophy, just coordinated with "space," but is of quite another ontological weight.

It is all the more oppressing that (despite profound detail-interpretations which surpass nearly everything written since Hegel about "time") the relation between "Sein" and "Zeit," i.e., their mutual foundation, remains opaque throughout most of the book.

This opaqueness, however, is the consequence of the indecisive character of his analysis of "Sorge," i.e., of the fact that the problem of "want" remains hidden underneath the "Sorge." The outline of a "genealogy of time" (if this paradoxical figure of speech be allowed), the deduction of "time" from the fact "want" would not have been so difficult. Such a deduction would have had to take approximately the following course:

So far as a creature is "needy" (and that it is constantly, since it depends on world), it has *not* what it *should* have. True, there are classes of "needed" things that are at the creature's immediate disposal: air, for example. Other things, however, are absent, or are separated from it by a certain *distance*. Now *want, by insisting on having its "object," insists on annihilating the distance*. The living being is *after* its prey, in order to *have* it, to consume it, and thus to continue living. ("Es stellt dem vorgestellten Gegenstande nach.") This "to be after," this act of prosecution necessarily fills a certain *extension*, i.e., the extension equal to the distance between "not having" and the moment of "having" or of "capture."<sup>13</sup> It

matter. Of the fact that the concept of "idea" (with its "idealism") stems from practical life (as pattern of the object to be manufactured), ordinary materialism is just as unaware as idealism of the fact that the "generality" of its *logos* is related to "need."

<sup>13</sup> This distance is far from being a merely spatial one: nothing would be more

is this extension that is called "time." It is little wonder that those activities that consist in direct (distance-less) supplying of the needed material (as, e.g., breathing) do not "constitute" time, but only those activities that have to overcome the distance from the prey.<sup>14</sup> Then "time" is rolling by or, as the German language puts it, "running." But it is not we who run with it (as a rhyme by W. Busch jokingly tells us), but time that runs with us. Once the needed object is reached, time ceases to elapse: the satisfied baby sleeps and is "timeless." *Den Glücklichen schlägt keine Stunde.* This is the basic model of the genealogy of time out of want, a genealogy which had to remain obscure in Heidegger's deductions, because the deduction of the *ontological* character "time" from the *ontic* insufficiency of the living being (or of man as a living being) would have shattered the primacy and the self-sufficiency of the ontological sphere. It is needless to stress that our deduction is but a first step. In it the difference between animalic and human time is not yet taken account of; just as little as the question as to how the continuity of time develops out of this primitive form in which time, as it were, breaks out in temporary fits, to die down again.<sup>15</sup> This is, however, not the place to follow up those questions.

As little as Heidegger, though connecting "time" with "Sorge," clarifies the fact that "time" is the "fall" ("Gefalle") between want and satisfaction, just as little does he clear up the limitation of the concept "Dasein." Nowhere—again in spite of "Sorge"—is there the slightest hint that it could be the *ontic* condition of man, more correctly: his *ontic defect* that might be the "Bedingung der Möglichkeit" of his being "ontological."<sup>16</sup> Nowhere,

futile than deducing the phenomena of temporal distance from a purely spatial one. The distance embodies the entirety of relations between persecutor and persecuted, their relation of strength, courage, etc.

<sup>14</sup> There is an interesting connection between Heidegger's omission of this problem of distance and his (to a considerable extent legitimate) ridiculing of the epistemological question of how to get at the "outer world." Primarily Heidegger sees the feature "being in the world," but hardly the distances from the objects which have not been invented by mediocre philosophers but that exist on the strength of "individuation" separating one being from the other, and on the strength of "hunger," which has to bridge a *metaxu* in order to "have" and to "be." Entirely suppressed by Heidegger is the third fact that "Dasein" is (part of the natural) world. Only by simultaneously dealing with the three features: Being in, being in distance, and being a part of the world, can one claim ontological completeness. (See my remarks on "Integrations—Koeffizient" in "Une interprétation de l'Aposteriori," *Recherches Philosophiques*, 1934–35).

<sup>15</sup> A pattern that makes understandable the change of the waking and sleeping.

<sup>16</sup> It would be tempting, indeed, thus to reverse Heidegger's *ordo rerum*. Not self-sufficient, as he is, man, in order to be at all, is compelled to be "In der Welt sein"; to be "there" (the "Da" of "Dasein") when and because want awakens him. As a matter of fact, it is only the waking "Dasein" that is really "da" while for Heidegger this character "da" belongs to Dasein independently from want. The



is it mentioned that Dasein has (or is) a body; nowhere, that it has, as it was called in more than two thousand years of philosophy, a twofold nature. All this Heidegger passes over in silence, despite his living next door to naturalistic theories.

In the opening line, we had announced that Heidegger, although avoiding all things supra-natural, never reaches "nature." This thesis seems to be confirmed now in full. As a matter of fact, his Dasein does not know of any *concupiscentia*, of any instinct, of any tooth-ache. Very soon we will see that it knows just as little of *caritas*, or friendliness, or duties, or the state. Doomed to this doubly mutilated condition, it is not precisely an enviable species. One is tempted to vary the famous French word "ni homme ni femme, c'est un capucin" into: "ni homme, ni capucin, c'est un Dasein."

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Since "being in the world" is a character of the "Dasein," "world" is, roughly, an element of "being in the world"—hence the whole system of pragmatic "Sorge," "In der Welt sein," is, as it were, the transcendental condition of the world. This odd sounding thesis means that the "Dasein" has supplanted transcendental consciousness which, as we know, was supposed to "constitute" its objects. As a matter of fact, Heidegger has blown up the concept of "consciousness" by means of his pragmatic cartridges, to make the result of his explosion a sort of "Consciousness" again. True, one could not go so far as to state, that Heidegger's "Dasein" *constitutes* its world. That it does not do; neither in the sense of the word used by Kant, nor in that of Fichte, Cohen, or Husserl. The "constitutional relation" as described for one hundred and fifty years by metaphors as "gründen," "setzen," "schaffen," or "konstituieren" ("founding," "positing," "creating," "constituting") has lost its active character in Heidegger's philosophy. This notwithstanding, he does not start with recognition of the "world" either—it is the "In der Welt sein," that is his basis. Again his philosophy cuts across the ordinary alternative. This time across that of "realism" and "idealism."

But why did he not continue with the idealistic idea of "constitution"? Why did he deprive the still somehow "transcendental" relation between "Dasein" and "Welt" of its activistic character? Did he do it for purely philosophical reasons? Hardly.

If, according to Fichte, the "ego" "posits" himself, this strange act of difference between waking and sleeping is omitted as so many others. Obviously the sleeping "Dasein" is neither "da" nor is it "man," nor a "self." These problems did not interest Heidegger whose "Dasein," it is true, may bother about the "Zeug" bed, but will never lie down in it.



self constitution, or rather this term, represented the translation of a non-speculative activity into speculative language: by "positing" himself, the ego posited himself as a free legislator ("setzt sich als Gesetzgeber"); by "positing" the Nicht-Ich, it posited or created "its" world, namely its self-made *citoyen's* state, its "constitution," its "Satzung" (law.)<sup>17</sup> If Fichte's strange "positing" even embraces "Nature" (and not only the constitution of Society), this philosophical "overstatement" represents an example of harmless and academic "universalization," that was bound to take place because even the particular aim (political "Setzung") was doomed to remain purely academic. Not admitted to "positing" himself as politically active *citoyen* or to shaping a "constitution," he looks for vengeance by "positing" Nature and by theoretical self-deification of the "Ego." Stirner, who in so many points anticipated Heidegger, is a caricaturistic example for such harmless radicalization.

Yet, although Heidegger's "Dasein" does not posit its world, it definitely posits or constitutes itself. His making himself, and making himself answerable for himself, takes the place of the "gesetzte Satzung" (the "constitution" of society made by "subjects"). This means that interest in moral or political participation or action (which had been embodied in the concept "Setzen") has become extinct in Heidegger's philosophy. The only thing, the "Dasein" takes into its own hands, is the *Dasein* itself; each individual in his individual hands—in spite of the world. This fact, that the "Dasein" does not posit the world any longer, but solely the "self," is easily understood. The political optimism of the rising bourgeoisie one hundred and fifty years ago, which had hoped to build up a world of their own, was wholly unknown to the petit-bourgeois around 1920. It minded "constitutions." "Democracy" seemed to them to incarnate first the principle of the German defeat, then the blot on German honor; therefore, "world" did not assume the role of a "product of life" any longer, but that of a somehow neutral correlate of life. The sole product remains the "Self"—at least virtually—i.e., the human being, who drags himself out of the anonymity of "man," to boldly ("verwegen") risk a *Dasein* in social nothingness ("Nichts") as a lonely and stubborn self-made man.

Incidentally, what holds good for Heidegger, applies, in a way, to the whole and much praised return to realism and metaphysics (thus to "Sein") that took place in Germany in the years between the collapse in 1918 and that in 1933. This development can be derived from the fact, that the philosophers had abandoned the fundamental category of bour-

<sup>17</sup> The other sources of the idea of "constitution" as f.i., the "genetic definition" which "makes" its objects by constructing them; or modern science which, by constructing the experimental model, "realizes" natural law—are of no importance in this context.

geois revolution: "*Making*" which had circumscribed the participation in the making of a society of free subjects by free subjects ("of the people, by the people").<sup>18</sup> Now they either let "things" slide or they were willing to recognize "power" or the world of power that was not made by themselves. Either attitude lends itself marvelously to translation into "Realismus."<sup>19</sup> The diverse metaphysical variants of this period reflect partly bourgeois defeatism, partly apotheosis of power. The pathos of Neo-Kantism, according to which "world" is not a "datum" but a "dandum" (nicht "Gegebenes," sondern "Aufgegebenes") had thinned out miserably; as a matter of fact, it was voiced only by two or three Kantianizing "Kulturphilosophen," representatives of the wholly unrepresentative "Deutsch-demokratische Partei," and at best corresponded to the short-lived pseudo-optimism in Germany around 1927.<sup>20</sup>

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### III. INDICATIVUS AND CONJUNCTIVUS. THE PROBLEM OF FREEDOM. THE ACOSMISTIC SELF-MADE MAN

"Habeo, non habeo"

(Aristippos)

We said that Heidegger does not ask for the "*Bedingung der Nötigkeit*," but only for the "*Bedingung der Möglichkeit*."<sup>21</sup> As a matter of fact, it is a decisive mark of *idealism* (ultimately a Stoic heritage) that it *re-coins every "must" into a "can,"* every feature of existence into a mark of freedom; that it asserts man as allegedly *being free*, because (no matter what the actual circumstances look like) he *could be free*; that it passes off the ontic *conjunctivus* of freedom as an ontological *indicativus*. It is far more than a

<sup>18</sup> It is very characteristic that the philosophers opposed to the French Revolution, as Bonald, saw very early the implications of this category and violently fought it.

<sup>19</sup> It is no coincidence that Dilthey who, by recognizing "Widerstand" (resistance) as the criterion of Reality, opposed the idea of a "constituted" object, politically was more conservative than the early transcendental philosophers.

<sup>20</sup> On the other hand the pathetic idea of "making the world" was still, or again, alive in groups of the socialist movements. However, by maintaining the naturalistic concept of world as formulated in the nineteenth century, those groups were prevented from seeing the "Konstitutionsproblem." It is needless to add that German academic philosophy came in contact with socialist theories for passing moments only, in the years preceding and following the revolution of 1918. (Example: Natorp.)

<sup>21</sup> It is very characteristic that the two greatest post-Hegelian German philosophers, Marx and Nietzsche, whose other similarities are not exactly striking; both have transformed the traditional question for the "Möglichkeit" into that of "Nötigkeit" without, however, *expressis verbis*, opposing their way of thinking to the Kantian formula.

coincidence that, in the post-Kantian phase of German idealism, Kant's moral and political concept of "freedom" became, as it were, "de-humanized," i.e., deprived of its exclusively anthropological and moral meaning; that freedom was transformed into a sort of "being"—into (natural) "potency" by Schelling, into "history" by Hegel. Schelling downright formulated that "freedom" is "Seyn" as opposed to "Seyendem."<sup>22</sup>

If Heidegger makes "Können" the fundamental category of "Dasein," he finds himself in respectable society, although in a tradition which, by "ontologizing" liberty has renounced the idea of actually liberating man.

Now, one could easily assume that Heidegger would grant to "Können" a smaller scope than the post-Kantian philosophers who had made freedom a cosmological, at least a universal principle and, by thus broadening the concept, had deprived it of its actual moral momentum. After all, there is nothing akin to Hegel's *Weltgeist* developing toward freedom nor Schelling's *natura naturans* to be found in Heidegger's philosophy.

This assumption, however, is deceptive. True, it is only "Dasein" that "kann" (not nature or history); but whatever it is doing, its doings pass for proof of its potentiality; whatever occurs to it, it seems to be "Dasein" itself that makes it occur. As a matter of fact *Heidegger's trick consists in re-coining every possibilitas into potestas, every Möglichkeit into Macht.* The entire process of becoming oneself (the kernel of Heidegger's philosophy and, no doubt, the exclusive duty of every better class of "Dasein") is composed of a series of "occupations," the whole appears as an "*occupatio fati*," if we thus may disfigure the classical figure of speech "amor fati."<sup>23</sup> It is very characteristic, indeed, that the words "Eigentum" (property) and "Eigentlichsein" (being proper, authentic being) stem from the same root. The "Dasein" that, according to Heidegger, first finds itself as stranded good ("cast into the world") becomes authentic by making itself its own proprietor.

One should not overlook the features denied in such a process of total self-appropriation: any form of "belonging to" (to the world, groups, duties, friends) seems, though silently, excluded. Nevertheless, can there be no doubt that he means this description of self-adoption as his *moral* philosophy, although he does not dissociate the moral part of philosophy from his theoretical ontology. Thus, he leaves it open, no doubt deliberately,

<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, it is no coincidence either that the theoretical apostles of social liberty regarded themselves as "determinists," although it was they who wanted to build up actual freedom. This observation held good for spokesmen of the early bourgeois revolution as well as for socialists.

<sup>23</sup> "Amor fati," properly speaking does not play any role. The "Dasein's" consent to itself is not induced by *amor*, rather dictated by a sort of "so what," of stubbornness. "Since I am who I am, I will punish the contingency by making it 'existence,'" it seems to speak.

whether his self-transformation of the "Dasein" into "existence" is supposed to represent an ontological *fact* or an "ought to be." Apparently we are confronted here with a new neutralization or, more correctly, with a new ambiguity.

The self-adoption starts out in a state of indignation: as response to the metaphysical scandal of "facticity"; this means that as response to the scandal that "Dasein" finds itself as being there (not ordered, as it were, by itself), and as being X or Y of all people which fact "Dasein" cannot help recognizing. We say it "can not." Thus the primordial condition of "Dasein" is stigmatized as total lack of freedom. In a way, the whole life that now follows, represents a drawn-out act of vengeance. After having faced the primordial scandal, "Dasein" "can" everything if it only wants to, for the only thing it wants to be is to become a self, or itself, or never ceasing to outbid himself, his own "Self." Now he shoulders his contingent "facticity" (his being there without having dispatched himself) decides to exist as if he had been there of his free will, takes over his possibilities and, in a way, becomes his own father.<sup>24</sup> This undertaking it achieves partly by means of stubbornness, partly by means of an ontological *pun*<sup>25</sup>; for now, by using the "Wurfkraft" of the "Geworfenheit," Dasein transforms "Geworfenheit" into an "Entwurf": by using the momentum of its "being thrown into the world" it "throws itself into planning life." Generally speaking this description is a truism: Only on the strength of our being there, can we take life in our own hands. It should be noted, however, that Heidegger's description, as it stands, presupposes that "Dasein" comes to the world as a nobody, and that, what happens to it, is up to none but to itself—in short: it applies to the historical type of the self-made man, not to man in general—though to a self-made man who has no longer the opportunity to rise in the world, thus to an *acosmistic self-made man*.<sup>26</sup>

Yet, it is not only the "facticity" of its being there but the "locus" into which it was cast, too, that scandalizes "Dasein." It has found itself as an

<sup>24</sup> Of course, this metaphor does not occur in Heidegger's writings. Since, however, the "cast" "Dasein" is ancestorless, the Self supplants his ancestry and becomes his own *maker*. See my article, "Nihilismus und Existenz," *Neue Rundschau* (October, 1946).

<sup>25</sup> It is hardly possible to convey the etymological connotations that pervade the German philosophical idiom. In its profundity and pun are strangely blended. This applies not only to Heidegger—far from it; it rather has its source in an attitude towards Language which had been general: since the Romantic movement Language, was not considered solely as a means to convey thoughts, but as a living source or reservoir of thoughts and truths. Since, for Heidegger (and quite legitimately) "Sprache" is one of the "Existenzialien" of "Dasein," "Dasein" has to listen to its words to know something about itself.

<sup>26</sup> On the concept of "Self-made man" hidden in His philosophy see the above article, "Nihilismus und Existenz."

amorphous being, drowned in the mush of what *one* says, what *one* uses to do, what *one* uses to claim, in short: drowned in what Heidegger calls the "one," the "man." Expressed in more positive words, one finds oneself carried by anonymous others, not sentenced to doing, judging, shouldering everything all by oneself. However, for Heidegger, who does not belong to any group, this fact of one's not only being oneself, implies no connotation of relief whatsoever. The others, doxa, prejudice, customs, are nothing but the loam sticking to the self's foot and hindering his being himself. It is out of this loam of "Man," that "Dasein" has to drag itself, like Münchhausen seizing himself by his own hair. Only if and when it succeeds in this performance, it has become "Existence," only then has it attained that status of "Unbedingtheit," of not being conditioned by, in which "Dasein" is the realization of its own possibilities.

If we translate this action from the ontological idiom into everyday language, it turns out to circumscribe quite familiar phenomena: *emancipation* and *social rise*, emancipation from that social anonymity in which one is born, and rise to another one, with the exception, though, that Heidegger's "Dasein" considers its origin as such an indelible blot, that it has to cover it up completely. Not being born, but "cast," it comes (like an outcast) from nowhere, and remains an outcast as long as it does not succeed in bestowing on itself the title of "existence."

However, it is not "Geworfenheit" and the "Man" only that limit "Dasein's" urge for total freedom. *Mortality* being its other limit, death has to be adopted or occupied likewise. Therefore "existence," according to Heidegger, consists of usurping death, of making it a "momentum" of life, of becoming a "*Sein zum Tode*" (being toward death)—a self-transformation whereby, in a way death, despite its ever-present threat, is made rather harmless, for now it is becoming a property or an attribute of life itself. Thus, the restrictions of "Dasein's" freedom seem to be located exclusively outside the two ends of life, in its arrival and its departure, and either of them seems to limit "Dasein" only to be victoriously defeated and appropriated by the Self. *Those powers, however, that in course of actual life, deprive "Dasein" of its freedom: the real powers that be, are not worthwhile mentioning in Heidegger's philosophy.* Not once are they alluded to. And when they actually entered the scene, Heidegger did not try to fight them like "Geworfenheit" or "death," but kowtowed to them. What a philosophy of freedom! No word is uttered to build up or to "constitute" a world, no crumb is left of the political concept of "Freedom" as formulated by the great speakers of bourgeois revolution. "Autonomy" has turned to mere stubbornness, has become that asocial semblance of "freedom" to own one's origin and one's own death. True, no one can deny that the gloominess of this "Being toward death" is presented very impressively, gloominess is



neither a merit nor a proof of truth. If Heidegger bases his identification of "Being a Self" and "Being toward death" on the implication that death be the *one* situation utterly excluding any possible substitution by anybody else (and therefore, in a way, "more mine" than anything else), this implication is dubious: just as little substitution is possible in every living relation or rapport between human beings. Moreover, it is not a fact, but the prejudice of the totally de-solidarized being, to consider "replacability" a feature of necessarily negative value. Granted even, that nothing is "more mine" than my own death, *Heidegger transforms the grammatical possessive pronoun into an actual title deed* which is meant to console him the same way as the moriturus in the *Arabian Nights* who, by shouting "my headsmen!" suddenly, by the very power of the uttered possessive pronoun, owned him as his slave.

We see: Heidegger's "being toward death" is, despite the macabre ring of the formula, a new pseudo-radicalism, ultimately even a sort of escapism. Fearing death he escapes into the sham-freedom of "Sterbenkönnen" (*potestatem moriendi*) als "eigenster Möglichkeit." What a miserable, what a desperate form of freedom, to live toward death instead of liking to live or instead of living for a cause. To object to such a desperado-situation from a given set of values, would be idle, of course. The Self whose life lives for nothing ("ins Nichts hineingehalten" as, in another context, he puts it) is sufficiently punished by the desperado situation itself. Still, punishment is no merit either; neither is it proof of truth. Incomparably truer and more dignified appears to be what classic philosophy had to say about hopeless situations. The Stoics never tired of stressing that the last and the last consoling act of freedom is suicide. If the nihilistic philosopher keeps on living in spite of all, and if he even makes theories of justification, then he ought to admit that, in spite of all, *he likes to live*, or, since he prefers general statements, that *life is worthwhile living after all*—whatever this word "worthwhile living" may mean. Then he ought to fit this statement "worthwhile" as decisive element into his analysis of the "Dasein." However, although the fact of his "keeping on living" demonstrates life as being worthwhile living, the professionally grave Existentialist cannot edge his way through to this fundamental statement: it would sound to him too frivolous, at least too superficial. Thus, he must find or invent something between life and suicide. And that is exactly what Heidegger's "Self" is doing: *it presents life itself as a sort of suicide*. By voluntarily and incessantly shouldering its death, Heidegger's "existence" commits *lifelong suicide*, a pitiful death which, nonetheless, since it lasts as long as life itself, offers certain undeniable advantages.

Thus, the free subject, who, in the epoch of Kant and Fichte, had wanted to participate in the building of a society of free citizens, has reduced him-



self to the rank of a stockholder of his own end. The movable scenery of ethico-political hopes, that had formed the background of the self-constituting Ego, is taken down (for history itself had already taken down that hope); there is no aim, no idea of happiness, one could find as the motor of Heidegger's action. Nor is the Ego occupied with Kant's moral acts ("Handlungen") or Hegel's "Reality of the Mind"—solely and exclusively with itself. Since "Dasein" still interprets itself as "Können," thus as dynamic, since, on the other hand, it does not act any longer, the activity of "Dasein" reduces itself to a mere moral *self-treatment*, to the incessant maintenance of its existential condition. *Its categorical imperative* (inherent, though not formulated by Heidegger) would not open any longer with the Kantian word "act" or "do"—what sanctimoniousness! it *would confine itself to the naked "be," at best to a "be yourself!"* a harmless command that life can comply with while sitting at the desk. In a way, compliance with this imperative even consists in philosophizing since philosophy is *ἀληθεύειν*, thus self-revelation of the "Dasein" as a self; and since "Philosophy" and "Dasein" share in the same object, "Wesen" (essence)—for "Existenz ist das Wesen des Daseins." Now, at last, do we understand fully that Heidegger's philosophy is theoretical *and* practical philosophy at the same time. Thus being either one simultaneously, he is like an anarchist who has made it a rule not to leave his studio, who, in his philosophical acts resolves—no, not to do this or that, but to *be*, to be resolved. The allegedly bold jump out of the "generality" of theory into the concreteness of existence ends as a purely theoretical existence, as the pure "mood" of "resoluteness überhaupt" ("vivere pericolosamente"). Thus, in spite of his harshly anti-aesthetic pathos, as a purely *aesthetic* phenomenon. If his philosophy causes the impression of being enormously "activistic," if philosophy seems to be re-transformed into active life—mere appearance, for, but for this philosophic activity there is none to which existence is bound or called. *His philosophy is that active because all action has become philosophy*—as Hegel's "Geist" is that concrete, because everything concrete has become "Geist." The activistic vehemence of his philosophizing is nothing but the reverse of the fact that he neither postulates nor claims the slightest moral or political action in this world, the reverse of the fact that he (like the majority of German *petit bourgeoisie*) carried through a moral and political sit-down-strike. Little wonder that he had no principle whatsoever, no social idea, in short: *nothing*, when the trumpet of National Socialism started blaring into his moral vacuum: he became a Nazi.

#### IV. HEIDEGGER'S LACK OF SYNCHRONIZATION. CONCEPT OF "GESCHICHTLICHKEIT"

However, this disgrace of the moral pretensions of the "existential" philosopher is far removed from the original motives of his philosophy. If

we take no account of his nakedly opportunistic reasons, Heidegger's attempt at falling in line, his conformism can be understood only from the fact that his start had been an unusually and vehemently non-conformistic one; for, when he was working on *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger found himself in the peculiar situation of *still being a heretic—in a period in which the secularization of both the inner and the outer life had been a matter of course for many generations*. He is a marvelous illustration of the fact *how little history is "synchronized" with itself*. He grew up a Provincial—not surrounded by "modern life," social problems, industrialization. His first "Bildungswelt" was Christianity and Greek-Christian ontology—while his contemporaries were moving in the most diverse planes of secularization, in a world articulated by technique and natural science.<sup>27</sup> He had to deny God once more—in a period, in which no one even thought of his indifference longer; he had to get rid of the concept of a "created" world, in a period, in which even the idea of a *becoming* world had already lost its interest—and that he did by inventing the negative idea of "Geworfenheit" (being cast into) which does not imply any "Werfenden" (anyone who did cast man into the world). Though excluding anything supranatural, this notion obviously rejects natural "descendance" likewise. Our first thesis according to which Heidegger's philosophy cuts across the alternative "Natural-Supranatural" finds its confirmation again. Once more he had to recover Luther's step which, in his life, played the same vehement, even liberating role which, for many of his contemporaries, events of their days might have played. It is no wonder that he designates the true approach to "History" as "Wiederholen"—which world, when accentuated on its first syllable, denotes "re-covering," when accentuated on its third one, "repeating." It was not from the present day, with which he was so poorly synchronized, that his historical road led him to this or that *locus historicus*—he rather *worked himself out from the past* in which he was far more at home, climbing through the diverse floors of history up to the roofs of our days only to differ again, this time from the roof-dwellers who were living on top of the floors without actually knowing them. Whatever he brought up from their forgotten floors, they regarded as something new: e.g., the theological remnants of his atheism which, in their eyes, seemed to be the germs of the metaphysics

<sup>27</sup> It is no coincidence that many of Heidegger's pupils in the twenties were simultaneously fascinated by Anton Bruckner, for Bruckner who was still (though in the already secular form of symphonies) a genuinely Christian composer, had been just as "anachronistic" as Heidegger was. If our concept of "History not synchronized with itself" needs an illustration, the reader may think of Bruckner saying his prayer on the tomb of the Feuerbach-disciple Richard Wagner whose own prayers were far from Christian and whose concept of redemption had become a wholly secular, even an erotic one.

to come; or the total blending of philosophy and anthropology<sup>28</sup> which, formulated by Feuerbach a hundred years before, had meanwhile been buried again under other strata of philosophy. In short, his anachronistic origin gave rise to *his trip toward the present*, where, because of his travel-experiences, he found himself again an anachronistic and lonely creature.

So far, biographically, his approach to history is plausible and consistent. Unanswered, however, remains, if we may use this obsolete word, the "epistemological" question of *whether repetition is possible*. As a matter of fact, the scope of things "repeatable" is limited, except as we are willing to dilute the compact reality of things past (with which we are obviously not identical) into something that can become "one's own existence."

Now, time and again, we had had the opportunity to notice that Heidegger's efforts point in the direction of "*Owning*," of appropriating and owning even the event absolutely removed from our sphere of power: death, by transforming it into "Sein zum Tode." In quite a similar way Heidegger appropriates "History." Being, as it were, a "*Daseins-Monist*," recognizing nothing but "Dasein," he dilutes the "Vergangenheit" into "Gewesenheit," the past events to "Dasein that has been," into *realized possibilities* of "Dasein," thereby depriving the continuum of "ontic" events, political systems, etc., of their undeniable weight in favor of the "Dasein that has been." Obviously the key of interpretation shows the Hegelian making, though with the two fundamental differences, that Heidegger omits all "Objektiven Geist" and that he neutralizes, even reverses, the idea of *progressing* possibilities, in such a way as to sometimes making *history* look like the *history of its own* decay or self-burials ("Verschüttungen"), in short: like a *re-gress*.<sup>29</sup>

Now, the deliberate vagueness of the term "Dasein" and Heidegger's failure to give it a definite hypostasis, allows him to call both himself and history "Dasein." To put it clumsily, either is made out of the same ontological ὄλη. Being "Dasein," being "geschichtliches Dasein" himself, he can "repeat" history. The famous Goethe-word "Waer nicht das Auge

<sup>28</sup> When emphasizing, nevertheless, that his "Hereneutik des Daseins" does not simply amount to a new "Philosophical Anthropology," Heidegger means to say that while the anthropologist naively deals with "men" as an "ontic" species among others without so much as entering the discussion of "Sein," he is examining him ontologically."

<sup>29</sup> In this, again, he is a secularized Christian. For he comes forward as a sort of re-formulator of the once apparent truth (ontology). That is why finding truth equals for him ἀναγέειν, which word he takes literally as "uncover the covered up." This applies at least to the first part of *Sein und Zeit* in which he unburies the Greek ontological question, choked up and covered with the sand of centuries. Since he is doing this uncovering with the nowadays wholly unusual pathos of *the reformer*, he could not help being mistaken (even by himself) as a sort of philosophical revolutionary.

sonnenhaft . . ." could be varied: "waer Dasein nicht geschichtshaft. . . ." However, by becoming his, history loses its compact reality and becomes mere tonality of "Dasein": "Geschichtlichkeit."<sup>30</sup>

After that one would, easily expect from Heidegger a universalistic Hegelian readiness and susceptibility for everything human that has been, is, or might be. This expectation is again deceptive. Heidegger repeats only that history that has or allegedly has made him nothing but the line of his own ancestors. Since he has no interest but the one, to annihilate his "*Geworfenheit*," he re-transforms it into a *natum esse*. Changing the unendorsed check of his own facticity into the hard money of his ancestors, he tries to "erwerben" history in order to "own" it, in order to be it. ("Was du ererbt von deinen Vätern hast, erwirb es, um es zu besitzen.") Thus, history is for him *eo ipso*, "my history," whereby the possessive pronoun "my" displays again the iridescence to which we had called attention before. *It denotes things that owe me just as well as things I owe. Heidegger always re-coins the first meaning into the second one.* To be more concrete, Heidegger confines the historical "Dasein" with which he identifies himself, to the boundaries of the Greek-Christian-European history, and only to its "geistesgeschichtlichen" sector. His is an attitude of deliberate *self-provincialization*, farthest away from any philosophical seafarer-attitude. It is only in the depths of history that he takes his soundings. History no one can take away from him. No interest whatsoever leads him *into oecumenic broadness, into "one world,"* into "foreign," not to mention primitive civilizations. According to him, they are merely objects of curiosity, never our business. Obviously this retreat parallels that of Germany's retreat into herself after the defeat, the loss of her fleet and her colonies in 1918. It goes together with suspicion and xenophobia that, later on, facilitated his falling in line with National Socialism.

Thus, Heidegger's position is a very intricate one. On the one hand, History is being re-transformed into a possibility of Dasein, in such a way as to enable man, being equally "Dasein," to re-experience it as his own "Möglichkeit." On the other hand, man, being history, but only his own history, recognizes only his own pre-history as history. Obviously this double or mutual mooring of "History" and "Dasein" brings about a two-fold narrowing of the concept of History.

By re-translating "past" into "having been," "Vergangenheit" into "Gewesensein," Heidegger again makes mankind appear "free" in a higher degree than it actually is. He passes over in silence the decisive fact that (if not all, at least the majority of) historical situations do not directly repre-

<sup>30</sup> It was Georg Simmel who preceeded Heidegger by defining history as the medium in which "Subjekt" and "Objekt" are of the same "nature." Heidegger betrays Simmel's premature formulation as little as most philosophers from Dilthey on.

sent positive possibilities of man, but extremely indirect responses of man to objective conditions of world or society. These conditions are far from being provided for by "human nature" (if there is such a thing); to many of them "human nature" is even wholly unable to live up, to make them their own. To say the least, it would be useless to interpret (example 1) the fascist world, certainly a historical phenomenon as a genuine *Möglichkeit* of "Dasein." Mostly "Dasein" does not know how to master this world, although it is man-made, and *if there is a "Dasein" corresponding to it, this type of "Dasein" is not a "mögliches Dasein" properly speaking, but often "Dasein's" forced response to its own product, which product has become bigger than its producer.* In short, as little as Heidegger takes into account "Nature" (the non-human factor in man) as little does he account for history as a *medium transcendens proportionem humanam*, as "objective mind," *objektiven Geist* or *Un-geist*. The only feature transcending this proportion he deals with is the "one" (the average publicity of no one and everyone) which, however, is a purely negative pattern: State, economy, slavery, law—nothing of it is so much as mentioned in Heidegger's philosophy of history.

As we have just remarked, Heidegger's interpretation of "History" as "Gewesensein" is closely connected with his implied theory of freedom. The fact that the major portion of history is history of *power*, thus history of the un-free, history *imposed* upon people, is totally suppressed. Now, this suppression has the most important consequences for the concept of "repetition." If a historical situation is determined not only by "Dasein," but by objective factors imposed upon man, the sole fact of my being "Dasein" does not suffice, does not enable me to repeat the situation. "*Gewesenheit*" has not necessarily to do with the "*Wesen*" of "Dasein" as Heidegger seems to imply. As a matter of fact, the treatment of the words "Wesen" and "Gewesen" as twin words, as we find it time and again in German metaphysics, had always a conservative ring (example 2). Is it possible, e.g., to repeat the type of "Gewesenheit" as it is invested in a concept as the Kantian "autonomy"? It would be a truism to stress that "autonomy" was not simply an emanation of "Dasein," at least it was too the echo of "Dasein" to an irrevocably passed world to that of rising bourgeoisie. The answer to our question has been given though in an indirect way, by Heidegger himself, for, as we have emphasized before, Heidegger has *not* repeated the "cityen-motives" inherent in bourgeois revolutionary philosophy. Living in a thoroughly changed world in which "republic" and defeat seemed to be equivocal, he just could not repeat the concept of "world" that was implied in the Kantian term. And precisely because such repetition was impossible, Heidegger's undertaking dissolves in complete nihilism. Our example "autonomy" was not accidental. As we know,



Heidegger, too, had started in a way from a sort of "autonomy" or "emancipation" (e.g., from "belief"). Since, however, in the world of a disintegrating society it was out of the question to march forward in that direction in which the speakers of emancipation of the *troisième état* once had pointed, Heidegger's pre-secular position switched, like the spark in a short circuit, directly into that of nihilism *without passing through the intermediate moralistic or political stages, without dwelling on secularized in-between stations*. When he wanted to be "himself" (i.e., free from authorities and the contingency of his origin), when he wanted to be in the "truth" (instead of drowning in "dewa" and "man") Freedom or Truth as meant in the politico-philosophical ethics of German idealism could not convey any positive meaning to him. True, he freed himself, but only *out of* a bondage, not into another condition. While the Kantian and Fichtean "subject" had spoken in the name of groups, Heidegger spoke for no group unless we recognize him as the mouthpiece of the admittedly considerable number of Germans after 1918 whose group-consciousness had become equivocal or even imaginary. Granted even, he was speaking for them, he was doing it the way fever speaks for illness: *characteristic he may have been for them, but not doing anything for them*, devising no positive moral or political plans or postulates "for" them. Since he tried to "repeat" history or "Gewesensein" instead of passing the moral watchword of his days, as true philosophers had done, there exists a systematic bond between his philosophy of history and the emptiness of his moral rigorism.

#### V. PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE HOSTILE TO LIFE. EXISTENCE—BASHFUL ETERNITY

If one distinguishes three types of "Morality": (1) Being moral in the given recognized world, (2) Building up a "moral world," (3) Making oneself moral without regard of the world, Heidegger unequivocally belongs to the third type. Since the fellow-being is not accounted for in his process of "Becoming oneself" (neither as "proximus" nor as "stranger," neither as partner of love nor of duty nor of politics) the only goal left is to become a *homo novus*<sup>31</sup> though one lacking *caritas* as well as social responsibilities. To call such a lack "omission" is understating things. The concept of "individuality" is brought to such a point that it has become the exclusively binding content while formerly, in the form of conscience, it had been only the ultimate and binding voice. To be more precise, the voice of conscience plays a part hardly inferior to that in Christianity or Kantianism, but it is

<sup>31</sup> In the first years following the German Revolution of 1918, the harmlessly extremist word "Neuer Mensch" was a pet phrase in those circles which being neither outspokenly Christian nor socialist felt that something unheard of was due in the new situation. The word whose meaning was pure pretense, neither denoted "belief" nor "revolution." Heidegger's "self" is the ironclad brother of this "new man."



*the voice of the Self exhorting the Self (or the "Dasein") to be his Self.* Thus, making the Self speaking to the "Dasein," Heidegger maintains throughout the Dualism of Christianity although God or Spirit in their customary meaning are shut out. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader once more of the formula of our opening paragraph. Again he cuts across the alternative "Natural-Supra-natural."

We had said to be "myself" is the sole content of the Self's exhortation. True, "Mit-sein" (to be with others), and "Fürsorge" (taking care of the other) are mentioned in *Sein und Zeit*; however, they are barely more than Aristotelian reminiscences (ζῶν πολιτικόν, συμβουλεύειν) unable to compete with the vehement pathos of the "Selbst-werden." They remain dry footnotes of his system. This means for Heidegger's "Dasein" its own "*Leben*" (*qua* existence) is "*der Güter höchstes*" (*summum bonum*). Yet, while usually (at least up to the first world war) the watchword "Das Leben ist der Güter höchstes" expressed either something utilitarian or Epicurian or Dionysic ("full life," "Denn alle Lust will Ewigkeit"), Heidegger's life is, though the sole good, far from enjoying itself. As a matter of fact, *his philosophy is the first and unique sample of the species "philosophy of life hostile to life."* His "Dasein" still suffers from the Christian bad conscience, even from the additional bad conscience of having thrown overboard the Christian concept of sin after all. This doubly evil conscience makes Heidegger's "Dasein" so vile that it begrudges itself all joy. If Heidegger neither appointed *grudge* nor *stubbornness* as "Existenzialien," this omission can only be explained by the fact, that, despite his passionate search for *aletheia*, he suppressed the motives of his philosophizing altogether. *No man could bestow a worse treatment on his fellow-man than Heidegger's "Dasein" bestows on itself.* Whether the treatment is sadistic or masochistic this question is hard to decide since the social partners are Siamese twins. When "Dasein" sleeps, it wakes itself up, if it wants to read the paper it tears this "tool of mediocrity and average-life" from its own hands. It excludes itself from leisure, friendship, friendliness, in short, from culture. Its *exercitia* fill the twenty-four hours of the day, its drudgery to march toward death lasts the whole life. Perhaps, once it has reached its end, "Dasein" will say "I made it after all," then it might have enough of it, but it will certainly not be "lebenssatt" as it is said of the patriarchs who lived their fill. The doubly bad conscience gives his philosophy such a stony sternness, such a lack of Socratic irony, such an inability at "fröhliche Wissenschaft," that *the mere fact of one single laughter would give the lie to the general validity of his analysis of "Dasein."*

Despite its utter lack of *caritas*, the nihilistic procedure through which "Dasein" works its way to "Existence" shows a Christian, to be more concise, a Paulinic structure, for the only thing that matters, the only issue at

stake consists in *salvation*, thus in a *status of being*, not in "law" or in "action." This means the Paulinic concept of "Belief" reappears in Heidegger's philosophy, though *modo diabolico*, and with the label "existence."

As everybody knows, in Paulinism "belief" is meant as the status which enables man to fulfill the Law. Thus, "belief" is ranged above obedience and the actions that flow out of belief. Now, in Heidegger's de-Christianized theology, the "status ranged above actions" is being retained, though Christian belief is supplanted now by belief in oneself as savior of "Dasein" and as redeemer from death. While Pauline belief purported that belief renders the commanding of good works superfluous, because these will follow from belief, in Heidegger's philosophy good works themselves become (though, of course, not *expressis verbis*) superfluous, once the state of "Existence" is arrived at—at least at no place are we advised of them.

It is not as easy as that to draw the word "blasphemy" from the mouth of a non-believer. I can hardly see, however, how this total reversal of the original meaning of Paulinism could be labelled otherwise.

\* \* \*

When we spoke of the maltreatment of the "Dasein" by the "Self," we saw that the chase of the Self after himself is an exceedingly torturous operation. Since, as the title *Sein und Zeit* indicates, "Dasein" is temporal, it has "extension": thus, whenever "Dasein," travelling through time, and seized by missing-panic, tries to catch itself as a whole red-handed, the prey will always slip from its fingers; "Dasein" will catch just one moment of itself instead, always this or that contingent traveling station of its continuous journey, never its whole track. Hence, unable to seize or to be itself in its extensive "wholeness" ("Gaenze des Dasein"), it has to find or invent an *intensive* way of being as a whole. As a matter of fact, this *missing panic* is one of the fundamental motives for Heidegger to introduce the concept of "Existence" which is the intensive wholeness of "Dasein." Better than from any other point, do we understand from here the function of death for the "Existence." Since, in a way, it is death that limits or defines<sup>32</sup> the extension of life so as to make it a whole, Heidegger retains it and orders it to make the intensive wholeness of life. Heidegger's astonishing request for the "Gaenze des Daseins" is the desperado request of the one who is mortally afraid of continually missing the only capital in his hands, his "Dasein," because, being temporal, this Dasein continually reduces itself to something un-occupiable and unseizable.<sup>33</sup> Thus,

<sup>32</sup> The connection between *finis* and *definitie* has hardly ever been taken as seriously as in Heidegger's philosophy.

<sup>33</sup> It is astonishing that this philosophical motive (though showing all the marks of a genuine philosophical panic) nonetheless seems to be the variation of a classical

the ultimate, though never admitted goal of "Sein und Zeit" is the conquest of one's own Sein despite its time or the dissolving of time into the "Intensivum" of the existential state of Dasein which, seen from this angle, might be called the "eternity of Dasein." In a way, Heidegger's word, according to which "Existenz ist das Wesen des Daseins" corroborates this interpretation: after all, in the history of European thought ever since Plato, the notion "Wesen" (essence) had always implied the connotation of timelessness. True, Heidegger avoids professing this inheritance from Greek and Christian metaphysics or to call it by its proper name. Being an anti-super-naturalist, he is, in a way, "ashamed of eternity."

It is obvious that this idea of "eternity," at least of neutralization of time, is not a complete *novum* in modern philosophy: the Hegelian concept of an "end of Philosophy"; the Marxian thesis according to which history is nothing but a pre-history of an extra-historical stage; the Nietzschean idea of "eternal recurrence"—all of them are attempts at establishing a sort of "eternity" within time, precisely because "time" had become the axis of philosophical thinking in a far higher degree than it had ever been in the antique world.

Although standing in a broad tradition, Heidegger again stands apart by making his "eternity" (i.e., his "existence," embracing the wholeness of life and death) a *totally private affair* whereby it becomes an odd variant. His "existence" is but a *life-long eternity locked up in the individual*. Being furthermore an eternity denuded of God, of a realm of "validity," of "ideas," of natural or moral laws, of happiness or a social *aetas aurea*, in short, deprived of all accessories and contents which, in the course of the history of religion and philosophy had accrued to the concept of "eternity," it is again a nothingness, just the empty object of the fanatic wish not to get drowned in the fluid element, life the only property left to him.<sup>34</sup> It is needless to stress again that we cannot take exception to the fact that, for Heidegger, the validity of all contents formerly connected with "eternity" had evaporated. Once the nihilistic situation which had been breeding for

text. In his well-known discussion of Happiness, (*NIC. Eth.*, 1100 a 1) Aristotle disputes the child the possibility of being happy—since it has not or has not yet reached its completeness of life; a few lines later, Aristotle quotes Solon's question of whether one could be happy altogether before death, only to reject it. The connection between Heidegger's problem of "Gaenze" and this passage is beyond doubt. Apparently Heidegger's "Bildungserlebnisse" and "Urerlebnisse" are inextricably intertwined.

<sup>34</sup> There is an obvious connection between this intensity denuded of content and the programmatic, programlessness of the German pre-war Mouth movement which forms an important part of Heidegger's life. It was into it that he escaped from the "Man" of his surroundings. The difference consists in the fact that Heidegger's intensity, called "existence," lacks all dionysic connotations.

a long time, becomes acute, it is, of course, out of the question just to order values back in line. It is rather his attempt at concealing the nihilistic nature of his Nihilism that seems to us objectionable, the fact that he presents it as "ontology," and that he tries, despite the complete annihilation of values, to perform a sort of "Verewigungs-Ritual."

#### VI. ISOLATION—THE CONDITION OF ONTOLOGY

Although at first sight it may be surprising that Heidegger presents his "Trotz-Ritual" as ontology, the connection is far from accidental.

As we had seen, his elementary action had consisted in breaking out of the contingent situation into which he felt himself cast; this act did not imply any positive step for his only aim was the recovery of his Self. Hence his action had, by necessity, to carry him into extreme isolation, into a situation in which he faced the naked "I am" and in which he was not "this" or "that" any longer ("this" or "that" always being socially recognized functions) but just "there." As a matter of fact, *extreme isolation is the conditio sine qua non for discovery of "Sein" as differing from "Seiendem"* (εἶναι as differing from ὄν) and thus, the condition of what Heidegger, in the opening paragraphs of *Sein und Zeit* announced as the epochal resumption of the Platonic-Parmenidean distinction. *The ontological consternation at the "facts" that there "is" this or that, that there exists something like a "there is something" cannot strike into everybody; it can alarm only the being totally isolated from the world, the being, for whom the existence of the world is no matter of course, for whom its non-existence is "thinkable."*<sup>35</sup> The distinction between "things that are" and the "being of things" originates only if and when the existing world has become contingent and alien; thus if and when I am not bound to it any longer. This applies to one's own "Dasein" just as well as to "Sein" in general. Only the hopelessly marooned human is amazed that he himself is—a keener analysis would show that *ontology is rather a theory of this "consternation-that" than a theory of "Sein"*. True, one could object, that this "deduction" of the ontological approach is of no consequence for the truth of ontology; that, after all, each and every discovery needs a definite situation without which it could never be made; that a river's source does not refute its mouth. Generally speaking, this observation may be true. Not, however, where discoveries in the province of "Dasein" are at stake *because the very act of philosophizing on "Dasein" is a symptom of a special sort of "Dasein"—not to speak of its changing effect on Dasein*. Therefore the existential philosopher does not

<sup>35</sup> As paradoxical as it may sound, only because the existence of the world is not a matter of course for Heidegger, he had to emphasize the "to be in the world" as a matter of course.

discover "Dasein," but "Dasein" of the existential philosopher. *Sua res agitur. Sola sua.*

#### VII. SELF-MUTILATION

Be that as it may, is Heidegger right when he contends to be the first to have laid open the age-long buried ontological question?

Although it is beyond doubt that Parmenides', Plato's, Aristotle's, style of asking ontological questions was abandoned for centuries, it is questionable whether this applies to ontology altogether. Modern ontology gave itself another name, that of "Transcendental Philosophy." It is a truism to stress that Kant or Fichte did not classify the subject as "Erscheinung" or just as a being object among *ὄντα*. The innumerable metaphors in which the subject was circumscribed as "spontaneity" or as "source of causality" or as "unbedingt" proves that, to use Heidegger's term, it was the "Seinsart," the *species existendi* of "Subjectivity" that had been the exclusive theme of transcendental philosophy. It was Heidegger himself who, in his admittedly deep Kant-Interpretation, has presented the connection except for the fact that he turned the relation upside down. *Transcendental philosophy (i.e., philosophy of freedom) is not, as it appears to be according to Heidegger, an ontology not yet fully understanding itself; rather is "Ontology of Dasein" a philosophy of freedom which does not understand itself any longer, namely a philosophy of freedom without freedom.* Although we had touched upon this problem before when we discussed the categories of "possibilitas" and "potestas," we have to resume it once more.

In the very moment in which the "free subject," despite all his "boldness" ("Verwegenheit," Heidegger's word!) has renounced using this freedom effectively, in the very moment in which he does not, or will not, or cannot utilize it as freedom of action, it discovers itself as a sort of *είμαι*. Resembling Lessing's "Raphael without hands," the existential philosopher is a free man without hands but one who, after mutilating himself, registers his intense pain in the amputated limb and his still living impulse toward action and freedom as a sort of "Sein." Increasingly it becomes understandable that such a philosophy had to originate in a period of total passivity (after the defeat of 1918), that it was the expression of an immobilized group and that it was the work of a man who scornfully declined to solidarize himself with what cause so ever, and increasingly understandable, that "Dasein," after having renounced its true vocation, "freedom," was bound somehow to realize it nonetheless: it had to become *unscrupulous*. We are deliberately using this word, calling forth the connotation of a philosophical anarchist for that's what the "Self" really is—except for the fact that it remains totally academic and tame, that it does not testify its aversion of authorities or moral obligations by physical terror or annihilation



("Vernichtung") as the desperate and actually bold Russian nihilist of the last century had done, but only by "nihilation" ("Nichtung", Heidegger's term, being just as little part of the German language as "nihilation" of the English). The "Self" is a bloodless anarchist endangering neither himself nor the world. If its advocate procured his university chair from exactly that world which he held in such contempt, it was the premium for the bloodlessness of his action.

#### VIII. SKEPTICAL CHRISTIAN AND CHRISTIAN SKEPTIC

"Dasein ist ein Sein, dem es um es selbst geht. . . ."<sup>36</sup> "It is a species *existendi* characterized by the interest it takes in itself . . ." or more precisely: "characterized by the fact that it is at stake for itself." In a way this formula is the common denominator for the whole of Heidegger's philosophy, for it applies to both the non-authentic Dasein ("man") and the authentic one ("Selbst"). After all, it is just by taking this principle seriously that "Dasein" makes itself "authentic."

It is quite obvious that this formula is meant to refer the reader back to the father of Existential philosophy, Kierkegaard,<sup>37</sup> who was the first to use the term "Existenz" and whose leading category was "Interest." Thus, the continuity is obviously maintained by Heidegger. However, is it not contradictory that "Existence" or "interest" should become part of something like a philosophical system? Had not Kierkegaard used his categories as weapons against the very idea of a systematic philosophy? Has not Heidegger, by making a system-like Existential philosophy, despite his outspoken suspension of all religious questions, made something theological out of Kierkegaard's religious undertaking?

As it is well known, Kierkegaard's accusation against Hegel runs about as follows: Philosophy (as system of "being" or "becoming") necessarily omits *me, mean rem*, my unexchangeable situation; in a way, Kierkegaard charges that philosophy (i.e., Hegel's system) amounts to a vast and vastly complicated net that, though covering the whole, allows every individual thing or situation to slip through, thus me too. "*Me,*" however, does neither

<sup>36</sup> The expression "es geht um" is a deliberately blunt, extra-academic, "concrete" word implying something of an ultimatum. (See: 'Es geht um Leben und Tod,' 'es geht um die Wurst'.)

<sup>37</sup> The Existentialism which comes to America today as "*dernier cri*" is a *dernier cri*, indeed,—the cry of a fourth generation—Kierkegaard, Strindberg, Heidegger, Sartre—one hundred years of *derniers cris*—to say nothing of the fifth and sixth, of Chateaubriand, Herder, Hamann, or Rousseau. There seems to be a far cry between the *cri d'avanhier* and the day on which it arrives in the most advanced country. So far, America has not been in need of those cries. Now, there might exist certain extra-philosophical reasons for the fashion which, so far, however, does not amount to much more than to a ceaseless printing of the word in magazines.



designate the "Ichheit" of transcendental philosophy, nor me, empirically; rather the inescapable moral situation with which I happen to be identical and in which I can't help making decisions; or, in more Christian terms; I, confronting God or confronted by God—thus, I with regard to my salvation which, according to Christianity, is the Self's exclusive "interest." No philosophy neglecting this situation that I am, can, according to Kierkegaard, claim to the title of being philosophy. It is obvious that, thus, in a way, Kierkegaard re-moors philosophy in "Sein" and that he attempts to force "interest" back into theory, although, as Kierkegaard knew perfectly well, the main characteristic of theory had precisely consisted in "suspension of interest," called "*objectivity*."<sup>38</sup>

Now, Kierkegaard is usually regarded as having inaugurated a wholly new concept of "Sein" by introducing the concept of "Existenz," which makes the ungeneralizable (my case) as contrasted with the most general, the unique object or task of philosophy. This version is, to say the least, equivocal. If "one's being" was formulated by Kierkegaard in a far more rigoristic key than ever before, the reason for this rigorism is his despair; despair about the fact that the traditional "status" in which nothing is at stake but "one-self" or one's salvation: *belief*—found itself in a deadly crisis. It is not only against the background of "system" (Hegel) that he had formulated his anti-conceptual concept of existence; not only against that of rising positivism which failed to tell anybody anything about himself; not only against the lack of judgment and conviction of the press, nor against the petit-bourgeois adulteration of man who could not genuinely understand anything any longer, since, as "Publikum," it knew everything anyhow: *his undertaking is*, to at least the same degree *the attack of the Christian belief on "knowing"*; or the philosophical attempt of one, not firmly believing in his own believing anymore, to "*philosophize himself back*" to belief, a sort of a "dubite ergo sum," the attempt of a skeptic to make his very skepticism the "*pièce de résistance*" of his religious situation—an attack, though, by a man donning his enemy's weapons, making use of the language of philosophy, carried forward with a maximal philosophical furor, and disguised into the aphoristic rags of despair and paradox. Seen from this angle, his existentialism represents a rescuing-device of a new style forced upon him by the crisis of the church, growing ever more acute and by the vanishing of religion which (as "absolutes Wissen") had been drawn and swallowed by Hegel's Philosophy. Thus, *Kierkegaard's originality did not consist so much in the cause he advocated as* (if one understands the word in its broadest meaning) *in the method he had to apply to*

<sup>38</sup> It is needless to stress that Marx when re-mooring Philosophy in "Sein" and "Interest" had very different concepts in mind; still a certain parallelism between their critical undertakings is undeniable.

*keep alive an old* or, as he admits without shame, "eternal" cause.<sup>39</sup> Hence Kierkegaard is far more of a re-former than of an innovator or of a philosophical revolutionary—which fact could not be properly recognized in the nineteenth century since the concept of "progress" was necessarily thwarting the very understanding of this historical category "re-form." His "method" was "existence"; his cause: salvation, as old as Christianity itself. It is, thus, not for primarily ontological reasons, that Kierkegaard was interested in the "I am"; at best for "negatively ontological" reasons: in order to stall the omnipotency of philosophy's concept of "being"—ultimately, however, for purely Christian motives. The last Christian, smashed by the weight of the equally last, the Hegelian metaphysics, formulates his threatened position by means of the instruments of the enemy: the philosopher, in order to demonstrate the philosopher's incompetency for his own position: Belief. *He philosophizes against philosophy.* Passionately, and most likely, successfully, Kierkegaard would have defended himself against the praise of his "newness." New, indeed, is his attempt to transfer his polemic against philosophy into the province of philosophy itself, which undertaking, however, was not entirely unique, since, in a way, all post-Hegelian philosophy consisted of criticism of the competency of philosophy: each and any of them was a philosophically formulated anti-philosophy. The fact that Kierkegaard's unique undertaking was bound to become decisive for Heidegger, is obvious. It lacks plausibility only when one introduces Heidegger as Husserl's successor, as we had done for external reasons. Their affinity rests in the following facts:

(1) Since Kierkegaard felt himself to be a "Korrektiv gegen die Zeit" and a last Christian he had to live in a vacuum not so different from the vacuum in which Heidegger's "Self" is doomed to live; and had to go through the same moods connected with isolation (as anxiety) which Heidegger is describing.

(2) While Kierkegaard is a *skeptical Christian* who works up even his doubts for his Christian purposes—*Heidegger is a Christian Skeptic* who consumes even his Christian dowry (as "guilt," etc.) for his non-religious purpose. Either of them stands in an equivocal situation (if the two situations do not actually coincide with each other) but they are interpreting it from opposite directions. Either philosopher offers a philosophy of salvation, Kierkegaard still clinging to a concept of salvation handed to him by tradition, while Heidegger invents a new one. Both, however, are focusing only the influence of the crisis on the individual—while movements of far larger size tried to solve the crisis or pretended to solve it. As a matter of fact, the

<sup>39</sup> It is evident that such undertakings are always doomed to certain dialectical turns. By introducing a new rescuing-device for an old cause, one can not help engendering a new cause. (Most impressive example: National Socialism.)

invention of the concept of "existence" is only the reply to the fact that "things" and institutions had overpowered man and deprived him of "being."

#### IX. STUFFED NIHILISM

We had produced ancestors of the most diverse provenience: Greek ontology, Christianity, phenomenology, pragmatism, transcendental philosophy, Kierkegaard—and one could have added many more, such as Dilthey, Nietzsche, Bergson. This abundance of ancestors is surprising, indeed. It is not the least reason for the fact that Heidegger has become the source of an undeniable fascination. As a matter of fact he has digested a larger part of the history of the European mind than any philosophy since Hegel. While we have called Heidegger's Existentialism the unique sample of the species "Philosophy of life hostile to life," we can now add that it is the sole example of the species "Stuffed Nihilism" (*Farcierter Nihilismus*) whereby we mean that it is, despite its nihilistic tendency, bursting with all motives of History. This "stuffing," however is not simply an aesthetic phenomenon, as abundance had been in Romanticism; it is rather the result of the "Self's" will to power, of its omnivorous urge to appropriate everything. Nietzsche's words: "If there were a God, how could I bear not to be God?" seem to be transformed into "If there is History, how could I bear not to be History?"

The desperate motto of all active desperados, "all or nothing," changed under the hands of the existential one into an "all and nothing," which makes it well understandable that the book that continues his work is not entitled *To be or not to be*, but *Être et Néant*.

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#### EXTRACTO

En este artículo se muestra como Heidegger, al situarse entre alternativas clásicas, produce la impresión de establecer un plano filosófico enteramente nuevo: "Dasein" como tema, no de la investigación "óptica," sino de la "Ontológica." Por ejemplo, Heidegger corta a través de la alternativa "Naturalismo-Sobrenaturalismo": su filosofía, a pesar de ser tan atea como el materialismo, no reconoce ninguna "naturaleza." Comparado con el concepto académico de "conciencia," su "Dasein" parece extraordinariamente concreto, debido en particular a su "Sorge" ("cura"); sin embargo, Heidegger prescinde de la raíz verdadera de la "Sorge," del efectivo "menester" del hombre (y de todos los seres vivientes), pues al interpretarlo se hubiese situado en la peligrosa vecindad del materialismo y esto le hubiese

obligado a considerar al hombre como un ente necesitado de otros entes "materiales," sin los cuales no es capaz de existir. Y es precisamente esta omisión del "menester" o necesidad lo que le permite establecer, como un supuesto plano nuevo, el plano "ontológico," diferenciado del plano puramente "óntico."

Aunque no es naturalista, su filosofía tampoco es idealista. Los ideales morales y políticos que, desde Kant, motivaron el idealismo, ya no aparecen en él. Su concepto de libertad es enteramente solipsista, mientras que su Ética está separada tan completamente del obrar efectivo en el mundo social, que para él este "obrar" se reduce a una especie de operación sobre sí mismo (la "Eigentlich-werden"). Este hecho ha producido una neuva neutralización: la de la alternativa entre filosofía teórica y filosofía práctica. De hecho, el filosofar se presenta como la "acción" del "Dasein"; por otro lado, toda "auténtica" acción del "Dasein" consiste en filosofar, por cuanto la filosofía es el camino para "liberarse" del prejuicio de la opinión pública ("man") y para llegar a ser un "Yo mismo."