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Heidegger's

Being and Time
An Introduction

Paul Gerner

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HEIDEGGER'S *BEING AND TIME*

In *Being and Time* Heidegger gives an account of the distinctive features of human existence, in an attempt to answer the question of the meaning of being. He finds that underlying all of these features is what he calls 'original time'. In this clear and straightforward introduction to the text, Paul Gerner takes the reader through the work, examining its detail and explaining the sometimes difficult language which Heidegger uses. The topics which he covers include being-in-the-world, being-with, thrownness and projection, truth, authenticity, time and being, and historicity. His book makes *Being and Time* accessible in a way that conveys the essence of Heidegger's project and remains true to what is distinctive about his thinking.

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HEIDEGGER'S *BEING*
AND TIME

An Introduction

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Preface

My aim in writing this book is indicated by its title. I have tried to produce an introduction to *Being and Time*, rather than a page-by-page commentary. As well as being a very difficult book, *Being and Time* is also a very long book (though only half the length Heidegger originally intended). So it would have been counter-productive to produce an introduction of similar dimensions. What I have attempted to do is to convey the essence of the work, while at the same time attending to its detail. Inevitably I have had to be selective. It has not been my intention to present a particular interpretation of Heidegger (though by its very nature writing about philosophy is interpretive). There are, however, a number of considerations which have guided my approach. At this stage in his philosophical career Heidegger described himself as a *phenomenologist*. I have found it illuminating to keep in mind the relationship between Heidegger's conception of phenomenology and that of its founder, Husserl (though the main emphasis is on the differences between Husserl's reflective phenomenology of consciousness and Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology of what he calls *Dasein*). I have also been concerned to correct the widespread view that Heidegger is simply an *existentialist*. While there is no denying the pervasive presence of typically existentialist themes in Heidegger it seems to me that to treat him as *simply* an existentialist is essentially to trivialise his

thought and to fail to recognise its significance in the history of western philosophy. My own expertise is largely in the area of German philosophy and I think it is important to see Heidegger in the context of German philosophy (while not of course denying the crucial significance of non-German, in particular Greek, influences). Above all my aim has been clarity. It is up to others to say how successful I have been.

A note on the translations

There are two translations of *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*), one by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (first published in 1962) and one by Joan Stambaugh (first published in 1996). Both have their merits (the more recent translation is certainly the more readable of the two). For the most part, I have used the older translation (though I have frequently made what I regard as improvements). The Macquarrie and Robinson translation of key terms has become so entrenched in English-language discussions of Heidegger that it seemed best to stick with it.

Introduction

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Martin Heidegger was born on 26 September 1889 in Messkirch, a small town in south-west Germany, about 20 miles north of Lake Constance. From 1903 to 1906 he attended the Gymnasium in Konstanz, having secured a scholarship through Conrad Gröber, the Archbishop of Freiburg, who was also from Messkirch. Although he attended classes at the Gymnasium he lived in a hostel reserved for boys destined for the priesthood. In 1906 he transferred to the Gymnasium and seminary in Freiburg and in 1909 briefly entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits). However he left after only two weeks, ostensibly on health grounds. Still with the intention of becoming a priest he enrolled in the theology faculty at the University of Freiburg. Although theology was his main subject he was also required to do some philosophy, though in a form approved by the ecclesiastical authorities. However he had already developed an interest in philosophy independently, specifically in the question which was to dominate his thinking throughout his career – the question of the meaning of being. The first stimulus to this came from the study of a book given to him by Conrad Gröber while he was still attending the Gymnasium in Freiburg – Brentano's *On the*

Several Senses of Being in Aristotle.¹ And in his final year at school he came across a work by the Freiburg theologian Carl Braig *On Being: A Sketch of Ontology*.² From the first semester of his theological studies he immersed himself in Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (having heard that Husserl was deeply influenced by Brentano).

In 1911 he gave up the idea of training for the priesthood and switched to philosophy. In 1913 he wrote his doctoral dissertation on the theory of judgment in psychologism and in 1915 his habilitation thesis on the theory of categories and meaning in Duns Scotus.³ Both of these works show the strong influence of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* – the first the influence of Husserl's critique of psychologism, the second the influence of Investigation 4, 'On the distinction between independent and dependent meanings and the idea of pure grammar'. From 1918 to 1923 he was a Privatdozent in Freiburg and also Assistant to Husserl, who had come to Freiburg in 1916 as successor to Heinrich Rickert. In 1923 he became an associate professor in Marburg and also began work on *Being and Time*, which was eventually published in 1927.⁴

¹ *Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden bei Aristoteles* (Freiburg: Herder, 1862). English translation: *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, trans. Rolf George (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

² *Vom Sein: Abriss der Ontologie* (Freiburg, 1896).

³ The text which formed the basis of his study was at that time attributed to Duns Scotus (1266–1308) himself though it has since been shown to be the work of a member of the school of Duns Scotus, Thomas of Erfurt.

⁴ As a result of the success of *Being and Time* and on the recommendation of Husserl he secured the chair at Freiburg in 1928. In 1929 he gave his inaugural lecture 'What is Metaphysics?'. In the same year he had his famous debate with Ernst Cassirer on the interpretation of Kant at Davos. Having originally been apolitical, Heidegger was attracted by Hitler and like many others saw in National Socialism a means to national renewal. This led him to accept the Rectorship of the University of Freiburg in May 1933. He resigned in April 1934. It seems that his romantic and rather idiosyncratic

BEING AND TIME: AN OVERVIEW

For purposes of orientation and to avoid getting lost in the detail of Heidegger's study I will start by giving an overview in which I hope to capture the essence of Heidegger's thought.

Being and Time is concerned with the question of the meaning (*Sinn*) of being, not in the sense of what's it all about, why are we here, or even why is there something rather than nothing, but in the sense of what we should understand by being, what being 'is' ('is' in scare quotes because one of Heidegger's main contentions is that being is not a being, not even the highest being). Ultimately it is concerned with the meaning of being as such – rather than with the meaning of this or that being. But for the most part *Being and Time* is not *explicitly* about being as such but about the being of that being which I myself am. For reasons which will be explained later, he will call this being or entity 'Dasein'. To ask and attempt to answer the question of the meaning of being is to engage in *ontology*. Because reaching clarity about the being of Dasein is regarded as a necessary prerequisite of tackling the question of the meaning of being as such the analysis of the being of Dasein is called *fundamental ontology*.

The first half of *Being and Time* (Division One) is taken up with the attempt to give an account of the basic structures

version of National Socialism and his efforts to implement it resulted in friction with party officials. In his Nietzsche lectures between 1936 and 1940 Heidegger was critical of so-called Nazi philosophy and seems to have attracted the interest of the Gestapo. After the war Heidegger went before a Denazification Commission and was issued with a *Lehrverbot* (teaching ban). He began to lecture again in 1951. In 1966 he was interviewed by the German magazine *Der Spiegel* and gave an account of his Rectorship and the events leading up to it in which he seeks to play down his involvement with the regime. On his own instructions this was not published until after his death. He died on 26 May 1976 and was buried in his home town of Messkirch.

of the being of Dasein. It is a *phenomenological* account in the sense that it is not a matter of inference or argument but of 'seeing'. Essential to Heidegger's notion of phenomenology is that there can be a seeing, not just of *entities* and their properties, but of *being* and structures of being. Whereas for Husserl the subject-matter of phenomenology is consciousness, for Heidegger the subject-matter of phenomenology is being.

The term he will use to designate the being of the entity he calls Dasein is *existence*. The important thing about existence, in contrast to other modes of being, is the understanding of being. To say that Dasein *exists* is to say that Dasein *is* in such a way that it understands being – its own being but also the being of things other than itself to which, as Heidegger will put it, it *comports* itself.

The basic structures of the being of Dasein he will call *existentials*. These are contrasted with *categories*, which refer to the basic structures of the being of entities other than Dasein. The most basic of the structures of the being of Dasein is what he will call *being-in-the-world*. Dasein is *in the world* not in the sense of one thing being spatially contained in another thing but rather in the sense of being *engaged* with things. Dasein is not a *subject* for which the world is an *object* over against it. It is possible for Dasein simply to behold things, but such mere beholding is only possible as a modification of engaged having-to-do-with things. The things with which are engaged are in a broad sense *used* or *employed*. Such entities are what he will call 'equipment' (*Zeug*). He speaks of such entities as being 'ready-to-hand' or 'available' (*zuhanden*) and of their mode of being as 'readiness-to-hand' or 'availability' (*Zuhandenheit* or *Zuhandensein*). This is contrasted with the being of things and their properties which simply occur, which he calls presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit* or *Vorhandensein*). Dasein is in the world in the sense of being engaged with

things, but what Heidegger means by *world* is not itself an entity, not even the totality of entities (of what is), but the web of significance which makes it possible for entities to show themselves or be encountered. World has to do, not so much with what is, but with the *openness* of what is. He will speak of different modes of comportment to entities. Understanding of world is not itself a mode of comportment to entities but rather what makes comportment to entities possible.

The being of Dasein is always someone's being, or as Heidegger puts it, is always *mine*. This character of being a *self*, this selfness, is not to be understood in terms of a persisting non-material something which through its persistence and self-sameness unites the multiplicity of my mental states and makes them *my* mental states. The sense in which Dasein is a self is one which involves the possibility of *choosing* ways of existing. But that the being of Dasein is always mine does not mean that Dasein is something essentially private and isolated. The being of Dasein is being-in-the-world, but the world is not my private possession but a *shared* world. Being-in-the-world is being-*with*-others-in-the-world. Relationship to others is not just a contingent fact about Dasein, the fact that I am not the only one of my kind. Being alone is a possibility but it is only possible on the basis of being-with. Being-with does not depend on inference from bodily appearance and behaviour. But nor does it depend on something non-inferential like empathy. Empathy is not the bridge between one private subject and another private subject but is itself made possible by being-with.

Heidegger will speak of the being of Dasein being *disclosed* in Dasein (though he will also make it clear that this is inseparable from the disclosing of the being of entities other than Dasein and of being as such). The 'Da' (or 'there') in Dasein refers to such disclosedness rather than to spatial location.

There are two basic modes of disclosedness – affectedness (*Befindlichkeit*) or mood (*Stimmung*) and understanding (*Verstehen*). In the first of these Dasein is disclosed in its thrownness (*Geworfenheit*), its sheer thatness. In the second it is disclosed in its possibility, its ability to be. In understanding how to be Dasein is *projecting* itself onto possibilities of existence. So he will say that the being of Dasein is thrown projection.

Dasein is thrown into the world (is always already in the world) and is always 'ahead of itself' in the sense of projecting itself onto possibilities. It is also engaged with entities *within* the world (given Heidegger's terminology chairs and tables, sticks and stones are *within* the world but not *in* the world. Only Dasein is *in* the world). These three basic features of existence – thrownness, projection and engagement, or what he will call 'concern' (*Besorgen*) – in their essential interconnection are what he will call 'care' (*Sorge*). Heidegger's answer to the question 'What is the being of Dasein?' is the being of Dasein is care – in this sense of 'care'.

In the various modes of comportment to entities entities are allowed to manifest themselves as entities. They are brought out of concealment or as he will put it, they are uncovered or dis-covered (*entdeckt*). What makes the uncovering of entities possible is the understanding or disclosedness of being. This has implications for the understanding of *truth*. Traditionally this has been understood as a relationship of agreement or correspondence between a statement and a state of affairs. For Heidegger truth is essentially unconcealedness (*Unverborgenheit*). Statements are not true by virtue of agreeing with something or corresponding to something but by virtue of uncovering something. But the uncovering accomplished by (true) statements, he maintains, is parasitic on the uncovering accomplished by engaged having-to-do-with things, which in turn is dependent on the disclosedness of being. So the

statement is not the basic location of truth, and the most primordial truth is not the uncoveredness of entities but the disclosedness of being.

The structures of being which Heidegger's phenomenology of Dasein lays bare are structures of Dasein in what Heidegger calls its *everydayness*. Everyday existence is what he calls *inauthentic* existence. But it is also possible for existence to be *authentic*. To exist authentically is to choose and own my possibilities of existence and in this sense to *be* myself. To exist inauthentically is to have my possibilities of existence determined by something he calls *das Man* (the One or They). I do, feel, judge, think as *one* does, feels, judges, thinks. The relationship to others – being-with – is essential to existence (in Heidegger's sense of the term) but there is also a sense in which others – in the shape of the One or They – take away my being. Another aspect of inauthenticity is what he calls falling (*Verfallen*). This is absorption with – or lostness in – entities within-the-world. Dasein is disclosed to itself in its fallenness in a 'distinguished' mood or mode of affectedness he calls *Angst* (anxiety). This is unlike fear in that, whereas fear has as its object some entity within the world and is fear *for* some particular possibility of being, *Angst* has as its object not an entity within the world but the world as such. And what it is anxious *for* is not some particular possibility of being but being-in-the-world as such. In *Angst* the nothing (*das Nichts*) is disclosed. This disclosure of the nothing involves the entities, in which one is absorbed or lost in falling, 'slipping away' in their totality in such a way that they lose all relevance and no longer offer any support.

Authenticity involves a certain mode of comportment towards death, the *end* of Dasein, the possibility of the impossibility of Dasein. Death is not something which happens to Dasein. The being of Dasein is being towards death. Death

is the possibility which is most my own, the possibility with regard to which there can be no deputising. Because it involves the severing of *all* relations to others Heidegger calls that possibility of being that is death *non-relational* (*unbezüglich*). It is also the most extreme possibility in the sense that it is the possibility of the impossibility of *any* comportment to anything and in this sense cannot be *surpassed* (outstripped, overtaken). Death also has its own kind of *certainly* but is indeterminate with respect to its *when*. Existing inauthentically, Dasein covers up and disguises these features of death. Existing authentically, Dasein faces up to death as the end of Dasein.

The notion of *conscience* also plays an important role in Heidegger's account of authenticity. It is interpreted by him as the call to authenticity. As ordinarily understood conscience declares me guilty – for what I have done and for what I have failed to do. It warns me of possible guilt for what I may or may not do in the future. And when my conscience is clear it declares the absence of guilt. But Heidegger wishes to maintain that there is a sense in which Dasein as such is guilty. Conscience discloses my guilt but it is *ontological* guilt. Guilt in the ontological sense is: the null being-the-ground of a nullity (*das nichtige Grund-sein einer Nichtigkeit*). What this means is that with respect to both thrownness and projection the being of Dasein is determined by a *not*. As thrown, Dasein has *not* brought itself into existence. It is its disclosedness but this is *not* something it has brought about. It belongs to itself but has *not* given itself to itself. It projects itself onto possibilities, but possibilities into which it has been thrown, in the sense that it does not create the world which defines the possibilities of existence open to it. It is the ground of its projecting but as thrown it is a null (*nichtig*) ground. The other aspect of Dasein's being, its projecting, is also null, determined by a

not – but not just because it is *thrown* projection. Simply as projection it is also essentially null. In projecting Dasein is choosing possibilities of being. To the extent that it does this Dasein is *free*. But freedom as the choosing of one possibility necessarily involves not having chosen the others.

In recognising my ontological guilt and facing up to death I am also ready to decide how to act in the concrete situations in which I find myself. So Heidegger will also say that authentic existence is resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*). The German word is also chosen for its connection with the German word for disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*). Recalling that for Heidegger truth is essentially unconcealedness, we can say that resolute disclosedness is pre-eminently true.

The being of Dasein is care. Care can be authentic or inauthentic. But what is the sense or meaning (*Sinn*) of care? Heidegger's answer is that it is *time*. But time in what sense? It is not time in what Heidegger calls the ordinary or common sense. This is time understood as a uniform sequence of nows. On this understanding of time the not-yet-now becomes the now and the now becomes the no-longer-now in a beginningless and endless and irreversible sequence. In interpreting the being of Dasein in terms of time Heidegger is not making the obvious point that we are essentially temporal beings in the sense that we are in time understood as the sequence of nows. Dasein is not simply in time, its temporality is not what he calls 'within-time-ness' (*Innerzeitigkeit*). Nor does Dasein's temporality consist in within-time-ness combined with awareness of within-time-ness. The temporality that is distinctive of Dasein, and in terms of which its being is to be understood, is what he calls *ecstatic temporality*.

In the technical, ontological, sense Heidegger gives to it, 'care' designates the three principal structures of Dasein's being in their essential unity – projection, thrownness and

concern. In projecting itself onto possibilities of being-in-the-world Dasein is '*ahead* of itself'. As thrown, Dasein is *already* in-the-world. As already in-the-world it is *bei* entities within-the-world, in the sense that it is involved with them, dwells with them, is absorbed by them. Underlying each of the three essential components of care is what Heidegger calls a temporal *ecstasis*. The three temporal ecstases in their essential unity are what constitutes the ecstatic temporality (or original time) in terms of which Dasein's being is to be understood. They correspond to the past, present and future of time as commonly understood but cannot be identified with them. That is to say, they cannot be identified with the no-longer-now, the now and the not-yet-now.

In its projection Dasein is coming-towards-itself in its possibility. In its thrownness it is coming-back-to-itself in its having-been (*Gewesen*). In letting entities within-the-world manifest themselves Dasein is making entities present or enpresenting (*Gegenwärtigen*) them. Ecstatic temporality is this unity of coming-towards-itself, coming-back-to-itself and enpresenting. Each of them is an ecstasy in the sense that in each of them Dasein is *outside itself*— though not in the sense that it is initially encapsulated within a private sphere of pure interiority from which it somehow manages to escape. By virtue of my ecstatic temporality I am already outside myself.

Ecstatic temporality is the sense or meaning of the being of Dasein. Heidegger thinks that if this claim is to be substantiated it must be possible to give a temporal interpretation of all those structures of Dasein's being uncovered in Division One. In other words, for each of the existentials it must be possible to show that it is grounded in a specific mode of ecstatic temporality. All three ecstases must underlie each of

the existentials, but individual existentials differ with respect to which of the ecstases has primacy.

Heidegger also reflects on time as we actually encounter it, time as we reckon with it. Time as reckoned with is not an abstract series of pure nows but has the features of *datability* (every now is 'now, when such and such', for example, 'now, when the door slams'), *spannedness* (every now refers not to an indivisible point, but is always 'now, during' or 'now, while' – for example, 'now, during the break', 'now, while climbing the mountain'), *publicness* (although each one of us utters his or her own now, it is nevertheless the now for everyone; it is accessible to everyone and thus belongs to no one) and *significance* (time is always time *to*; it is appropriate or inappropriate time, right or wrong time).

Time as a uniform sequence of nows is an abstraction from time with these structures. But there is something more basic than this concrete time of 'everyday' experience, something which makes it possible. This is ecstatic temporality. The covering up of the structures of time as reckoned with, of their origin in ecstatic temporality, and of ecstatic temporality itself, has its origin in the tendency of Dasein to understand its own being and that of everything else as presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*). Time itself is interpreted as something somehow present-at-hand. The succession of nows is interpreted as a present-at-hand sequence. The nows come and go like entities. Like present-at-hand entities they perish, becoming no longer present-at-hand.

The being of Dasein is care, and the sense or meaning of care is ecstatic temporality. But this clearly does not amount to an answer to the question about the meaning of being as such. It merely prepares the ground for such an answer. Dasein *is* in such a way that it understands being. What needs to be

shown is that that in terms of which Dasein understands and interprets being is *time*. Time must be brought to light as the horizon for all understanding and interpretation of being.

If being is to be conceived in terms of time then being itself must be shown to have an essentially temporal character. This was to have been the task of Division Three ('Time and Being'). Although Heidegger wrote this section he appears to have found it unsatisfactory.

The question of being

The Introduction¹ to *Being and Time* is preceded by a short piece of text, later referred to by Heidegger as the Foreword,² which starts with a quotation from Plato's *Sophist*. The Eleatic Stranger, a follower of Parmenides and Zeno, is depicted as saying: 'For manifestly you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the expression "*being*". We, however, who used to think we understood it, have now become perplexed.' Heidegger asks whether we today (he was writing in the 1920s) have an answer to the question of what we mean by the word 'being' (*seiend*) and is emphatic that we do not. And it is not just a matter of being perplexed about the meaning. We lack the understanding for the significance of the question. The task of the Introduction is to reawaken this understanding.

¹ My understanding of Heidegger's Introduction – and of *Being and Time* as a whole – has benefited considerably from the first volume of Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann's commentary, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1987). Von Herrmann, who was Heidegger's assistant in the last years of the philosopher's life, was taught by Eugen Fink, who had a uniquely close relationship with both Husserl and Heidegger. The second volume of his commentary (which covers Division One of *Being and Time*) appeared too late to be used in this introduction.

² In the Introduction to his 'What Is Metaphysics?' (originally given as his inaugural lecture in Freiburg in 1929. The Introduction was written twenty years later).

Once this has been done the preliminary³ aim of *Being and Time* is the 'interpretation of *time* as the possible horizon of any understanding of being'. This already gives us some indication of how we should understand the title of the work. The relationship between being and time is not one of opposition.⁴ Rather their relationship is such that the latter is the key to the meaning of the former. However, it will emerge that by 'time' Heidegger does not mean what we ordinarily understand by the term. According to what he will call the ordinary or common (*vulgär*) conception of time, time is a beginningless, endless and irreversible sequence of nows. We think of things, including ourselves, as being *in* time as thus conceived. From the outset we must be clear that it is *not* time in this sense which determines the meaning of being. It would be to get Heidegger completely wrong if we were to suppose that he was replacing the traditional view that what truly is – the really real – is the timeless with the view that *everything* that is, is in time. The ordinary conception of time is derivative from something he will call ecstatic-horizonal temporality. It is time in this sense, not time as a sequence of nows, that is the key to the meaning of being.

By any standards Heidegger's text is difficult. And unlike other philosophical texts it is not made accessible by our becoming familiar with the traditional technical terms of philosophy. To a significant extent he forges his own philosophical vocabulary, often making use of peculiarly *German* features

³ The significance of 'preliminary' here is that the 'interpretation of *time* as the possible horizon of any understanding of being' in Part 1 was to have been followed in Part 2 by what he calls the 'phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology'. We will examine the notion of such a history in chapter 7.

⁴ So the relationship between being and time is not like that between, for example, being and becoming.

of language. So we need to find a way of easing ourselves into what he is about. So let us start with the simple fact that we have to do with all manner of things, or, as Heidegger would put it, that we *comport* ourselves to entities, to things which *are*.

I open the door and enter the room. I sit at my desk and begin to write. Occasionally I look out of the window and appreciate the beauty of the landscape. I perceive the things in the room, but I also use them. People come into my room and I talk to them or ignore them. But I can also be said to comport myself to myself. This need not mean that I am engaged in introspection, that I am consciously attending to my own mental states. I am engaged in a task and am either satisfied or dissatisfied with my performance. In all of these cases there is something *to which* I comport myself: the door, the room, my computer, the beauty of the landscape, other people, myself. I comport myself to them as something that *is*, as entities.

For Heidegger an entity or a being (*ein Seiendes*) is anything that in any sense *is*. An entity is something that *is*, but what is it for something to *be*? We are all familiar with entities. But what it is for something to be is not itself an entity. The *being* of entities is not itself an entity. There is, then, a fundamental *difference* between anything that is and being (*Sein*). Although Heidegger highlights this difference between being and entities (*Sein* and *Seiendes*) in *Being and Time* he does not give it a name. Subsequently (in lectures in Marburg in the summer semester of 1927, for example) he will speak of the *ontological difference*. Although there will be much talk of entities in *Being and Time*, the ultimate theme of the work is *being* or, more precisely, what he calls the meaning or sense (*Sinn*) of being. Whatever else is discussed is subordinate to the question of being.

But the question of the meaning of being, he thinks, has come to be neglected, even forgotten (2).⁵ We have lost the understanding for the significance of the question. In Heidegger's view we have to go back to the ancient Greeks to find a real engagement with the question. In another reference to Plato's *Sophist* he speaks of a 'battle of the giants', concerning being, the dispute between those who maintained that true being pertained only to the objects of sense perception and those who maintained that true being pertained only to the objects of pure thought, the ideas.

The question concerning the meaning of being must be revived. But this does not mean that we have simply to raise the question as it was raised by Plato and Aristotle. Essentially they were asking about what Heidegger would later call 'beingness' (*Seiendheit*), which is what all things which *are* have in common, what belongs to beings as beings. The more radical question that Heidegger wants to ask concerns not beingness, beings as beings, but being as being, being as such.⁶

The question of being has come to be neglected, but this neglect is felt to be justified by the fact that being is the most general concept. Because it is the most general concept it is also empty and indefinable. And whatever meaning it has is in any case obvious or self-evident (*selbstverständlich*). Heidegger grants that being is the most general concept in the sense that any kind of comportment to anything presupposes an

⁵ Unless otherwise specified all page references are to *Being and Time*. All such references are to the page numbers of the German original (*Sein und Zeit*) as both translations (Macquarrie and Robinson and Stambaugh) include these page numbers in the margin of their text.

⁶ Though it must be said this is clearer in the marginal comments written by Heidegger in his own copy of *Being and Time* than in the text itself, in which he repeatedly speaks of the being of entities (*Sein des Seienden*).

understanding of being. However, he denies that it is the most general, or universal, concept in the sense of being the highest genus of entities. We can illustrate the notion of species and genus in the following way. A spaniel is a species of the genus dog. A dog is a species of the genus mammal. A mammal is a species of the genus animal. An animal is a species of the genus living thing. A living thing is a species of the genus physical thing. To say that being is not the highest genus is to say that it is not what this process culminates in. It is not what we come to when we have completed this progression from species to genus. Being is neither an entity nor a class of entities.

If the generality or universality of being *were* that of a genus, and if being were the *highest* genus, then it would indeed follow that the concept of being is indefinable – at least if definition is understood as definition by genus and specific difference. For example, ‘man’ can be defined by saying what differentiates this species of the genus ‘animal’ from all other species of this genus. If, as has traditionally been thought, this differentiating feature is *rationality* then man can be defined as a rational animal. If being is the highest genus then it cannot be a species of a yet higher genus and hence cannot be defined. But the generality of being is not that of a genus. So therefore the question of definition, in this sense, simply does not arise.

But surely we already know the meaning of being. It is something obvious, self-evident. We all know what we mean when we say ‘there *is* a chair in this room’, ‘the sky *is* blue’, ‘I *am* glad’, so why make a mystery out of it? And it is not just that we understand these *words*. In all our comportment to entities, whether to oneself or to what is not oneself, we have an understanding of being, regardless of whether we give verbal expression to our comportment. Without such an understanding of being we could not comport ourselves to entities *as* entities. Prior to the explicit raising of the question

of the meaning of being we already have an understanding of being. Indeed understanding of being belongs to the being of the entity which we ourselves are. It is this understanding of being (that of myself and that of what is not myself) which in Heidegger's view distinguishes us from all other beings. But having such an understanding is not the same as being able to give an account of the meaning of being. Understanding of being and being able to give a conceptual articulation of this understanding are not the same.

In any case appeals to what is self-evident or obvious are in Heidegger's view deeply unphilosophical. Heidegger refers approvingly to Kant's insistence that it is precisely such 'covert judgments of common reason'⁷ which stand in need of analysis before they can properly be understood.

It might seem an objection to Heidegger's claim that the question of being had fallen into oblivion that there is a branch of philosophy called ontology which in his day at least was widely practised. Think of Nicolai Hartmann and phenomenologists like Max Scheler and Roman Ingarden, who did not follow Husserl in the direction of transcendental idealism. And even Husserl himself has a place for ontology, albeit as a discipline which ultimately must be grounded in transcendental phenomenology. However, Heidegger would say that such ontologists, although concerned with the being of this or that kind of entity, fail to raise the question of the meaning of being as such.⁸

What is the relationship between ontologies and the question of being? Being is always the being of an entity. The

⁷ See Immanuel Kant, 'Reflexionen zur Anthropologie', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Akademie-Ausgabe (Berlin and Leipzig: de Gruyter, 1923), vol. XV, p. 180, Reflexion 436.

⁸ At most they raise the question of being in the sense of beingness (*Seiendheit*), not that of the meaning of being as being, being as such.

totality of entities can be divided up into different regions of entity. Examples of such regions would be history, nature, space, life, language. The entities of such regions can become the objects of the various sciences. The basic concepts which define a region of entities constitute the subject-matter of regional ontologies. They determine the way in which the objects of science are understood in advance. The positive sciences presuppose regional ontology. But in Heidegger's view such ontology remains 'naïve and opaque' if pursued in isolation from the question of the meaning of being as such. Regional ontology establishes the a priori conditions of the possibility of the positive sciences which uncover entities as entities of such and such a type. But inquiry into the meaning of being as such aims to provide the a priori conditions of the possibility of regional ontology. Regional ontology can provide a rich system of categories but in the absence of the clarification of the meaning of being as such it remains blind.

But if the question of the meaning of being as such is to be properly *posed* it must first be made transparent. To do this Heidegger first analyses the structure of a question.⁹ All questioning is a searching. All searching is guided in a preliminary way by what is sought. With regard to the question of being the what-is-sought is the meaning of being. So we must already have a preliminary understanding of the meaning of being. The explicit question about the meaning of being and the attempt to conceptualise it arise from this preliminary understanding. We do not *know* what being means. But simply in asking 'what *is* "being"?' we show that we have some understanding of 'is', even though we are not able conceptually to articulate this understanding. Such 'average and vague' understanding of being, as Heidegger calls it, is a fact. He also

⁹ In § 2.

points out that this understanding can be permeated with traditional theories and beliefs about being. He does not give examples here, but we can find some in 'The Origin of the Work of Art': the conception of an entity as the bearer of properties, or as the unity of a manifold of sensations, or as formed stuff or matter.¹⁰

In regard to any question we can distinguish between *das Gefragte* (what is asked about), *das Befragte* (what is interrogated or questioned) and *das Erfragte* (that which is to be found out or ascertained by the asking). In the case of the question of being, *das Gefragte* is being – that which determines entities as entities, that on the basis of which entities are always already understood (6). Heidegger reiterates the ontological difference. The being of entities 'is' not itself an entity. We cannot determine entities as entities by tracing them back in their origin to other entities, not even to the supreme being. Looking ahead to phenomenology as the *method* of inquiry into the meaning of being Heidegger says of being that it has its own way of being exhibited (*eine eigene Aufweisungsart*) which is essentially different from the un-covering (*Entdeckung*) of entities (6).

Das Erfragte, what is aimed at in the questioning, is the meaning of being. Interpreting this meaning will require its own peculiar concepts, concepts essentially different from those used to characterise entities.

Although not itself an entity being is always the being of entities. So answering, or preparing to answer, the question of being will require the questioning or interrogation of entities. But there are all manner of entities. There are chairs and tables, sticks and stones, thoughts, sensations, persons, plants,

¹⁰ See *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 148–56.

animals, numbers, words, sentences, states of affairs, events, works of art, institutions. Which if any of these are to be interrogated in the question of being? What is *das Befragte* in the question of being?

As the comportment of an entity, the questioner, questioning has its own character of being. If the question about being is to be explicitly posed in a way which is fully transparent to itself then it must be made clear how being is to be looked at, how its meaning is to be understood and conceptually grasped. The right choice of the entity to be interrogated must be made. Different kinds of entity require different modes of access. For whichever entity is chosen we must work out the proper mode of access to it. Looking at something, understanding and conceiving it, choosing it, securing access to it – these are all modes of comportment and hence modes of being of a specific entity, *that* entity which we ourselves are. So the working out of the question of being means the making transparent of an entity, the inquirer, in its being. So the answer to the question: which entity is the entity to be interrogated in the question of being? is: ourselves, i.e. the entity which each of us is. For reasons to be explained later he will call this entity *Dasein*.

Heidegger points to the apparent circularity of his procedure. It is being claimed that the question about the meaning of being can only be properly posed if we first determine an entity in its being. But it would seem that we can only do this if we have first established the meaning of being. In other words the working out of the question of the meaning of being presupposes that we already have an answer to this question. Heidegger dismisses this objection as purely formal but adds that in fact there is no circularity in his procedure. It is possible to determine an entity in its being without being in possession of an explicit concept of the meaning of being. Had this not

been the case then there could not have been any ontological knowledge. But there clearly has been such knowledge. This is made possible by what he calls 'taking a preliminary look at being' (*vorgängige Hinblicknahme auf Sein*) which arises from the 'average understanding of being in which we always already move and which in the end belongs to the essential constitution of Dasein itself' (8). We can call this *vorgängige Hinblicknahme* a 'presupposition' but it is not a presupposition in the sense of an unproven principle (*Grundsatz*) from which other propositions are to be derived. He is not in the business of establishing something by argument but of 'letting something be seen', something he will go on to call 'phenomenology'. It should be noted that, although Heidegger rejects the charge of circularity, there is also a sense in which his procedure is necessarily circular. This has to do with what he will call the 'hermeneutic circle'. This is not simply a feature of the procedure adopted but an essential feature of the being of Dasein as such.

There is, it must be confessed, something slightly artificial about Heidegger's choice of the entity to be questioned. We must avoid any suggestion that the being of human beings is to serve as the model for the being of all other entities.¹¹ The real ground for his choice is that what distinguishes our being from that of other entities is that it includes an understanding of being. Dasein is not an entity from which the meaning of being is to be abstracted; it is what he calls the 'place (*Stätte*) of the understanding of being'.¹² To be in the way we are is to understand being, that of ourselves and that of entities other than ourselves. This entity Heidegger calls *Dasein*. This

¹¹ In a marginal comment on p. 7 of his own copy of *Being and Time* Heidegger says: 'But the meaning of being is not read off [*abgelesen*] from this entity.'

¹² See his marginal comment on p. 8.

word (the literal meaning of which is being-there or being-here or, more strictly, something between the two), which he uses as an ontological term of art, is both a word of ordinary language (meaning human existence) and a traditional philosophical word (used to translate the Latin word for existence, *existentia*). It would not be false to say that Heidegger is talking about human beings when he uses the term 'Dasein'. But 'human being' or 'man' (not *Mann* but *Mensch*) is not an ontological term, whereas 'Dasein' is. What it is about human beings that the term Dasein focuses on is the understanding of being. He also speaks of the disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*) of being. The 'Da' in 'Dasein' refers to this disclosedness of being. So it makes sense for Heidegger to speak of the Dasein *in* human beings.¹³ For these reasons it is best to leave the term untranslated.

It is the understanding of being which distinguishes this entity, Dasein, from other entities. 'Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities' (12). Unlike all other entities Dasein is such that in its being this being itself is an issue for it.¹⁴ This clearly has nothing to do with the instinct for self-preservation, something which is common to all living things. Dasein is concerned with its being in the sense that it must choose the way it is. Its being is such that it must choose the way it is, not *that* it is but *how* it is. In its being it has a relationship of being to this being. This means that Dasein

¹³ As he does in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, for example. See *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1990).

¹⁴ 'Es ist . . . dadurch ausgezeichnet, dass es diesem Seienden in seinem Sein *um* dieses Sein selbst geht.' The German idiom 'es geht um' means something like 'it is a matter of', 'it concerns'. For example a savings bank in its advertising uses the phrase 'wenn es ums Geld geht' (when it's a matter of money).

understands itself in its being. With and through its being this being is *disclosed* to it.¹⁵

For the being of Dasein – the way it is – Heidegger reserves the term ‘existence’ (*Existenz*). Given this terminology, we can say that only Dasein exists. We can also say that for Heidegger ‘Dasein exists’ is a necessary truth. This does not of course mean that we could use a version of the ontological argument to prove that there is Dasein. There might not have been Dasein. When it is said that Dasein understands being it is important to see that this does not just mean that it understands its own being, that it understands existence. The being Heidegger calls existence is being in a world. The understanding of being which belongs to Dasein – which Dasein *is* – includes an understanding of something like ‘world’ and an understanding of the being of entities encountered within the world. Inseparable from the understanding of existence is an understanding of the being of entities other than Dasein.¹⁶

However, let us for the moment concentrate on Dasein’s understanding of its own being, existence. Heidegger says that we cannot define the essence of Dasein by specifying its ‘what’. Its essence lies rather in the fact that ‘it has its being to be and has it as its own’ (12). The being of Dasein is not the mere occurrence of something. It is, in a manner of speaking, a task, something to be accomplished, done. It is something

¹⁵ The ‘with’ and ‘through’ here point ahead to the fundamental distinction Heidegger will later draw between two basic features of the being of Dasein which he will call ‘thrownness’ (*Geworfenheit*) and ‘projecting’ (*Entwerfen*). Cf. von Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie*, pp. 106–8.

¹⁶ Commenting on his statement ‘The understanding of being is itself a determination of the being of Dasein’ (*Seinsverständnis ist selbst eine Seinsbestimmtheit des Daseins*) (12) Heidegger says: ‘But here being not only as the being of human beings (existence). This becomes clear from what follows. Being-in-the-world includes within itself the relation of existence to being as a whole: understanding of being.’

to which we are delivered over, but for which, having been delivered over, we are responsible. So if *essence* is understood as what-ness (for example, the essence of a tree consists of the properties which together make a tree a tree) Dasein does not really have an essence. When Heidegger returns to this topic (in § 9) he puts essence (*Wesen*) in scare quotes. ‘The “essence” of Dasein lies in its existence’¹⁷ (42). Dasein does not have an essence in the sense of properties which make it the entity it is but it does have an essence in the sense of distinctive ways of being which make it the entity it is.

Dasein has its being to be and *has it as its own*. As Heidegger will later put it (in § 9) the being of this entity is in each case mine (*je meines*). Selfness (*Selbstheit*) belongs to Dasein. The being of Dasein is the being of a self. But, as Heidegger makes clear from the outset, the sense in which Dasein is a self should not be understood in terms of the existence (in the ordinary sense) of a persisting, non-material, but thing-like, something which gives unity to the multiplicity of my mental states or experiences. Heidegger’s self is neither substance nor subject but is to be understood in terms of existence.

Although Dasein does not have an essence in the sense of a set of properties that make it the thing it is the notion of what is essential is still one that has application to Dasein. This entity, Dasein, which is by way of an understanding of being, is such that its being, existence, exhibits a complex interconnection of essential structures. This interconnection of structures of existence Heidegger calls ‘existentiality’. A structure of the being of Dasein he calls an ‘existential’. He contrasts existentials with *categories*, structures of the being of entities other than Dasein. Having its being to be (*Zu-sein*) and in-each-case-mineness (*Jemeinigkeit*) are existentials. Other

¹⁷ ‘Das “Wesen” des Daseins liegt in seiner Existenz’.

examples, to be examined later, are being-in-the-world, concern (*Besorgen*), being-with, thrownness, projection, falling (*Verfallen*).

As we have already indicated it will emerge that the meaning of the being of Dasein is temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*). However this does not itself amount to an answer to the question concerning the meaning of being as such (we can't equate the being of Dasein, existence, with being as such). It does, however, prepare the ground for such an answer. Dasein is in such a way that in its being it understands being. The 'horizon' of such understanding, that from the standpoint of which, in terms of which (*von wo aus*), being is understood, is *time*. As already indicated the concept of time which is here operative must be distinguished from the ordinary or common conception of time. According to Heidegger this also underlies all *philosophical* interpretations of time, from Aristotle to Bergson. Heidegger will try to show how this concept of time and the ordinary understanding of time in general arise out of temporality (or 'original' time).

The essential temporality of being for which Heidegger is arguing should not be confused with temporality in the sense of being-in-time, which has traditionally been used as a criterion for distinguishing between different regions of entity. For example there are temporal (*zeitlich*) entities such as processes in nature and events in history. These are contrasted with non-temporal (*unzeitlich*) entities such as spatial and numerical relations. In addition there are timeless (*zeitlos*) entities such as the *senses* of sentences which are contrasted with the temporal sequence of the *utterance* of sentences. Finally the contrast is made between temporal entities and the eternal. According to the traditional concept of God, God is eternal not in the sense of being at all times but in the sense of being right outside time or supra-temporal (*überzeitlich*). If being itself is essentially

temporal then even the non-temporal, the timeless and the supra-temporal are, with respect to their *being*, temporal.

PHENOMENOLOGY

The laying bare, the exhibiting (*Aufweisen*) of Dasein's existentiality Heidegger calls *phenomenology*. But what does he mean by phenomenology? *Being and Time* is dedicated to Husserl, it appeared in Husserl's *Jahrbuch*,¹⁸ and Heidegger had been Husserl's assistant.¹⁹ Moreover Heidegger himself calls what he is doing 'phenomenology'. So one may think that he is simply applying the phenomenological method, as conceived by Husserl, to a particular area of experience. This would be a mistake. The key ideas of Husserlian phenomenology are consciousness, intentionality and the phenomenological reduction. The first two barely figure in *Being and Time*, and the last item does not figure at all. It is true that in his Marburg lectures on phenomenology, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger uses the word 'reduction', but it refers to the directing of phenomenological 'seeing' not from entities to the *consciousness* of entities but from entities to the *being* of entities.²⁰

Husserlian phenomenology is the study of the intentional structures of consciousness, i.e. the various ways in which

¹⁸ *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, ed. E. Husserl, vol. VIII (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1927).

¹⁹ It is only towards the end of the section on phenomenology (§ 7 'The phenomenological method of investigation') that Heidegger refers to Husserl by name: 'what is essential to [phenomenology] does not consist in its *actuality* as a philosophical "movement"'. In a marginal comment Heidegger writes: 'i.e. not the transcendental-philosophical direction [*Richtung*] of Critical Kantian idealism'.

²⁰ *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1982), § 5.

consciousness is directed toward objects. It describes the ways in which objects are 'constituted' in consciousness. And it does so on the basis of the phenomenological reduction, in which all positings of the real existence of the world and of objects in the world, including ourselves as psychophysical entities, are suspended or put out of action. What one finds in *Being and Time* is something quite different. Its 'subject-matter' is not consciousness (and certainly not transcendentially reduced consciousness) but Dasein and the structures of its being.

Heidegger takes from Husserl the idea of a return to the things or 'matters' themselves (*zu den Sachen selbst!*), letting things 'speak for themselves' rather than being dictated to by theory, taking things as they present themselves, or show themselves, rather than 'constructing' them in accordance with the demands of a system.²¹ Phenomenology 'is opposed to all free-floating constructions and accidental findings; it is also opposed to taking over concepts only seemingly demonstrated (*nur scheinbar ausgewiesenen Begriffe*); and likewise to pseudo-questions²² which often parade themselves as "problems" for generations' (27f).

²¹ To be guided by the things or matters (*Sachen*) themselves is surely a principle of scientific knowledge as such. 'But this maxim ["To the things themselves!], one might retort, is abundantly self-evident and, moreover, expresses the principle of all scientific knowledge' (28). That there is something essentially trivial about the idea of phenomenology understood in terms of the return to the things themselves is something Heidegger does not really succeed in countering. But then he is only claiming to give the preliminary concept (*Vorbegriff*) of phenomenology.

²² The sort of things Heidegger has in mind are the 'problems' of our knowledge of the external world and our knowledge of other minds. With regard to the former, what gives rise to the problem is the false conception of knowledge as something essentially internal, something which occurs in the purely immanent and essentially private sphere of consciousness. Husserl had already shown the traditional epistemological problem to be unfounded by showing that consciousness is essentially *intentional*. The objects of consciousness, what are intended or meant, are not inner mental pictures or images which 'stand for' the things themselves. Heidegger takes

In calling his mode of treatment of the question of the meaning of being *phenomenological* Heidegger is keen to avoid giving the impression that he is thereby subscribing to a particular philosophical standpoint or direction. Properly understood, phenomenology can be neither of these things.²³

As the name suggests phenomenology is the study of phenomena.²⁴ By 'phenomenon' Heidegger understands that which shows itself as it is in itself. *Phenomenon* is thus to be distinguished from *semblance*²⁵ and the various senses of *appearance* – in particular that meaning according to which what appears does not show itself but 'announces' itself through something which does show itself (e.g. symptoms of illness).²⁶ Phenomenology in what he calls the *formal* sense is the 'letting be seen' (*Sehenlassen*) of that which shows itself. But in the *philosophical* sense phenomenology is not the letting be seen of *entities* as they show themselves. Rather it is the letting be

this further in arguing that intentionality is itself grounded in what he calls being-in-the-world.

²³ In a marginal note to p. 38 Heidegger makes it clear that in Husserl's hands phenomenology, despite its claims to be without presuppositions, became itself a standpoint, a particular form of idealism (the 'transcendental-philosophical direction of Critical Kantian idealism').

²⁴ There is, it must be confessed, something rather contrived about Heidegger's approach to the nature of phenomenology. He points out that the expression has two components, phenomenon and logos, and that both go back to the Greek terms *phainomenon* and *logos*. He gives a detailed analysis of both and then puts them together, the result being the meaning of 'phenomenology'.

²⁵ Although they must be distinguished they are structurally related. 'Only when the meaning of something is such that it purports (*prätendiert*) to show itself – that is, claims to be a phenomenon – *can* it show itself as something it is *not*, *can* it "only look like . . ." (29). Heidegger speaks of semblance (*Schein*) as the privative modification of phenomenon.

²⁶ Appearing, in the sense of announcing itself or making itself known (*sich melden*), is a *not-showing-itself*. 'Although "appearing" is never a self-showing in the sense of phenomenon, appearing is only possible *on the basis* of a *self-showing* of something' (29).

seen of that which for the most part does *not* show itself, but is the ground and meaning of that which does show itself. This is not an entity but the *being* of entities, that which determines entities as entities, that on the basis of which (*woraufhin*) entities are always already understood.²⁷

The being of entities remains concealed in an exceptional sense, that is, in a way quite unlike that in which some entities remain concealed. Having been disclosed in the work of philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, it again falls back into concealment or only shows itself in a disguised way. Some letting be seen of being occurred in the work of such thinkers but what was made to show itself became concealed again or, instead of falling back into total concealment, continued to show itself but in disguised form.²⁸ It is because the being of entities is inherently subject to concealment and disguise that it demands to be made into a phenomenon in a distinctive sense.²⁹

Husserl's phenomenology, as phenomenology of consciousness, is reflective. Heidegger's phenomenology, by contrast, is essentially *interpretive* (*auslegend*). It is *hermeneutic* phenomenology. What it interprets is the being of Dasein.

²⁷ Heidegger maintains that phenomenology is 'primarily' a concept of *method*. '[The term] does not characterise the "what" of the objects of philosophical research in terms of their content (*das sachhaltige Was*) but the "how" of such research' (27). But as he now makes clear it is not *simply* a method which can have any kind of object. Heidegger's conception of phenomenology is such that its only 'object' is being.

²⁸ It is for this reason that the working out of the question of being demands what Heidegger calls the 'destruction of the history of ontology'.

²⁹ The notion of phenomenon as that which shows itself or manifests itself, together with the related notions of semblance, concealment and disguise, make perfect sense when applied to entities but make doubtful sense when applied to being. The difficulty increases if one considers Heidegger's tendency to *identify* being with disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*) and unconcealedness (*Unverborgenheit*).

But this also involves the interpretation of the being of entities other than Dasein because the understanding of such being belongs to the being of Dasein. What Heidegger understands by hermeneutics is more fundamental than the methodology of the historical *Geisteswissenschaften*. Heideggerian hermeneutics interprets the historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) of Dasein, which itself is the condition of the possibility of history (*Historie*) in the sense of the discipline.

The interpretation (*Auslegung*) by means of which Heidegger's phenomenology proceeds is not something we all engage in. It is something which philosophers engage in. But interpretation as the theoretical activity of the hermeneutic phenomenologist arises out of interpretation which belongs to the being of Dasein as such.³⁰ Pre-theoretical interpretation is an existential. We understand our being. We understand existence. So it would seem that Dasein, the *Befragte* in the question of being, is ontologically what is closest to us, in the sense that of all entities Dasein is the one whose ontological structure is most easily accessible.

Dasein could not be more close to us, for after all each of us *is* Dasein. We are closest to this entity by virtue of *being* it. But it does not follow that *ontologically* it is what is closest. In a sense it *is* what is ontologically closest. Dasein is itself ontological. Its being is existence and existence is understanding of being. But such understanding is pre-ontological. Simply in virtue of existing Dasein understands its own being, but this does not mean that it is in possession of a worked-out ontology of Dasein. But if we simply unfold and make explicit this pre-ontological understanding of being will we therefore not achieve such an ontology? The problem is that the pre-theoretical interpretation which belongs to Dasein as such,

³⁰ This is elaborated in § 32.

and not just to Dasein qua philosopher, distorts the natural understanding. Dasein has a tendency to interpret its own being in terms of the being of entities other than itself. It has a tendency to understand its own being in terms of the 'world'. He speaks of the 'ontological reflection back of understanding of the world onto the interpretation of Dasein' (16).³¹ As will become clear later Heidegger has a conception of 'world' according to which the world is not an entity, not even the totality of entities, but the framework of significance which makes possible any kind of comportment to entities. However, as a marginal comment in his own copy of *Being and Time* makes clear, in the present context 'world' refers to the present-at-hand or occurrent (*das Vorhandene*). The tendency of Dasein to interpret its being as presence-at-hand he will later call 'falling' (*Verfallen*).

Heidegger is proposing an 'analytic of Dasein' as 'fundamental ontology'. The structures of the being of Dasein it uncovers are to be essential structures rather than arbitrary and contingent structures. However even the uncovering of essential structures is not engaged in for its own sake. The analytic of Dasein remains exclusively oriented towards the working out of the question of being. There is no intention of providing a complete ontology of Dasein.

There is, it seems to me, a problem with Heidegger's conception of phenomenology. Given that the only access to being is through the understanding of being, by what criterion are we to decide whether a particular understanding of being is adequate or not? For the most part Dasein has an inadequate understanding of its own being, but the only way we can achieve an adequate (or 'true') understanding is by unfolding

³¹ 'die ontologische Rückstrahlung des Weltverständnisse auf die Daseinsauslegung'.

the understanding we already have. We cannot 'see' the being of Dasein – or the being of anything else for that matter – as it is, and compare our understanding of being with it. A central contention of Heidegger's philosophy is that seeing represents a derivative mode of comportment to entities and yet his conception of the method of philosophy as phenomenology is very much wedded to the idiom of seeing. It is a letting be seen (*Sehenlassen*). This does not sit very easily with the idea that it is also interpretation (*Auslegung*).³²

³² Though strictly speaking what is interpretive is not the seeing itself but the description of what is seen in the seeing.

Being-in-the-world

Whereas Husserl's phenomenology is a phenomenology of *consciousness*, Heidegger's phenomenology is a phenomenology of *being*. But because being is always the being of beings or entities it is also a phenomenology of entities in the sense that the letting-be-seen of the being of entities can only be achieved on the basis of a clear view of the entities in question. The entity with which *Being and Time* is principally concerned is Dasein, the entity whose being is such that it involves – indeed *is* – the understanding of being, its own being and the being of other entities to which it comports itself. Although some entities show themselves naturally and do not need to be *made* to show themselves,¹ being does *not* normally show itself. In the analytic of Dasein Heidegger employs the phenomenological method to lay bare the being of Dasein. What is distinctive about Dasein is that in its being it understands being. So the phenomenology of Dasein is seeking to lay bare what is understood in this understanding. The being of Dasein comprises various basic structures, which, because the being

¹ For example we do not have to employ special techniques to gain access to the things of ordinary, pre-scientific experience (sticks and stones, chairs and tables, animals and the like) but we do have to employ special techniques to gain access to the entities which figure in physics. What is special about being is that wherever there is comportment to entities (scientific or pre-scientific) there is understanding of being.

of Dasein is *existence*, Heidegger calls *existentials*. The most basic of the existentials is *being-in-the-world*.

THE MEANING OF 'BEING-IN-THE-WORLD'

The expression is hyphenated to emphasise the unitary character of the phenomenon. But this does not mean that we cannot distinguish and focus on certain constitutive elements. Initially I will focus on two of them: world and in-ness. What does Heidegger mean by 'world' and in what sense is Dasein 'in' the world? It is perhaps easier to say what he does *not* mean. World is not a great big entity. It is not the sum total of what exists (in the ordinary sense of 'exist'). By 'world' he does not mean the earth or the physical world or the cosmos. And by 'being-in' he does not mean 'spatially contained in'. The sense in which Dasein is *in* the world is not that of one spatially extended thing being contained in another spatially extended thing. Dasein is not *in* the world in the sense that, for example, water is 'in' a cup, a jacket is 'in' a cupboard (54).² The 'in' of being-in does not refer to a relationship of two spatially extended things to one another with respect to their location in space. However, as we shall see, this does not mean that there is no sense in which 'world' as understood by Heidegger is spatial. Spatiality, properly understood, belongs to the being of Dasein. But even this spatiality does not have the fundamental significance Heidegger ascribes to *temporality*. What he calls original or primordial time (or ecstatic-horizonal temporality) is not just a structure of Dasein's being; it is the sense or

² Heidegger's examples could be misleading. Cups and jackets are not mere things. They are not as he will put it merely *vorhanden* (present-at-hand) but *zuhanden* (ready-to-hand). They are instances of what he will call 'equipment' (*Zeug*).

meaning (*Sinn*) in terms of which not just the being of Dasein but being as such is understood.

Now Husserl's transcendental subject or ego is not spatially contained in anything. It is not in the world in the sense of being part of a psychophysical entity which is one item among others in the entities which make up the world. It is that *for which* the world is. Rather than being part of the spatio-temporal world, the transcendental subject is that in which the spatio-temporal world is 'constituted'. So it might seem that in insisting that Dasein is *in* the world Heidegger is denying what Husserl affirms of the transcendental subject or ego. But Heidegger's Dasein cannot be equated with consciousness, whether this be transcendental or 'mundane'. He certainly wants to reject the idea that Dasein is cut off from entities other than itself by an impenetrable wall of 'ideas' or 'representations',³ that it is confined to a private sphere of pure interiority. But in saying

³ Husserl, it must be said, was also critical of the 'theory of ideas'. He maintained that in the representational theory of perception perceptual consciousness is being treated as though it were a form of picture- or image-consciousness. This assimilation of simple perception to picture-consciousness rests on bad phenomenology. Simple perception and picture-consciousness have a completely different intentional structure. Take a genuine case of picture-consciousness. I'm looking at a picture postcard of Edinburgh Castle. Although I perceive this picture-thing the primary object of awareness is not the picture-object but the picture-subject, what is pictured in the picture, namely, Edinburgh Castle. I see *through* the picture what is pictured. There is nothing like this in the case of simple perception. I see the thing, the tree there in the garden, for example. This and nothing else is the object of the perceptual intention. A second, immanent tree or an inner picture or image of the real tree out there in the garden is in no way given. As well as appealing to the phenomenological differences between genuine picture-consciousness and simple perception Husserl also argues that the assimilation of simple perception to picture-consciousness involves an infinite regress. If perception of an object requires perception of a picture which represents the object then perceiving the picture would require perception of another picture which represented *it*, and so on ad infinitum.

that Dasein is in-the-world he is *not* saying that Dasein is an entity existing alongside other entities, the totality of which makes up the world. To suppose that this is what he is saying would be to misunderstand both 'in' and 'world' as they figure in 'being-in-the-world'.

CONCERN AND EQUIPMENT

What then does he mean by 'being-in-the-world'? There are different *ways* of being in the world. He gives the following examples: 'having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, ascertaining, interrogating, observing, discussing, determining' (56f). These diverse modes of being-in are all forms of what Heidegger calls 'concern' (*Besorgen*).⁴ It should be clear from the examples that the term does not refer exclusively to *practical* modes of comportment.⁵ Observational modes of comportment are just as much instances of *Besorgen* as those in which I can be said to be *doing* something *to* something or *with* something. However, what is true is that the practical modes are somehow more basic than the theoretical. By the former I understand those modes of comportment in which, in the very broadest sense, things are used or employed. It should also be clear from the examples that *Besorgen* does not necessarily involve physical manipulation. However, it must be said that when it comes to the *analysis* of

⁴ In ordinary language *besorgen* has a variety of meanings, such as 'get', 'acquire', 'attend to', 'see to', 'take care of'. Heidegger uses it as an ontological term of art which refers to a basic way in which Dasein *is*.

⁵ 'This term has been chosen not because Dasein happens to be initially, and to a large extent, "practical" and economic but because the being of Dasein itself is to be made visible as *care*' (57).

Besorgen, or laying bare its structure, such examples tend to predominate.

As something used or employed an entity is what Heidegger calls 'equipment' (*Zeug*). Just as concern is not confined to physical manipulation, so too equipment does not just refer to such things as hammers, screwdrivers, cars, tractors, traffic-lights, computers. It also encompasses such things as books, clothes, roads, houses, rooms. He speaks of such entities as being 'ready-to-hand' or 'available' (*zuhanden*) and of their mode of being as 'readiness-to-hand' or 'availability' (*Zuhandenheit* or *Zuhandensein*).⁶ Engagement with such entities is a specific mode of comportment. What makes comportment to entities possible is the understanding of being. What makes *this* mode of comportment possible is understanding of the being of equipment, being-ready-to-hand (*Zuhandensein*). The phenomenology of equipment is the letting be seen of the being of equipment. Equipment shows itself; the being of equipment must be *made* to show itself.

Such entities show themselves, or are encountered, in our having-to-do-with them. Indeed it is what is ready-to-hand rather than mere things which we primarily and for the most part encounter. Equipment is what first and foremost shows itself, rather than things with their properties. However, this should not be taken to mean that our attention is focused on the equipment itself. Unless things go wrong in some way the equipment is 'inconspicuous'. When I am completely

⁶ All these examples of ready-to-hand entities are artefacts. However we should not think that the notion of the ready-to-hand excludes *nature*. 'The wood (*Wald*) is a forest of timber (*Forst*), the mountain a quarry of rock; the river is water-power, the wind is wind "in the sails"' (70). However it must be said that little attention is paid to the ontology of nature in *Being and Time*. His 'The Origin of the Work of Art' is much more instructive in this regard.

engrossed in dealing with something and make use of some equipment in this activity I am precisely not directed towards the equipment as such, the tool for instance. And I am just as little directed towards the work itself.

MERE PERCEPTION

Contrast such having-to-do-with or engagement, which, Heidegger is suggesting, is the primary mode of comportment to things, with merely looking at things. In such *perception* I am aware of an object over against me, an object of a certain size and shape, texture and colour and so on. Traditionally this has been treated as though it were the basic relation we have to things and the foundation of all the rest. In Husserl, for example, although there are all manner of modes of consciousness, perception is the most basic, upon which all others are 'founded'.⁷ A striking thing about Heidegger is that he reverses the traditional order of priority. We are first and foremost *engaged* with entities. Mere perception of entities arises when engagement is held in abeyance. Perception is a modification of engaged having-to-do-with, what he calls a deficient mode of concern (61).

Now it might be thought that there is something absurd in the idea that perception as such is a modification of engaged having-to-do-with. It is surely the case that I can only manipulate things, work with things, if I can see them, feel them, hear them, in short *perceive* them. In other words engagement with things essentially involves perception. So how can perception

⁷ What Husserl calls the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) includes such things as artefacts and institutions but the basic stratum of the lifeworld upon which everything else is founded is the purely perceptual stratum, the objects of sense-perception.

be simply a modification (a deficient mode) of having-to-do-with them? To make sense of Heidegger's claim we must distinguish between engaged perception and pure or mere perception. The perception involved in hammering in nails, in which the hammer is seen *as* a hammer and the nails are seen *as* nails, is engaged perception. Perception in which I simply behold an object with its sensible qualities is pure perception. It makes sense to speak of the latter as a deficient mode of engaged perception.

Even when I am not actually engaged with things I do not normally perceive them simply as objects with such and such sensible qualities. I perceive things *as* something. To use some of Heidegger's own examples, I hear the creaking wagon, the motor-cycle, the column on the march, the north wind, the woodpecker tapping, the fire crackling (163). I see the hammer, the door, the house. Simply hearing sounds or seeing visual qualities, far from being the most basic kind of perception and the foundation of perceiving *as*, is quite an achievement.⁸ 'When we have to do with anything, the mere seeing of the things which are closest to us bears in itself the structure of interpretation, and in so primordial a manner that just to grasp something *free*, as it were, of the "*as*" requires a certain readjustment (*Umstellung*)' (149). What he calls *as*-free perception is the privation of perceiving *as*.

That we primarily see and hear things *as* something is not just an interesting fact for Heidegger. It is not just an interesting fact that we first and foremost encounter equipment, entities whose mode of being is readiness-to-hand. He would argue that perceiving entities *as* something is a condition of the

⁸ 'In order to hear a bare sound we have to listen away from things, divert our ear from them, i.e., listen abstractly' ('The Origin of the Work of Art', in Martin Heidegger: *Basic Writings* ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 152).

possibility of perceiving objects and their sensible properties and that engagement with entities is a condition of the possibility of perceiving something as something. But the condition of the possibility of all of this is being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world is the condition of the possibility of any kind of comportment to any kind of entity.

THE BEING OF EQUIPMENT

Phenomenology as Heidegger understands it is the exhibiting, the letting be seen, of the being of entities. The being with which we are presently concerned is the being of equipment (*Zeug*), readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*). It is through the analysis of such being that we reach an understanding of 'world'. The being of equipment is such that equipment always belongs to a whole of equipment. Strictly speaking there is no such thing as *a* piece of equipment. Any particular piece of equipment is encountered within a broader context of equipment. Heidegger gives the following examples of equipmental wholes: stairs, corridor, windows, chair, benches, blackboard; ink-stand, pen, ink, paper, blotting pad, table, lamp, furniture, windows, doors, room. The various entities are not first encountered singly, by themselves, so as then to fill out a room as a sum of entities. What is first encountered is the lecture-room or the study. And these are not encountered as what is 'between four walls' in a geometrical, spatial sense, but as equipment for working in. *Prior* to the 'individual' piece of equipment an equipmental whole is always already disclosed.

It is in the appropriate way of dealing with equipment, of having-to-do-with it, that such entities show themselves. No amount of mere looking (or 'gaping' (*Begaffen*), as Heidegger is fond of saying) will give us access to the equipment as what it is. For example, it is in *using* the hammer, in hammering,

that the hammer shows itself as what it is – a hammer. It is important to note that he is talking about *mere* perception here. It is possible for me to *see* the hammer as precisely what it is. His point would be that this possibility presupposes prior engagement with hammers, using them in the appropriate way, for knocking in nails.

This, we may say, is what a hammer is *for*. This tells us something about the being of equipment as such. 'Being *for* something' is constitutive of the being of equipment as equipment. 'Equipment is essentially "something in-order-to"' (68). Heidegger calls this for-what or in-order-to (*Um-zu*) of an entity its 'reference' (*Verweisung*). The being of equipment is readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*), so we can say that such reference is constitutive of readiness-to-hand as a mode of being.

Heidegger also uses the German terms *Bewenden* and *Bewandtnis* in his analysis of Dasein's having-to-do-with entities within-the-world (§ 18). The problem is that the German idioms which he puts to use in this connection essentially defy translation (I think this is the only part of *Being and Time* of which this is true). The equipmental character of equipment is constituted by what Heidegger calls *Bewandtnis*, variously translated (more or less arbitrarily) as involvement, relevance or functionality. It is not clear what is to be gained by this additional vocabulary. *Bewandtnis* as Heidegger uses it is the same as the 'in-order-to' (*Um-zu*) of something, its 'reference' (*Verweisung*). In saying of this hammer that it is 'in order to hammer' or of this door that it is 'in order to make leaving, entering and closing possible' we are specifying the entity's *Bewandtnis*. He also speaks of the *Womit* (with-which) of *Bewandtnis* and the *Wobei* (in-which) of *Bewandtnis*. The 'in-which' is what something is *for* (hammering, for example); the 'with-which' is the something which is for something (in

this case the hammer). In view of the difficulties created by the untranslatability of the German idiom and because its introduction does not involve any addition of substance it seems to me best to stick to the vocabulary of 'in-order-to' and 'reference'.

Mere perception in which I am aware of an object and its sensible qualities cannot in Heidegger's view be the most basic mode of comportment to entities. Primarily and for the most part Dasein comports itself to entities which are ready-to-hand and this comportment is that of engaged having-to-do-with. Mere perception is a deficient mode of such comportment. However this should not prevent us from seeing that engagement has its own kind of sight, something Heidegger calls *Umsicht* (circumspection). I *see* the 'in-order-to' of things and its connection with the 'in-order-to' of other things. It is not something I simply add in *thought* to the perceptually given.

WHAT HEIDEGGER MEANS BY 'WORLD'

The references which are constitutive of the being of ready-to-hand entities do not occur in isolation but belong to systems of references, 'referential totalities' as Heidegger calls them. Encountering ready-to-hand entities presupposes familiarity with the system of references to which such entities belong. A referential totality is ultimately anchored in something which is not itself ready-to-hand (84). I encounter this ready-to-hand entity I call a hammer. It is for hammering. The hammering is for making something fast. Making something fast is for protection against bad weather. And this protection is for the sake of providing shelter for Dasein – that is to say, for the sake of a possibility of Dasein's being. This last reference is some possible way for Dasein itself to be. It is what Heidegger

calls a 'for-the-sake-of-which' (*Worumwillen*). This notion of Dasein as the ultimate 'for-the sake-of-which' is related to Kant's notion of persons as ends in themselves, although Heidegger would say that like previous philosophers Kant has an inadequate idea of the *being* of persons. The 'for-the-sake-of-which' is Dasein, and the being of Dasein is not that of something present-at-hand (*vorhanden*).

The being of Dasein is being-in-the-world. In at least a preliminary way we have seen what is meant by this 'being-in'. Dasein is 'in' the world in the sense of being engaged with or having-to-do-with equipment or ready-to-hand entities. But what does Heidegger mean by 'world'? He does not mean the totality of entities. Not the totality of things or substances (what he calls the 'present-at-hand' (*das Vorhandene*)), but also not the totality of entities with which Dasein is engaged, the totality of equipment or entities ready-to-hand. 'World' is neither an entity nor a totality of entities. Rather it is that which makes possible the encountering of entities. 'World' is the system of references. Think of the system of references constitutive of a workshop which makes possible the various items in the workshop and the encountering of such items. Or the system of references constitutive of a university. But it is important to see that such systems are themselves embedded in wider systems of references. What Heidegger means by 'world' is what we might call the all-embracing system of references.

The being of Dasein is being-in-the-world. What Heidegger means by 'world' is not itself an entity. Nor is it the totality of entities. It is, however, inseparable from entities in two respects. Firstly, world is an existential; it belongs to the being of Dasein, and Dasein is an entity. So if there were no Dasein there would be no world. Secondly, world is inseparable from entities other than Dasein. There cannot be

a world without entities within-the-world (Heidegger's terminology is such that only Dasein is *in* the world; entities other than Dasein are *within* the world, they are *innerweltlich*). And comportment to entities other than itself belongs to the being of Dasein. The world is not a condition of the possibility of the existence (in the ordinary sense) of entities but it is a condition of the possibility of entities showing themselves or being encountered. 'World' in Heidegger's sense can therefore be said to be *a priori*. But if there can be different worlds, different all-embracing systems of references, then the world cannot be *a priori* in the sense of being an essential structure of the being of Dasein as such. What *is* an essential structure of the being of Dasein as such is being 'in' some world or other. So what is *a priori* in the strict sense is not the world but worldhood, those basic relations constitutive of world as such, of which a particular world, a particular system of references, is a concretisation. Part and parcel of the being of Dasein is an understanding of such relations (*Bezüge*) as 'in-order-to', something as something *for* something, 'for-the-sake-of-which'. He calls the interconnection of relations, the understanding of which makes possible the encountering of ready-to-hand entities, 'significance' (*Bedeutsamkeit*).

The world is not an entity towards which we comport ourselves. It is not an object over against a subject. Nor is it something ready-to-hand with which we are engaged. Rather it is the system of references or the web of significance from out of which entities show themselves or are encountered. We live in the world, dwell in it, are at home in it. In such dwelling the world, as the condition of the possibility of entities showing themselves, does not show itself. But there are certain kinds of experience, Heidegger maintains, which are specially disclosive of world or which at least put us in a position to 'let it be seen'. What they have in common is a disruption

of the references constitutive of entities ready-to-hand.⁹ In our dealings or engagement with things something can be encountered as unusable or not suited to the use we had in mind. For example, I reach for the hammer, but it is broken or too big. Or something which is needed for the task in which I am engaged is missing. Or something is simply in the way. In each of these cases the ready-to-hand entity assumes the character of something merely present-at-hand. In such experiences the references which are normally implicit, taken for granted, become explicit. The system of references in which we normally simply dwell 'lights up', as Heidegger puts it. He speaks of the assuming of the character of something merely present-at-hand which takes place in such experiences as the 'un-worlding' of the ready-to-hand. But in this un-worlding the world announces itself.

Being-in-the-world is a condition of the possibility of comportment to entities. Now we can accept that being-in-the-world is a condition of the possibility of comportment to the ready-to-hand. But why is it also a condition of the possibility of comportment to the present-at-hand or mere things? A partial answer to this is that mere things only present themselves to mere beholding, but mere beholding is only a deficient mode of concern or engagement. Concern or engagement is inseparable from 'world' in the sense of the structure of significance from out of which the ready-to-hand shows itself. A world-less subject would not be able to comport itself to *any* entities. But isn't Heidegger making mere things dependent on equipment and isn't this simply absurd? Equipment becomes equipment by mere things being given functional properties by human beings. The dependence is the other way round. But this supposes that what Heidegger is talking about is *ontic*

⁹ See § 16.

dependence, the dependence of one sort of entity on another sort of entity. In fact he is talking about *ontological* dependence. Presence-at-hand is dependent on readiness-to-hand in the sense that the understanding of presence-at-hand presupposes the understanding of readiness-to-hand. The relationship is one between understandings of being not between entities.

SPACE AND SPATIALITY

Being-in (*In-Sein*) has been clearly distinguished from 'insideness' (*Inwendigkeit*). The latter kind of spatial inclusion is a category rather than an existential. However this does not mean that there is no sense in which the notion of space can be applied to Dasein. On the contrary, Heidegger thinks that Dasein has its own specific kind of spatiality. His analysis begins with the spatiality of the entities with which Dasein is engaged: equipment. The kind of spatiality which applies to equipment is bound up with its mode of being, readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*). Equipment is the kind of entity which is encountered *zunächst*. Not just in the sense of first (*zuerst*) but also in the sense of close by (*in der Nähe*). 'What is ready-to-hand in our everyday dealings has the character of *closeness*' (102). The closeness of equipment is not established by measuring distances (*Abstände*) but is determined by circumspective concern. This also determines the direction (*Richtung*) in which the equipment is accessible. The closeness and direction of the ready-to-hand entity together determine its *place* (*Platz*). Place is quite different from simply occurring at a particular location in space (*Raumstelle*). It is the place where the thing *belongs*. It is the place of the entity as equipment for . . . and just as the individual piece of equipment belongs to an equipmental whole so too the place of the equipment

belongs to a multiplicity of places which together constitute a whole of places (*Platzganzheit*).

A whole of places in turn belongs to what Heidegger calls a *region* (*Gegend*). This somewhat obscurely defined notion has to do with orientation. The place, which is constituted by direction and closeness, is 'already oriented towards a region and within that region' (103). A region is something which must already have been uncovered if things are to be assigned their place within a whole of places. 'In the region of' (*in der Gegend von*) does not simply mean 'in the direction of' (*in der Richtung nach*) but also conveys the idea of being within the range or orbit (*Umkreis*) of something which lies in that direction. 'The regional orientation of the multiplicity of places belonging to the ready-to-hand goes to make up the aroundness – the "round-about-us" [*das Um-uns-herum*] of those entities which we encounter as closest environmentally [*des umweltlich nächstbegegnenden Seienden*]' (103). Heidegger's emphasis on the region makes it clear that we are not presented with a three-dimensional multiplicity of possible positions (*Stellen*) which happen to be occupied with this or that thing. The spatiality of the ready-to-hand is such that the 'above' is what is 'on the ceiling', the 'below' what is 'on the floor', the 'behind' what is 'by the door'. Such regional 'wheres' are uncovered by what Heidegger calls the 'ways and paths of everyday dealings' ('*Gänge und Wege des alltäglichen Umgangs*') (103) rather than by measurement and observation.

Having examined the sense in which equipment is 'in space' Heidegger now turns his attention to the sense in which Dasein itself is 'in space'. The being of Dasein is neither presence-at-hand nor readiness-to-hand so its spatiality can be neither occurrence in a position (*Stelle*) in space nor having a place (*Platz*). The being of Dasein is being-in-the-world so Dasein's spatiality must be grounded in being-in-the-world. The two

aspects of Dasein's being which are constitutive of Dasein's spatiality are what Heidegger calls de-distancing (*Entfernung*) and orientation or directionality (*Ausrichtung*). I will briefly consider these in turn. The ordinary meaning of *Entfernung* is 'distance' but Heidegger transforms its meaning by emphasising the inseparable prefix *ent-*. This is equivalent to the English *de-* or *un-*. Examples of the occurrence of such a prefix are 'de-capitate' (*Enthaupten*) and 'de-nazification' (*Entnazifizierung*). He uses the expression *Entfernung* in an active and intransitive sense. So it is a kind of doing something to something – but an *ontological* doing. De-distancing means making distance disappear, making the being at a distance of something disappear, bringing it near. Dasein is essentially de-distancing. Its being is such that it lets entities be encountered in nearness.

Just as de-distancing is a structure of the being of Dasein (an existential) which corresponds to closeness (a category) so too directionality is a structure of the being of Dasein which corresponds to direction. De-distancing and directionality necessarily go together. 'Every bringing-close [*Näherung*] has already taken in advance a direction into a region from which what is de-distanced approaches [*sich nähert*] so that it can be encountered with respect to its place' (108).

A distinction is often made between space as it figures in geometry and physics and space as we actually experience it. But what this distinction amounts to very much depends on what is meant by 'experience'. Husserl distinguishes between the spatiality of the lifeworld (the world of lived experience) and the spatiality of the objects of natural science and argues that the latter is grounded in 'lifeworldly' spatiality in the sense that the spatial concepts of natural science arise out of the idealisation and mathematisation of experienced shapes and structures. But by 'experience' here is meant *perception*. 'Lifeworldly' spatiality is the spatiality of the world as given

in sense-perception. In Heidegger, by contrast, it is engaged having-to-do-with, circumspective dealing, which determines the spatiality of everyday existence. Clearly we perceive things as spatial, but such perception is grounded in concern.

HEIDEGGER AND THE 'PROBLEM' OF THE 'EXTERNAL' WORLD

If Heidegger is right about the primacy of engaged having-to-do-with over mere perception, then a traditional philosophical problem – that of our knowledge of the external world – simply does not arise. What Heidegger means by 'world' is not *external* anyway. It is an existential, a structure of Dasein's being. What are external, in the sense of being *other* than Dasein, are ready-to-hand and present-at-hand entities. If the primary mode of access to entities is perceptual, then scepticism about the existence of external objects is possible. But if perception is dependent on engaged-having-to-do-with, then scepticism about entities other than Dasein makes no sense. Kant thought it was a scandal of philosophy that no proof of the existence of the external world had been found and proceeded to try to remedy this by producing his own non-causal proof (in what he calls the 'refutation of idealism'). What he offers is not a variation of the causal argument but an argument to the effect that awareness of the temporal succession of my mental states presupposes direct awareness of something external.

The problem arises from the Cartesian idea that I am, and can only be, directly aware of my own consciousness and its contents. This is what is given. In perception I take myself to be directly aware of material objects and at least some of their properties. But strictly speaking what I am directly aware of are my *ideas* or *representations* of such objects. Ideas or representations are mental entities, contents of consciousness.

Descartes himself sought to justify our belief in the existence of an external world (external to consciousness) by appealing to *divine veracity*. Some have tried to solve the problem by *reducing* material objects to systems of (actual and possible) contents of consciousness ('sense-data'). But how then do we explain the systematic, ordered character of such contents? I have this ordered multiplicity of perceptions (ideas, representations) when, as I say, I go out into the garden and see a tree. To say that we are only directly aware of contents of consciousness is already to have abandoned common sense, but the natural explanation of my having the perceptual experiences I do and of the order that they exhibit is that there is, for example, a tree in the garden and that its presence causes me to have the experiences that I do. Non-reductionist accounts of material objects – given the Cartesian starting point – tend to have recourse to *causal* inference. Those contents of consciousness we call perceptions are caused by material objects. But the problem is: how can we establish the existence of such a causal relation given that one term of that relation is forever inaccessible? To say that I can *infer* the inaccessible term is already to presuppose the causal relation.

Heidegger does not offer an alternative proof. The real scandal, in his view, is not, as Kant would have it, that no successful proof has been forthcoming, but that such a proof has been sought in the first place (205). The problem in his view is a pseudo-problem. It arises from a failure properly to analyse the *being* of the 'subject'.

It is important to distinguish different kinds of question regarding the 'reality' of the 'external' world. There is the question of whether there *are* any entities which transcend consciousness and whether the existence of such entities can be proved. And then there is the question of whether such entities can be *known* as they are in themselves. But for Heidegger the

only genuine philosophical question is that which concerns the *meaning* of reality as a mode of being.

As a phenomenologist Heidegger recognises that the analysis of reality as a mode of being is only possible on the basis of the proper mode of *access* to the real. Traditionally this has been regarded as *anschauendes Erkennen* (202). This is cognition, in which the subject beholds something. Alternatively put, it is perception considered as a mode of cognition or knowledge. This is something which is 'located' in the mind or consciousness. It is a mode of comportment of consciousness. But it belongs to the sense or meaning of reality that the real is independent, is 'in itself'. So inevitably, Heidegger thinks, the *ontological* question about the meaning of reality as a mode of being gets tied up with the question of the possible independence of the real 'from consciousness' or the question of the possible transcendence of consciousness beyond itself into the 'sphere' of the real (202). But what has so far been missing, in his view, is an ontological analysis of the *being* of that which the real is supposed to be independent of, that which is supposed to be transcended. What has to be got clear about is the *being* of consciousness or the knowing subject. Furthermore it has to be determined whether *anschauendes Erkennen* is indeed the primary mode of access to the real.

Heidegger is not out to deny that there is such a thing as consciousness or such a thing as the knowing subject. There is such a thing as consciousness in the sense of having entities before one as objects. But this is *a* way in which Dasein, as being-in-the-world, *is*. There is *cognition* of entities but such cognition is an essentially *founded* mode of access to entities (see § 13). We dwell with entities within-the-world, we are involved with them, engaged with them. Cognition of entities, though genuine, is not what first gives us access to entities, for it can only arise on the basis of an 'uncovering'

of entities achieved in our engaged having-to-do-with entities. Entities are only accessible as entities within-the-world. And all access to entities within-the-world is ontologically grounded in Dasein's basic constitution: being-in-the-world.

Questions do not just occur: they have to be *raised*. *Who*, Heidegger asks, raises the question of whether there is an (external) world and whether its existence can be proved? The answer is: not a world-less subject but Dasein as being-in-the-world. But precisely because *Dasein* poses the question the question is absurd. It is important in this context to keep in mind Heidegger's distinction between world and 'world',¹⁰ for otherwise it might seem that to dispose of the problem of the existence of the external world in the way suggested (Dasein raises the question and the being of Dasein is being-in-the-world) is just verbal trickery. 'External world' refers to entities which are supposed to be external to and independent of us. If being-in-the-world meant being amidst such entities, then if the being of Dasein is being-in-the-world, it follows that there is no problem. But 'world' in being-in-the-world does not refer to such entities. As the 'wherein' of being-in, world is the web of significance or meaning which makes possible the encountering of entities. What the problem of the external world is concerned with is not world but 'world'. However, Heidegger would reject as absurd the idea that there might be disclosure of world without the disclosure of entities within-the-world. World is essentially disclosed *with the being* of Dasein; 'world' is always already uncovered, dis-covered (*entdeckt*) with the disclosedness of world.

The 'problem' of the external world concerns the independence of something and its externality. But what is neglected is

¹⁰ World (without inverted commas) is not an entity or plurality of entities but that which makes it possible for entities to show themselves or be encountered. 'World' refers to innerworldly entities.

the ontology of that *from which* the external world is supposed to be independent and *to which* it is supposed to be external. It is not that there is no understanding of the being of this 'subject' but that implicitly at least it is a false understanding. The being of the subject is implicitly understood as presence-at-hand (*Vorhandensein* or *Vorhandenheit*). So what is needed to dispel the illusion that such a proof is needed is an adequate ontology of the subject or, in Heidegger's terms, an existential ontology of Dasein. Properly understood in its being Dasein already *is* what those who seek to provide proofs of the external world think has to be proved for it. It is in-the-world comporting itself to entities within-the-world.

Where, then, does Heidegger stand in relation to the realism/idealism debate? According to realism the external world exists and we can know both that it does exist and what it is like. Some statements of Heidegger's existential ontology, such as that with Dasein as being-in-the-world entities within-the-world are always already disclosed (uncovered), appear to agree with realism. But what fundamentally distinguishes Heidegger's statements of existential ontology, such as the one above, is that they are *ontological*, whereas the thesis of realism is essentially *ontic*. It is about what there is rather than about the being of what there is.

He takes a much more favourable view of *idealism*—suitably interpreted (see 207). Being and reality are only in consciousness. This is true provided such idealism does not misinterpret itself as 'psychological' or 'subjective' idealism. Misunderstood in this way it would be maintaining that entities, including those we call real entities, are in, or only exist in relation to, consciousness considered as the object of inner perception or introspection. It is not entities that are in consciousness but being, not real things but reality. And reality is only in consciousness if consciousness is understood as *Verstehen*

(understanding). Being is not something that 'is' in a Platonic heaven. Being only 'is' in the understanding of being. Reality 'is' in the understanding of reality. This does not mean that entities depend on Dasein, only that entities can only show themselves as entities on the basis of the understanding of being that Dasein *is*.

Does Heidegger actually succeed in dissolving the problem? It is we who raise the question of the existence of the external world. Now if we are Dasein, that is, if our being is as Heidegger describes it in his existential analytic, then the problem must be a pseudo-problem. The being of Dasein is being-in-the-world. But being-in-the-world is inseparable from being involved with (being *bei*) entities within-the-world. What I think is crucial to Heidegger's success is his being able to show the primacy of 'engaged' modes of comportment – which is more than just drawing attention to the fact that they tend to predominate. If *anschauendes Erkennen* is grounded in engaged having-to-do-with and is not possible without it, then the 'problem' does not get off the ground.

Being-with

The being of Dasein is being-in-the-world. Dasein is not a worldless subject. Heidegger now wants to show that Dasein is not an *isolated* subject.¹ (In fact Dasein is not, strictly speaking, a *subject* at all.)² It is not just a matter of its being the case that I am not the only one of my kind. My being is essentially being-with-others. If this is so then another traditional problem of philosophy, the problem of our knowledge of other minds, turns out to be a pseudo-problem.

The traditional 'problem' arises from the assumption that I can only be *directly* aware of my own mind and its contents. Any knowledge I have of *other* minds is necessarily indirect. Assuming that it is possible to have knowledge of physical objects through sense-perception, I become aware that some of the physical objects I encounter resemble, both in appearance

¹ 'In clarifying being-in-the-world we have shown that a bare subject without a world never "is" proximally, nor is it ever given. And so in the end an isolated "I" without others is just as far from being proximally given' (116).

² This needs qualifying. Dasein cannot be identified with being a subject. Being-in-the-world does not consist in a subject placing something before itself as an object. Heidegger is not, however, saying that there is no such thing as this relationship between a subject and an object. Without objectification there could be no such thing as science. But objectification can only take place on the basis of comportment to entities which is not that of a subject to an object. It is the idea that the subject-object relation is *basic* that Heidegger is contesting.

and behaviour, my own body. On the basis of this resemblance I infer the existence of a mind or consciousness like my own 'behind' the other body and its behaviour. The problem with such an analogical inference is that, in the nature of the case, it can only rest on a single case. I cannot use as a premise a generalisation to the effect that whenever I have encountered a body like my own it has been associated with consciousness, because this association is known only in my own case.

Although Husserl in his treatment of intersubjectivity does not have recourse to analogical *inference* his approach to the problem, for all its subtlety and complexity, is basically the traditional one.³ The other ego and its experiences are not presented in my experience but *appresented* in something like the way in which the (currently) unseen rear-side of an object is appresented.⁴ The important thing is that appresentation is not a matter of *inference*. But of course the crucial difference is that, whereas what is appresented in the perception of an object can subsequently be presented (I can walk round to the other side of the object and perceive what was previously its rear-side), this is not so where what is appresented is another consciousness or subject. The appresentation is analogical in the sense that it depends on the perceived resemblance between my body and the other body, but we are assured it is not an analogical *inference*.

Max Scheler, another phenomenologist and a contemporary of Heidegger,⁵ also strongly rejects any notion of

³ For Husserl's treatment of intersubjectivity see his *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorian Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), Fifth Meditation.

⁴ Appresentation is not reducible to what is seen giving rise to the thought or image of what is not seen.

⁵ Heidegger had a very high opinion of Scheler, describing him as the most powerful force in contemporary philosophy. However his references to the details of Scheler's work are invariably critical.

inference. According to him we *see* the other person's mental states, their emotions, thoughts, attitudes and so on.

We see joy in their laughter, their sorrow and pain in their tears, their shame in their blushing, their entreaty in their outstretched hands, their rage in the gnashing of their teeth, their threats in the clenching of their fist, the tenor of their thoughts in the sound of their words. I do not merely see the other person's eyes. I also see that the other person is looking at me and even that they are looking at me as though they wished to avoid my seeing that they are looking at me.⁶

It has repeatedly been pointed out that comportment to entities is made possible by an understanding of the being of entities. Thus comportment to equipment presupposes understanding of the being of equipment, readiness-to-hand. Comportment to mere things presupposes understanding of presence-at-hand. Comportment of Dasein to itself presupposes understanding of existence. So if comportment to other Dasein is to be possible there must be understanding of what Heidegger calls *Mitdasein*, Dasein-with. He maintains that such an understanding is inseparable from Dasein's understanding of its own being.

Instead of dealing directly with what we might call the face-to-face encounter of Dasein with Dasein, Heidegger starts by pointing out how, in encountering ready-to-hand entities, we also encounter other Dasein (117f). For example, the work produced by the craftsman involves an essential reference to possible wearers and users. Walking along the edge of a field, the field shows itself as, or is encountered as, belonging to such-and-such a person, as properly maintained by him and so on. The boat moored at the edge of the lake refers to someone we know who sails in it. And even if it is a boat we are

⁶ Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, trans. Peter Heath (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954), 260.

not familiar with it still refers to others. In each of these cases we encounter other Dasein. Now it might be suggested that we don't really *encounter* other Dasein in such cases.⁷ All we have in such cases, it might be said, is a thing, something present-at-hand. The others are not really encountered but are simply a mental addition, something added in thought. Heidegger emphatically denies this. Such entities (the shoes made by the shoemaker, the field, the boot) are ready-to-hand and can only be encountered on the basis of the disclosedness of world and this world is *essentially* one within which such entities are ready-to-hand not just for me but *for others* (118).

World is not itself an entity but what lets us encounter entities. It is what makes it possible for entities to show themselves. What Heidegger is now saying is that Dasein's world lets it encounter, not only entities whose mode of being is either readiness-to-hand or presence-at-hand, but entities whose mode of being is the same as its own: being-in-the-world. The other is encountered as within-the-world but at the same time as 'in' the world. Being-in-the-world is being-*with*-others. An entity which is *merely* within-the-world cannot be *with* another entity. An entity which does not have the character of Dasein can only be within-the-world. A chair can be alongside another chair but cannot be *with* another chair. The world which Dasein and the other are 'in' is a with-world, a shared world. So although world is an existential and has the mode of being of Dasein it is not the private possession of an individual.

⁷ In lectures delivered in the summer semester of 1925 Heidegger was still using the Husserlian notion of appresentation. 'The poorly cultivated field along which I am walking appresents its owner or tenant. The sailboat at anchor appresents someone in particular, the one who takes trips in it' (*History of the Concept of Time. Prolegomena*, trans. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1985), p. 240).

In saying that the being of Dasein is being-with Heidegger is not saying that I am not the only one of my kind, that as well as this instance of the species 'human being' there are other instances. To say this would be to make what he calls an *ontic* statement. That is to say, it is a statement about entities, a factual statement about what entities there are and what they are like. If the entire human population of the world, with the exception of myself, had been wiped out, the statement that I am not the only one of my kind, although false, would still be an ontic statement. Its falsity would have no bearing on the statement that the being of Dasein is being-with. This is because the latter is a statement of existential *ontology*. Being-with is something which belongs *essentially* to my mode of being. It is not a property which I possess by virtue of the fact that there happen to be other people. Even if there had been no Man Friday on the island, Robinson Crusoe's being would still have been being-with. As the sole survivor of a universal catastrophe my being would still be being-with.

And where it is not a matter of no one else existing but of no one else being present or of my not being aware of anyone else being present my being is just as much being-with. As Heidegger puts it, the others can be *absent* only *in* and *for* a being-with. Being alone is what he calls a 'deficient mode of being-with' (120). The possibility of being *alone* itself demonstrates that the being of Dasein is being-with.

Suppose I am alone. The fact that there is another instance of the species 'human being' alongside me, or even many such instances, does not make me any less alone. Being alone in a crowd is a familiar phenomenon, but it would be a serious misdescription of this phenomenon to say that the others who make up the crowd are merely present-at-hand. They are encountered as other Dasein but in the mode of indifference. Encountering others in the mode of indifference is only

possible for a being whose being is essentially being-with. Because the being of Dasein is *essentially* being-with it does not consist in the occurring together of a plurality of 'subjects'. To think of Dasein as a subject rather than as an object is still to think of it as something present-at-hand or occurrent. As belonging to the being of Dasein being-with cannot be reduced to any kind of relation between present-at-hand entities.

We have seen that others are encountered in my dealings with the ready-to-hand. It might be better to say that they are *co-*encountered in such dealings because, although they are not simply added in thought to the ready-to-hand entity encountered, it is true to say that they are encountered *through* the latter. In this sense they are not encountered directly. But of course I also encounter others directly. In traditional treatments of the experience of others I experience the other's body, which in important respects looks like and behaves like (moves like) my body. On the basis of its appearance and movement I add in thought to what is perceived the mind of the other person (thoughts, feelings and so on). For Heidegger this is a pure construction. I do not encounter a body which looks thus and so and moves thus and so, but someone 'at work', i.e. someone 'in' the world engaged with entities ready-to-hand, e.g. sawing logs, writing a letter, or just walking along the street. Even when we see someone 'merely standing around' we do not experience them as a present-at-hand human *thing*. Someone who is merely hanging about is not *doing* anything (if compared with someone mowing the lawn). But such hanging about is not mere presence-at-hand but a deficient mode of concern, of engaged being-in-the-world. Even the deficient modes of concern can only apply to Dasein, not to entities other than Dasein: "standing around" is an existential mode of being: an unconcerned,

uncircumspective lingering with (*Verweilen bei*) everything and nothing' (120).

As we shall see, when Heidegger has completed his phenomenological laying bare of the structures of Dasein's being – the existentials – he uses the term *Sorge* ('care') to refer to the totality of these structures in their essential unity.⁸ Using 'care' in an *ontological* sense, to be explained later, he says that the being of Dasein is care. The *-sorge* in *Besorgen*, the term used to designate Dasein's dealings with intraworldly entities (entities within-the-world) that are ready-to-hand, is not accidental. All modes of comportment of Dasein have to be interpreted in terms of the phenomenon of care which determines the being of Dasein as such. Being-with is a way of being to, or towards, entities which are encountered within-the-world (intraworldly entities). But such entities are also *in-the-world*, the same world that I am *in*. The entity to which Dasein as being-with comports itself does not have the mode of being of ready-to-hand equipment and likewise being-with cannot have the same character of being as *Besorgen*. The entity to which Dasein as being-with comports itself is itself Dasein. To preserve the link with *Sorge* Heidegger uses the term *Fürsorge* (literally care for) to designate the mode of comportment to other Dasein, a link which unfortunately is lost in the English word used to translate it, 'solicitude'.

In using this term to designate the comportment of Dasein to other Dasein Heidegger is not making any kind of evaluation. It would be a complete mistake to think of *Fürsorge* as something positive and good and of being-with as something warm and attractive like 'togetherness'. Being-with has nothing to do with 'solidarity'. We can be for one another

⁸ Although 'care' embraces all of the existentials the essence of care consists of the three basic existentials of projection, thrownness and *Sein bei*.

or against one another. We can get along without each other. We can pass one another by or be wholly indifferent to one another. All these modes of comportment are possible modes of *Fürsorge* in the ontological sense of the term. Heidegger's existential analytic, initially at least, is concerned with Dasein in its *everydayness*. Everyday and average being-with is characterised precisely by these modes of deficiency and indifference. It is these indifferent modes of being-with-one-another which lead to this being (being-with) being mistakenly interpreted as the mere presence-at-hand of a plurality of subjects. Heidegger insists that *ontologically* there is all the difference in the world between the 'indifferent' occurring together of things and the not-concerning-one-another of entities that are *with* one another.

There are however positive modes of solicitude. Although these lack the indifference of the dominant modes the sense in which they are positive does not necessarily imply praiseworthiness. Heidegger distinguishes two extremes of positive solicitude (122), one in which the other is dominated and one in which they are liberated. In the first kind of solicitude the other's 'care' (*Sorge*) is taken away from them. I *leap in* for the other as Heidegger puts it and take over whatever it is they are engaged with. The other has the merely passive role of taking over what has been done for them, the 'finished product'. Although this may seem to disburden the other it is a form of domination which makes the other dependent, even though the domination remains concealed from the one who is dominated.⁹

In the second, positive, kind of solicitude, by contrast, I do not leap *in* for the other but leap *ahead* of them. As we

⁹ There is an echo here of Hegel's dialectic of master (*Herr*) and slave (*Knecht*) in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

shall see in chapter 6 Heidegger distinguishes between existing authentically and existing inauthentically. At this stage all we will say is that authenticity has to do with *freedom*. To exist authentically is to choose what one is, in the sense of choosing one's own possibilities of being. In the second kind of positive solicitude (*Fürsorge*) I don't take away the care (*Sorge*) of the other person but 'free them to be their care authentically' (122). This kind of solicitude, in liberating rather than dominating, helps the other to become transparent to themselves in their care.

The being of Dasein is in each case *mine*. We now know that the being of Dasein is also being-*with*. There is no incompatibility here. It does not mean that Dasein is any less an individual. The being-with of Dasein is in each case mine (though as we shall see in chapter 6 there is also a sense in which 'the others' *take away* my being as an individual). Because the being of Dasein is both in-each-case-mine and being-with I do not first have to escape from some private sphere of my own subjectivity and gain access to other equally private subjects. Dasein's knowledge of the other is not based on some dubious analogical inference but arises out of its being always already *with* in a shared world.

But not all approaches to the problem of other minds involve *inference*. There are also those which appeal to *empathy*. As the German word for empathy – *Einfühlung* – suggests this is a kind of feeling one's way into another person's mind or consciousness. Now Heidegger has no wish to deny that there is such a thing. What he does deny, however, is that being-with is *made possible* by empathy. Rather empathy *presupposes* being-with. Being-with is the condition of the possibility of empathy, rather than the other way round. The need for empathy arises precisely because of the dominance in 'everyday' existence of

the *deficient* modes of being-with, the ‘indifference of passing one another by’.

Because initially and for the most part solicitude takes the deficient and indifferent form of passing one another by and because of the proneness on the part of Dasein to reticence, self-concealment and disguise there is a need for *cultivating* empathy, for developing special ways of getting ‘behind’ the other. But recognising this is quite different from supposing that empathy is the bridge between one intrinsically private subject and another intrinsically private subject. Heidegger is not claiming that some other kind of bridge is required. The mistake is to suppose that *any* kind of bridge is required. Dasein is not an intrinsically private subject. Its being is being-in-the-world and this being-in-the-world is being-*with*-in-the-world.

Heidegger’s Dasein, unlike an intrinsically private subject, is such that its understanding of its own being includes an understanding of the being of other Dasein, or as he puts it, an understanding of *Mitdasein* (being-there-with). Although he does not make this clear the point seems to be that to have a notion of *my own* being requires the contrast between *my own* and that of *someone else*. This understanding of *Mitdasein*, the being of *another* is precisely that: *understanding*. As will become clear in the [next chapter](#) understanding (*Verstehen*) for Heidegger is not a form of cognition but a basic way in which Dasein *is* (a ‘primordial existential mode of being’). Cognition (*Erkennen*), he will claim, can only be understood as a *modification* of understanding. *Knowing* one another is grounded in the understanding of being-with, which is inseparable from the understanding of one’s own being.

Being *with* others is not a being towards present-at-hand things nor is it a being towards something ready-to-hand. It

is a relationship of being (*Seinsverhältnis*) of Dasein to Dasein (124). Now one way in which empathy has been understood is as the projection of oneself into another. In line with this conception the model for the relationship between myself and the other is the relationship I have to myself. Dasein is itself a relationship to Dasein in the sense that Dasein in understanding its being comports itself to itself, that is, to Dasein. The other is being treated as a duplicate of the self. What is wrong with this approach is that it presupposes that the being of Dasein to itself is being to *another*. And this is precisely what it is not.

How successful is Heidegger in his attempt to expose the problem of other minds as a pseudo-problem? If I am Dasein, and the being of Dasein is being-with, then it *is* a pseudo-problem. There is only a problem if I am an intrinsically private subject to whose states only I have direct access. It is important to see that Heidegger is not in the business of *refutation*. That is to say, he is not seeking to establish by *argument* that the conception of the subject which gives rise to the problem is mistaken.¹⁰ In this respect at least he is not like Wittgenstein who tries to establish the incoherence of the idea that we are intrinsically private subjects through his private language argument.¹¹ On the assumption that we cannot

¹⁰ This is evident in the 1925 lectures referred to earlier: 'It is assumed that the subject is encapsulated within itself and now has the task of empathizing with another subject. This way of formulating the question is absurd, since there never is such a subject in the sense it is assumed here. If the constitution of what is Dasein is instead regarded without presuppositions as being-in and being-with in the presuppositionless immediacy of everydayness, it then becomes clear that the problem of *empathy* is just as absurd as the question of the reality of the external world' (*History of the Concept of Time*, 243).

¹¹ See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), sects. 243–315.

have the conception of something without language he argues that we cannot have the conception of an intrinsically private subject because this would require an intrinsically private language, but this is impossible. The words of a language only have meaning if their use is governed by rules. But they can only be governed by rules if there can be a public or inter-subjective check on whether rules are being followed. But for an intrinsically private subject there would be no difference between following a rule and seeming to follow a rule. A rule which did not allow of the distinction would be no rule at all. In Heideggerian language, as a language user my being is necessarily being-with.

Heidegger makes no reference to language in his treatment of being-with. However, as will become clear in the [next chapter](#), there is a sense in which he thinks language is essential to Dasein. Dasein is its disclosedness, and what he calls *Rede* ('discourse') is an essential dimension of this disclosedness.

What then is Heidegger's justification for the claims he makes? In fact this is a question which could be asked about all the claims that Heidegger makes in *Being and Time*. Ontological claims are to be established not by argument but *phenomenologically*. So ultimately it is a matter of *seeing* that things (*Sachen* – so broadly construed that the term covers both beings or entities and the being of beings) are so. In the philosophical sense phenomenology is the letting be seen of being – which primarily and for the most part does not show itself but must be made to show itself. The only kind of verification of which ontological claims are capable is phenomenological. This must be borne in mind throughout one's reading of *Being and Time*. It is not just a matter of reading these words and understanding them. The words are intended to let *die Sache* be seen. In reading the words we have ourselves to engage in phenomenological seeing.

As regards the particular ontological thesis that is the subject of this chapter – that the being of Dasein is being-with – we might ask how we can just see that this is so. How can we just see that we are not isolated and intrinsically private subjects or centres of consciousness? There is no simple answer to this. But what is of crucial importance is the proper mode of access to Dasein. Although the subject-matter of phenomenology is not entities but the being of entities one can only get at being through entities. The being with which *Being and Time* is principally concerned is the being of that entity which each of us is – Dasein (though the ultimate concern is with being as such). As we saw in chapter I we could not be closer to this entity. We are closest to it by virtue of *being* it.

But what is this entity which each of us is? Philosophers, including phenomenologists such as Husserl, say that it is an 'I', an ego, a 'subject' or a self. And this is thought of as what persists throughout the changes in my mental acts and experiences and which thereby unifies this multiplicity. This is a *subject* in a pre-eminent sense – that which underlies. This something which remains the same through change has the character of a *self*.

Heidegger recognises that those philosophers who talk like this may reject the idea of a mental *substance* and insist that consciousness is not a kind of *thing* and that the person is not an *object*. Nevertheless, he claims, the being of the self or subject is being understood, implicitly at least, as presence-at-hand. This is the mode of being of entities other than Dasein.

But in affirming the existence of the I or self, however its being is to be understood, am I not simply accepting an indubitable phenomenological datum? In a Cartesian spirit we might ask: what is more indubitable than the givenness of the I? And to get clear about the nature of the self do we not have to focus exclusively on the self and look away from

the world and *other* selves? But what this assumes is that it is self-evident that the proper mode of access to Dasein is reflection or inner perception (*vernehmende Reflexion*). But if, as Heidegger claims (though this has still to be clarified), Dasein is an essentially *understanding* entity the proper mode of access to it will not be reflection but interpretation. As we have already seen Heidegger's phenomenology is *hermeneutic* phenomenology. Understanding is not a property or faculty which Dasein happens to possess. Dasein *is* understanding. And it is not just understanding of entities, it is also understanding of being. The claim that the being of Dasein is being-with is to be verified by phenomenologically interpreting the understanding of being which Dasein always already has – or better, *is*. What this reveals is that Dasein is not a mere subject without a world and not an isolated 'I' without the 'others'.

However, as we shall see in chapter 6, there is another side to his treatment of the relationship to others. This relationship is essential to the being of Dasein, the being of Dasein is being-with. But there is also a sense in which the others, in the shape of what he will call 'the One' (*das Man*), take away my being. This notion will be crucially important to the distinction, which has still to be highlighted, between *authentic* existence and *inauthentic* existence.

Being-in

DISCLOSEDNESS

The impression might have been given that being-in-the-world is *simply* a matter of dealing with equipment. This can hardly be the case given that being-in-the-world is what is supposed to make *any* comportment to entities possible. In the Kantian language Heidegger favours, being-in-the-world is a condition of the possibility of comportment to entities as entities. He also comes to identify being-in-the-world with what he calls *transcendence*. The being of Dasein is transcendence is the sense that Dasein is a going beyond or transcending of what is (*Seiendes*) to being (*Sein*). It is in thus transcending entities that Dasein is able to comport itself to entities as entities.

That being-in-the-world is not simply a matter of dealing with equipment becomes clear when we turn to his analysis of being-in. We already know what it is *not*. But our knowledge of what it *is* is partial and incomplete. Concern (*Besorgen*) – engaged having-to-do-with equipment – is at most a way of being-in-the-world. But what being-in-the-world essentially is, is what Heidegger calls *disclosedness* (*Erschlossenheit*). Concern is a form of disclosedness in the sense that in our engagement with things, things are disclosed. But it is also a form of disclosedness of Dasein in the sense that Dasein

discloses itself to itself in its engagement with things. For reasons of clarity, Heidegger uses the terms 'uncover' or 'dis-cover' (*Entdecken*) and uncoveredness or dis-coveredness (*Entdecktheit*) for the disclosing and disclosedness of entities other than Dasein. 'Disclosedness' he reserves for the disclosedness of Dasein (which as disclosedness of being-in-the-world includes disclosedness of world) and the disclosedness of being.

It has already been pointed out that 'Dasein', as Heidegger uses it, is an ontological term. It is now made clear that the 'da' in 'Dasein' refers to disclosedness. Dasein, he says, is itself its 'there' (132). 'Da' in ordinary language is a spatial term. Strictly speaking it should not be translated as 'there'. It can mean 'here' as in 'Ich bin da' ('I am here') but usually it signifies something between 'here' (*hier*) and 'there' (*dort*). This is another reason for leaving 'Dasein' untranslated. But in any case Heidegger is not using it in a spatial sense. Rather than being itself spatial 'da' refers to what makes spatiality, among other things, possible. Heidegger says of Dasein: 'This entity carries in its ownmost being the character of not being closed off (*Unverschlossenheit*)' (132). The expression 'Dasein' refers to this essential disclosedness. Dasein *is* in such a way as to be its Da. It is 'illuminated' (*erleuchtet*), 'cleared' (*gelichtet*), but not by something else. It is itself the clearing (*Lichtung*). Dasein is its disclosedness. It is the disclosedness of being, that of itself and that of entities other than itself.

There are two fundamental modes of the disclosedness of Dasein's being. These are *Befindlichkeit* (state of mind, affectedness) and *Verstehen* (understanding). They are, as Heidegger puts it, equiprimordial (*gleichursprünglich*). That is to say, they are equally basic, and neither is derivable from or reducible to the other. He will also speak of something he calls 'discourse' (*Rede*) as being existentially equiprimordial with

affectedness and understanding, which suggests that there are not two fundamental modes of disclosedness but three. But discourse (which cannot be identified with language but is rather the essence of language in the sense of what makes language possible) is not equiprimordial with affectedness and understanding in the same sense that affectedness is equiprimordial with understanding and understanding is equiprimordial with affectedness, but in the sense that it determines *both* affectedness and understanding without being founded upon either.

AFFECTEDNESS

Affectedness is mood (*Stimmung*), being in a mood, being in an affective state.¹ Even though I may regard myself as not being in any particular mood I am, as we might say, always 'mooded' (*gestimmt*), in some affective state or other. But if *Befindlichkeit* and *Stimmung* refer to the same phenomenon why does Heidegger use two words where one would do? It is because it is through mood, rather than thought or cognition, that Dasein *finds* itself 'there', *finds* itself disclosed. The German word for 'find' is *finden*. The reflexive verb *sich befinden* means literally 'find oneself'. *Wie befinden Sie sich?* means literally 'How do you find yourself?' and is equivalent to the English 'How are you?' *Befindlichkeit* is a noun constructed from this verb. Heidegger uses the word because of what he thinks mood discloses. In mood Dasein is disclosed to itself in the thatness of its there. That I am, and have my being to be, is something that I *find*, rather than *choose*. The 'there' of Da-sein is something to which Dasein is delivered over. I am responsible for what I make of myself, how I exist, which possibilities of being I realise, but I am not responsible for

¹ For Heidegger's treatment of this form of disclosedness see § 29.

having this responsibility. I *find* myself existing and with the responsibility of existing. Mood, my affective state, discloses the 'that I am and have to be' in a way that a purely *cognitive* state could never do. I can observe that something is the case – that I am taller than the person next to me, that there are tigers in India, that there are members of the species *homo sapiens*, that there is *this* member of that species – but the thatness which mood discloses, the delivered-over-ness to the 'there', is not something which could ever be merely observed. This aspect of Dasein's being – its sheer thatness – Heidegger calls thrownness (*Geworfenheit*), the thrownness of this entity into its 'there', its disclosedness (135). For Dasein to be is to be in a world, so we can also say that Dasein is thrown into a world. I am thrown into a world, but I am also thrown into a 'world'. That is to say, I find myself in this particular world in the sense of this historical web of significance. The world in this sense determines which possibilities of being are open to me. Although I can choose which ways of existing I will realise I do not choose which possibilities are available. This is determined by the world I find myself 'in'. But I also find myself in the midst of, and depending on, just these entities other than myself.

He also calls the thatness of Dasein's being facticity (*Faktizität*) (135) but distinguishes this from the mere obtaining of a state of affairs. As the aspect of my being over which I have no control thrownness also includes my past in the sense of my having-been-ness (*Gewesenheit*). What I have been is part of what I am. However, as we shall see, the having-been-ness of Dasein is not the same as what is past in the sense of no longer now. The temporality of Dasein must be distinguished from time in the ordinary sense of a uniform sequence of nows.

State-of-mind, affectedness, discloses Dasein to itself in its facticity or thrownness. But would it not be correct to say that

it is *certain* moods which disclose thrownness, those moods, namely in which my being manifests itself as a *burden*? That is to say, *bad* mood (*Verstimmung*) discloses the burdensome character of existence, but not *good* mood, in the sense of being in good spirits, joyous, elated and so on. In a way which is characteristic of his thinking Heidegger interprets such good moods as a turning away from the burdensome character of being. Such turning away involves the disclosure of what it is a turning away from. Turning away is not like a mere failure to recognise.

Mood is a fundamental mode of disclosedness in which Dasein is 'there' for itself, but this does not mean that being in a mood, being 'mooded', is *reflective*. It is not a case of a *subject* attending to its own inner states. To be reflective in this sense mood would have to be something I *do*. But mood *assails* me, *comes over* me. Indeed it is precisely in *unreflective* engaged absorption with entities within-the-world, that moods come over me. Heidegger is not saying that there can be no such thing as immanent reflection, that is, reflection on my mental states. It is just that mood is not an instance of such reflection. It would be more correct to say that mood is a condition of the possibility of such reflection. This is because Dasein must always already be given to itself if it is to focus attention on its inner states. It must always already be disclosed in its 'there' and it is mood in which such disclosure 'takes place'. Mood is neither itself an inner state nor is it directed towards an inner state. It is a way of being-in-the-world which itself discloses being-in-the-world.

But mood is also a condition of the possibility of entities within-the-world showing themselves or being encountered. This runs counter to the whole tradition, according to which mood (feeling, emotion) is something entirely subjective, an inner state. The traditional view is as follows. Out there there

are objects. I encounter such objects in perception. But my moods or feelings can be 'projected' onto what presents itself in perception. My inner states can as it were reach out and 'colour' things. For example, sadness is not a property of the landscape but a projection of my inner state – my sadness – onto the landscape. However it would be completely to misconstrue Heidegger's opposition to the traditional view if one were to say that in his view moods are not subjective but objective, that the sadness, for example, is an objective property of the landscape. As an existential, mood (*Stimmung*) is an aspect of the being of Dasein and as such is neither subjective nor objective. Moods are modes of being-in-the-world, which is not the relation of a subject to an object.

But *how* is mood a condition of the possibility of encountering or uncovering entities, of entities showing themselves? If perception is treated as the basic mode of encounter it is left unexplained *why* entities should show themselves. In perception the object is present to the perceiver, the object shows itself. But *why* does it show itself? Because of some *interest* which the perceiver has in it. It is *possible* to be interested in just how something looks. In theories which make perception the *basic* mode of comportment to entities this interest in how things look is treated as though this were the basic interest we have in things. For Heidegger, such an interest is a *modification* of a more basic interest. The mere having-before-one's-gaze of an entity as an object is founded upon concernful *engagement* with entities. But such concernful engagement is only intelligible if Dasein, which lets entities show themselves, which uncovers entities, is mooded (*gestimmt*), essentially mooded. This is because it is only to such a being that something can *matter*. Only an essentially mooded being can be *affected* by entities. Such affection cannot be reduced to objects having a *causal* impact on organs of sense (137).

Putting it another way, only an essentially mooded entity can have a world, be 'in' a world. Theories which make perception the *basic* mode of encounter ignore the within-the-worldly character of entities. The 'object' of encounter is treated in isolation. But according to Heidegger world is a condition of the possibility of encounter. But world is only possible for an essentially mooded entity, for it is only for such an entity that there can be for-the-sake-of-whiches. The fields of significance constitutive of world are grounded in the for-the-sake-of-whiches of Dasein.

This is perhaps an appropriate place to comment on the relationship between Heidegger's Dasein and Husserl's *consciousness*. The latter, it will be recalled, is characterised by intentionality, directedness towards an object. In his lectures on Husserl, delivered in Marburg in the summer semester of 1925 as part of a series of lectures on the theme 'Prolegomena to the History of the Concept of Time', Heidegger includes intentionality as one of the three 'principal discoveries' of phenomenology.² But what he thinks is missing in Husserl's account is an account of the *being* of the bearer of intentionality. The bearer of intentionality, the intentional entity, is Dasein. Dasein is intentional in the sense that it comports itself to entities. But there are two important respects in which Heidegger differs from Husserl on the question of intentionality. Firstly, whereas Husserl treats theoretical modes of intentionality, in particular perceptual intentionality, as basic, with practical modes of intentionality being *founded* on them, in Heidegger the basic mode of intentionality is *Besorgen* (concernful having-to-do-with). Perception as the mere beholding of something is a deficient mode of such engaged intentionality. We now see

² The others are the idea of categorial intuition and the original sense of the a priori.

that the latter kind of intentionality, and so any kind of intentionality, depends on the moodedness or affectedness of Dasein in virtue of which things can *matter*. Secondly, Heidegger maintains that intentionality of any kind, theoretical or practical, depends on the understanding of being. Comportment to entities depends on the disclosedness of what is not an entity, viz. being. For example, comportment to equipment depends on the understanding of readiness-to-hand as a mode of being. And understanding of readiness-to-hand is inseparable from being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world, or transcendence, is a condition of the possibility of intentionality.

UNDERSTANDING

The other basic mode of disclosedness is *Verstehen* (understanding) (see § 31). In the hermeneutic tradition the term *Verstehen* is used to refer to a special mode of knowledge or cognition which is contrasted with *Erklären* (explanation). It is the kind of knowledge we have of other human beings, their mental life and the outward expressions of this mental life – in texts, works of art, institutions and so on. There are individualistic approaches and more Hegelian approaches to hermeneutics, depending on whether the expressions are taken as expressions of individual minds or the supra-individual mind of a community or society or culture. Explanation, by contrast, is based on the (external) observation of regularities of sequence. Phenomena are explained by being subsumed under causal laws. Heidegger is not concerned to deny either the existence or the distinctness of these modes of cognition. But he sees no point in debating the question of whether they are distinct modes of cognition before getting clear about what they are supposed to be modes of, viz. cognition or knowledge. Cognition, he maintains, is a derivative mode of

being-in-the-world.³ What Heidegger means by *Verstehen* is a *primary* mode of being-in, a fundamental existential, of which *both* understanding (*Verstehen*), in the sense used by Dilthey and others, *and* explanation are derivatives. *Verstehen* is a basic mode of the *being* of Dasein. It is not a faculty which Dasein *has*, along with other faculties, but a fundamental way in which Dasein *is*.

His *ontological* use of the term is modelled on one of its *ontic* uses. The expression *etwas verstehen* ('understand something') can mean *etwas können* ('be able to do something'). Using an idiom which exists in English but not in German, we can say that *Verstehen* is knowing *how* in contrast to knowing *that*. Knowing that . . . is propositional knowledge. Knowing how . . . is the possession of a skill, and this is not a matter of knowing true propositions. A person possessing a skill may be able to describe what that skill involves, but possession of the skill as such does not imply the ability to utter true propositions about it. A skill can be expressed in propositions, but it need not be. And knowing the propositions does not guarantee possession of the skill. Someone can know the content of the best medical text books and yet be conspicuously lacking in the skills which make a good doctor.

In the ontological sense of *Verstehen* what is understood is *being*. Dasein understands its own being, being as existing. If *Verstehen* is knowing how then in understanding its own being Dasein knows how to be. Such understanding is its ability to be (*Seinkönnen*). Dasein *is* what it *can* be, it is its possibility. As applied to Dasein possibility, as ability-to-be, is peculiar to Dasein. It is not a *dispositional* property of the kind we attribute to other entities. To say of sugar, for example, that it is soluble, that it can dissolve, is to say that if it were placed

³ See § 13, 'The exemplification of being-in in a founded mode: knowing the world'.

in water it would dissolve. If ability-to-be (*Seinkönnen*) or possibility of being (*Seinsmöglichkeit*) were like this then what Dasein can be would be what Dasein would be if something *happened* to it. The possibility which Dasein *is*, is neither logical possibility nor physical possibility. As a modal concept which applies to the present-at-hand, possibility is what can happen to something. The possible in this sense is the not yet actual and the not at any time necessary. It is the *merely* possible whose ontological status is lower than that of actuality and necessity. Possibility as an *existential*, by contrast, is 'the most primordial and ultimate positive ontological determination of Dasein' (143f). *Verstehen* discloses Dasein to itself in the sense that it discloses its possibilities and it *is* its possibilities. We can say that in understanding Dasein 'knows' its possibilities, what it is able to *be*, but this knowing must not be thought of as inner self-perception or immanent reflection. Understanding as disclosedness is neither a mere behavioural disposition nor an inner act of self-reflection.

Verstehen in the sense of ability-to-be, knowing how to be, is a mode of disclosedness which is 'equiprimordial' with state-of-mind or affectedness. But the being of Dasein is being-in-the-world. Dasein's ability-to-be, knowing how to be, is ability-to-be-in-the-world, knowing how to be-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world encompasses being towards entities within-the-world (concern, *Besorgen*), being towards- or with-others (solicitude, *Fürsorge*) and being towards oneself. Understanding as knowing how to be is knowing how to be in all these basic modes.

Understanding discloses Dasein's possibilities of being, and because comportment to entities other than itself is an essential feature of Dasein's being, understanding also discloses the possibilities of entities other than Dasein. 'Not only is the world, *qua* world, disclosed as possible significance, but when that which is within-the-world is itself freed, this entity is

freed for its *own* possibilities. That which is ready-to-hand is dis-covered as such in its serviceability, its usability, and its detrimentality' (144).

In affectedness or mood Dasein is disclosed in its thrownness. In understanding Dasein is disclosed in its ability to be. We might say it is disclosed in the self-making aspect of its being. We do not have absolute freedom to choose the sort of person we will be. This is because the 'playroom' (*Spielraum*) of possibilities from which we can choose is not itself chosen. We are thrown into a particular world and it is the world which defines the possibilities of being that are open to us. Understanding as disclosing possibilities of being has the structure of what Heidegger calls 'projection' (*Entwurf*). What *Geworfenheit* (thrownness) and *Entwurf* (projection) have in common is *werfen* (throwing). In affectedness I am thrown, in understanding I am throwing. I am throwing myself ahead of myself into possibilities, projecting myself into them. In ordinary German *Entwurf* can mean a preliminary sketch. It does not have this meaning in Heidegger's ontological use. It has nothing to do with comporting oneself towards a plan that has been thought out in advance and in accordance with which Dasein then conducts itself. Although projecting is something we do it should not be thought of as a mental act of planning or sketching something in advance. Understood in this way projection would be a particular mode of comportment engaged in on particular occasions. In the ontological sense Dasein has always already projected itself and continues to project itself as long as it is.⁴

⁴ What must not be lost sight of is that projection is a form of disclosing. Although it is active, whereas mood or affectedness is passive, it is not creative in the sense that it brings possibilities into being. It discloses possibilities of being rather than making them.

In Kant there is a fundamental distinction between sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*) and understanding or intellect (*Verstand*). The former is essentially receptive (it is the capacity for being affected); the latter is active or spontaneous. There is clearly a parallel between Kant's distinction and Heidegger's distinction between affectedness (*Befindlichkeit*) and understanding (*Verstehen*). But whereas Kant's distinction is absolute (though there is some attempt to unite them in the notion of the transcendental imagination) Heidegger makes it clear that 'affectedness always has its understanding (*Verständnis*)' and that 'understanding is always mooded (*gestimmt*)' (142).

Heidegger's notion of understanding is not free of problems. If understanding is essentially knowing how, we can see what it means to say that Dasein understands itself in its being-possible (*Möglichsein*) or ability-to-be (*Seinkönnen*). I know how to be this and that (a father, a husband, a teacher). But how can understanding of *being* be interpreted as knowing how? We can distinguish between the being of Dasein (existence), the being of other Dasein (*Mitdasein*), the being of equipment (readiness-to-hand) and the being of mere things (presence-at-hand). If understanding is knowing how then we might say that understanding the being of these four kinds of entity is in each case knowing how to comport ourselves to such entities. For example, understanding the being of this hammer as equipment is simply knowing how to hammer. But this cannot be right, because knowing how to comport ourselves to equipment itself presupposes an understanding of being as readiness-to-hand. If such knowing how to comport oneself presupposes understanding of being then such understanding cannot be *reducible* to knowing how to comport oneself. Similarly, understanding my being as existence cannot be reducible to knowing how to comport myself to myself because I can only comport myself to myself on the

basis of the understanding of my being as existence. And what about understanding of being as such – as opposed to kinds of being (*Seinsarten*)? It is even more difficult to see how this can be interpreted as any kind of knowing how.

INTERPRETATION (*AUSLEGUNG*)

Understanding, Heidegger tells us, contains within itself the possibility of *development*, in the sense of the *appropriation* of what is understood in understanding (150). I take it that what he has in mind is the making *explicit* of what is understood. He calls this making explicit *interpretation* (*Auslegung*). Interpretation is not a theoretical technique, cultivated by some but not by others. It belongs to Dasein as such. It is an existential. But it is an existential that is grounded in, or founded upon, the more basic existential of understanding. In interpretation understanding does not become something different. It becomes itself.

Heidegger illustrates the notion of interpretation at the level of the engaged having-to-do-with the ready-to-hand. In preparing, putting to rights, repairing, improving, the ready-to-hand entity is *explicitly* understood with respect to its in-order-to (or for-what) (148f). Interpretation is this explicit understanding. What is explicitly understood or interpreted has the structure of *something as something* (*Etwas als Etwas*). By virtue of such interpretation something is 'seen' *as* a table, *as* a door, *as* a car, *as* a bridge and so on. What Heidegger calls the 'as-free apprehension' (*als-freies Erfassen*) of something, far from being what is both basic and natural, is something difficult to achieve. Far from being more basic than 'understanding seeing' (*verstehendes Sehen*) it is the privation of such seeing (149). The seeing-as of interpretation should not be thought of as something subjective. It is not as though we first

experience something purely present-at-hand, a mere thing, which we then construe *as* a door, *as* a house. Interpretation as Heidegger understands it is not a matter of throwing a 'meaning' (*Bedeutung*) over the naked thing or attaching a 'value' to it. It is the making explicit of what is already there in the entity as something within-the-world.

Interpretation does not necessarily involve *working out* the significance of something. It does however involve *presuppositions*. Interpretation of something as something always essentially involves what Heidegger calls fore-having (*Vorhabe*), fore-sight (*Vorsicht*) and fore-conception (*Vorgriff*). If we stick to interpretation at the level of our dealings with equipment, we can say that the fore-having required for its interpretation *as* something is the understanding of the referential whole to which it belongs. Fore-sight is the point of view (*Hinsicht*) which fixes that with regard to which what is understood is to be interpreted. Fore-conception is the conceptuality (*Begrifflichkeit*) in terms of which the interpretation is framed.

Interpretation, as requiring these kinds of prior understanding, has a certain circularity about it. The idea of the hermeneutic circle is a familiar one in the area of textual interpretation. But according to Heidegger it has a much more far-reaching significance. It is the expression of the existential *fore-structure* of Dasein itself. Interpretation presupposes the understanding of what is to be interpreted. But interpretation is not a theoretical technique employed by some but not by others. As we have seen, it is an existential. Once this is recognised we can see the absurdity of branding any discipline which involves interpretation as unscientific on the grounds of its circularity. Science cannot presuppose what it is supposed to provide the ground for. But Heidegger would say that it is absurd to try to make understanding and interpretation conform to an ideal of knowledge which is itself only a derivative of understanding.

The possibility of scientific knowledge is grounded in the existential constitution of Dasein. The hermeneutic circle, far from being peculiar to certain kinds of 'science', is itself a feature of this constitution.

ASSERTION OR STATEMENT (*AUSSAGE*) AS A DERIVATIVE MODE OF INTERPRETATION

Interpretation is grounded in understanding. Heidegger now wants to show that assertion or statement (*Aussage*) or judgment (*Urteil*) is a derivative mode of interpretation, that it involves a modification of the 'as'-structure of interpretation. There are two reasons why this is important. Firstly, it undermines the supposed primacy of logic. Secondly, it calls in question the traditional conception of truth according to which the statement is the primary location of truth. Statements uncover, or purport to uncover, what is, entities. But if the statement is a *derivative* mode of interpretation then it cannot be the primary mode of uncovering (or letting entities be seen). If we call the kind of uncovering accomplished by statements *predicative* uncovering⁵ then we can say that predicative uncovering is founded upon and is derivative from the pre-predicative uncovering accomplished by the various ways in which we engage with entities. By undermining the primacy of the statement or judgment Heidegger thinks he is thereby undermining the primacy of logic. And if predicative uncovering has the status Heidegger says it has then it follows that the statement cannot be the primary location of *truth*. At least

⁵ Heidegger uses this terminology in 'On the Essence of Reasons' ('Vom Wesen des Grundes', 1929), section I. For a recent translation see 'On the Essence of Ground', in *Pathmarks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

it does so if Heidegger is right in his contention that the primary meaning of truth is unconcealedness (*Unverborgenheit*). We will examine this issue in chapter 5.

Heidegger begins by distinguishing three characteristics of the statement (or judgment). Firstly, it is a letting-be-seen, an exhibiting or showing. He uses the German word *Aufzeigen*, inadequately translated as 'pointing out' (154). It is supposed to have the same meaning as the Greek *apophansis*, letting something be seen from itself. Statements uncover or discover (*entdecken*). They uncover, let be seen, an entity, not a sense or meaning. What is meant or intended in the statement is the entity itself and not an 'inner' representation of the entity. For example, what is meant or intended in the statement 'The hammer is too heavy' is not a representation of the hammer but the hammer itself. The entity uncovered by the statement need not actually be present.

Secondly, statement is *predication* (154f). In a statement a 'predicate' is 'asserted' of a 'subject'. Such predication is a *determining* of the subject. This is just another aspect of letting-be-seen. By virtue of predication it is not just the entity that is uncovered (the hammer) but the entity in its determinate character (the too heavy hammer).

Thirdly, statement is communication (*Mitteilung*) (155). It is not just a letting-be-seen, it is a letting-be-seen-with (*Mitsehenlassen*). The German word for 'share' is *teilen*. Statement is a sharing. What is shared is not so much the entity in its determinate character but *being* towards what is uncovered in its determinate character. This sharing of being is not a case of somehow transferring a private mental content from one subject to another. As being-in-the-world *Dasein* is always already outside itself. So the vocal utterance (*Ausgesprochenheit*, literally spoken-out-ness) which belongs to statement as

communication should not be seen as the making public of something private.

The next step is to show that statement is a form of interpretation. Heidegger does this by showing that statement has its existential foundations in fore-having, fore-sight and fore-conception. As regards the first of these, he points out that the uncovering which statement accomplishes is only possible on the basis of a prior uncovering in engaged, circumspective having-to-do-with. Statement (or assertion) is not a free-floating mode of comportment which could of itself uncover entities. The fore-having (*Vorhabe*) of statement is this prior uncovering. Just what fore-sight (*Vorsicht*) is supposed to be in this context is less clear. 'Thus any assertion (statement, *Aussage*) requires a fore-sight; in this the predicate which we are to assign and make stand out, gets loosened, so to speak, from its unexpressed inclusion in the entity itself' (157). The fore-conception (*Vorgriff*) is the articulation in terms of meanings of what the statement uncovers. The conceptuality which makes up the fore-conception of the statement includes such things as the concept of heaviness belonging to the hammer, the concept of the hammer having the property of heaviness.

Having shown that statement is a mode of interpretation by showing that it has the essential structures of interpretation, Heidegger now shows that it is a *derivative* mode of interpretation. For logic the simplest kind of statement is the categorical statement. For example, the statement 'The hammer is heavy', where this is understood to mean something like: the hammer-thing has the property of heaviness (157). Such statements do not occur at the level of concerned circumspection. Such concern however has its own kind of interpretation, the verbal expression of which would be something like 'The hammer is too heavy' or simply 'too heavy', 'the other hammer!' But for

there to be interpretation no words need be uttered. There is interpretation involved in simply putting aside or exchanging the unsuitable tool.

The hammer is ready-to-hand as equipment. If the hammer becomes the 'object' of a statement (what it is about) then there is a fundamental change in the fore-having. The *with-which* of having-to-do-with becomes the *about-which* of the statement.

The fore-sight aims at something present-at-hand in what is ready-to-hand. *Through* the fore-sight and *in* the fore-sight the ready-to-hand becomes concealed in its readiness-to-hand. Within this uncovering of presence-at-hand which conceals the readiness-to-hand the present-at-hand is determined in its being-thus-and-so-present-at-hand [*in seinem So-und-so-vorhandensein*]. Now for the first time there is access to *properties* [*Eigenschaften*]. The what *as* which the assertion determines the present-at-hand is drawn *from* the present-at-hand as such. The as-structure of interpretation has undergone a modification. In its appropriation of what is understood the 'as' no longer reaches out into a totality of involvements [*Bewandtnisganzheit*]. It is . . . cut off from the significance constitutive of worldhood. (158)

We saw earlier that what is *interpreted* in engaged having-to-do-with has the structure of something *as* something (*Etwas als Etwas*). Heidegger calls this 'as' the *hermeneutic* 'as'. The 'as' of statement he calls the *apophantic* 'as'.

DISCOURSE (REDE)

Although interpretation is an existential it is not a *primordial* mode of disclosedness because it is founded upon understanding, in the sense that it is the making explicit of what is understood in understanding. And assertion or statement is even less primordial because it is a modification or derivative form of interpretation. By contrast what Heidegger next discusses

(in a section⁶ which, it must be said, is compressed, dense and confusing, if not confused) – ‘discourse’ (*Rede*), talk or telling – *is* primordial. It is not the modification of some more basic mode of comportment.

The first thing to be said is that discourse (*Rede*) is not the same thing as language (*Sprache*). It is the existential or ontological foundation of language. So rather than *being* language it is what makes language possible.⁷ It is equiprimordial with affectedness (*Befindlichkeit*) and understanding (*Verstehen*). But this does not mean that it is another basic mode of disclosedness, alongside the other two. Rather it is a basic structure of disclosedness as such and hence a structure which pertains both to affectedness and understanding. Discourse, he says, is the ‘articulation of intelligibility’ (161).⁸ Articulation does not mean giving linguistic expression to but giving *structure* to. The world has sense but this sense is not amorphous but takes the form of a multiplicity of separate though related meanings. What is articulated, or given structure, in discourse is the totality of meanings, which for Heidegger is the world, as opposed to the totality of *entities* within-the-world. The disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*) of world is what makes possible the uncoveredness (*Entdecktheit*) of entities. So we can say that discourse is what gives shape, form, structure, articulation to disclosedness, the basic forms of which are affectedness and understanding. But because the disclosedness which discourse articulates is the disclosedness of Dasein

⁶ § 34: ‘Being-there (Da-sein) and discourse. Language’.

⁷ In ordinary language *Rede* means speech (including speech as something one makes) or talk. Heidegger is using the term as an *ontological* term of art. It is not enough to say this. One also has to say precisely what it does mean when used in this way. Heidegger’s explanation of its ontological sense leaves something to be desired.

⁸ ‘Die Rede ist die Artikulation der Verständlichkeit’.

and the being of Dasein is being-in-the-world, discourse must also have its own peculiarly 'worldly' character (161). It must express itself in *words*, 'speak itself out' (*sich aussprechen*). The spoken-out-ness of discourse is language (*Sprache*). Discourse takes the form of language because of Dasein's *thrownness*, its dependence on the 'world' in the sense of entities within-the-world.

But what precisely does Heidegger mean by the 'worldly' (*weltlich*) character of discourse? Discourse becomes language by virtue of being expressed in words. There is a suggestion that words are ready-to-hand entities, a form of equipment (*Zeug*). But to treat words as entities within-the-world, not admittedly as mere things, as present-at-hand, but as ready-to-hand seems incompatible with the idea that language is somehow constitutive of world in the Heideggerian sense. As expressed in words discourse is worldly (*weltlich*) but this is quite different from saying that it is within-the-world (*innerweltlich*).

Having said that 'discourse' is not the same as language but what makes language possible Heidegger goes on to describe the structure of discourse in ways which suggest that what he is talking about *is* language. He distinguishes four basic features of discourse: 1. Discourse is *about* something. 2. In discourse something is *said*. 3. Discourse is *communication*. 4. Discourse is *expression* (*Bekundung*). I will comment briefly on each of these. 1. Discourse has an about-which (*das Worüber*) (not just when it takes the form of a statement but equally when it takes the form of a command, a request, a question). 2. Discourse plays an essential role in the disclosedness of being-in-the-world. Although being-in-the-world is not itself comportment to an entity (world is not an entity) it essentially involves comportment to entities. Discourse uncovers entities. It uncovers an entity by *saying* something about it.

Discourse has a *what-is-said* (*das Gesagte*).⁹ 3. The traditional interpretation of communication (*Mitteilung*) sees it as the transfer of inner experiences and thoughts from one subject to another subject. But discourse is not a structure of *consciousness*. It is a structure of *Da-sein*, of disclosedness. It is the articulation and sharing (*Teilen*) of understanding and affectedness. 4. Discourse is expression or making known (*Bekundung*). In discourse Dasein 'speaks itself out'. This is not because it is something intrinsically 'inner', separated from anything 'outer' by an impenetrable wall of 'ideas' or 'representations'. Dasein is always already 'outside', in the sense that it is always already *bei* (involved with) entities within-the-world and always already *in* the world. In speaking of expression (making known) Heidegger seems especially concerned with affectedness, mood. This is what is expressed in such things as intonation, modulation, tempo. This is not the outward expression of an inner state because, as we saw earlier, mood (*Stimmung*) is a basic mode of being-in-the-world.

Intonation, modulation and tempo are clearly properties of *speech* or spoken *language*. To treat them as properties of *discourse* seems at odds with Heidegger's insistence that discourse is not the same thing as language. By contrast his treatment of hearing and listening as an 'existential possibility which belongs to discourse' (163) is consistent with that insistence. It is the 'existential being-open of Dasein as being-with for the other' (163). As such it is not reducible to acoustic perception. Acoustic perception is grounded in hearing, just as linguistic utterance (*sprachliche Verlautbarung*) is grounded in discourse. We hear the other but we also hear entities within-the-world. This is not reducible to the having of auditory sensations. We

⁹ This must be distinguished from *das Beredete* (what-is-talked-about) which is the same as the about-which (*das Worüber*).

do not hear sensations. We hear the creaking wagon, the motor bike, the column on the march, the north wind, the tapping woodpecker, the crackling fire (163).

Hearing and listening belong to discourse. And so does remaining silent (*Schweigen*). But unlike hearing remaining silent is a *mode* of discourse, of *saying*. Listening is not itself a form of saying but the listening to what is said by another. The remaining silent Heidegger has in mind is not not saying anything, precisely because it is a form of saying something. It is not replying in the form of linguistic utterance. The silence itself is a kind of reply. Remaining silent, like speech and listening to, is essentially dialogical.

The kind of remaining silent Heidegger has in mind is not the same as simply not saying anything in the sense of remaining mute (*stumm*). A student who never says anything in a tutorial because he or she has nothing to say is *stumm*. But we cannot say that he or she *schweigt*. Someone who literally cannot speak in the sense of being dumb can also not remain silent. Remaining silent is a mode of discourse because to remain silent is to say something about something and thus to uncover or disclose something.

CARE (*SORGE*)

The being of Dasein, existence, is being-in-the-world. Although this is a unitary phenomenon it is also a manifold. Concern, being-with, affectedness, understanding, interpretation, discourse – these are all structures of Dasein's being. They are all existentials. But in what sense do they constitute a unity? In what sense is this manifold of existential structures a *whole*? Heidegger's answer is to say that the being of Dasein is care (*Sorge*) (§ 41). Our task is to explain this rather strange-sounding claim. The statement that the being of Dasein is care

is a statement of existential ontology and as such says nothing about which affective states are most prevalent. People with a care-free disposition in the ordinary sense of the term are just as much characterised by care in the ontological sense as naturally gloomy people. As Heidegger uses it 'care' is a technical term which designates the three principal structures of Dasein's being in their essential unity. These are projection, thrownness and concern (*Besorgen*). In projecting itself onto possibilities of being-in-the-world Dasein is 'ahead of itself'. As thrown Dasein is already in-the-world. As already in-the-world it is *bei* entities within-the-world. It dwells with entities within-the-world, is absorbed by them. But although 'care' is a technical term which means nothing more than these three basic structures of the being of Dasein in their essential interconnection, it is not chosen arbitrarily. Its *ontic* meaning helps to convey the idea that Dasein is not a detached subject contemplating the world but is such that its being is an issue for it, and that the way in which its being is an issue for it is inseparable from its engagement with intraworldly entities.

CONCLUSIONS

The structures we have been examining are all structures of Dasein's being. As existentials they belong to the ontology of Dasein, or, as Heidegger also calls it in his Kant book¹⁰ (published in 1929), the metaphysics of Dasein. The method he has been employing is phenomenology as he understands it. He does not proceed by inference but by exhibiting (*Aufweisung*), laying bare, bringing out of concealment – concealment which results from our natural tendency to

¹⁰ *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1990), §§ 39–45.

understand our being as presence-at-hand and to understand our being in terms of inherited ontological concepts. The results of Heidegger's phenomenology reinforce the difference between his phenomenology and that of Husserl. There is a fundamental difference between Dasein and consciousness and between the mode of access to Dasein and the mode of access to consciousness. Disclosedness, understood in terms of affectedness, understanding, interpretation and discourse, cannot be equated with consciousness, which is essentially the relationship between a subject and an object. For Husserl consciousness is a stream of experiences (*Erlebnisse*). In his phenomenology this stream of experiences becomes the object of reflection or inner perception. It is quite clear that no amount of inner perception could reveal the sort of structures which Heidegger has been bringing to light. None of this has the implication that for Heidegger there is no such thing as consciousness or a subject-object relationship. It is just that they are grounded in Dasein and its existential structures.

Truth

In its various modes of comportment to beings or entities – what is – Dasein *uncovers* (dis-covers, *entdeckt*) beings or entities. It lets them show themselves. Correlative to the uncovering of entities is the uncoveredness (*Entdecktheit*) of entities. But such uncoveredness of entities is only possible on the basis of *disclosedness* (*Erschlossenheit*) – the disclosedness of *world*. The disclosedness of world – which is not itself an entity – makes possible both the uncovering and the uncoveredness of entities. Heidegger will argue that these notions are the key to a proper understanding of the nature or essence of *truth*. This is the topic of § 44 ('Dasein, Disclosedness and Truth').

But first we need to say something about what lies behind Heidegger's treatment of this topic and the centrality he gives to it. Why does the topic of truth have such a prominent place in *Being and Time*? It is a topic which figures in logic but also in epistemology. But fundamental ontology is neither of these things.¹ What does the question of the nature of truth have to do with the question of being? Heidegger begins by pointing

¹ Though it can be argued that *Being and Time* involves a radicalising of epistemology as traditionally understood. Epistemology seeks to show how knowledge is possible. Heidegger's fundamental ontology can be seen as showing how knowledge is grounded in engaged having-to-do-with things, which in turn is grounded in the understanding of world.

out how historically there has been a connection between truth and being. The first discovery of the being of beings by Parmenides 'identifies' being with the perceptive understanding (*vernehmendes Verstehen*) of being. Aristotle defines philosophy as the science of truth but also as the science that considers beings as beings, that is, with regard to their being. To the extent that Heidegger sees his question concerning the meaning of being as a 'repetition' or 'retrieve' (*Wiederholung*) of such Greek inquiries he is also going to recognise the connection between truth and being. However it cannot be said that *Being and Time* provides an *explicit* explanation of the connection. After *Being and Time* it becomes increasingly clear that Heidegger is not just connecting being and unconcealedness (*Unverborgenheit*) but is in effect *identifying* them. But as far as *Being and Time* is concerned his thinking seems to be that if fundamental ontology is to make good its claim to be fundamental then it must be able to give an account of so basic a notion as that of truth.

If truth does have a 'primordial connection' with being then the phenomenon of truth must already have been encountered, if only implicitly, in the analytic of Dasein (213). Presumably what is being referred to here is the earlier demonstration (in § 33) that assertion or statement (*Aussage*) is a derivative mode of interpretation. Statement is *predication*. In a statement a 'predicate' is 'asserted' of a 'subject'. Such predication is a *determining* of the subject (154). The statement uncovers the entity. But such predicative uncovering of entities is grounded in pre-predicative modes of uncovering of entities, which are themselves grounded in the understanding of being (or world). Given that statements or assertions – some of them at least – are *true* there is the implication that the understanding of being must be true in a more basic sense.

The question 'What is truth?' is not concerned with what things are true but with the nature or essence of truth itself. However one approach to the question of the nature of truth is to ask what is true, not in the sense of what truths there are but in the sense of to what does truth belong, what is it that has the 'property' of truth. According to what might be called the traditional conception of truth it is the statement (*Aussage*) or judgment (*Urteil*) that is characterised by truth. Or, to put it another way, the *location* of truth is the statement or judgment. In other words, *what* is true is held to be the statement or judgment. And the essence of truth, it is claimed, is the *agreement* or *correspondence* (*Übereinstimmung*) of the statement with its 'object', with what it is about (its *Woriüber*, its about-which). For example, the truth of the statement 'The cat is on the mat' consists in its agreement or correspondence with the cat on the mat or the state of affairs which consists in the cat's being on the mat.

But this does not tell us anything illuminating about the nature of truth if we are unable to say in what this agreement consists. There are many ways in which one thing can agree with another. So in what way can a true statement or judgment be said to agree with something? Heidegger points to the sort of agreement that can hold between numbers, the form of agreement we call *equality*. The number 6 agrees with 16 minus 10 in the sense that they are equal with respect to *how much*. Or to use an example from Heidegger's essay 'On the Essence of Truth',² this coin agrees with that in that they are equal with respect to *appearance*. This 'with respect to' or 'in regard to' is a feature not just of that form of agreement we

² 'Vom Wesen der Wahrheit'. The English translation appears in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 115–38. This important essay was first published in 1943 but had already been given in lecture form as early as 1930.

call equality, but of agreement in general. If truth is a relation of agreement then what is it in regard to which the 'terms' of the relation agree? Given the nature of the statement or judgment and that of the object what is there about them in regard to which they can agree? Because judgments and their objects have totally different modes of being (except in the case of judgments about judgments) there is *no* respect in which they can be *the same*. For example, the judgment or statement ' $16 - 10 = 6$ ', if we are to speak of it as an entity at all, is an entity of a completely different kind from the *numbers* it is a statement about. And the statement or judgment 'The cat is on the mat' is something utterly different from a cat.

But if there is no respect in which judgment and object are the same, perhaps there is some respect in which they are *similar*. But if it makes no sense to say they are the same, then it makes no sense to say they are similar either. And even if we could make sense of such resemblance we could not equate it with truth. True statements are about how things *are*, not what they resemble. There can, of course, be true statements about resemblance. For example, 'The cat on the mat resembles the cat on the sofa'. But here the resemblance is between cats and not between statements and cats. A true statement is not true by virtue of resembling its object, because if it is true then it presents things *as* they are, *just* as they are.³

The relation of agreement between judgment and thing which is supposed to make the judgment true does not become any clearer if we distinguish between two senses of judgment: judgment in the sense of the *act* of judging, a *real* mental process which takes place at a particular time, and judgment in the sense of what-is-judged (not the about-which, but the stated,

³ 'But knowledge is supposed to "give" the thing *just as* it is' ('Aber Erkenntnis soll doch die Sache *so* "geben", *wie* sie ist') (216).

asserted). In the first sense the judgments of different people (or the same person on different occasions) are necessarily distinct, but in the second sense they can be the same. For example, my act of judging that the picture on the wall is crooked and your act of judging that the picture on the wall is crooked are necessarily distinct (they may be qualitatively identical but cannot be numerically identical). Judgment in the second sense is an *ideal* content. This, it is maintained, is the proper location of truth, i.e. it is this ideal judgment-content which stands in the relation of agreement (or correspondence). But the about-which of the judgment is not normally something ideal (it is in the case of mathematical or logical judgments) but something real (e.g. the cat on the mat). Heidegger finds mysterious the idea of a relation of agreement between entities of radically different modes of being. And what are we to say about the relation of agreement itself, *its* mode of being? Is it real or ideal or neither of these? And how are we supposed to understand the nature of the relation between the ideal content and the real act of judging?

So how should we understand the relation of agreement (or correspondence) which is supposed to make a true statement true? Heidegger suggests that the way to get clear about this is to attend to what is involved in *showing* a statement to be true, what is involved in the verification (*Ausweisung*) of a true statement or judgment. He uses the following example. With my back to the wall I make the true statement 'The picture on the wall is crooked' (217). The statement is shown to be true, or verified, by perception. I turn round and *see* the crooked picture on the wall. In making the judgment with my back to the wall I do not perceive the picture but only 'represent' it (*stelle es vor*). But this does not mean that in judging that the picture on the wall is crooked I am directed toward 'representations' (*Vorstellungen*) in the sense of inner mental pictures,

pictures of the real thing on the wall. I am directed to the picture on the wall. This and nothing else is what is intended or meant. My making the judgment is as Heidegger puts it 'a way of being (*ein Sein*) towards the existing (*seiend*) thing itself' (218).⁴ What is verified by the perception is not a relationship of agreement between a representation 'in here' and a thing 'out there'. The statement or judgment purports to 'uncover' the picture on the wall. What is verified by the perception is that the statement or judgment uncovers the picture as it is in itself. True statements are statements which uncover entities as they are in themselves. Properly understood the relation of agreement which constitutes the truth of a statement (propositional truth) is not a relation between an inner representation and an outer entity but between an entity as uncovered by the statement and the entity itself. What is verified is the *identity* of the entity as uncovered and the entity itself.

Only where there is this identity between the entity as uncovered by the statement and the entity itself is the uncovering a genuine uncovering. All statement or judgment *purports* to uncover. Only those which genuinely uncover, in the sense of uncovering the entity 'just as it is in itself', are true. We can therefore say that the truth of a statement is its being-uncovering (*entdeckend-sein*) or more precisely being-uncovering of the entity in itself. Without this reference to the entity as it is in itself we would have to say that all statements are true because Heidegger makes uncovering part of the definition of a statement (see 154).

Having interpreted propositional truth as uncovering, Heidegger goes on to treat other forms of uncovering and disclosing as forms of truth. Although wishing to avoid what he calls word mysticism, he makes great play of the original

⁴ 'Das Aussagen ist ein Sein zum seienden Ding selbst'.

meaning of the Greek word for truth: ἀλήθεια, *aletheia* – unconcealedness, unhiddenness (*Unverborgenheit*) (219). It is, he thinks, the business of philosophy to preserve the force of these ‘most elemental words’.

We can call the uncovering accomplished by statements or judgments propositional uncovering or – to use the terminology Heidegger adopts in ‘On the Essence of Reasons’⁵ – *predicative* uncovering. As we saw in the [previous chapter](#), Heidegger’s analysis of the statement claims to show that the predicative uncovering achieved by the statement or judgment cannot claim to be the *primary* uncovering of entities. Although the statement uncovers, this is not something it can accomplish in its own right. Statement is not a free-floating mode of comportment which could of itself uncover entities. Predicative uncovering is founded in pre-predicative uncovering. The latter is accomplished by the various forms of engaged having-to-do-with entities within-the-world. In such concern or engagement we interpret something *as* something, for example, a hammer *as* a hammer. The ‘as’ of such pre-predicative comportment is what Heidegger calls the *hermeneutic* ‘as’. In statement or judgment the hermeneutic ‘as’ is transformed into the *apophantic* ‘as’. In hammering with the hammer, for example, the hammer is uncovered as the entity that it is.

There is such a thing as propositional or predicative truth.⁶ But the predicative uncovering, and hence truth, of statements or judgments is *founded* in the pre-predicative uncovering accomplished by engaged having-to-do-with. Predicative truth is grounded in pre-predicative truth. But now recall that

⁵ The distinction between ontic truth and ontological truth appears in section I.

⁶ Heidegger’s claim is that such truth is not the most basic kind of truth, not that there is no such thing as propositional truth.

all our dealings with entities within-the-world are grounded in the understanding, the *disclosedness*, of world. The truth of statements as predicative uncovering is only possible as a modification of the pre-predicative uncovering of entities within-the-world. But what makes such pre-predicative uncovering possible is the disclosedness of world. World is not an entity but the all-embracing web of significance relations which makes it possible for entities to manifest themselves as entities. What makes the uncovering of entities possible must be called true in a more primordial sense. Pre-predicative truth is more basic than predicative truth, but truth in the most primordial sense is the disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*) of world.

Disclosedness of world, however, is not the whole of disclosedness. It is only an aspect of the disclosedness of Dasein as being-in-the-world. It is the disclosedness of Dasein which is the most primordial phenomenon of truth. If the disclosedness of Dasein referred to the self-awareness of an individual human being the claim that the disclosedness of Dasein is truth in the most primordial sense would be absurd and would justify the claim that Heidegger is purveying the most extreme form of subjectivism. To see that this is not the case we have to remember that Dasein's disclosedness (the disclosedness that Dasein *is*) embraces the understanding of its own being (existence), the understanding of world and the understanding of the being of entities other than Dasein to which Dasein comports itself.

Being-true as being-uncovering is a way in which Dasein *is*. Engaged-having-to-do-with uncovers intraworldly entities. So does disengaged mere looking, although the latter depends on the former inasmuch as it is a deficient mode of such concern. In a secondary sense uncovered entities can be said to be true. That is, a secondary sense of truth is uncoveredness. What makes the uncovering, and hence the uncoveredness, of

entities possible is the most primordial phenomenon of truth. This is Dasein itself or rather the fundamental constitution of Dasein. In so far as Dasein essentially *is* its disclosedness, and in its disclosedness makes possible all uncovering, it is essentially true. Dasein is, as Heidegger puts it, in the truth (*in der Wahrheit*) (221). This of course has nothing to do with omniscience. It does not mean that simply by virtue of being Dasein – by *existing* – we are in possession of all truths. But he also wants to say that it is equally ‘true’ that Dasein is in the *untruth* (*in der Unwahrheit*) (222). However to see what this means we will first need to become familiar with the distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity (the topic of chapter 6).

THE ‘DEPENDENCE’ OF TRUTH ON DASEIN

If truth is disclosedness and uncoveredness⁷ there can only be truth if there is Dasein. ‘There is (*es gibt*) truth only in so far as, and as long as, Dasein is’ (226). Heidegger gives as examples of truths the laws of Newton and the principle of contradiction. Such truths, indeed any truths, are only true in so far as Dasein is. He appears to be saying that the laws of physics and the laws of logic depend on the existence of human beings. But before human beings appeared on the scene was it not the case that falling objects obeyed the law of gravity and was it not the case that something could not have logically incompatible properties? Heidegger is quite unequivocal: ‘Before there was Dasein there was no truth and when there is no longer Dasein there will be no truth’ (226). Given his identification of truth

⁷ In the terminology which Heidegger also uses in ‘On the Essence of Reasons’ disclosedness is *ontological* truth, uncoveredness is *ontic* truth.

with disclosedness and uncovering and uncoveredness this surely follows.

In saying that before they were discovered (uncovered, *entdeckt*) Newton's laws were not true he is not of course saying that they were false. Before their discovery (*Entdeckung*) they were neither true nor false. Given Heidegger's account of truth to say of Newton's laws – or the propositions in which they are expressed – that they are true is to say that they uncover entities. 'Through Newton the laws become true; and with them entities become accessible in themselves for Dasein' (227). In being uncovered entities show themselves as the entities they already were. What these laws uncover – nature – was the way it showed itself to be after the uncovering. Truth as uncovering uncovers entities precisely as they were already, regardless of their uncoveredness or non-uncoveredness.

The kind of dependence of truth on Dasein of which we have just been speaking does not make truth something 'subjective' in the sense that it is up to the individual Dasein whether a statement is true or not. Predicative truth is not the most basic kind of uncovering but it is uncovering. That a statement genuinely uncovers rather than merely purporting to uncover is determined not by the individual making the statement but by the entity that the statement is about. As Heidegger puts it, 'it brings the uncovering Dasein before the entity itself' (227). True statements have 'universal validity' but they can only have this character because Dasein can uncover entities in themselves. The entity binds everyone making a statement about it.

Entities are not at our disposal and so ontic truth is not at our disposal. But what about ontological truth? We can't say that there are only entities if Dasein is. But we can say that there is only being if Dasein is. 'There is' ("*es gibt*") being – not

entities – only in so far as truth is. And truth *is* only in so far as and as long as Dasein is' (230). But this does not mean that the disclosedness of being is at our disposal. It would be more correct to say that that we as individual human beings participate in this disclosedness. If there were no Dasein there would be no disclosedness, no unconcealedness (no clearing (*Lichtung*) – to use the term Heidegger favours in his later philosophy).

Authenticity

Heidegger's phenomenology of Dasein, his existential analytic, is the laying bare, or letting be seen, of the fundamental structures of existence – the mode of being peculiar to Dasein. In so far as Dasein *is*, Dasein *exists*. But he does not just speak about the structures of existence. He also draws a basic distinction between existing *authentically* and existing *inauthentically*. Initially at least, his existential analytic is concerned solely with Dasein in what he calls its 'everydayness' (*Alltäglichkeit*). The structures of being which his phenomenology of Dasein claims to lay bare are, in the first instance, either indifferent to the distinction between authentic (*eigentlich*) existence and inauthentic (*uneigentlich*) existence or they are structures of *inauthentic* existence. So what does this distinction amount to? It first appears in § 4 (though at this stage the *terms* 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' are not used): 'Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence – in terms of a possibility of itself: to be itself or not itself. Dasein has either chosen these possibilities itself, or got itself into them [*in sie hineingeraten*], or grown up in them already' (12). To exist authentically is to be myself, to choose my possibilities of being. The *terminology* is first used in § 9: 'And because Dasein is in each case essentially its own possibility this entity *can* in its being "choose" itself, win itself; it can lose itself or never win itself but only "seem" to. But only in so

far as it is essentially something that can be *authentic* – that is something of its own [belong to itself, *sich zueigen sein*] – can it have lost itself and not yet won itself? (42f). From this we can see that authenticity has to do with self. But to say this is not very helpful. Whether Dasein exists authentically or inauthentically the being of Dasein is in each case *mine*. Indeed in-each-case-mine-ness (*Jemeinigkeit*) is the condition of the possibility of authenticity and inauthenticity. The being of Dasein is that of a self, has the character of selfhood (it is *selbsthaft*). This does not mean that there is an *entity* called the self which persists through all the changes in my mental states and which confers unity on this multiplicity of mental states. The self thought of in this way would be something with the mode of being Heidegger calls presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*). I do not become a self by existing authentically. But in existing *inauthentically* I am not *being* myself. I *am* my possibilities of being. To exist authentically is in some sense to *choose* these possibilities. The self of *inauthentic* existence is what he calls the One-self (*das Man-selbst*). My possibilities of being are possibilities of *my* being but when I am existing *inauthentically* they are not *chosen* by me. They are determined not by me but by something he calls the One.

THE ONE (OR THEY)

What does Heidegger understand by the One (*das Man*)? To determine this we need to go back to what was said in chapter 3. There it was made clear that, although Dasein is a self in the sense that its being is in each case mine, it is not an isolated *subject* unrelated to others. The being of Dasein is essentially being-*with*. The relationship to others is part and parcel of Dasein's being. But paradoxically Heidegger also wants to say that there is a sense in which the others have

taken away my being. My being is taken away from me in the sense I *am* my possibilities, but these possibilities are 'chosen' not by me but by others. But the others referred to here are not particular others. The others who take away my being are not this or that individual Dasein. They are not some group of individual Dasein or the sum total of Dasein. They are what Heidegger calls *das Man*.¹ The German word *man* is the indefinite pronoun equivalent to the English *one* (as in 'one shakes hands with one's right hand') or the French *on*. In ordinary, everyday existence what Heidegger calls *das Man* is not something over against me or separate from me. For this reason it is better to translate it as the 'One' rather than as the 'They'. The separateness implied by the latter, which excludes *me* from *das Man*, is precisely contrary to Heidegger's intention.

In a way that is normally hidden from me the One exercises a form of dictatorship over my possibilities of being or ways of existing. Heidegger gives as examples of possibilities of being such things as reading, seeing things in a certain way, judging works of art, enjoyment. The ways in which we read, the ways in which we see things, the ways in which we judge works of art, the ways in which we enjoy ourselves are dictated by the One. That is to say, we read, see, judge as *one* reads, sees, judges. We enjoy ourselves as *one* enjoys oneself. There are, of course, some people who go out of their way to be different, who seek to set themselves apart from the majority. But they are deluding themselves if they think that they have thereby escaped from the dictatorship of the One. As Heidegger puts it, 'we also withdraw from the great mass as *one* withdraws' (127).² Authenticity essentially has to do with

¹ Heidegger elaborates this notion in § 27.

² 'wir ziehen uns aber auch vom "grossen Haufen" zurück, wie *man* sich zurückzieht'.

owning myself in the sense of taking responsibility for my own being. But the One takes away my responsibility. It disburdens me by as it were taking the decisions regarding my ways of existing from me. To be thus disburdened is to exist inauthentically. Existing in this way Dasein is still characterised by selfness, in-each-case-mine-ness (*Jemeinigkeit*), but its self is what Heidegger calls the One-self (*das Man-selbst*). 'The self of everyday Dasein is the *One-self* which we distinguish from the *authentic* self – that is, from the *self* which has been taken hold of in its own way' (129).³

To exist as the One-self is to exist inauthentically. But this does not mean that in existing inauthentically Dasein is any less real.⁴ It does not involve any diminution of Dasein's 'facticity'. The One itself is utterly real. It is true that the others are not any particular others, that the One is nobody. But this does not mean that the one is nothing. With the important proviso that the reality of the One is a kind of being that is peculiar to Dasein and cannot be shared by things, we can say that the One is an *ens realissimum* (128).⁵ The One is not real in the way that a stone is real. It is not something present-at-hand. But phenomenological 'seeing' discloses it as the 'most real subject' of everydayness. Rather like Hegel's objective spirit the One is not reducible to a multiplicity of individual subjects. But nor is it a *universal* subject. To think of it in this way is to impose on Dasein the conceptual scheme of genus, species and instance.⁶

³ 'Das Selbst des alltäglichen Daseins ist das *Man-selbst*, das wir von dem *eigentlichen*, das heisst eigens ergriffenen *Selbst* unterscheiden.'

⁴ Though of course Dasein is never real in the sense of present-at-hand (*vorhanden*).

⁵ Most real being.

⁶ It is not altogether clear what sort of ontological status the One is supposed to have. Heidegger speaks of it as exercising a form of dictatorship over the

The One is an existential (129). That is to say, it is a basic structure of Dasein's being. It belongs to Dasein's ontological constitution. So it is no *accident* that the self of everyday existence is the One-self. However, it must be said that, if we look at Heidegger's examples of the One's dominion, it does not look like something which belongs to Dasein as such.⁷ There is, one might say, a distinct whiff of Weimar about it. But to make this the basis of a criticism of Heidegger's notion of the One would be to fail to distinguish between the One as an existential and the concrete historical forms that this existential can take. The One has what Heidegger calls 'various possibilities of becoming concrete' (129).⁸

Given that the One is an existential, in the sense of being something which pertains to the being of Dasein as such, it cannot be the case that existing authentically involves Dasein somehow detaching itself from it. Authentic existence is not the annihilation of the One-self but a modification of the One-self. '*Authentic being-one's-self* does not rest upon an exceptional

individual Dasein, which suggests a reality over and above Dasein in much the way that Hegel's objective spirit is independent of those individuals who participate in it. But he also maintains that it is an existential. It is a mode of being of Dasein, a way in which it is. It does not make sense to speak of a way in which something is as exercising dominion over that thing.

⁷ The dominion of the One is the dominion of the *average*. 'In this averageness with which it prescribes what can and may be ventured, it keeps watch over everything exceptional that thrusts itself to the fore. Every kind of priority gets noiselessly suppressed. Overnight, everything that is primordial gets glossed over as something that has long been well known. Everything gained by a struggle becomes just something to be manipulated. Every secret loses its force' ('Diese Durchschnittlichkeit in der Vorzeichnung dessen, was gewagt werden kann und darf, wacht über jede sich vordrängende Ausnahme. Jeder Vorrang wird geräuschlos niedergehalten. Alles Ursprüngliche ist über Nacht als längst bekannt geglättet. Alles Er kämpfte wird handlich. Jedes Geheimnis verliert seine Kraft') (127).

⁸ 'Es hat . . . verschiedene Möglichkeiten seiner daseinsmässigen Konkretion.'

condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from the One; it is rather *an existentiell*⁹ *modification of the One – of the One as an essential existential* (130).¹⁰ If the One is an existential and if to exist as the One-self is to exist inauthentically then it would seem to follow that simply as Dasein our existence is inauthentic. This is true in the sense that authentic existence, although possible, is only possible as a *modification* of inauthentic existence.

FALLING

Inauthentic existence is also described as *fallen* or *falling* existence. Heidegger insists that by 'falling' (*Verfallen*) he does not mean original sin. It should not be construed as a fall from some original state of purity and moral innocence. Nor should it be thought of as something which happened in the past but which continues to affect us adversely. It is an ontological happening in the sense that it belongs to Dasein's being as such. It does not refer to an undesirable feature of human beings which through changes in society and culture might eventually be eliminated. It is something which belongs to the structure of the being of Dasein. In other words, what Heidegger calls falling is an existential – something which belongs to the structure of existence, the being of Dasein. In what then does it consist? It is absorption in, losing oneself

⁹ The distinction between *existentiell* and *existential* corresponds to that between *ontic* and *ontological*. In fact it is the ontic–ontological distinction as applied to the entity Heidegger calls 'Dasein'. An example of something *existentiell* would be my choosing to face up to death. That the being of Dasein – and hence my being – is being towards death, on the other hand, is something *existential*.

¹⁰ 'Das *eigentliche Selbstsein* beruht nicht auf einem vom Man abgelösten Ausnahmezustand des Subjekts, sondern *ist eine existenzielle Modifikation des Man als eines wesenhaften Existentials*.'

in, the world of one's concern. By world is meant 'world', the totality of *entities* or *beings* with which I am concerned (rather than world in the sense of what makes the encountering of entities possible). In such absorption I understand myself in terms of the tasks in which I am engaged.

Fallenness is absorption in entities, losing oneself in the 'world'. But it is also absorption in being-with-one-another in so far as this is determined by the One. In having my possibilities of being prescribed for me by the One I am falling away from myself as authentic, the self which in choosing its possibilities of existence is choosing, and thus 'owning' itself. More specifically, falling is absorption in being-with-one-another in so far as this is governed by what Heidegger calls 'idle talk' (*Gerede*), 'curiosity' (*Neugier*) and 'ambiguity' (*Zweideutigkeit*) (§§ 35–7). These terms should not be understood in a pejorative sense. Whatever their *ontic* meanings are, Heidegger uses them to refer to phenomena which constitute the mode of being of understanding and interpretation in everyday Dasein. Discourse which expresses itself is *communication* (*Mitteilung*). It should aim to bring the hearer to participate in being towards *what is talked about* in the discourse (*das Beredete*). In idle talk being towards what-is-talked-about is replaced by being towards what-is-said-in-the-talk as such. Heidegger uses the term 'curiosity' (*Neugier*, literally greed for the new) to refer to the tendency to just-perceive (*Tendenz zum Nur-Vernehmen*). Curiosity is concerned with seeing, not with a view to *understanding* what is seen but *just* in order to see. Ambiguity has to do with the inability to distinguish between what is genuinely understood and what is not. 'When in our everyday being-with-one-another we encounter the sort of thing which is accessible to everyone and about which anyone can say anything it soon becomes impossible to decide what is disclosed in a genuine understanding and what is not' (173).

'Everything looks as if it were genuinely understood, grasped and spoken, though at bottom it is not; or else it does not look so, and yet at bottom it is' (173).

It must be said that the relationship between these three aspects of falling – absorption in entities, absorption in being-with-one-another as determined by the One, being governed by idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity – remains obscure. It will be recalled that in chapter I it was said that Dasein has a tendency to interpret its own being in terms of the being of entities other than itself and to interpret the being of entities other than itself uniformly as 'presence-at-hand' (*Vorhandenheit*). Heidegger appears to identify this tendency with falling. But he does not make clear just how this is supposed to be connected with his more 'concrete' definitions of the phenomenon. Why should lostness in the publicness of the One result in interpreting my being as the mere occurrence of something? Why should the fact that my being-with-one-another is governed by 'idle talk' result in this false ontological interpretation? He seems eventually to have come to identify falling with forgetfulness of being (*Seinsvergessenheit*). In his later work he speaks simply of falling onto or into entities (*das Ver-fallen des Daseins an das Seiende*). Being absorbed in our comportment to entities, to what is, we are not mindful of what makes such comportment possible.

DASEIN IS IN THE UNTRUTH

It is appropriate at this point to return briefly to the topic of *truth*. Because the disclosedness of Dasein is what makes any kind of uncovering of entities possible such disclosedness is truth in the most primordial sense. For this reason Heidegger says that Dasein is 'in the truth'. But it was pointed out that he also insists that Dasein is 'in the untruth'. Having explained

such notions as the One and falling, we are now better placed to understand the notion of being in the untruth.

In being disclosed Dasein is also closed off and in uncovering it also covers up and conceals. Dasein is in the truth. But equally Dasein is in the untruth. To understand this we need to reflect on what is disclosed in the disclosedness that Dasein *is*. This is not some aspect of Dasein's being, but the whole of Dasein's being, with all its structural components: thrownness, projection, falling. *Thrownness* is not just finding myself in a world, but in *this* world, this framework or horizon of meaning or significance. I am always already in a particular world. And as regards 'world' I am always already 'alongside', dwelling with (*bei*) a specific range of intraworldly entities. *Projection* (*Entwurf*) is Dasein's disclosive being towards its ability-to-be (*Seinkönnen*), its possibilities of being. Such projection can be restricted to possibilities of being towards intraworldly entities (Dasein *can* understand *itself* in terms of the 'world'). Such possibilities are laid down for it in advance by those anonymous others (to which I myself belong) Heidegger calls *das Man* (the One or the They). However projection can also disclose possibilities of being which are most my own, ways of existing authentically. *Falling* (*Verfallen*) is lostness in the 'world', absorption in (being held in thrall by) the 'world' as interpreted by the One. Uncovering of intraworldly entities belongs to Dasein's being and such uncovering is grounded in Dasein's disclosedness. But 'as a result of' Dasein's falling what has been uncovered and disclosed is disguised and closed off. Entities show themselves but in the mode of *semblance* (222). Because Dasein is *essentially* falling we can say that Dasein's ontological constitution (*Seinsverfassung*) is such that Dasein is in the 'untruth'.

Dasein's being is such that it discloses and uncovers, but at the same time closes off and covers up, conceals. Both

closed-off-ness (*Verschlossenheit*) and covered-up-ness (*Verdecktheit*) belong to the being of Dasein. But it is not entirely clear whether this essential concealedness has to do with Dasein's *facticity* (thrownness) or Dasein's *falling*. It does make a difference because, whereas it is entirely plausible to say that facticity is ontological (in the sense that it belongs to the essence of Dasein's being), given *some* of the things Heidegger says about falling it is not so plausible to say that falling is ontological. The 'idle talk' (*Gerede*), 'curiosity' (*Neugier*) and 'ambiguity' (*Zweideutigkeit*) with which he fleshes out his notion of falling may seem too 'localised' phenomena to characterise Dasein's being as such. And what he says about *das Man* may be true of (early) twentieth-century Dasein but is it true of Dasein as such?

Tying 'being in the untruth' to Dasein's facticity is more plausible. In so far as I am 'thrown' I am *essentially* finite. Unlike God, who sees everything that is from every point of view simultaneously, or who does not need a point of view and for whom consequently there *can* be no concealment, Dasein in its finitude, its delivered-over-ness to things, *can* only uncover and disclose by at the same time concealing and covering up.

ANGST

Heidegger also speaks of falling as a kind of *flight*. In losing itself in things, in being absorbed in the 'world', Dasein is fleeing from itself as authentic ability-to-be-itself.¹¹ What is

¹¹ It is difficult to reconcile the idea that in falling what is being fled from is the authentic self with the insistence that authentic existence is only possible as a *modification* of inauthentic existence, that the authentic self is only possible as a modification of the One-self.

being fled from is made manifest in anxiety or *Angst*. We saw in chapter 4 that there are two basic modes of disclosedness or the ‘there’ of Dasein. These are affectedness (‘state of mind’) (*Befindlichkeit*) or mood (*Stimmung*) and understanding (*Verstehen*). Anxiety is a ‘distinguished’ mode of affectedness, distinguished because it discloses Dasein to itself as regards what is most basic to its ontological constitution – its thrownness and projection. To understand Heidegger’s account of *Angst* we must first take a brief look at his phenomenological description of the specific mode of affectedness he calls ‘fear’ (*Furcht*).¹² It will emerge that the account of *Angst* is crucially dependent on the *contrast* with fear.

With regard to fear we can distinguish the *Wovor* of fear, the fearing, and the *Worum* of fear. The *Wovor* of fear is the object of fear, in the sense of *what* is feared. It is the ‘before which’ (the ‘in the face of which’) of fear. The *Worum* of fear is that on account of which (or for which or about which) I fear.

The *Wovor* of fear is the ‘fearsome’ (*das ‘Furchtbare’*). This is in each case something which shows itself within-the-world, an intraworldly entity. As a *phenomenologist* Heidegger is not concerned with the *ontic* task of giving an account of the sorts of thing that are or can be fearsome but rather with the *ontological* task of describing the fearsome in its fearsomeness, what belongs to the fearsome as such, what belongs to the being of the fearsome.

It is in fear that the fearsome shows itself or is encountered. The fearsome has the character of being threatening. Drawing on the account of space and spatiality given in chapter 2 Heidegger describes the threatening entity as approaching from a particular ‘region’ (*Gegend*) and drawing close within

¹² See § 30: ‘Fear as a mode of affectedness’.

what is near (*innerhalb der Nähe*). But though drawing close it can stay away or pass us by (fail to strike as it were).

As regards the *fearing itself* Heidegger says that in fearing the threatening is 'freed and allowed to matter to us' (141). What this means is that fear – this mode of affectedness – discloses or uncovers the threatening entity. It lets the threatening entity show itself as threatening. It lets it *matter* to us in a specific way. It is not as though we first establish the existence of a future evil and then fear it. Rather fear (fearing) uncovers – dis-covers (*entdeckt*) – the fearsome in its fearsomeness.

The *Worum* of fear is that which does the fearing, the fearing being itself – Dasein. Only a being for which in its being this being itself is an issue can fear. I fear for myself and the possibilities of my being. This might seem to contradict the obvious fact that animals can be afraid (the cat fears the dog, the mouse fears the cat). But an animal is not an instance of Dasein, it does not *exist*, it does not have an understanding of being. However Heidegger is simply restricting his use of the term 'fear' to the phenomenon which exhibits the features he describes. The being of animals is not being-in-the-world so it cannot be threatened by entities within-the-world.

Having explained Heidegger's analysis of fear we must now approach Angst¹³ via the already familiar notion of *falling*. Falling, we have seen, is a *fleeing* of Dasein from itself as authentic ability-to-be-itself. As falling Dasein is fleeing *from* itself *into* the One and the 'world' of its concern. In a way that is characteristic of his thinking Heidegger points out that where there is fleeing what is fled from (before which one flees) must already be disclosed. To flee from myself I must be disclosed to myself. However this does not mean that the

¹³ For his account of Angst see § 40. See also 'What Is Metaphysics?', in *Basic Writings*, pp. 93–110.

from-what or the in-face-of-which is *apprehended* (*erfasst*). It is in Angst that the *Wovor* of flight becomes manifest.

Fear too has the character of flight, flight from what fear discloses, the threatening. That which is feared is in each case an entity within-the-world, from a particular region, which approaches within what is near, but which can 'fail to strike'. So what is the difference between the *Wovor* of Angst and the *Wovor* of fear? The *Wovor* of Angst is not an intraworldly entity, something within-the-world. The *Wovor* of Angst is indeterminate, not in the sense that it is left undecided which intraworldly entity is threatening, but in the sense that in Angst intraworldly entities are as such simply not relevant. The totality of intraworldly entities as it were collapses into itself. The 'world', in Angst, has the character of complete insignificance. What threatens in Angst is nowhere (it belongs to no region). And it is nothing, in the sense of being no intraworldly entity. What threatens in Angst is 'nothing and nowhere' (*Nichts und nirgends*) (186).

Rather puzzlingly Heidegger now tells us that the *Wovor* of Angst is the world as such (187). To understand this it is vitally important to hang on to the distinction between 'world' and world. The 'object' of Angst is not the 'world' in the sense of the totality of entities but rather the world in the sense of that which makes comportment to entities possible. The world as the web of significance which makes comportment to entities as entities possible is not itself an entity. It is nothing in the sense of not any thing, no-thing. And given that world belongs to the being of Dasein as being-in-the-world we can say that the *Wovor* of Angst is being-in-the-world itself.

What is there about being-in-the-world to be anxious about? In our absorbed having-to-do-with-things entities and our dealings with them have sense or significance thanks to the world, the web of significance. In Angst the world, which

normally functions as the unquestioned, taken-for-granted background of our dealings with things, comes to the fore and is seen as that which gives significance but is itself without significance. That which gives significance has itself no significance because it has no foundation in the nature of things.¹⁴

The disclosure of the world as world in Angst is not the product of reflective thought. It is not as though we think away, or disregard in thought, intraworldly entities and then think only about the world and, finally, anxiety about the world arises. Angst as a mode of affectedness does not *result from* the disclosure of world but is itself the disclosure of world as world.

So much for the 'object' (the *Wovor*) of Angst. But what about the *Worum* of Angst, in the sense of that on account of which (or about which or, better, *for* which) I am anxious? What is distinctive about Angst as a mode of affectedness is that the *Wovor* and the *Worum* are the same. That for which (or about which) Dasein is anxious and that in the face of which it is anxious are one and the same – being-in-the-world as such. It is not some particular possibility of being about which I am anxious but my being-in-the-world as such. The 'world' has no longer anything to offer. Not only entities within-the-world but also other Dasein sink away into total irrelevance. In being confronted with its own naked ability-to-be-in-the-world Dasein is individualised. It is individualised in Angst because Angst discloses itself to itself in its 'being-free-for the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself' (188). It is important to see that this freedom is not the absolute freedom of self-creation.¹⁵ The being of Dasein is characterised by

¹⁴ It is not part of a cosmic order which has validity independently of Dasein.

¹⁵ It is not the freedom Fichte attributes to the absolute ego (*Ich*) which posits itself and the non-ego (*Nicht-Ich*) as the other of itself and is thereby free in the sense of being absolutely independent of anything other than itself.

projection but equally by thrownness. Dasein as being-in-the-world has been 'delivered over' (*überantwortet*) to its freedom. And choosing how to be is not something which takes place in a vacuum but in a *Spielraum* of possibilities which is always already there (Dasein is thrown into a world).

Mood or affectedness makes manifest 'how one is' (*wie einem ist*). So what is the 'how one is' that is made manifest by Angst? 'In anxiety one has an eerie or uncanny (*unheimlich*) feeling' (188).¹⁶ *Heim* is a German word for *home*. So literally *unheimlich* means unhomelike. In Angst one is not-at-home. This not-at-home is not the localised not-being-at-home in, say, Aberdeen or the Black Forest. In § 12, where Heidegger gave a preliminary characterisation of being-in, this was characterised as *Wohnen bei*, living in, residing in (alternatively: being-familiar-with). In Angst every familiarity collapses into itself. In Angst it is not a case of not-being-at-home here or there but rather not-being-at-home-in-the-world. 'Being-in enters into the existential "mode" of the "not-at-home"' (189).

In falling Dasein flees from (in the face of) something. It does not flee from anything within-the-world. On the contrary, it is entities within-the-world *to* which it flees, living amongst them in 'tranquillised familiarity' (*beruhigte Vertrautheit*). Falling is flight *into* the at-home of the public 'world' of the One *from* the not-at-homeness which characterises Dasein's being as thrown and delivered over to itself.

DEATH

As falling Dasein is fleeing from being and seeking refuge in beings. Angst is a turning towards what is fled from in falling. This turning towards, which is essential to what Heidegger

¹⁶ 'In der Angst ist einem "*unheimlich*".'

understands by authenticity, also involves a certain way of being towards *death*. But his introduction of the topic¹⁷ is in the context of reflection on the *wholeness* of Dasein. Heidegger's existential analytic is concerned to give an account of the basic structures of the being of Dasein. But are we able in this account to encompass the *whole* of Dasein (Dasein in its wholeness)? Being is always the being of beings (entities), so we cannot engage in ontology independently of the experience of entities. Accordingly the ontology of *Dasein* can only be carried out on the basis of the experience of Dasein. But there is a problem here. How can we experience Dasein as a whole (in its wholeness) given that an essential feature of Dasein's being is *projection*? Dasein projects itself onto the possibilities of its being and in this sense is always 'ahead of itself' (*sich vorweg*). In Dasein, Heidegger says, there is always 'something still outstanding'. 'A constant unsettledness, unconcludedness belongs to the essence of Dasein's basic constitution. When there is nothing more outstanding Dasein no longer *is*, no longer exists, is no longer "there" (*da*). As long as Dasein *is* as an entity it has not attained its wholeness. If it does attain it then this gain becomes the loss of its being-in-the-world as such' (236).

The impossibility of experiencing Dasein as a whole is not simply a consequence of the inadequacy of our cognitive faculties but rather has to do with the *being* of Dasein (236). To experience Dasein as a whole would require that I be able to experience the loss of the being of the 'there', the transition to no-longer-being-there (*Nichtmehrdasein*). Now instead of concluding that an ontology of Dasein in its wholeness is therefore impossible, a natural move would be to take as the entity to be studied, not oneself but *others*. I may not be able

¹⁷ For Heidegger's treatment of death see Division Two, chapter 1.

to experience my own death but I can experience the death of others. The coming-to-an-end of Dasein in another can, it seems, be the *substitute theme* for an analysis of Dasein in its wholeness (238).

But do we genuinely experience the *death* of another? In one sense it is clear that we do. We see the dying person, we see that they are still alive, we see that they are now dead. But do we experience the *dying*? The dead person is no longer in-the-world (the being of Dasein is being-in-the-world). We might be tempted to say that the being of the dead person is presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*). All that is left is the dead body, the corpse, and this is a mere thing. We can experience the other's death, one might say, in the sense of experiencing the end of an entity as Dasein and the beginning of this entity as something thing-like, a change in mode of being from *existence* to *presence-at-hand* (238). Heidegger thinks this is based on bad phenomenology. The being of a corpse is not the same as that of an inanimate material object. Something no longer alive is not the same as something lifeless in the sense of inanimate. But even if we can speak of a switch (*Umschlag*) of being, experiencing such a switch is not the same as experiencing the other's death; for to experience this would be to experience the other's *loss* of being.

The world which the dead person has left behind is a with-world (*Mitwelt*). It is *our* world. This makes it possible for those left behind to be still *with* the deceased – in tending their grave, for example. But this being-with the dead person does not in any way amount to experiencing the having-come-to-an-end of the dead person. In such being-with death is experienced as loss, but as the loss suffered by those who remain behind. 'In suffering this loss, the loss of being which the dying person "suffers" does not as such become accessible' (239). So it can't be said that we genuinely experience the death of others. At

most we can be present at the death. It is death as a possibility of being of the person who dies which interests Heidegger in his ontology of death, not the way in which the dead person is still there with those who are left behind.

There is a sense in which Heidegger denies that there is any such thing as a *self*. There is no such *thing* as a self in the sense of a present-at-hand entity which makes us who we are by persisting. Dasein is a self *as* Dasein, not as some other kind of entity. It is the selfness of Dasein, its in-each-case-mine-ness (*Jemeinigkeit*), which makes the taking of the death of others as a substitute theme so misguided. For to do so presupposes that one Dasein can be *substituted for* another, so that what cannot be experienced in one's own Dasein can become accessible in the Dasein of another.

This is not to say that one person cannot substitute for another in activities and tasks. Although the being of Dasein is in each case mine, Dasein is not an isolated individual cut off from others by virtue of being an essentially private mind behind bodily appearance and behaviour. The being of Dasein is not just being-in-the-world but being-*with*-in-the-world, being-with-one-another-in-the-world. An essential feature of this being-with-one-another-in-the-world is what Heidegger calls the *representability* (*Vertretbarkeit*) (239) of one Dasein by another. Dasein's possibilities of being are for the most part determined not by itself but by those anonymous others Heidegger calls the One (*das Man*). Possibilities of being are ways of existing. These can be more or less specific. For example, being a father, mother, wife, teacher, joiner, giving a lecture, chopping wood, collecting a package, arranging a meeting. To the extent that the nature of such possibilities is determined, not by the individual Dasein, but by *das Man*, in projecting itself onto such possibilities one Dasein is like

another. In teaching history someone can deputise for me, a representative can collect the package, arrange the meeting. This representability, which is part and parcel of everyday being-with-one-another-in-the-world, has no place when it comes to death – the possibility which Heidegger calls the ‘possibility of the impossibility of any comportment to . . .’ (262).

Now in one sense it might seem that what Heidegger is saying is simply not true. It clearly is possible for one person to die for another. In *The Silent Angel*,¹⁸ a posthumously published novel by the German writer Heinrich Böll, a deserter from the *Wehrmacht* is awaiting execution by firing squad. The person guarding him has his own reasons for not wanting to live and so exchanges jacket and papers with the condemned man and goes before the firing squad in his place. Or, to take a real-life case, in Auschwitz the Polish priest Maximilian Kolbe took the place of a family man destined for the gas-chamber. In both of these cases there is a clear sense in which one person is dying for another. However, this does not mean that the other has had their death taken away from them. Death is something which each of us must take upon ourselves. Death is the possibility of being which is most my own. In so far as death ‘is’ it is essentially in each case *mine*. This is in no way altered by the possibility of the kind of postponement involved in the examples just given. In a sense all the possibilities of my being are mine but that possibility which is death is a distinguished (*ausgezeichnet*) possibility. It is that possibility which is *most* my own.

Does Heidegger think that death is unique as regards the impossibility of representation or deputising? Someone else

¹⁸ *Der Engel schweigt*.

can do my lecturing, my travelling, my fetching and carrying, but no one else can do my dying. But then no one else can do my loving and hating for me, no one can be a friend for me. This is all true, but there remains something about death which makes it unrepresentable in a special way. Love, hatred, friendship are essentially mine, but they differ fundamentally from death in the following respect: although essentially mine and as such unrepresentable they nonetheless involve an essential reference to *others* – in love the person I love, in hatred the person I hate, in friendship the friend. Death, by contrast, involves a severing of *all* relations to others. It is my ownmost (*eigenste*) possibility, precisely because it is not, and cannot be, a possibility of being-with-one-another. The fact that I can die alone in the Scottish mountains or at home surrounded by my loved ones makes no difference to this point. Because it necessarily involves the severing of all relations to others Heidegger calls the possibility of being which is death *non-relational* (*unbezüglich*).

Heidegger is a phenomenologist. His phenomenology of death is not a misguided attempt to describe what it is like to be dead. Nor is it a description of what dying is like. We should not forget that the motivation for taking the other person's death as a substitute theme was that I cannot experience my own death. The phenomenon of phenomenology, as Heidegger understands it, is *being* – the being of Dasein, the being of the entities to which Dasein comports itself and ultimately being as such. Death is a phenomenological theme in so far as death belongs to the being of Dasein. The being of Dasein is being towards death (*Sein zum Tode*). In its being Dasein comports itself to death. Heidegger's phenomenology of death is not a description of being dead or of dying but a descriptive analysis of being-towards-death and of death as it shows itself (and disguises itself) in such being.

Heidegger's concern with death is ontological and he is keen to distinguish ontology from other kinds of study.¹⁹ Death is something which is studied by biologists and physiologists, by medical science. Psychology studies the psychology of dying and bereavement. Anthropologists study the different ways in which death is treated in different cultures. Theologians consider the question of how death came into the world, what happens after death and so on. Although these disciplines exhibit huge differences they are all what Heidegger calls *ontic* disciplines, i.e. they are concerned with *entities*, properties of entities, relations between entities, rather than with the *being* of entities. Ontological questions are prior to ontic questions. So the question about the ontological essence of death is prior to the ontic question of what comes after death. In itself the ontology of death is neutral with respect to the question of whether there is an afterlife.²⁰

Death is a possibility of being. This plainly does not mean that death is something *merely* possible. Death is certain though the moment when it comes is indeterminate. And the certainty of death is not the certainty which belongs to some *propositions*.

Heidegger, we have said, is not concerned to describe what dying is like but how death shows itself in Dasein's being toward death, i.e. how it shows itself in Dasein's comportment to this possibility of its being. As projecting, Dasein is always ahead of itself. Its being is not just being towards particular possibilities of its being but, at the same time, being towards that possibility of being which is its *end*. There is nothing in this ontological claim to suggest that we are always *thinking*

¹⁹ See § 49.

²⁰ But how plausible is this neutrality? If death is the possibility of the impossibility of *any* comportment to anything then the idea of an afterlife surely makes no sense.

about death. Comportment towards death belongs to the being of Dasein; thinking about death is just one specific mode of such comportment.

Death is impending (literally stands before, *steht bevor*) (250). But such standing before is clearly not peculiar to death. The following sorts of thing can be impending or stand before: a storm, alterations to the house, the arrival of a friend. These are all events or happenings which we encounter within-the-world (although they involve entities with different modes of being: presence-at-hand, readiness-to-hand, Dasein-with). So to speak of death as impending, or standing before, might suggest that death is an event within-the-world and that it has one or other of these modes of being. But death is not an event within-the-world.

But possibilities of Dasein's *own* being can also stand before – for example, a journey, a debate, the renunciation of something. These are all Dasein's own possibilities. But although they are Dasein's own possibilities they are all, whether obviously or not, possibilities of being-with-one-another. Even acting alone is a mode of being-with. What distinguishes death from all other possibilities of being is that it is not grounded in being-with-others. In each case it must be taken upon itself by Dasein itself. In the case of death, what stands before Dasein is not an event and not a possibility of being-with-one-another but Dasein itself in the possibility which is most its own. Most its own because in death there can be no representation. Standing before itself in this way all relations to other Dasein are severed. It is my *ownmost* possibility precisely because it is not and cannot be a possibility of my being-with-one-another. It is precisely because it involves the severing of *all* relations to others that Heidegger calls that possibility of being that is death *non-relational* (*unbezüglich*). So death is the possibility which is most my own and it is

non-relational. It is also the most extreme possibility in the sense that it is the possibility of the impossibility of *all* comportment to . . . It cannot be surpassed (outstripped, overtaken), not because it is best, but because there is nothing with which it can be compared; and it clearly does not admit of degrees. It is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein.

So being-towards-death is being-towards this ownmost, non-relational and unsurpassable possibility. Although in being-towards-death Dasein is projecting itself ahead of itself this projection, like all projection, is *thrown* projection. Dasein does not choose its that-it-is and has-to-be. It does not choose that its being is being towards death, though it can choose the *how* of its being towards death.

And because the being of Dasein is characterised by falling (*Verfallen*) Dasein *flees* in the face of this ownmost, non-relational and unsurpassable possibility and covers it up, disguises it. The self of everyday existence is the One-self (*das Man-selbst*). This inauthentically existing self interprets death as an occurrence which is constantly taking place, a 'case of death', a familiar event which occurs within-the-world. It is accepted that in the end I myself will die, but for the time being I remain untouched. Death is understood as an indeterminate something which will eventually arrive but which as far as oneself is concerned is not yet present and is therefore no threat. Death is something that befalls the One. One dies. Death is levelled down to an occurrence which affects, befalls, concerns Dasein – but nobody in particular (the One, it will be recalled, is the nobody). This attitude to death which dominates everyday being-with-one-another is an *evasion* of death which conceals it as a possibility of *my* being, a possibility which is most my own, is non-relational and unsurpassable. Such concealing evasion can also be seen in the way we comport ourselves to the dying. We try to persuade them that

they are not going to die and will soon return to the familiar world of their concern. In thus seeking to console the dying person we are helping them to conceal from themselves the possibility of being that is most their own. And in helping to conceal death from the dying person we are also seeking to conceal it from ourselves.

Dasein is an entity which by virtue of its understanding of being uncovers entities other than itself and in so doing discloses itself to itself. There are, we have seen, two basic forms of disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*) – understanding (*Verstehen*) and affectedness (*Befindlichkeit*). How we understand ourselves and things other than ourselves is determined by the *das Man* and this understanding is articulated in the ‘discourse’ of *das Man*: ‘idle talk’ (*Gerede*). Affectedness is feeling, mood (*Stimmung*). Dasein’s being is such that Dasein is always in some mood or other, is always mooded. Mood, like understanding, is regulated by *das Man*. It decides which mode of affectedness is to determine our attitude to death. Anxiety (*Angst*) in the face of death, in which Dasein is brought before itself as delivered over to this ownmost, non-relational and unsurpassable possibility, is suppressed in favour of *fear* of death as an approaching event. *Angst* is a distinguished mode of affectedness which has as its ‘object’ not this or that threatening entity within-the-world but being-in-the-world as such (the ‘object’ of *Angst* is no thing, nothing). But in suppressing *Angst* in favour of fear *das Man* also depicts such fear as a weakness. The ‘done thing’ is calm indifference in face of the ‘fact’ that one dies. Heidegger says of such supposedly ‘superior’ indifference that it *alienates* Dasein from its ownmost, non-relational possibility of being (254).

What we have been looking at so far is Heidegger’s analysis of *inauthentic* being towards death, the essence of which is evasion and concealment. It follows that *authentic* being

towards death will be a 'letting death stand before' in such a way that there is no evasion and concealment. The analysis of inauthentic being towards death, the concrete form this being takes in everydayness, followed what Heidegger calls an existential sketch of being towards death as being towards Dasein's ownmost, non-relational and unsurpassable possibility of being. He now proposes to move in the opposite direction and arrive at the full existential conception of death by means of a more complete interpretation of everyday being towards death.

It would be a mistake to proceed as follows: first give an account of authenticity in general and then treat authentic being towards death as a *species* of this. To do so would be to overlook the pivotal role that authentic being towards death plays in authenticity *as such*. It emerges that authenticity in relation to particular possibilities of being depends on our being towards death being authentic.

Everyday being towards death, we have seen, is articulated in the 'idle talk' (*Gerede*) of *das Man*: 'One dies too, sometime, but not for the time being' (255). We have already seen that the 'one dies' expresses the understanding of death as an event, a 'case' or 'instance' of death. Heidegger now focuses on the 'sometime, but not for the time being'. What this articulates – though in a way that disguises or covers up – are two other fundamental features of the existential conception of death: its certainty and the indefiniteness or indeterminateness of its 'when'. We are already acquainted with the features of its being the possibility which is most my own, its being non-relational and its being unsurpassable (most extreme, cannot be outstripped, overtaken). So the full existential conception of death is as follows: death as the end of Dasein is the ownmost, non-relational, certain and as such indeterminate, unsurpassable possibility of Dasein (258).

We will consider these additional features – certainty and indefiniteness (*Unbestimmtheit*) – in turn. Heidegger relates certainty to truth. As we explained in chapter 4, truth, according to Heidegger, is unconcealedness (*Unverborgenheit*, *a-letheia*). Dasein is ‘in the truth’ in the sense that uncovering, disclosing, bringing out of concealment, belongs to Dasein’s being. The most fundamental truth is Dasein’s disclosing of itself. All disclosing or uncovering of entities is grounded in Dasein’s self-disclosure. Propositional truth is a derivative mode of uncovering which depends on the prior uncovering of entities accomplished by our engaged having-to-do-with things. Heidegger distinguishes between truth in the sense of uncovering (*entdeckend*) and truth in the sense of uncoveredness (*Entdecktheit*). The former is what Dasein does, the latter is the entity as uncovered. He makes a parallel distinction in regard to the related notion of *certainty*. We say of something that it is certain but we also say I am certain. Certainty in the sense of Dasein’s being certain corresponds to truth in the sense of being-uncovering. Certainty in the sense of something’s being certain corresponds to truth in the sense of being-uncovered. In regard to death we can distinguish between Dasein’s being certain about death and death’s being certain. The kind of certainty (being certain) that is appropriate in regard to something depends on the kind of being of what it is one is certain about. The certainty of the One-self (*das Man-selbst*) about death is a certainty which covers up or conceals death rather than uncovering it or disclosing it.²¹ It is a certainty which is appropriate to a type of *event*. Death is experienced or heard about every day. It is an undeniable ‘fact of experience’. This everyday certainty of death can be modified by critical reflection. All human beings – as far as one knows – die. That everyone will die is to the

²¹ Dasein is ‘in the truth’. But equally Dasein is ‘in the *untruth*’.

highest degree probable, though not 'unconditionally' certain. The certainty of death is 'merely empirical'. It falls short of 'apodictic' certainty. But this empirical certainty of death is not really certainty of *death*. It is the certainty of a biological event (*Ableben*, demise, perishing) rather than the certainty of death, the *end* of Dasein. The certainty of death is neither empirical nor apodictic but *existential*. The being of Dasein *as* the being of Dasein is being towards death. The empirical certainty of one's 'demise' merely covers up the existential certainty of death as my ownmost, non-relational and unsurpassable possibility. Death is my ownmost, non-relational, unsurpassable and *certain* possibility.

Everyday, inauthentic being towards death, we have seen, is articulated in the 'idle talk' of the One: 'One dies too, sometime, but not for the time being.' The 'sometime, but not for the time being' articulates – though in a way that disguises or covers up – the second feature of death as an existential phenomenon mentioned earlier: the indefiniteness or indeterminateness of its 'when'. In inauthentic being towards death this indefiniteness refers to the occurrence of an event at some unspecified time in the future. Indefiniteness thus understood conceals what is peculiar to death as certain: that it is possible *at any moment*.

This, then, is the complete concept of death as a concept of existential ontology. The concept of death is the concept of the end of Dasein. The end of Dasein is its ownmost, non-relational, certain and as such indefinite, unsurpassable possibility. In its being towards death Dasein has always decided one way or another. It has chosen to face this 'distinguished' (*ausgezeichnet*) possibility or to evade it.

Being towards death is comportment to this possibility. So we know what authentic being towards death would be comportment to. And in so far as Heidegger has provided a characterisation of *inauthentic* being towards death we can

say what authentic being towards death is *not*. Authentic being towards death will be comportment to death which does not conceal. It will be comportment to the end of Dasein which discloses it *as* my ownmost, non-relational, unsurpassable, certain but indefinite possibility, which does not cover up this possibility or flee from it.

There are, it will be recalled, two basic modes of disclosedness: understanding (*Verstehen*) and affectedness (*Befindlichkeit*) or mood (*Stimmung*). The one always involves the other. All understanding is 'mooded', all affectedness, all mood, 'has' its understanding. Death, as inseparable from Dasein's being, is always already disclosed. Its disclosedness belongs to Dasein's disclosedness of itself. Existing authentically Dasein is disclosed to itself as it is (as thrown projection). Authentic being towards death is not just an aspect of existing authentically; it is a precondition of existing authentically because my 'other' possibilities of being can only genuinely be chosen in the light of the distinguished possibility that is death.

So how is death disclosed as it is? In everyday, inauthentic existence death is understood as an event within-the-world and is the object of *fear* (death is disclosed but as other than it is). What is the understanding and what is the mood or mode of affectedness which together disclose death in authentic-being-towards-death? The understanding of death in which Dasein projects itself onto its ownmost possibility Heidegger calls *Vorlaufen*. Literally this means 'running ahead' (*Vorlaufen in den Tod* = running ahead into death) but is rather weakly translated as 'anticipation'. The mood or mode of affectedness of authentic being towards death is *Angst*. *Vorlaufen* is an example, albeit a very special one, of a mode of comportment towards a *possibility*, so Heidegger tries to clarify what he means by it by contrasting it with other modes of

comportment to the possible. We have seen that a major theme of his analytic of *Dasein* is engaged having-to-do-with entities within-the-world (*Besorgen*, concern). Examples given include such things as producing something, getting something ready, rearranging something (261). In such comportment I am concerned with a possibility but not with the possible as such – the possible in its possibility – but rather with its actualisation or realisation. When the possibility has been actualised – the thing has been made, is ready, has been rearranged – the actuality still involves possibility in the sense that it is *for* something, possible for something. But in using such a thing I am not focused on the possibility as such, but on what it is a possibility for.

Authentic being towards death as comportment to a possibility is clearly not like this. It is not concern with a possibility with a view to its actualisation. For a start, death as something possible (*ein Mögliches*) is not a possibility of something ready-to-hand or present-at-hand, but is a possibility of being of *Dasein*. Moreover concern with the actualisation of *this* possibility would mean bringing about one's demise (*Ableben*). Somewhat dogmatically Heidegger claims that such suicide is incompatible with authentic being towards death. 'But in so doing I would deprive myself of the very basis for an authentic being towards death' (261).

Another mode of comportment to a possibility is dwelling on the possibility of something. For example, dwelling on the possibility of one's house being broken into. Such comportment, although not a concern to actualise a possibility, is still a concern *with* actualisation, a concern with whether and, if so, when and how this possibility will be actualised. When the possibility in question is one's death, in other words when I dwell on death, am forever thinking about it, brooding on it, death does not completely lose its character as possibility. It is

thought about, brooded upon, as *coming*. But in such brooding, Heidegger says, we weaken its character as *possibility* by *calculating* with death as something we would like to have *at our disposal*. In authentic being towards death the possibility shows itself as just that – a possibility in its possibility. It is borne, endured, as a possibility.

Yet another mode of comportment to the possible is *expecting* (*Erwarten*). In such comportment something possible is understood with respect to whether and when and how it will become actual. It is, Heidegger says, not just an occasional or incidental looking away from the possible to its possible actualisation; it is essentially a *waiting for* this actualisation (the German for 'wait for' is *warten auf*, for 'expect' the word is *erwarten*).

What these various modes of comportment to the possible have in common is that they are not concerned with the possible as possible but the *actualisation* of the possible. Authentic being towards death is likewise a mode of comportment to the possible but here there is no concern with actualisation. It is comportment to a possibility in which the possibility is disclosed *as* possibility. It is not a concern with actualisation because in the case of this unique possibility there is nothing to actualise. It is a possibility of Dasein the actualisation of which is nothing that Dasein can *be*. 'Death as a possibility gives Dasein nothing to be "actualised" and nothing which Dasein, as actual, could itself *be*' (262). This is because death as possibility is the possibility of the impossibility of existence, the possibility of the impossibility of any comportment to . . .

CONSCIENCE AND GUILT

Heidegger's sketch of authentic being towards death is not intended to show that such authentic existence is a real

possibility for us or, in his terminology, an *existentiell* possibility. It merely shows that authentic existence is an *existential* or ontological possibility. In other words, the being of Dasein as such does not exclude authentic existence as an *existentiell* possibility. To show that it is such a possibility he turns to the phenomenon of *conscience*, which he claims provides an 'attestation' (*Bezeugung*), not just that authenticity is possible, but that it is demanded. What he claims to provide is the phenomenological 'letting be seen' of such an attestation and of what it attests. As phenomenological in the philosophical sense this will involve showing that such an attestation must have its roots or origin in Dasein's ontological constitution.

His thinking seems to be something like this. Conscience (*Gewissen*) calls us or summons us to authentic existence. But it can only do so if such existence is a genuine possibility for us. This is rather like Kant's 'ought' implies 'can'; I can only have a moral obligation to do what I am able to do. Initially and for the most part Dasein is lost in the One. This means that I exist in such a way that my possibilities of being have not been *chosen* by me but have been determined by the One. As we have seen, the One exercises an inconspicuous dictatorship. It takes away from Dasein the burden of *choosing* its possibilities of being but conceals the manner in which it does so. So it remains indeterminate who has really done the choosing. By contrast, in existing authentically, in being itself, Dasein is choosing to choose its possibilities. However, it should not be forgotten in all this that authentic existence is not existence in detachment from inauthentic existence. Authentic being-myself is an *existentiell* modification of the One-self.

Heidegger interprets what has traditionally been called the *voice* of conscience as the *call* (*Ruf*) to choose to make this choice. In being called by conscience we are being summoned to carry out this modification of the One-self.

Dasein is its disclosedness. 'Discourse' (*Rede*) is fundamental to disclosedness in the sense that it is what gives structure or articulation to the fundamental modes of disclosedness: affectedness and understanding. The call of conscience is a mode of discourse. Heidegger insists that in speaking of the *call* of conscience he is not speaking figuratively (271). It is not like Kant's talk of conscience as a court of law.²² However this does not mean that the call is a vocal utterance. But then, as we have seen, discourse does not require such utterance. It is more basic than utterance and makes utterance possible. Conscience speaks but in the mode of silence. Correspondingly, *hearing* the call of conscience is in the mode of reticence (*Verschwiegenheit*).

The call of conscience addresses Dasein. More specifically it addresses the One-self of Dasein. It calls upon the *self* in the One-self to *be* itself. So the call is not a mode of discourse in which information is conveyed, but a summons (*Aufruf*). The self being summoned to be itself is not a substance, something thing-like, albeit not a material thing. It is not the self of introspection but the self whose mode of being is being-in-the-world. Conscience summons the self to be itself and overcome its lostness in the One, but because my being is being-in-the-world it is not a summons to detach myself from intraworldly entities and other Dasein.

We must distinguish between caller (*der Rufer*) and called (*der Angerufene*). Who is called and who does the calling in the call of conscience? In conscience Dasein is calling itself but not in the sense that this calling is somehow planned or prepared. It is not an intentional act. On the other hand, the call of conscience does not emanate from another Dasein who

²² See 'The Metaphysics of Morals', in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. VI, p. 438. 'Consciousness of an *internal court* in man . . . is conscience'.

is with me in the world. 'The call comes *from* me and yet *over* me' (275).²³ This coming over me of the call may suggest that the call stems from some higher power or from God. But if conscience is to be understood in terms of the being of Dasein we must reject such appeals to alien powers. Such appeals involve thinking in terms of a mode of being – presence-at-hand – which applies only to entities other than Dasein.

In conscience Dasein is calling itself, so how can we make sense of the idea that the call comes over me? We clearly cannot say that there are two distinct entities in Dasein, one which does the calling and the other which is called. This again would be to treat Dasein as something present-at-hand. The distinction we need to make is not between two entities but between Dasein in its *Unheimlichkeit* (its 'uncanniness' or not-at-home-ness) and Dasein as falling. Here we need to recall what was said about Angst. This distinguished mode of affectedness discloses Dasein in its *Unheimlichkeit* (its 'uncanniness' or not-at-home-ness), in its sheer individuality and naked thatness. The caller in the call of conscience is the self in its not-at-home (*Un-zuhause*). The called in conscience is also the self but the self as falling, lost in the One, the One-self. What it is summoned *to* is authentic existence, the possibility of being that is most its own. What it is summoned *from* is fallenness in the One.

On Heidegger's existential interpretation of conscience the call of conscience summons me to authentic existence, choosing to choose my possibilities of being (rather than having them chosen for me by the One). So construed conscience does not provide a blueprint for how I should live my life,

²³ 'Der Ruf kommt *aus* mir und doch *über* mich.' This is incorrectly translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as: 'The call comes *from* me and yet *from* beyond me.'

in the sense of stipulating concrete possibilities of existence which I must embrace. Conscience, we might say, does not specify the *content* of authentic existence. But although the existential interpretation of conscience does not itself provide the concrete possibilities of authentic existence, it does provide the condition of the possibility of such concrete possibilities.

Conscience as ordinarily understood is closely associated with the notion of *guilt*. It declares me guilty for what I have done and for what I have failed to do. It warns me of possible guilt for what I may or may not do in the future. And when my conscience is clear it declares the absence of guilt. But Heidegger wishes to maintain that there is a sense in which Dasein as such is guilty. To exist is to be guilty and this existential or ontological guilt is a condition of the possibility of being guilty in the ordinary sense.

His discussion of guilt in the ordinary sense is complicated by the fact that much of what he says depends on the linguistic accident that the German word for 'guilt' (*Schuld*) is also the word for 'debt'. However it is possible to approach his conception of *moral* guilt in a way which avoids getting mired in tedious linguistic analysis. There are moral requirements on my conduct. For example, I am morally required to tell the truth, to keep my promises, to help those in need. They are *moral* requirements in the sense that my being subject to them does not depend on whether I *want* to comply with them (in Kantian language they are categorical imperatives, not hypothetical imperatives). Moral guilt involves the breach of a moral requirement. Seemingly disregarding the possibility that there may be moral requirements concerning what I do to myself (Kant's duties to self) Heidegger maintains that to be guilty in the ordinary sense is to be responsible for some harm to another or, as he puts it, it is to be the ground or basis (*Grund*) of some lack or deficiency (*Mangel*) in the other. By virtue of the lack I bring about I am myself defective. A lack is

something negative. In the idea of 'guilty' there lies the idea of the *not*. But negativity, Heidegger claims, is something which belongs to the being of Dasein as such and in such a way that we can say that Dasein as such is guilty. In the ordinary sense of guilt I can only *become* guilty, in the sense that by breaching a moral requirement I *incur* guilt. In the ontological sense of guilt being-guilty belongs to my being as Dasein.

He defines what he calls the formally existential idea of 'guilty' as follows: being-the-ground for a being determined by a not – that is, being-the-ground of a nullity (*Nichtigkeit*) – and goes on to say that Dasein, by virtue of its being, is guilty in this sense. It is the ground of a nullity. More precisely, it is the null ground of a nullity. Guilt in the ontological sense is: the null being-the-ground of a nullity (*das nichtige Grund-sein einer Nichtigkeit*) (285).

To understand this extremely abstract-sounding claim we have to recall Heidegger's contention that the being of Dasein is thrown projection (*geworfener Entwurf*). With respect to both thrownness and projection the being of Dasein is determined by a not. As thrown, Dasein is *not* brought by itself into its 'there', its disclosedness. It is an ability-to-be which belongs to itself but has *not* given itself to itself.²⁴ It projects itself onto possibilities into which it has been thrown. Dasein does not create the world which defines the possibilities of existence open to it. It is the ground of its projecting but as thrown it is a null (*nichtig*) ground.

Turning to the other aspect of Dasein's being, its projecting, we can say that it is null, determined by a not, because it is *thrown* projection. But it is also essentially null itself, simply *as projection*. In projecting Dasein is choosing possibilities of being. To the extent that it does this Dasein is *free*. But freedom

²⁴ 'Seiend ist es [Dasein] als Seinkönnen bestimmt, das sich selbst gehört und doch *nicht* als es selbst sich zu eigen gegeben hat' (284).

only *is* in the choice of the one possibility and the *not* having chosen and the not being able also to choose the others.

So the being of Dasein, as Heidegger puts it, is permeated with nullity through and through (285). Being guilty in this ontological sense (the null being-the-ground of a nullity) is the condition of the possibility of Dasein becoming guilty of this or that. This essential being-guilty is the existential condition of the possibility of the 'morally' good and evil, of morality as such.²⁵

The call of conscience declares Dasein to be guilty in this ontological sense. But the call (*Ruf*) of conscience is also a summons (*Aufruf*). So in it Dasein is being summoned to be guilty. But isn't this a complete distortion of the nature of conscience? Should we not say that what conscience summons us to is the *avoidance* of guilt. It all depends on what is meant by 'summoning to being-guilty'. It summons Dasein to be *authentically* the 'guilty' it already is. To hear the call of conscience is to choose oneself. In the call of conscience one might say Dasein is being summoned to recognise or acknowledge, to take ownership of, its essential guilt, its ontological guilt, a guilt which remains concealed from the One-self. The only guilt the One-self understands is that which consists in the failure to follow rules and satisfy public norms (288).

Understanding the call of conscience is choosing. It is not choosing conscience because this cannot be chosen. What is chosen is *having* a conscience – being free for one's ownmost being-guilty. Understanding the appeal (*Anruf*) means: wanting-to-have-a-conscience (*Gewissen-haben-wollen*).

²⁵ Heidegger is fond of these claims that something is the 'condition of the possibility' of something else. Being guilty in the ontological sense is the condition of the possibility of guilt in the ordinary sense. Ontological guilt is the condition of the possibility of morality. However it cannot be said that these claims are convincingly substantiated.

So according to Heidegger's ontological interpretation of conscience the 'voice' or 'call' of conscience is a summons to being-guilty, a call from Dasein in its uncanniness or not-at-home-ness (*Unheimlichkeit*). And hearing or understanding this call is interpreted as wanting – or willing (*Wollen*) – to-have-a-conscience. But what has all this got to do with conscience and hearing the voice of conscience as these are ordinarily understood? Does the ontological interpretation of conscience have to agree with the ordinary understanding of conscience? If initially and for the most part Dasein is absorbed in the objects of its concern (*Besorgen*) and lost in the One then its interpretation of the voice of conscience which calls upon it to overcome such lostness will itself be marked by falling and concealment.

This being so, the everyday way of interpreting conscience cannot be accepted as the final criterion for the 'objectivity' of an ontological analysis of conscience. On the other hand, such an analysis has no right to disregard the everyday understanding of conscience and to pass over the anthropological, psychological and theological theories of conscience which have been based upon it.

What would be serious would be if there were certain basic features of 'ordinary' conscience which simply could not be reconciled with the existential analysis. I will consider just one of these. As ordinarily understood conscience declares me guilty for what I have done and for what I have failed to do. The voice of conscience occurs *after* the deed has been done or left undone. The voice points *back* to something in the past. But according to Heidegger's existential analysis of conscience the call of conscience is a summons, a calling-*forth* (*Vor-ruf*). It would seem that conscience, far from pointing *back* to something past, points *forward* to something future. But the interpretation of ordinary conscience (more specifically, bad

conscience) just outlined treats Dasein, its deeds, and the voice of conscience as present-at-hand. The voice is interpreted as something which *occurs*. It has its position in the sequence of experiences (*Erlebnisse*) which are present-at-hand and it follows after the experience of the deed. But, Heidegger insists, neither the call nor the deed which has happened nor the guilt with which one is laden is an occurrence with the character of something present-at-hand. The call has the kind of being which belongs to Dasein. The being of Dasein, we have seen, is care (*Sorge*). In the call Dasein 'is' ahead of itself in such a way that at the same time it directs itself back to its thrownness. Only by first positing Dasein as an interconnected sequence of successive experiences is it possible to take the voice as something which comes afterwards, something later, which therefore necessarily refers back. The voice does call back, but it calls beyond the deed which has happened and back to the being-guilty into which one has been thrown, which is 'earlier' than any incurring of guilt (*Verschuldung*). But at the same time this calling-back calls forth to *being*-guilty. Being-guilty in the ontological sense follows the call.

However, it should be said that this attempt to demonstrate the compatibility of Heidegger's existential analysis of conscience with the ordinary understanding of conscience cannot be fully understood without first having come to grips with his analysis of the temporality of Dasein. As we shall see in the [next chapter](#) the sense in which Dasein is a temporal entity is not that of occurring in a sequence of nows.

RESOLUTENESS

This wanting-to-have-a-conscience, the recognition and free acceptance of one's essential guilt, is a form of disclosedness. As such it is constituted not only by understanding but

also by affectedness (mood) and discourse. Understanding the call discloses the self in its uncanniness (not-at-home-ness, *Unheimlichkeit*) and sheer individuality. The mode of affectedness in which the self is thus disclosed is that of *Angst*. The corresponding mode of 'discourse' (*Rede*) is that of reticence (*Verschwiegenheit*). This authentic disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*), involving understanding, affectedness and discourse, Heidegger calls 'resoluteness' (*Entschlossenheit*). Resoluteness is 'the reticent self-projection upon one's ownmost being-guilty in which we are ready for anxiety' (297).²⁶

In chapter 5 we saw how disclosedness is treated by Heidegger as *truth* in the most primordial sense. *Dasein*, which is its disclosedness, is 'in the truth' (*in der Wahrheit*). But equally *Dasein* is 'in the untruth' (*in der Unwahrheit*). We now have enough insight into the notion of authenticity to see what this means. Resoluteness is the authentic mode of disclosedness and as such is the most primordial truth. In resoluteness *Dasein* is primordially disclosed with respect to the world, being-in and the self. But whenever the world is disclosed, intraworldly entities are also uncovered. So in resoluteness intraworldly entities are somehow uncovered in a more genuine way. However it still remains the case that *Dasein* as such is also in the untruth. In resoluteness *Dasein* does not put inauthentic existence behind it. Resoluteness is a modification of inauthentic disclosedness.

Resoluteness only exists in decision (*Entschluss*). Such decision should not be understood as the selection or opting for of possibilities which have been placed before one or recommended. It is the *disclosing* of the possibilities themselves. The decision is in a *situation*. The situation should not be thought

²⁶ 'das verschwiegene, angstbereite Sichentwerfen auf das eigenste Schuldigsein'.

of as a kind of pre-existing framework in which I find myself or into which I have somehow brought myself. Rather the situation only *is* in and through resoluteness.

It must be confessed that the transition from wanting-to-have-a-conscience to resoluteness is somewhat abrupt. The call of conscience is the summons to authentic being-guilty i.e. authentically being the null ground of a nullity. To be in this way is to overcome lostness in the One. But it is not clear why this should lead to decision and action rather than paralysis. Resoluteness is the readiness to act in the concrete situation.

But having established that authentic existence is resoluteness Heidegger now has to show what the connection is between resoluteness and anticipation of ('running ahead into') death (*Vorlaufen in den Tod*). It is difficult to see what the connection could be. Resoluteness is resolving to act in the concrete situation. Death seems to have nothing in common with the concrete situation of action. Putting resoluteness and forerunning together would seem to be something which follows the demands of a 'system' but lacks any phenomenological justification. He claims, however, that, thought through to the end, it can be seen that resoluteness 'harbours in itself authentic being-towards-death as the possible existentiell modality of its own authenticity' (305). In its resoluteness Dasein projects itself authentically onto possibilities of being but such authenticity is, as it were, at its most authentic when Dasein's projecting of itself onto concrete possibilities is underpinned by the projection of that possibility which is *most* its own, viz. death.

Resoluteness is wanting-to-have-a-conscience. Wanting-to-have-a-conscience is acknowledging and accepting one's own essential guilt, that one is the null ground of one's own nullity. The reason why to be fully authentic resoluteness must

become *anticipatory* (*vorlaufend*) resoluteness is this negativity which lies at the heart of Dasein. Understood existentially death is the possibility of the *impossibility* of existence. Death is the ultimate nullity or nothingness. So it is in being towards death – authentic being towards death – that the nullity which Dasein *is* through and through is pre-eminently revealed.

Heidegger makes an interesting comment at the end of his discussion of authenticity. Is there not, he asks, a ‘particular ontic conception of authentic existence, a factual ideal of Dasein’ (310) underlying his ontological interpretation of the existence of Dasein? Surprisingly perhaps, he answers that indeed there is. He speaks of the *positive necessity* of this fact (*Faktum*) and says it must be understood (*begriffen*) in terms of the thematic object of the investigation. Philosophy will never wish to deny its ‘presuppositions’ but equally cannot simply admit them. This is supposed to be further clarified in the following section (§ 63).

HEIDEGGER’S ‘EXISTENTIALISM’

The themes with which I have been dealing in this chapter are all associated with something called ‘existentialism’. But does the presence of such themes make Heidegger an existentialist? He has generally been regarded as an existentialist, although he himself strenuously resisted this description. But leaving aside for the moment the presence of such themes as Angst, death and guilt it seems no accident that the existentialist label stuck. From the outset Heidegger’s terminology invites such a description. He is engaged in an analytic of *existence*. Existence is the mode of being which distinguishes Dasein from all other entities. ‘The “essence” of Dasein’, he asserts, ‘lies in its existence’ (42). It has already been noted that his use of the term ‘essence’ (*Wesen*) is non-standard (hence the

scare quotes). However it should also have become clear that 'existence' has a special meaning for Heidegger. Once we reflect on this meaning we can see that the bracketing of his thought with existentialism simply on the strength of his use of the *term* existence is wholly unjustified. To see this we should take the statement just quoted together with another basic proposition from the early part of *Being and Time* (§ 4 to be precise): 'Understanding of being is itself a determination of being of Dasein' (*eine Seinsbestimmtheit des Daseins*). Dasein's understanding of being which defines its existence is not just understanding of its *own* being but understanding of the being of entities other than Dasein and understanding of being as such.²⁷

But if Heidegger is not an existentialist why are there extensive and detailed discussions of such typically existentialist themes as authenticity and inauthenticity, Angst, death, conscience and guilt in *Being and Time* and why are they given so much prominence? What must be borne in mind throughout is that his ultimate concern is the being of *any* entity and the being of entities as a whole, not just the being of human beings. So we must ask how this ultimate concern is illuminated by the treatment of the 'existentialist' themes. There are basically two ways in which this is so. Firstly, the examination of such themes is supposed to provide insight into the nature

²⁷ That the 'essence' of Dasein is existence does not mean that in human beings *existentia* precedes *essentia*, that human beings first just exist and after this posit their essence. This, according to Heidegger, in his *Letter on Humanism*, is how Sartre interpreted the statement in *Being and Time*. He simply reversed the proposition that had been accepted in metaphysics since Plato, viz. that *essentia* precedes *existentia*. Neither the traditional metaphysical proposition nor its reversal by Sartre have anything to do with Heidegger's claim that the being of human beings is existence. See 'Letter on Humanism', in *Basic Writings*, p. 232.

of *time*, and it is time which is supposed to provide the meaning (*Sinn*) of being. However this is a discussion which we will postpone till the following chapter. Secondly, the examination of such themes is supposed to provide insight into the nature of *nothing* (*das Nichts*). And being and nothing are inseparable.

As we saw at the very beginning, there is a fundamental difference between being and any kind of entity (the ontological difference). We encounter all manner of entities, but being is not something we might come across and even metaphorically point to. To try to take hold of being is to reach out into the void, into nothing. Being as no kind of entity is no-thing, nothing. It is because being and nothing essentially belong together that any attempt to get clear about the meaning of being must also concern itself with nothing. The 'existentialist' themes in *Being and Time* all involve an essential reference to nothing. Nothing is experienced in Angst but also in conscience and being towards death. In conscience Dasein confronts itself with its own essential guilt. This 'ontological' guilt we have seen is being-the-(null)-ground-of-a-nullity. And death is nothing in the sense that it is the absolute impossibility of *any* comportment to anything. So in all of these things – Angst, conscience and (authentic) being towards death – we experience nothing.

The ontological import of the 'existentialist' themes in Heidegger is brought into sharper focus in his 1929 inaugural lecture, 'What is Metaphysics?'. In this lecture he describes the mode of existence of the members of the academic community he is addressing as 'determined by science' (*durch die Wissenschaft bestimmt*). Science can be seen as a system of propositions, but Heidegger is here viewing it *existentially* – as a way of existing. In all our ways of existing we comport

ourselves to entities or beings, to what *is*. But in science we comport ourselves to what is in a distinctive way. In all our pre-scientific and extra-scientific modes of comportment entities are uncovered, but in scientific comportment this uncovering is itself the purpose of the comportment. In science Dasein becomes the locus of what-is showing itself as it is. Science is concerned with what-is *and nothing else*. 'But what is remarkable is that, precisely in the way scientific man secures to himself what is most properly his, he speaks of something different.'²⁸ This something different is *nothing*. But being exclusively concerned with entities – with what-is (*Seiendes*) – science wants nothing to do with the nothing (*das Nichts*). And it is surely right because the idea of inquiring into the nothing makes no sense. This is because the question ('What is the nothing?') is a question which necessarily deprives itself of its own object. The question turns the nothing into an entity. It involves treating the nothing as something that *is* thus and so. In asking the question we are positing the nothing as a being, an entity, something that *is*. But this is precisely what the nothing is *not*. So the very question turns what is asked about into its opposite. Any answer to the question takes the form: the nothing *is* this or that. So both question and answer are nonsensical. Science, it seems, is right to want to have nothing to do with the nothing and be exclusively concerned with entities because the question about the nothing is ruled out by *logic*. It is ruled out by logic because it violates a fundamental principle of logic: the principle of contradiction. It belongs to the essence of thinking that it is always thinking *of* something. To think of the nothing would be to think of something that is not something. If logic is the final arbiter on the legitimacy of the question about the nothing then the

²⁸ 'What is Metaphysics?', in *Basic Writings*, p. 95.

matter seems to be settled. Putting it another way, *negation* is an operation of the intellect or understanding. The nothing is the negation of the totality of what-is. So the question about the nothing cannot escape the authority of the understanding, of logic.

But what this assumes is that the nothing is the product of negation and the use of the term 'not'. What Heidegger claims is that the nothing is more fundamental than negation and the 'not'. If his thesis is correct then the possibility of negation as an operation of the intellect or understanding and hence the possibility of the understanding itself (inasmuch as negation is essential to the understanding) depends in a certain way on the nothing. And if this is so then the question about the nothing cannot be decided by the understanding.

But whatever is to be interrogated (*befragt*) must at least be *given* in some way. We must in some way be able to *experience* it. If the nothing is more fundamental than negation then we should not be prevented from asking the question about the nothing by the question's formal impossibility. But as a question it must at least satisfy this basic requirement of the givenness of what is interrogated.

The nothing is not the product of negation – because negation presupposes the nothing – but the 'definition' of the nothing as the negation of the totality of what-is at least points us in the direction of the nothing. If the totality of what-is is to be negated then it must somehow be given. Now we can certainly have the *idea* of this totality, we can *think* the totality of beings, the whole of what-is. But as finite beings we cannot apprehend (*erfassen*) it. Putting it in Kantian terms, the world as a whole is not a possible object of experience. However, by virtue of our moodedness (*Gestimmtsein*) or affectedness (*Befindlichkeit*) we *find* ourselves *amidst* the totality of beings. Some moods disclose this finding-ourselves-amidst more than

others. Heidegger particularly singles out *boredom* (*Langeweile*). Not what we might call focused boredom – as when we are bored with this lecture, this book, this travelling companion, being stuck in this railway station – but real boredom, profound boredom. ‘Profound boredom, drifting here and there in the abysses of our existence [*Dasein*] like a muffling fog, removes all things and human beings and oneself along with them into a remarkable indifference. This boredom reveals beings as a whole [*das Seiende im Ganzen*].’²⁹

Such boredom discloses the world as a whole in the sense of the totality of what-is. The disclosure of the nothing is not achieved by performing the logical operation of negation on the world as a whole as thus revealed. Rather such disclosure requires another basic mode of affectedness: anxiety (*Angst*). We have seen that, whereas fear is fear *of* something (some entity within-the-world) and fear *for* something, that in the face of which one is anxious is wholly indeterminate, as is that for which one is anxious. In *Angst* we experience the nothing and in experiencing the nothing we experience the totality of what-is as ‘slipping away’ (*entgleitend*). It is not as though I first experience the nothing and then beings as a whole slipping away. They are two aspects of the one experience. In the slipping away of beings as a whole the nothing is disclosed. The slipping away applies to everything that is, including the something that is that I myself am. The nothing disclosed in *Angst* is not a being, an entity, something that is. It is not given as an *object*. *Angst* is not an apprehending (*Erfassen*) of the nothing. The nothing is disclosed in and through *Angst* but not as something detached from and as it were ‘alongside’ beings as a whole.

²⁹ Ibid. p. 99.

It is the nothing which makes possible what Heidegger calls the original openness of entities as such. It is only for Dasein that there are entities as such. And there are only entities as such for Dasein in so far as Dasein experiences the nothing. It is only on the basis of the original disclosure of the nothing that we can have to do with, have dealings with, entities as such. But comportment to entities – that which it is itself and those which it is not – belongs to the being of Dasein. So the disclosure of the nothing is the condition of the possibility of Dasein as such. As Heidegger characteristically puts it: Da-sein means holding itself out into the nothing (*Hineingehaltenheit in das Nichts*). Holding itself out into the nothing, Dasein is already beyond beings as a whole. He calls this being beyond 'transcendence'. He also characterises transcendence in terms of Dasein's understanding of being. But it is the same phenomenon in both cases. Being and nothing are two sides of the same thing. Being is nothing in the sense that it is nothing, not any thing, not any entity. What is *understood* in the understanding of being is *felt* in the experience of the nothing in Angst.

But if disclosure of the nothing is a condition of the possibility of Dasein, and the nothing is disclosed in Angst is not Heidegger in the awkward position of having to say that we can only *exist* by being permanently in a state of Angst? But by his own admission Angst is rare. His response is typical. The nothing *is* permanently disclosed. If it were not we could not comport ourselves to entities. But for the most part our comportment to entities is such that we are preoccupied with entities, absorbed by them, lost in them. The nothing is disclosed but in such a way that it is disguised. 'The more we turn towards beings in our preoccupations the less we let beings as a whole slip away as such and the more we turn away

from the nothing.³⁰ Falling (*Verfallen*), losing ourselves in beings, involves a turning away from the nothing. But what is turned away from must somehow be disclosed. This requires a distinction between *explicit* Angst and *latent* Angst. It is only in the former that the nothing is disclosed in an undisguised way.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 104.

Time and being

The question of the meaning (*Sinn*) of being (*Sein*) is the question which guides everything that is said in *Being and Time* and which determines the choice of topics to be examined. As we have already indicated, and as the very title of the work suggests, Heidegger thinks that the key to understanding being is *time*. Properly understood, time is the sense or meaning (*Sinn*) of being. But the book does not *seem* to be about being as such but about the being of particular beings or entities. So we have the detailed analyses of the being of those entities Heidegger calls *Zeug* (equipment): readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*); and the somewhat less detailed analyses of the being of things or substances: presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*).¹ But such analyses are all in the context of the analysis of the being of that entity which I myself am: *Dasein*. Properly understood, the analyses of readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand are part of the analysis of the being of *Dasein*. This is because comportment to entities other than itself and understanding of the being of entities other than itself are integral to the being of *Dasein*: *existence*.

Being and Time not only provides an account of the basic structures of the being of *Dasein* (the existentials); it also

¹ For the most part the account of presence-at-hand is negative, in the sense that it is what readiness-to-hand is not.

claims to provide an answer to the question regarding the *sense* or *meaning* of the being of this entity.² The being of Dasein is *care* (*Sorge*); and the sense or meaning of care is *time*. But as we have already emphasised this does not itself amount to an answer to the question concerning the meaning of being as such. We cannot without absurdity equate the being of Dasein – existence – with being as such. Nor can we identify the meaning of the being of Dasein with the meaning of being as such. For the moment I will leave aside the question of whether *Being and Time* itself provides an answer to its own fundamental question: what is the sense or meaning of being? What we first need to do is to look at what it clearly does claim to provide, viz. an account of the meaning of the being of Dasein.

The being of Dasein is *care* (*Sorge*); and the sense or meaning of care is *time*. But time in what sense? The first thing to say is that it is not time in what Heidegger calls the ordinary or common (*vulgär*) sense. This is time as a uniform sequence of nows. On this understanding of time the not-yet-now becomes the now and the now becomes the no-longer-now in a beginningless and endless and irreversible sequence. In interpreting the being of Dasein in terms of time – or what he calls temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) – he is emphatically *not* saying that Dasein is an essentially temporal being in the sense that it is *in* time thus understood. It is not that he is denying that this is so – it is just that this is not what he means by Dasein's temporality.

So is it just that there is something special about the temporality of human beings? The activity of human beings takes place in time. The existence of an individual human being begins at a certain moment in time and ends at a certain moment

² By *Sinn* Heidegger understands that on the basis of which, or by reference to which, something is understood. See *Being and Time*, p. 324.

in time. And other things – animals, plants, stones and planets – are ‘temporal’ in precisely the same way. But what makes the temporality of human beings special, one might say, is that, as well as being in time in the way other things are in time, human beings are also *conscious* of time and *take account* of time. But then could not the same be said of some animals? They manage without watches or clocks but clearly demonstrate some awareness of time. In lectures on the metaphysics of German Idealism delivered in 1941³ Heidegger points out that swallows fly off in September, titmice start breeding in March and the cock crows, not at ten in the evening, but at around four in the morning.⁴

So in what sense of time is the being of Dasein temporal? Dasein is not simply *in* time, its temporality is not what Heidegger calls ‘within-time-ness’ or ‘intratemporality’ (*Innerzeitigkeit*). Nor does Dasein’s temporality consist in within-time-ness combined with *awareness* of within-time-ness. The temporality that is distinctive of Dasein, and in terms of which its being is to be understood, is what he calls *ecstatic temporality*.

ECSTATIC TEMPORALITY

To understand what he means by this we must return to the notion of care (*Sorge*). It will be recalled that, as Heidegger uses it, ‘care’ is a technical term which designates the three principal structures of Dasein’s being in their essential unity. These are projection (*Entwerfen*), thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) and concern (*Besorgen*). In projecting itself onto possibilities of being-in-the-world Dasein is ‘ahead of itself’. As thrown,

³ *Die Metaphysik des deutschen Idealismus*, ed. Günter Seubold, Gesamtausgabe vol. XLIX (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1991).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

Dasein is already in-the-world. As already in-the-world it is *bei* entities within-the-world (*innerweltlich Seiendes*), in the sense that it is involved with them, dwells with them, is absorbed by them. Underlying each of the three essential components of care is what Heidegger calls a temporal *ecstasis*.⁵ The three temporal ecstases in their essential unity are what constitutes the ecstatic temporality (or original time) in terms of which Dasein's being is to be understood. They correspond to the past, present and future of time as commonly understood but cannot be identified with them. That is to say, they cannot be identified with the no-longer-now, the now and the not-yet-now.

So what then is ecstatic temporality and what are the three ecstases? The matter is complicated by the fact that Heidegger uses different terminology, depending on whether he is talking about the temporality of *authentic* existence or that of *inauthentic* existence. However, he also employs terminology which is neutral with respect to this distinction. In its projection Dasein is coming-towards-itself in its possibility. In its being-*already*-in (in its thrownness), Dasein is coming-back-to-itself in its having-been (*Gewesen*). In letting itself encounter entities within-the-world Dasein is making present or, better, enpresenting (*Gegenwärtigen*) entities. Ecstatic temporality is this unity of coming-towards-itself, coming-back-to-itself and enpresenting. Each of them is an ecstasy in the sense that in each of them Dasein is *outside itself* (*außer sich*). In coming-towards-myself, coming-back-to-myself and enpresenting I am outside myself (though not in the sense that I am initially encapsulated within a private sphere of pure

⁵ For Heidegger's introduction of the notion of ecstasy (*ekstase*) see *Being and Time*, p. 329.

interiority from which I somehow manage to escape; by virtue of my ecstatic temporality I am already outside myself).

Such ecstatic temporality is the foundation of existence as such, regardless of whether this is authentic or inauthentic. However, Heidegger initially uncovers the three ecstases, which in their unity constitute ecstatic temporality, by means of an analysis of *authentic* existence or resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*).⁶ As I indicated in the [previous chapter](#) the examination of ‘existentialist’ themes is supposed to provide insight into the nature of *time*, and it is time which is supposed to provide the meaning (*Sinn*) of being.

Resoluteness, we have seen, involves authentic being towards death and understanding myself in my essential being-guilty. The former is comportment to a possibility that is most my own. In comporting myself to such a possibility I am *ahead of* myself (325). I come from this possibility towards that which I myself am. This coming-towards is the primordial phenomenon of the *future* (*Zukunft*). In this coming-towards-itself Dasein is *futural* (*zukünftig*). According to the ordinary concept of the future the future is the not-yet-now. Heidegger’s contention is that the existential concept of the future (coming-towards-oneself) is the presupposition of the ordinary concept.

In understanding myself in my essential being-guilty I am taking over my thrownness. An essential element in this thrownness is what I *have been*. In taking over my thrownness I am comporting myself to what I have been (325). This having-been-ness (*Gewesenheit*) belongs to what I *am*. Dasein *is* what it *was*. Everything I have been is an essential determination

⁶ It is not just that he approaches Dasein’s ecstatic temporality through the analysis of authentic existence. Authentic temporality is somehow more basic than inauthentic temporality and in a way that is difficult to make sense of is supposed to provide its foundation.

of my existence.⁷ In comporting myself to my having-been I am coming-back-to-myself. This coming-back-to-myself is the primordial phenomenon of the past. The ordinary concept of the past as the no-longer-now presupposes the existential concept (coming-back to oneself in one's having-been).

Resoluteness discloses the *situation*. In its resoluteness Dasein brings itself into the situation. It is an enpresenting of the possibilities, circumstances and contingencies of the situation in which I decide and act. The ordinary concept of the present as the now is derivative from the existential concept of the present (*Gegenwart*) as enpresenting (*Gegenwärtigen*).

Temporality as the unity of future, past and present is the original outside-itself, the *ekstatikon* (329). For reasons to be explained later Heidegger also speaks of *ecstatic-horizonal* temporality. It is important to see that the temporality of Dasein is not any kind of *entity*. It is not. Nor is it any kind of *process*. It temporalises itself (*zeitigt sich*), brings itself about in the sense that it only 'is' in its coming-towards, coming-back-to and enpresenting.

AUTHENTIC AND INAUTHENTIC TEMPORALITY

In resoluteness Dasein comes towards itself authentically, it *runs ahead of itself* into the possibility that is most its own. The authentic future is *running ahead* (*Vorlaufen*). Dasein, simply as Dasein, is always already *ahead-of-itself*, but not always in the manner of *running-ahead*. In everyday, *inauthentic* existence Dasein projects itself onto possibilities of existence but these possibilities are determined by the things with which it is concerned or engaged. That is to say, it understands itself by way of things, in the sense that it understands itself in

⁷ See *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, § 19.

terms of possibilities that are determined by the success and failure, the feasibility and unfeasibility of its engagement with things (337). Its coming-towards itself in these possibilities is an expecting or awaiting (*Gewärtigen*) rather than a running-ahead. The inauthentic future is this expecting.

Existing authentically Dasein takes itself over in its thrownness, in its has-been. In thus coming back to itself authentically it *repeats* the being it has been. To authentic having-been Heidegger gives the name *repetition*, though the word he uses – *Wiederholung* – also has the meaning of bringing or fetching back.⁸ In its resoluteness Dasein is bringing itself back to what it has been. The authentic past (*Gewesenheit*) is this repetition. But for the most part we do not repeat the being we have been. Our having-been is *forgotten*.

Existing authentically, Dasein discloses the *situation*. This disclosing of the situation is an enpresenting (*Gegenwärtigen*). But as *authentic* enpresenting it does not lose itself in what it enpresents. In such authentic enpresenting Dasein does not forget its having-been or merely expect its possibilities of being. In its ordinary dealings with things, by contrast, Dasein loses itself in what it enpresents. The present of authentic existence Heidegger calls *der Augenblick* (338). In ordinary German this simply means ‘moment’, but Heidegger makes use of the fact that *Blick* means ‘look’. Used to designate authentic enpresenting, *Augenblick* takes on an active sense. It is active because it refers to an ecstasis (for this reason it is translated as ‘moment of vision’ rather than simply ‘moment’). For the inauthentic present Heidegger simply uses ‘enpresenting’ (*Gegenwärtigen*), though he also uses it in a sense which is neutral with respect to the distinction between the authentic present and the inauthentic present.

⁸ So instead of the term ‘repetition’ some translators prefer ‘retrieve’.

So authentic temporality is the running-ahead, repetitive moment of vision (*der vorlaufend-wiederholende Augenblick*). Inauthentic temporality is forgetting-expecting-enpresenting.

THE TEMPORAL INTERPRETATION OF EXISTENTIALS

Ecstatic temporality is the sense or meaning of the being of Dasein. Heidegger thinks that if this claim is to be substantiated it must be possible to give a temporal interpretation of all those structures of Dasein's being uncovered in Division One. In other words, for each of the existentials it must be possible to show that it is grounded in a specific mode of ecstatic temporality. All three ecstases must underlie each of the existentials, but individual existentials differ with respect to which of the ecstases has primacy. Thus, for example, in understanding (*Verstehen*) the (existential) future has primacy, whereas in affectedness (*Befindlichkeit*) the (existential) past has primacy. And although circumspective concern (*umsichtiges Besorgen*) is impossible without both expecting (*Gewärtigen*) and retaining (*Behalten*) the enpresenting (*Gegenwärtigen*) of the (item of) equipment (*Zeug*) has primacy.

TIME AS ENCOUNTERED IN CONCERN

The ordinary or common conception of time sees time as a beginningless and endless sequence of nows. In Chapter 6 of Division Two Heidegger seeks to show that time conceived in this way is derivative from original time (or ecstatic temporality). But first he demonstrates that the time of the ordinary conception is an abstraction in relation to time as we actually encounter it. He considers time as it manifests itself in our 'reckoning with' or 'taking account of' time. An example of

'taking account of' time would be looking at my watch to see how much time there is till the end of the lecture (though taking account of time does not necessarily involve the use of clocks and watches). I use my watch to determine how much time I still have to do this or that. He will call this feature of time 'significance' (*Bedeutsamkeit*). This and other features of time as it manifests itself in our concern with it are 'ironed out' in the ordinary conception.

But the first feature he highlights is something he calls 'datability' (*Datierbarkeit*). The 'now' that I utter is always implicitly a 'now, when such and such' (407). For example, now when the door slams, now when the book is missing. It is the same with 'then' (*dann*) and 'then' in the sense of 'at the time' (*damals*). When I say 'then' I always mean 'then, when'. When I say 'at the time' I mean 'at the time, when'. Datability is this implicit reference of the now, then and at-the-time to an event or situation. The 'date' in question need not be precise and certainly does not need to be a date in the sense of a calendar date. For example, 'at the time, when the French were in Germany'.⁹

The second structural feature of experienced time to which Heidegger draws attention is what he calls 'stretchedness' (*Erstrecktheit*) or 'spannedness' (*Gespanntheit*). Implicit in a 'then' is a 'from-now-till-then'. The stretch from now till then is articulated by means of the 'then' itself. Every now, then and at-the-time is 'now, during the break', 'now, during the meal', 'then, at breakfast', 'then, while climbing the mountain' (409). 'Now', 'then' and 'at-the-time' do not refer to indivisible points but are intrinsically spanned, the span's breadth being variable.

⁹ This example is used by Heidegger in his 1927 Marburg lectures on phenomenology, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 371.

Time as reckoned with also has the feature of *publicness* (*Öffentlichkeit*). Although each one of us utters his or her own now, it is nevertheless the now for everyone. It is accessible to everyone and thus belongs to no one. This is despite the fact that each of us may 'date' the now differently. For example, 'now, while having my breakfast', 'now, while the children are passing the house', 'now, in the morning', 'now, towards the end of the summer break'.¹⁰

Finally, there is what Heidegger calls 'significance' (*Bedeut-samkeit*). In the course of giving a lecture I look at my watch. I do so in order to see what time it is. But I want to know what time it is because I want to know how much time remains till the scheduled end of my lecture. I want to establish that I have enough time *in order to* finish the topic. I look at my watch in order to determine how much time I still have to do this or that. Time is not a series of pure nows but is always time *to*. It is appropriate or inappropriate time, right or wrong time.

Time as a uniform sequence of nows is an abstraction from time with these structures. But there is something more basic than this concrete time of 'everyday' experience, something which makes it possible. This is ecstatic temporality. 'Then' (in the sense of *dann*, which refers to something not yet) expresses the expecting or awaiting (*Gewärtigen*) of something, 'then' (in the sense of *damals*, 'at-the-time') expresses the retaining (*Behalten*) of something, 'now' the enpresenting (*Gegenwärtigen*) of something. If time with its now, at-the-time, then, expresses an enpresenting, retaining and expecting, then these ecstases in their essential unity constitute time in a more original sense.

¹⁰ This feature of time as reckoned with seems to be different from the other three to which Heidegger draws attention. Publicness has to do with the *accessibility* of time whereas the others have to do with the *structure* of time.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ORDINARY
CONCEPTION OF TIME

But if time is as Heidegger maintains how is it that the ordinary understanding of time only knows it as an irreversible sequence of nows, one following the other from future into past in an infinite succession? Why do the essential features of datability, spannedness, publicness and significance remain concealed from it? The covering up of these essential features, of their origin in ecstatic temporality, and of ecstatic temporality itself, has its ground in *falling* – the tendency of Dasein to understand its own being and that of everything else as presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*) (422f). Time itself is interpreted as something somehow present-at-hand. The succession of nows is interpreted as a present-at-hand sequence. The nows come and go like entities. Like present-at-hand entities they perish, becoming no longer present-at-hand (423).

TEMPORALITY AND HISTORICITY

Human beings are historical beings in the sense that each of us has a history. We belong to communities which themselves have a history. History consists of a process in which events unfold and each of us has our place in this process. Although history is dependent on nature it is not reducible to nature. Heidegger will claim that underlying all these 'facts' is the *ontological* truth that the *being* of Dasein is constituted by historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*).¹¹ Historicity is not something different from temporality but is the concrete form which the existential past (having-been-ness) can be seen to take when we consider the ontological truth that the being of Dasein is

¹¹ Von Herrmann is particularly helpful on this area of *Being and Time*. See von Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie*, pp. 199–277.

being-with (*Mitsein*).¹² Historicity concerns Dasein's past in the sense of what it has been. Dasein *is* its past, its has-been (*Gewesen*). Its past is not something which 'as it were pushes itself along "behind" it' (20). Its past in the existential sense is not a property which it somehow continues to possess and which every now and then exerts its influence. Historicity in this ontological sense (that is, as an essential feature of the being of Dasein) is not the same as occurring in history understood as a sequence of events. But, as we shall see, nor is it the same as history in the sense of the intellectual *discipline* of that name. Historicity in the ontological sense is the condition of the possibility of both of these things.

I have suggested that historicity in the ontological sense results from the combination of the idea of the existential past (the past in the sense of having-been-ness) and that of Dasein's being as being-*with*. Let me elaborate on this. Dasein is an individual in the sense that its being is in each case mine. But the being of Dasein is also being-with (*Mitsein*), in the sense that Dasein is not an *isolated* individual but an entity which is such that its being *essentially* involves a relationship to others. So we can say that the past which Dasein *is* is also the past of its 'generation'.

Throughout *Being and Time* Heidegger speaks of Dasein projecting itself onto possibilities of existence. Now ways of existing are not simply plucked out of the air; they are not created out of nothing by the individual Dasein. So where then do they come from? According to Heidegger they come from something he calls the heritage (*das Erbe*). In other words, the possibilities of existence onto which Dasein projects itself are inherited possibilities of existence. In

¹² The interpretation of historicity is 'just a more concrete working out of temporality' (382).

coming-back-to its having-been (*Gewesen*) – its existential past – Dasein ‘takes over’ (*übernimmt*) the heritage (383). Heidegger is here extending the notion of having-been to cover the having-been-there (*Da-gewesen*) of others and other generations. Regarding the notion of having-been-there, he says: ‘Dasein can *never* be past (*vergangen*), not because it is imperishable (*unvergänglich*), but because it can essentially never be *present-at-hand* (*vorhanden*). Rather, if it is, it *exists*. But a Dasein that no longer exists is not past in the ontologically strict sense; it is rather *having-been-there*’ (380). The coming-back-to oneself which is an essential element of Dasein’s ecstatic temporality involves a *handing-over of oneself* (*Sichüberliefern*) to traditional (*überkommen*) possibilities of existence (383). This handing-over is the occurrence (*Geschehen*) of historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*).

The handing-over of possibilities that have-been does not have to be such that it involves *explicitly* knowing the provenance or origin (*Herkunft*) of the inherited possibilities. But it can, and when it does Heidegger calls such explicit handing-over (*ausdrückliche Überlieferung*) retrieval or repetition (*Wiederholung*) (385). This is the explicit ‘going back to the possibilities of Dasein that has-been-there’.¹³

The being of Dasein is historical in the way described but its historicity can remain hidden from it. But it can also be discovered in a certain way and be properly cultivated. Dasein as such is determined by tradition but it can also ‘explicitly pursue’ (*ausdrücklich nachgehen*) tradition. ‘The discovery of tradition and the disclosure of what it “transmits” [*übergibt*] and how this is transmitted can be undertaken as a task in its own right’ (20). In other words Dasein can become historical in the sense of engaging in the *discipline* of history (*Historie*).

¹³ ‘... der Rückgang in Möglichkeiten des dagewesenen Daseins’ (385).

History in this sense is a mode of being of Dasein, a distinctive way in which Dasein can be. 'The idea of history as a science implies that it (Dasein) has grasped the *disclosure* of historical entities [*das geschichtlich Seiende*] as its own task' (393).

Dasein is necessarily historical (*geschichtlich*) but it does not necessarily engage in history (*Historie*). But Dasein's ontological historicity is a condition of the possibility of history as the study of the past. The 'historical [*historisch*] disclosure of history [*Geschichte*]' is 'rooted' in the historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) of Dasein. '[T]he historical [*historisch*] thematisation of history [*Geschichte*] is only possible if the "past" [*Vergangenheit*] has always already been disclosed in general (or as such, *überhaupt*)' (393). The way into the past – the history (*Geschichte*) of Dasein must as such be open. But it *is* always already open by virtue of Dasein's ontological constitution. '[O]n the basis of its ecstatic-horizonal temporality Dasein is open in its having-been-ness [*Gewesenheit*]' (393).

The ontological thesis that the being of Dasein is historical has important implications for the way in which philosophy is engaged in. Philosophy is what Heidegger calls an 'ontic possibility of Dasein' (19). It is a way of existing. As such it is determined by Dasein's essential historicity. By virtue of its essential historicity Dasein *as philosopher* cannot detach itself from philosophy's *past*, its history. The question of being has a history, and in posing the question of being now the philosopher or ontologist, whether or not he or she is aware of it, is determined by the history of the question. According to Heidegger, Greek ontology and its history continues to determine the conceptual frameworks of philosophy. The concepts of Greek ontology he maintains arise out of genuine ontological experiences. But over the course of history they have become progressively more detached from such experience. In a way which remains somewhat obscure Heidegger applies

his notion of falling (*Verfallen*) to the relationship of Dasein to the philosophical tradition. Dasein has the tendency not only to fall into its 'world' in the sense of interpreting its being in terms of it but also to fall into the philosophical tradition. 'The tradition that in this way becomes dominant, far from making what it "transmits" accessible, initially and for the most part conceals it. It delivers over what has been handed down to obviousness [*Selbstverständlichkeit*] and blocks access to the primordial "sources" [*Quellen*] from which the traditional categories and concepts were . . . drawn' (21). This necessitates what he calls the 'destruction of the history of ontology'. This is understood as a process of tracing back the concepts of ontology to their origin in the 'original experiences' in which the 'first determinations of being' were achieved. 'Destruction' (*Destruktion*) in this context does not have a negative sense (*Destruktion* is not being used as equivalent to *Zerstörung*).

The crucial aspect of the Greek ontological experience concerns the connection between being and *time*, the understanding of being as presence (*Anwesenheit*), *ousia*. But whereas Heidegger will claim that he makes this connection explicit, in the Greek interpretation of being there is no explicit knowledge or even understanding of the fundamental ontological function of time.

The first philosopher who has gone any way towards grasping the ontological function of time is, in his view, Kant. Kant's categories are concepts which apply to entities simply as objects. They are concepts which determine the *being* of objects – their objectivity or objecthood (*Gegenständlichkeit*). But according to his doctrine of transcendental schematism these concepts have to be given a *temporal* interpretation. For example, the category of substance is interpreted in terms of *permanence*. But because Kant has no proper conception of Dasein the time in terms of which he interprets the

categories, and hence the being of entities, is time understood as a sequence of nows – what Heidegger calls the ordinary or common (*vulgär*) conception of time.

TIME AS THE MEANING OF BEING AS SUCH

In § 5 ('The ontological analytic of Dasein as the laying bare of the horizon for an interpretation of the meaning of being as such [*überhaupt*']) Heidegger anticipates the demonstration that the meaning of the being of Dasein is temporality. However, he makes it clear that this does not amount to an answer to the question about the meaning of being as such. It merely prepares the ground for such an answer. Dasein *is* in such a way that it understands being. What needs to be shown is that that in terms of which Dasein understands and interprets being is *time*. Time must be brought to light as the horizon for all understanding and interpretation of being.

If being is to be conceived in terms of time and the 'various modes and derivatives of being in their modifications and derivations' (18) are to be understood from the standpoint of time then being itself must be shown to have an essentially temporal character. This was to have been the task of Division Three ('Time and Being'). Although Heidegger wrote this section he appears to have found it unsatisfactory. In lectures on Schelling and the metaphysics of German Idealism¹⁴ delivered in 1941, he reveals that the decision to withhold Division Three was made at the end of December 1926, during a visit to his friend the philosopher Karl Jaspers in Heidelberg. What he had written, he surmised, would not be understood. There is some evidence that the Marburg lectures of 1927 were intended as a substitute. However it would be a gross

¹⁴ *Die Metaphysik des deutschen Idealismus*.

exaggeration to say that they provide an answer to the question of the meaning of being as such. The most they provide is a somewhat obscure temporal interpretation of the mode of being he calls 'readiness-to-hand' (*Zuhandenheit*).

I will give a brief outline of this temporal interpretation as it appears in the Marburg lectures.¹⁵ But first we need to say something about the notion of 'horizon' and 'horizontal schema'. The temporality of Dasein as coming-towards-itself (future, *Zu-kunft*), coming-back-to-itself (past, having-been-ness, *Gewesenheit*), and enpresenting (present, *Gegen-wart*, *Gegenwärtigen*), in their essential interconnection, is *ecstatic* inasmuch as in its three dimensions it has the character of being *outside itself*. Each ecstasy is a kind of movement (*Entrückung*) outside itself. But this 'movement' outside itself, this ecstasy of temporality, is not a directionless movement 'as it were into the nothing',¹⁶ but has a 'whereto' (*Wozu*) or 'whither' (*Wohin*) which Heidegger calls the *horizon* or *horizontal schema* of the ecstasy. It is for this reason that he calls the original temporality of Dasein *ecstatic-horizonal* temporality.

The crucial 'ecstasy' for the temporal interpretation of readiness-to-hand is that of enpresenting (*Gegenwärtigen*). For the horizontal schema of this ecstasy he uses the Latin name 'praesens'. 'That which lies beyond the ecstasy as such, due to the character of the ecstasy and as determined by that character, or, more precisely, that which determines the *whither of the "beyond itself"* as such in general, is *praesens as horizon*. The present projects itself within itself ecstatically upon praesens.'¹⁷ The ecstasy of the present in unity with those of future and past (having-been-ness) projects readiness-to-hand as such onto the horizon of praesens. The understanding

¹⁵ See *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, § 21 (a).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 306. ¹⁷ *Ibid.*

of that mode of being he calls readiness-to-hand – the being of equipment (*Zeug*) – is made possible by this projection onto *praesens*.

It is difficult to see how anything of substance is achieved by this *terminological* innovation. But even if the obscurity of the notions of 'horizon' and 'horizontal schema' could be overcome and their specific application in the shape of 'praesens' could be understood we would still be very far from having an answer to the question of the meaning of being as such. If all that was meant by 'being as such' was the being of entities other than *Dasein* then, to the extent that it can be understood, Heidegger's temporal interpretation of readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*) would provide at least a partial answer to the question of the meaning of being as such. But what would still be needed would be a temporal interpretation of the being of the present-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*), the being of living things, the being of works of art, the being of ideal entities and so on.

Beyond phenomenology

The subject matter of *Being and Time* is being – the being of Dasein and the being of entities other than Dasein to which Dasein comports itself. The method Heidegger employs in what, for a time at least, he called the science of being is *phenomenology*. We have seen that there are profound differences between Heidegger's conception of phenomenology and that of Husserl. However, despite the differences, it is still possible to see Heidegger's phenomenology as a form of transcendental philosophy. Viewed in this way it would be a radicalisation, rather than a straightforward rejection, of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. In Heidegger's view it is not enough simply to describe the intentional structures of consciousness in order to be able to see how intentionality, or as he would put it, comportment to entities, is possible. Intentionality must be seen not as a structure of *consciousness* but as a structure of *Dasein*, the essence of whose being is the *understanding* of being. It is the understanding of being which makes intentionality possible. It is Heidegger's concern with the understanding of being as what makes comportment to entities possible which makes it legitimate to see his phenomenology as a form of transcendental philosophy.

His concern with being in *Being and Time* is with being as it is disclosed in the understanding of being. Although there is clearly a verbal distinction between the understanding of being

and what is understood in this understanding, at this stage in his thinking there is no notion of being as something over and above the understanding of being. There is really no distinction between being and the disclosedness of being.¹ This is not true of his later philosophy. The period during which Heidegger called his own philosophy or way of doing philosophy phenomenology was relatively short. Abandoning the *word* phenomenology corresponds to significant philosophical changes. Although he will continue to speak of Dasein this will no longer occupy a position in his thought at least analogous to that of the transcendental subject in the thought of Husserl. Whereas in *Being and Time* Dasein has at least a quasi-constitutive role in his later thought Dasein is seen as itself constituted by being. It is the relation (*Bezug*) of being, construed as something over and above the understanding of being, that makes Dasein what it is. Hence his talk of the relation of being to the *essence* of human beings. In the later philosophy, we might say, being takes on a life of its own.

Central to Heidegger's later philosophy is what he calls the 'overcoming of metaphysics'.² This may suggest that he became anti-metaphysical in something like the way in which the logical positivists and logical empiricists were anti-metaphysical. But this would be a mistake. The 'overcoming' of which Heidegger speaks is not the dismissal or destruction (in the merely negative sense of the term) of metaphysics. It is a

¹ Though one might argue that there must be a distinction if as he claims there are ways of understanding being which cover up, conceal, distort, disguise.

² The following works can be taken as representative of Heidegger's post-*Being and Time* thinking: Introduction to 'What Is Metaphysics' (1949) and 'Letter on Humanism' (1947). The English translation of the former can be found in Heidegger, *Pathmarks*; that of the latter both in *Pathmarks* and *Basic Writings*.

going beyond metaphysics but not one which involves declaring metaphysics it to be false or even meaningless. Metaphysics as Heidegger understands it is thinking beings as beings (*das Seiende als das Seiende*). Interpreting reality as mind or spirit (*Geist*), as matter or force, as becoming, as idea or representation (*Vorstellung*), as will, as subject – these would all count as metaphysics as Heidegger understands it. What lies beyond metaphysics as the thinking of beings as beings is the thinking of being as being (or what he will call the truth of being). In each of the examples of metaphysics given, entities appear or show themselves in a certain way – as mind, as matter, as becoming and so on. But what makes this possible is being itself. In each case entities appear as entities ‘in the light of being’ (*Sein*), but in thinking beings as beings being itself is not thought. Whenever metaphysics thinks entities as entities, being as the ‘clearing’ (*Lichtung*) in which entities show themselves has already ‘happened’. The essence of truth is unconcealedness (*Unverborgenheit*). The truth of being is what makes the unconcealedness of entities possible. In metaphysics being is not thought in its unconcealing essence, in its truth. Metaphysics is only possible on the basis of the truth of being but as metaphysics, the representing of entities as entities – or, as Heidegger sometimes puts it, the beingness (*Seiendheit*) of beings – it does not attend to the truth of being. In questioning entities as entities it is absorbed by entities and does not turn to being as being. The truth of being is the ground of metaphysics but is not recognised by metaphysics. Heidegger’s retrospective view of *Being and Time* seems to be that it is at least a step on the way to the overcoming of metaphysics.

The change in Heidegger’s thinking can be seen if we reflect on the significance of his substitution of the word *eksistence* for *existence*. The being of Dasein is ek-sistence. This does not just mean that the being of Dasein is the understanding

of being (that of itself and that of entities other than itself) but that Dasein 'stands out into' being, stands 'in' the clearing (*Lichtung*) of being – where being and the clearing of being are construed as something over and above the understanding of being. We can only reach a proper understanding of what it is to be Dasein by raising the question of the relation of the truth of being to the essence of Dasein. Now already in *Being and Time* there was some such notion. The disclosedness of being as such is seen in its relation to *existence*. Existence is the being of an entity which understands being (its own being, the being of entities other than itself, and being as such). But to talk in this way of an essential relation of being to the essence of Dasein is compatible with thinking of being as nothing over and above the *understanding* of being. But when Heidegger talks of such a relation in his later work he does so in a way which suggests that in the understanding of being what is disclosed *takes possession* of Dasein, has Dasein *at its disposal*. Being is not simply a function of Dasein's understanding of being. Dasein is, however, the *location* of the unconcealedness of being. Being, we might say, while not being reducible to Dasein's understanding, *requires* Dasein. Dasein depends on being (the relation of being to its essence). But equally being depends on Dasein in the sense that there is an essential relationship of Dasein to the openness of being as such.

We can get some idea of what the change in Heidegger's thinking involves by taking a brief look at his influential lecture on modern technology, 'The Question Concerning Technology' (1953).³ In his lecture he is concerned with what he calls the *essence* (*Wesen*) of technology. The ordinary, most natural, understanding of technology is what Heidegger calls the instrumental and anthropological definition of technology.

³ *Basic Writings*, pp. 311–41.

According to this definition technology is a means to an end and a human activity. It is a human activity in which aims are set and the means for achieving these aims are created and used. There is something undeniable about this 'definition'. It presents us with a basic feature of technology and in that sense tells us *what* technology is. As the term 'essence' is ordinarily understood – the *whatness* of something – it gives us the essence of technology. Now even in this sense of essence it is clear that the essence of technology is not something technological, any more than the essence of a tree is itself a tree. But what Heidegger understands by the essence (*Wesen*) of technology is not only not something technological, it is not the *whatness* of the technological either. The essence of technology is not what all instances of the technological have in common. As Heidegger understands essence, the essence of technology is the understanding of being, or, as he now puts it, the way of revealing (*Weise des Entbergens*), which makes technology possible. The essence of technology is a distinctive way in which reality – what is – is brought out of concealment.

However, it is a way of revealing which, unlike the ways of revealing underlying fine art and handicraft, 'sets upon' and challenges rather than brings forth (it is a *Herausfordern* rather than a *Hervorbringen*). Technological revealing is not a *bringing* but a *demanding*; and this demanding does not have the character of bringing *forth* but of forcing *out*. It demands of nature that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored. '(T)he energy concealed in nature is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up, what is stored up is in turn distributed, and what is distributed is switched about ever anew'.⁴ A windmill, by contrast, uses

⁴ Ibid., p. 322.

the power of the wind but it does not unlock energy from the air currents in order to store it.

Corresponding to a way of revealing is the revealedness of what is revealed. The mode of revealedness in the case of the technological way of revealing is what Heidegger calls 'standing reserve' (*Bestand*). The essence of technology is the way of revealing in which entities are revealed as standing reserve.⁵

But who accomplishes this revealing in which entities are revealed as standing-reserve? In a sense we do, human beings. We comport ourselves in this way or that to entities and in so doing bring them out of concealment. But, Heidegger insists, we do not have control over the unconcealment itself in which things show themselves. 'Wherever man opens his eyes and ears, unlocks his heart, and gives himself over to meditating and striving, shaping and working, entreating and thanking, he finds himself everywhere already brought into the unconcealed.'⁶ The unconcealment of the unconcealed has always already *ereignet*, happened. We reveal or uncover entities but from within an unconcealment which is not of our making. We do the revealing but the way of revealing and the mode of revealedness are not subject to our will. The unconcealment takes possession of us. It is this combination of happening and taking possession which gives us the meaning of the key Heideggerian notion of *Ereignis*. In ordinary German this simply means *event* (though usually one of some significance). In the way he uses it Heidegger is exploiting its relation to the German word for 'own' (as in 'my own book'), *eigen*. *Ereignis* means something like 'event which appropriates'. *Ereignis* is a

⁵ The ontological term of art, *Bestand*, is formed in a way that corresponds to *Gegenstand* (object). For Heidegger *Gegen-stand* like *Be-stand* is a mode of unconcealedness of entities.

⁶ *Basic Writings*, p. 324.

mode of unconcealment (in the case under discussion this is the mode of unconcealment in which nature shows itself as standing reserve) taking possession of Dasein. We can say that it is Dasein in its ek-sistence which accomplishes the revealing, but only in so far as the mode of revealing is 'sent' by being itself. Ek-sistence combines the relation of being to the essence of man and the essential relationship of man to the openness of being as such. The former is thrownness (*Geworfenheit*), the latter projection (*Entwurf*). But in the later philosophy these notions have undergone a significant change, a change which reflects the change in the conception of the relation between Dasein and being. The 'throwing' is now attributed to being (*Sein*). Human beings are thrown by being into the truth of being or the clearing (*Lichtung*). Projection refers to the understanding of the truth of being. Human beings, we might say, are dependent on being, but equally being is dependent on human beings, inasmuch as human beings are the 'location' of the truth of being.

The essence of modern technology is what Heidegger calls 'enframing' (*Ge-stell*). This difficult notion combines the idea of the technological way of revealing in which entities are revealed as standing-reserve with the idea of this way of revealing *as claiming us, taking possession of us*. Thus understood enframing is not itself a technological activity but what makes such activity possible. As what makes it possible for something to *be*, enframing is not the essence (*Wesen*) of technology in the sense of the properties which together make it what it is. Heidegger is using *Wesen* in a verbal form, which is presumably meant to indicate that enfaming is an ontological *happening*.

Enframing is what Heidegger calls a 'destining' (*Geschick*). As an element in the history of being (*Seinsgeschichte*) it does not just happen. It is 'sent' (the German for 'send' is *schicken*)

by being, or perhaps it would be better to say that we are 'sent' into this mode of revealing. So there is a kind of necessity of the 'holding sway' of this way of revealing (though there is nothing in Heidegger corresponding to the dialectical logic of Hegel to explain the way in which different ways of revealing unfold).

Whatever one makes of this sort of talk it clearly represents a move away from the purely phenomenological thinking of *Being and Time*. The account he gives there of Dasein and the structures of its being is at least arguably open to a certain kind of verification. If we ask how does Heidegger know that what he says about human being and its structures is true, the answer would be: he knows what he says is true because he is able to let this being (*Sein*) and its structures be *seen*. It will not be enough *for us* just to read his words and sentences. We must *ourselves* 'see' the 'matter' (*die Sache*) they disclose. In other words, we must read the text *phenomenologically*.

We have chosen to look at his lecture on the essence of (modern) technology because it is representative of much of his later thinking. If we now ask: how does Heidegger know that what he says about the essence of technology is true? things become more difficult. If enframing is *simply* an understanding of being then the question of whether we do understand reality as standing-reserve (*Bestand*), is one that can in principle be answered. The claim is open to what we can call phenomenological verification. As an understanding of being it would not be something which primarily and for the most part shows itself, but it could be made to show itself. But the problem is that enframing is *not* just an understanding of being. It is also a 'destining' (*ein Geschick*). That we understand being in the ways we do is, Heidegger maintains, not of our making. Ways of understanding being – ways of

revealing – are necessary because what is understood in the understanding of being, namely, being itself, ‘sends’ them. In understanding being Dasein is being used by being. It is claims of this kind, which characterise the whole of Heidegger’s later philosophy, that seem to resist any kind of phenomenological authentication.

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