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DASEIN AND THE STILL POINT

A Consideration of Three Emphases in the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger, with peripheral references to relevant aspects of Eastern thought

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I. Introduction ............................................ 1  
Chapter II. Being and Self ........................................... 6  
Chapter III. Being and Nothing .................................... 30  
Chapter IV. Being and Language ..................................... 50  
Chapter V. Conclusion ................................................ 72  
Appendix ............................................................... 79  
Bibliography ........................................................... 88
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Who lays hold of something permanent in ravenous time and fixes it in the word?"¹ Man dwelling poetically. Man dwelling in such a way as to illumine the things that are, and to cast the light of his questioning into the darkness from which they spring.

The poet names the mystery and then is silent:

At the still point of the turning world . . . . .
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Where past and future are gathered. . . . . . .
. . . . . . . Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.²

The philosopher speaks the word and then asks the question.

Without Being, whose unfathomable and unmanifest essence is vouchsafed us by Nothing in essential dread, everything that "is" would remain in Beinglessness (Seinlosigkeit).³

What of this darkness from which things spring? Is it other than man, or is it the darkness of unmeaning—the darkness of the unspoken word? And do we even care?


When Heidegger suggests that we "raise anew the question of the meaning of Being", he does so because he sees a forgetting of Being that is at once an estrangement from Self and a not caring. The meaning of Being is either too obvious or too obscure to pursue. But man is distinguished from other entities in the world by the fact that he does


5 The words Being, being, entity, and Dasein are so frequently encountered in this work that it seems advisable to make distinctions between them at the outset. My own interpretation of Heidegger's meaning is: That thread of highly conscious human existence which runs through history is the presence of Being (Sein); the particular entity (Seiendes) in the world which tries, through its way of being (seiend), to make explicit this presence, and is thus responsible for history, is Dasein (Being-there).

Heidegger himself says "Entities are grasped in their Being as 'presence'; this means that they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time--the 'Present' /die "Gegenwart"/." Ibid., p. 47 (25).

Problems with these words will be encountered also, and for a number of reasons: 1) Each translator uses different terminology (which I will attempt to point out where it differs radically from that which I am using). Thus the quotations will differ from one to the other and I am not competent to refer to the German for purposes of comparison; 2) Within a single work, a translator frequently gives evidence of his own uncertainty in the choice of a particular form (some of these are obvious enough to point out--many more are not); 3) The words as used in the text are chosen to convey my own understanding which, when made explicit, is at best both a revealing and a concealing of the meaning Heidegger sought to bestow.

6 The use of the upper case "S" here signifies the authentic Self as distinguished from the inauthentic or "everyday" self which we will meet in Chapter II.
seek to understand himself and his world and he cannot abandon essential questioning without suffering alienation. Heidegger argues that since man's being is a pre-requisite to his questioning, an understanding of that being is necessary for an understanding of the search and its findings. Modern man has tried to understand Being through entities other than himself—through entities which he is not, without first making a thorough study of that which precedes the investigation and makes it possible—his own primordial understanding.

When historical man's investigations have been grounded in awareness of, and consideration of, that primordial understanding, his words have given Being a place in the world. The history of man's thought is given brilliance and wholeness by the persistent recurrence, if not continuous dwelling, of the truth of Being. Yet is it possible that this very brilliance owes its Being to the background of darkness against which it shows—the darkness of misunderstanding also made explicit, or of the silence of the unspoken word?

Heidegger has said that "we, mankind, are a conversation ... a single conversation"7 and that our historical existence and our existence as a conversation "belong

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together and are the same thing". I have taken this as a warrant for bringing into my work, peripherally, the speaking of Eastern man. The differences between cultural traditions, as well as between individuals within a tradition, may well be, as Radhakrishnan has said, "but different dialects of a single speech of the soul... differences due to accents, historical circumstances, and stages of development." If each tradition is but a unique response to the problems and questions which confront all men, then perhaps we can find help in easing our sense of alienation by listening for the voice of Being speaking out of the larger tradition—the tradition to which the words "a single conversation" attest—the tradition of man.

The human and ontological problems are one, in Heidegger, with the problem of language, hence the examination and revitalization of language is an essential element in the project of reviving the relationship between man and Being.

8Ibid.

It is perhaps relevant, at this point, to mention that Heidegger is reputed to have said, after reading the work of Daisetz Suzuki, "If I understand this man correctly, this is what I have been trying to say in all my writings." (See D. T. Suzuki, Zen Buddhism, ed., William Barrett /New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956/, p. xi.) Barrett's comment is: "This remark may be the slightly exaggerated enthusiasm of a man under the impact of a book in which he recognizes some of his own thoughts;... yet the points of correspondence between the two, despite their disparate sources, are startling..."
Heidegger has referred to our time as a time of need, as the "No-more of the gods that have fled and the Not-yet of the god that is coming."\(^{10}\) It is a time characterized by: 1) the need to go "beyond the God-murdering time of Nietzsche into a time when God is as irrelevant as the gods"\(^{11}\); and 2) the need to hold open the dimension of mystery so that there will be a place for unconcealment to occur—a place into which Dasein can throw the light of his questioning to illumine the things that are and thus bring them out of the darkness. Thomas Langan has said that to be delivered from his alienation, "man must first rethink the tradition sufficiently to feel painfully the Need."\(^{12}\)

This rethinking starts with a rethinking of Being in relation to Self, to the Nothing, and to Language, for it is Heidegger's thesis that Being is drawn out of Nothing and revealed in the world through the originative act of man speaking and thus bestowing meaning.

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12\textit{Ibid.}, p. 204.
CHAPTER II
BEING AND SELF
CHAPTER II
BEING AND SELF

In accordance with the hidden message of the beginning, man should be understood, within the question of being, as the site which being requires in order to disclose itself. Man is the site of openness, the there. The essent juts into this there and is fulfilled. Hence we say that man's being is in the strict sense of the word "being-there".  

Martin Heidegger studies man in the light of thought which calls itself "fundamental ontology". Insofar as he starts from human existence—without any prior assumptions about human nature or man's essence—, confronts the human situation in its totality, and asks the question of how man

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13 Martin Heidegger, An Introduction to Metaphysics, tr. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 205. The translator of this work uses the Latin "essent" for both the participle "being" (seiend) and the substantive "entity" (seiendes), and uses "being" with a lower case "b" for the "Being" (Sein) used by Macquarrie and Robinson. I feel that this is an unfortunate substitution in that it creates the impression of a radical separation of being and Being, while it is, I believe, the intention of Heidegger to show their interdependence. It is unfortunate also in that the word "essent", when used in an English translation, does not perform the participial function as well as does the word "being".

In quotations from this work (and from others where necessary) I have enclosed the original German (appearing in the translation) in crossed brackets \( \underline{\text{f}} \) in order to distinguish both from parenthetic inclusions of Heidegger and bracketed inclusions of my own.

14 Heidegger uses "fundamental ontology" to distinguish the task of clarification of the meaning of Being itself from that inquiry into the Being of entities which is generally named "ontology".
can find meaning in the face of his finiteness, Heidegger can be called an existential philosopher. But these elements of his work do not stand alone. In the search for Being, the existential questions are one with the ontological since man is both the seeker and the field of search:

We are ourselves the entities to be analysed. The Being of any such entity is in each case mine...  

The essence of [this entity] Dasein lies in its existence. Thus Dasein is never to be taken ontologically as an instance or special case of some genus of entities as things that are present-at-hand.¹⁵

Ontical man may be studied by the special sciences but in his ontological character, as the locus of Being, he cannot be so studied. We cannot feel that we have exhausted

¹⁵Being and Time, pp. 67-8 (42). For clarification of the term "present-at-hand", see p. 16, n. 31, infra. Here it is perhaps enough to relate "present-at-hand" to the distinction between ontological and ontical. Entities are interpreted ontologically with regard to their basic state of Being, and are interpreted ontically with regard to their observable, measurable, testable characteristics—their present-at-hand character. I have used Heidegger's terminology throughout this work. This is not done without recognition of the problem it presents to the reader unfamiliar with Heidegger, but to deliberately avoid using it would be to miss the point of much of what Heidegger is attempting to do. He chose to use terms which are cumbersome but essentially in keeping with his expressed hope of restoring to language the purity and vitality of its first speaking. If the difference between entities in their present-at-hand character and their ready-to-hand character is not understood, then the speaking of Heidegger will have to wait on that understanding. As long as man insists on binding his thinking with the restrictions of Greek logic, it may well be that Being will remain concealed from him. "Obedient to the voice of Being, thought seeks the Word through which the truth of Being may be expressed." ("What is Metaphysics?" Werner Brock, op. cit., p. 360.)
the possibilities for knowing him by moving around him and examining him with the methods of psychology, anthropology, biology, and the other special sciences. Man is there before he can be the object of analysis. In investigating other entities, he must start from himself. Whatever he discovers is interpreted through the medium of his own understanding and experience and is reported in terms that are at least in part the product of that understanding and experience.

Whatever is said about man, either by the special sciences or by theology, it is not enough. It does not, and cannot, include man's primordial understanding of his own ontological rootedness:16 "'Being' cannot be derived from higher concepts by definition nor can it be presented through lower ones."17 The understanding which man "has" as a result of tradition, study, etc., may coincide with this

16Heidegger speaks of this as the "vague average understanding of Being" (Being and Time, p. 257). I think of it as one's unformulated awareness of his historical relatedness—both personal and public. I am actual only as a totality (my life has significance only as a totality) but my totality can be understood only ontologically. Ontically viewed, I am an entity of such and such dimensions, with a set of constantly changing characteristics, exhibiting certain behavior patterns. Ontologically I am a whole and as long as I exist, "both the 'ends' of my life and their 'between' are . . . " (Ibid., p. 426, 374).

Introducing "Phenomenology and Existentialism" (William Barrett and Henry D. Aiken, ed., Philosophy in the Twentieth Century, Vol. 3 (New York: Randon House, 1962), p. 161), Barrett writes: "The possibility that there can be meaning at all is grounded on the fact of temporality—on the fact that man is a being who can bind together past, present, and future!"
primordial understanding, since much of that which has been incorporated into the tradition is the result of historical man's attempt to make explicit his primordial understanding. The difficulty, however, as Heidegger sees it, is that all such explication involves dissimulation as well as revelation. When historical man makes assertions he may uncover or reveal something of his understanding, but in the process of interpreting that understanding and of putting that interpretation into statement, he will undoubtedly also conceal something of the original understanding. It is for this reason that one cannot wholly accept that which has come down through tradition in the form of assertion, but must attempt to make the assertion transparent so that it will yield up something of the experience which produced it. If man fails to make this attempt and simply passes on down that which was passed to him, he acts in a way that serves to further conceal that which the assertions were attempts to reveal.

Dasein "knows" Being through uncovering it in himself. He is unique in being the only entity for which the question of Being matters—the only entity who questions his existence and its meaning. He acquaints himself with Being in other areas of that world which he first discovers in himself. Before he can know anything about his world he must first understand the possibility of such knowing, through himself. Ontic truth is, therefore, preceded by and
dependent on ontological or even pre-ontological understanding of Self as sole possibility for revelation of truth. "Dasein is as an understanding potentiality-for-Being." When man goes on to acquaint himself with Being in other entities, he is simply becoming aware of that which has been there all along but which has been concealed by his own lack of understanding (loss of Self). His becoming aware is the emergence (and here emergence means becoming apparent to thought) of that which, as presence, already is but is not manifest to thought. The power of emergence is "the overpowering presence that is not yet mastered in thought, wherein that which is present manifests itself as an essent." The more transparent he becomes to himself, the more will he master in thought.

Becoming transparent to oneself is difficult, however, because it involves grasping one's existence as a whole, even though there is part of that existence which is not yet

18 Being and Time, p. 274 (231).

Dasein has a primordial understanding of its possibilities for Being, but this understanding is accompanied by a state of mind which conceals Dasein from himself, and surrenders him to his everydayness. Dasein can reclaim himself through a state of mind which admits the potentiality-for-Being. "And because Dasein is in each case essentially its own possibility, it can, in its very Being, 'choose' itself and win itself; it can also lose itself and never win itself; or only 'seem' to do so. But only in so far as it is essentially something which can be authentic . . . can it have lost itself and not yet won itself." (Being and Time, p. 68 /437.)

20 Introduction to Metaphysics, p. 61.
actual—the future. That which is not yet actual belongs to Dasein as much as does that which is actual. That which is as potential is limited by death and so death becomes part of Dasein's existence as a whole.\(^{21}\)

As long as Dasein is as an entity, it has never reached its 'wholeness'. But if it gains such 'wholeness', this gain becomes the utter loss of Being-in-the-world.\(^{22}\) Death "completes" Dasein but at the same time extinguishes him. Temporality may thus be seen as a primordial element in the definition of Dasein.

Primordial temporality is recognized only in authentic existing. In everydayness, time is seen as a divisive factor. We divide our time into units and, in effect, "spend" these units on things which have successfully competed with each other for them.

He who is irresolute understands himself in terms of those very closest events and be-fallings which he

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\(^{21}\) As I sit here writing I do not know whether I shall live to be ninety or even to finish the sentence. I do know that death is the determining factor—that death is the outer limit of myself as possibility but as such is part of my life as a whole.

From Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu, we hear: "The sun at noon is the sun declining, the creature born is the creature dying." (Paradox HS 4, Chuang Tzu, 33rd Chap., quoted in Fung Yu-lan, A History of Chinese Philosophy, Vol. I /London: Allen and Unwin, 1937/, p. 196.)

And from T. S. Eliot:

"Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
And the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end,
And all is always now. . . . " ("Burnt Norton", op. cit., p. 7.)

\(^{22}\) Being and Time, p. 280 (236).
encounters . . . and which thrust themselves upon him in varying ways. Busily losing himself in the object of his concern, he loses his time in it too. Hence his characteristic way of talking—'I have no time'.

In the mood of irresoluteness man lets himself go this way and that, being little more than reactor to the myriad influences which impinge upon him. He divides up his time and loses both his time and himself without understanding where either have gone. We are never free of moods but we are free to replace one mood with another and the mood of irresoluteness is characterized by a taking hold of oneself, by establishing resistance to the tyranny of external influences. This taking hold of oneself is necessary if we are to live authentically.

Authentic existence . . . , in its resoluteness, never loses time and 'always has time'. For the temporality of resoluteness has, with relation to its Present, the character of a moment of vision . . . . One's existence in the moment of vision temporalizes itself as something that has been stretched along in a way which is fatefully whole in the sense of the authentic historical constancy of the Self. This kind of temporal existence has its time for what the Situation demands of it, and has it 'constantly'.

In resoluteness Dasein sees the extent of his lostness in everydayness. He faces the certainty of his death and

23 *Being and Time*, p. 463 (410).

24 It seems to me that we need to consider this word "resoluteness". It shares some of the meaning of will power but does not have the same implication of being involved as an implement for the enforcement of values. It is, rather, a guardian of openness. Whereas Dasein acts in willing, he is in being resolute.

holds himself open toward it and toward the possibilities of his finite existence. As certain as we are that death is ours, we are equally uncertain as to when it will occur. It is at once inescapably certain, yet indefinite. The facing and accepting of death exposes all self deception and "fleeing from".

Along with the sober anxiety which brings us face to face with our individualized potentiality-for-Being, there goes an unshakable joy in this possibility. In it Dasein becomes free from the entertaining 'incidents' with which busy curiosity keeps providing itself—primarily from the events of the world.26

It is the unification of time which Heidegger refers to as man's transcendence, but here the word "transcendence" takes on a very different meaning from that given it by Christianity. Heidegger's Dasein looks backwards and remembers; he looks forward and anticipates; he looks outward at the things of his world, and inward at the looking Self.27

26Ibid., p. 358 (310).

27"To be conscious is not to be in time
But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Be remembered; involved with past and future.
Only through time time is conquered." (T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton", op. cit., p. 5.)

The past lives in the present in memory but the authentic experience of the present (which assumes memorable quality as it passes into pastness) is out of time. It is consciousness without being consciousness of; it is understanding that does not take an object but simply enjoys itself; it is wonder in the eyes of a child. It is, perhaps, awareness of following a Way that others have followed, of participating in the dialogue of an I-Thou relationship, of belonging essentially to "the stillpoint of the turning world".
All experience filters through him as individual. That which he understands of history is determined in part by his past—that with which he came into the world as well as that which he has done and been—and in part by his future—that which he chooses to do or be, limited or defined by what he can be. Transcendence in this sense is man transcending time and space to bring everything into focus in the present—man transcending his finitude by relating to past and future in the role of voice in the conversation of historical man.

In the fundamental ontology of Heidegger, man seeks Being, not in introspective withdrawal from others or from the world, but in involvement with all of that with which he is concerned in his everyday life.

It is particularly important that Dasein should not be interpreted with the differentiated character of some definite way of existing, but that it should be uncovered in the undifferentiated character which it has proximally and for the most part.

28 What he can be, of course, is defined not only by his ability, energy, resolve, etc., but by his death.

29 Not unlike the Mahayana Buddhist, or the Zen Buddhist, he finds enlightenment in the midst of involvement—the authentic and inauthentic are one, even as are nirvāṇa (the bliss of the ultimate mystery), and samsāra (involvement in the round of struggle and suffering): "So long as nirvāṇa is looked upon as something different from samsāra, the most elementary error about existence still has to be overcome. These two ideas mirror contrary attitudes of the semiconscious individual toward himself and the outer sphere in which he lives; . . . " (See Heinrich Zimmer, Philosophies of India, Joseph Campbell, ed., New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1956, p. 481.)

30 Being and Time, p. 69 (43).
The pre-ontological understanding of Being which belongs to Dasein "comes alive" and is formulated explicitly through concernful involvement with entities of the everyday environment.\(^3\) It is in such involvement with others that Dasein becomes transparent to himself, and if he fails in becoming transparent, his problem is as much rooted in "lack of

\(^3\)Heidegger uses the term "ready-to-hand" in referring to the relationship of concernful involvement with entities in the environment. "The ready-to-hand is always understood in terms of a totality of involvements." (Being and Time, p. 191) When I first read Being and Time my interest was aroused by Heidegger's differentiation between the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand because it enabled me to explicate a particular relationship of which I had long been vaguely aware but to which I had given little thought. For years I have daily grasped the cellar stairway railing, in order to balance on the stairs, but each time I grasp it for this reason, I am also aware of the railing itself and the character it has acquired in a hundred years of use. I have felt this railing day after day, and "know" it in a concernful way through my use of it. I could easily distinguish it from another railing and would be immediately aware of the change, should it be replaced, but were I to try to describe it in terms of the kind of wood, the dimensions of the rail, etc., my attempt would serve only to conceal its ready-to-hand character and would be reducing it to its present-at-hand character. The more we use such things as the railing, the more primordial does our relationship to them become, and the more do they reveal themselves to us. But the world is disclosed to us before we are consciously aware of that disclosure. I was aware, in my being-ness, of the feel of the rail before I gained explicit awareness of my relationship to it (an awareness which in this case didn't come until my reading of Being and Time, some three or four years after my initial use of the railing). The disclosedness had to be there in order for me to become explicitly aware of it.

Dasein also has the character of ready-to-handness in his involvement with others, but Dasein alone of the ready-to-hand goes beyond this ready-to-handness to the point of being able to understand and interpret and disclose, with the help of language.
acquaintance with the world" as in "egocentric' self-deceptions". Yet that very involvement—even the search he makes in attempting to know Being by studying "beings"—conceals him from himself: "... the entity which in every case we ourselves are, is ontologically that which is farthest." Man searches for and finds his explanations in otherness, while that which should be closest to him—the Self—is the least understood.

Although man is always related to Being, he spends most of his time and effort relating to particular manifestations of it—he spends most of his time in the world of everydayness. Even when he approaches ultimate questions he draws from the materials of his everyday world, as indeed he must.

His encounters with Being may actually be looked upon as

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32 *Being and Time*, p. 187 (146).

33 "Common sense", which is the label that everyday thinking gives itself, insists on the "factual" and defines factuality in terms of entities in their present-at-hand character. Part of its reason for so doing is the belief that only the factual is reliable and therefore only that yielded by the factual is sufficiently dependable to warrant serving as a basis for conclusions.

"Common sense concerns itself, whether 'theoretically' or 'practically', only with entities which can be surveyed at a glance circumspectively. What is distinctive in common sense is that it has in view only the experiencing of 'factual' entities, in order that it may be able to rid itself of an understanding of Being. It fails to recognize that entities can be experienced 'factual' only when Being is already understood, even if it has not been conceptualized." ([Ibid.], p. 363 (3157).)

disturbing encounters with the paradoxical and so be pushed aside and neglected because his everyday relations appear so much more concrete and objective.35 In the judgment of his "they" self, the experience itself is suspect.

The fact that we may fail to pursue the paradoxical does not thereby eliminate it. It simply makes it the more hidden from us. We push it aside and forget it but in so doing, put the forgotten in a realm of its own. The mysterious thus retreats into hiddenness. The further we go, depending solely on the resources of our everydayness, the more we alienate ourselves from Being. The more we succeed in leading full, active, and positive everyday lives, the more successfully do we conceal Being. Yet it is through this everyday life, through ourselves in our everydayness, that we approach the understanding of what we are in our being, even though Being is so well concealed in our everydayness that it has to be "wrested" from it.

The self of everyday Dasein is the they-self \( \sqrt{\text{das Man-selbst}} \), which we distinguish from the authentic Self--that is, from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way \( \sqrt{\text{eigens ergriffenen}} \). As they-self, the particular Dasein has been dispersed into the "they", and must first find itself... If Dasein is familiar with itself as they-self, this means at the same time that the "they" itself prescribes...\( \sqrt{\text{the}} \) way of interpreting the world..."

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35Everyday man publishes the results of his concrete research but hides his poetry in his bureau drawer.

36Being and Time, p. 167 (129).
We function in everydayness with regard to our social, economic, and political concerns and do that which we do for the sake of the "they"—which is not only others, but the "they" in ourselves, our own public character. It is the "they" which dictates the value or significance of what we do in our everydayness. For the most part, Dasein functions in his "they" character. When a disclosure of his authentic Self takes place, it is accomplished by a sort of clearing-away of the things which have made the "they"-self and its activities seem of primary importance and significance. Being must be found in everydayness, yet in that everydayness man loses himself and misses Being. As long as we live our "they" life in an other-centered way (and here "other" refers as well to the "they"-self in me), without being aware that we are doing so, then we are covering up and missing our authentic Self and world. When the "they" world becomes—instead of a consuming end in itself and thereby an obstacle to understanding—the path to authentic Selfhood and one's own world, then its value as the means to understanding can be seen. Authenticity is not distinct from, but a modification of, everydayness.

The inauthenticity of Dasein does not signify any 'less' Being or any 'lower' degree of Being. Rather it is the case that even in its fullest concretion Dasein can be characterized by inauthenticity—when busy, when excited, when interested, when ready for enjoyment.37

37Ibid., p. 68 (43).
If Dasein in his "they" character sees himself leading a full and genuine life, he may be fooling himself and through this self-deception, lulling himself into a state of tranquillity which is at once comforting and alienating --comforting in giving false assurance that everything is understood, but alienating in that it hides one's ownmost potentiality-for-Being (or in that it keeps one from one's Self).

Through the self-certainty and decidedness of the "they", it gets spread abroad increasingly that there is no need of authentic understanding or the state-of-mind that goes with it. The supposition of the "they" that one is leading and sustaining a full and genuine 'life', brings Dasein a tranquillity, for which everything is 'in the best of order' and all doors are open. Falling Being-in-the-world, which tempts itself, is at the same time tranquillizing.\textsuperscript{38}

This tranquillizing has the effect of driving one into activity because one thinks he knows what the solutions are and has only to implement them.

Dasein plunges out of itself into itself, into the groundlessness and nullity of inauthentic everydayness. But this plunge remains hidden from Dasein by the way things have been publicly interpreted, so much so, indeed, that it gets interpreted as a way of 'ascending' and 'living concretely'.\textsuperscript{39}

Thus the tranquillizing effect of public approval serves to alienate Dasein from himself. If this alienation

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid., p. 222 (177). Heidegger sees this as a form of tranquillizing which, in essence, is more of a delusive lulling because it "does not seduce one into stagnation and inactivity, but drives one into uninhibited 'hustle' \textsuperscript{\text{"Betreibs"}}."\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., p. 223 (178).
is felt, it may lead merely into exaggerated self analysis and a consequent further concealing of Self, but there is also the possibility that it may produce the anxiety which leads to the penetration of the mysterious.

Although the "they" character is that in which we all dwell for the most part, the individual tends to think of others as "they", without including himself: "They said this . . . They did that . . ." When everyday Dasein is asked "Who?" and answers, "They", he is really answering, "Nobody". We tend to think of the way in which "they" live, without including ourselves, while actually this everyday averageness is the way in which we all live and in which we conceal the authentic Self.

In our everyday life, functioning in our "they" role, we do not need (or at least recognize our need of) that which Paul Tillich called "the courage to be". We drift along in the false security of the "they"-world's assurances until we confront the fact that "they" cannot protect us from our unique destiny--our own death. We may live our entire lives lost in "they"-ness and insulated against thoughts of death.

Dying, which is essentially mine in such a way that no one can be my representative, is perverted into an event of public occurrence which the "they" encounters. In the way of talking which we have characterized, death is spoken of as a 'case' which is constantly occurring. Death gets passed off as always something

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40_Ibid._, pp. 164-5 (127).
'actual'; its character as a possibility gets concealed, . . . By such ambiguity, Dasein puts itself in the position of losing itself in the "they" as regards a distinctive potentiality-for-Being which belongs to Dasein's ownmost Self. The "they" gives its approval, and aggravates the temptation to cover up from oneself one's ownmost Being-towards-death. 41

"They" do not want to permit Dasein to take his death to himself and face it. Up to the very end, they are insisting upon the evasive concealment of such words as "You'll be better soon," or "Of course you're going to get well." 42 Thus Dasein flees from death. This evasive fleeing from one's own possibilities, Heidegger calls "falling". It is characteristic of everydayness. It does not mean that death ceases to be an issue but rather that it becomes an issue in a deficient mode--through calculated indifference or deceit. If it becomes the dominant mode of our existence we may be quite unprepared for death and quite unprepared to accept the fact that "they" cannot really help us. 43 If we have so

41 Ibid., p. 297 (253).

42 These words may be spoken from the indifference of everydayness or they may be expressive of a kind of solicitude which wants to "take over"--to relieve the other of his problems, thus dominating and making him dependent. This kind of solicitude robs the other of himself while deceiving him into believing that all is well, and should be carefully distinguished from the care that Dasein exhibits in his authentic relations with others. Authentic caring tries to help the other become aware of himself and by so doing to free him for the assumption of his own responsibility and the realization of his own potential. (See Ibid., pp. 158-9.)

43 I am reminded of being present at the death of a fifty-year-old maiden aunt. Her final battle with angina pectoris lasted three days, and by the third day she began to realize that she would probably die. It seemed to be
lived, we have dwelt for the most part in a sort of 'untruth' and have been freed from this untruth only when it is too late.

But at any time freedom involves anxiety and uncertainty and man in his everydayness seeks an existence free from such anxiety and uncertainty. He cannot face the thought of not being and so accepts answers—such as personal immortality in the Christian sense—which offer relief from both death and uncertainty. In so doing, he is deceiving himself with false assurances which permit him to pursue his life of tranquillity. But he does not wholly rid himself of doubt and does bury more deeply the possibility of understanding. The anxiety of freedom is the condition of understanding.

Man looks for and finds many aids in the process of insulating himself against the contemplation of not being. He can involve himself in useful work which needs no justification but which reduces the frequency of those moments of silence in which the emptiness of non-being confronts him. His life takes on importance through the service he renders or the contributions he makes to society. But the more important he considers the work, the greater is its power

entirely unexpected and something to be resisted frantically. With each seizure, she would grasp anybody near and cling to them as if she believed that they might protect her. In between seizures she would plead with the doctor, with God, and with us, as if, God and the doctor failing, we would surely help. The words, "No, no!" punctuated her final intake of breath, and she died with the doctor's coat lapels gripped in her fingers.
to deceive and conceal. Convinced of the value of what he is doing and of what he has to offer the world, he may work feverishly to uncover new scientific truths, or improve his teaching skills, or write more adequate sermons, and in so doing lose himself. If in the midst of this activity, however, he pauses occasionally to wonder about the importance of what he is doing, he is experiencing the uneasiness of open-ness, which Heidegger refers to as "wanting to have a conscience". The uneasiness is the call of conscience--the call of authentic Selfhood to the self lost in everyday-ness--and is heard only when conscience speaks more clearly than the myriad voices of the "they"--including the "they"-self--to which we are accustomed to listening and which may be applauding our work.

Conscience discourses solely and constantly in the mode of keeping silent.

Yet what the call discloses is unequivocal, even though it may undergo a different interpretation in the individual Dasein in accordance with its own

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44 When I am working concentratedly on a project which I consider worthwhile, I don't question the value of the time spent. But when I sit three or four hours in front of a television set, without enjoying or even really being aware of what I am watching, I become most uncomfortable. I may continue to sit and watch, even as I berate myself for doing so, but in this situation--which appears to be an obvious waste of time--I am more likely to experience the kind of uneasiness which leads to a breakthrough to Self than I am when I am busy with things which my "they" self considers important or necessary.

45 Being and Time, p. 334 (288). "Openness" in this context means to be open to one's own possibilities.
possibilities of understanding.

Conscience summons Dasein's Self from its lostness in the "they".46

Because the call of conscience is to the "they"-self, Dasein may interpret it in terms of the experience of his "they"-self,47 and if he does, he may pursue that which is considered important, respectable, valuable, etc., by the public standards which he, in his "they" character, has helped to establish. If he does, he will still be covering up, albeit in a different way, his own possibilities.

He may also hide these possibilities by interpreting his initial break-through into understanding in such a way as to result in willing unreal or extravagant possibilities. Heidegger speaks of this as projecting a wish-world.48

46 Ibid., pp. 318-9 (273-4).

47 The conscience issues nothing in the way of specific moral or ethical imjunctions. Whenever it is believed to be doing so, i.e., when it is believed to making value judgments about our activities or our behavior, it is simply that we are adding to the basic call a content which does not belong to it but belongs to our religious or ethical code. When we do this we are actually refusing to hear the call.

48 The concept of the wish-world may need some clarification although it is one with which we are all familiar. It is that world in which we see possibilities just beyond where we now stand. It is the world of the greener grass, the better tomorrow, that blinds us to the possibilities of the here and now (which, in Heidegger, includes, as we have already seen, the yesterday and the tomorrow). It is the never-realized world—the world in which we go in search of possibilities which seem to offer greater promise. We all venture into the wish-world now and then, but if we attempt to dwell there, we reap not the expected harvest of delights,
Man loses himself in such projecting by losing the world which is his own and seeking one which is not available to him. Instead of being able to work out his own possibilities in the world which is his, he exhibits constant dissatisfaction with that which is available to him and bestows reality on his wish world. Again this results in covering up his own possibilities and, further, permits him to be dominated by his willing of unreal possibilities.

If one does, however, experience the uneasiness of openness in a receptive posture, the call of conscience may come as a call away from excessive activity and to the Self. In this call to Self, we become aware of possibilities uniquely ours. As we have already seen, we may turn away from the call because it disturbs our tranquillity, but we do have a choice and herein lies our freedom. We are free to turn away, back to the security of our everydayness, or to make ourselves accessible to Being.

but one of increasing dissatisfaction with the reality of our actual existence.

In the Tao Tê Ching (Verse I), there is reference to a barrier of "longing" which is not unlike the unreal wishing of the wish-world. The Taoist speaks of enlightenment residing as potential in all men but waiting upon "the eyes unclouded by longing". (See Tao Tê Ching, R. B. Blakney, tr., New York: New American Library, 1955, p. 53.)

Heidegger does not see this as a one-way permanent enlightenment. Everyday man does not suddenly become aware and then remain that way, impervious to the assaults of his everyday world. Quite to the contrary, he is constantly slipping back into his "they"-world character, and the "moments of vision", as Heidegger refers to them, may be rare indeed.
Let us think Being in its original sense as presence. Man is neither casually nor exceptionally confronted by Being. Being becomes evident and lasts only so long as by virtue of its claim it draws near to concerns (an-geht) Man. For it is man alone who has made himself accessible to Being, who permits Being to approach him with its presence.  

Making ourselves accessible to Being does not necessitate a radical change in the nature of the activity of our everyday lives but it does involve a change of attitude—a change of mood. It is the "openness to mystery" which renders us sensitive to the meaning of what we do in our everyday lives. Both domination by our everydayness and rejection of it stand in the way of such openness, while living our ordinary lives in the mood of resoluteness opens us to the possibilities of our own situation. We may go on doing the same things we have been doing, but if we do whatever we do in such a way as to keep ourselves open to Being, then we bestow meaning on the most ordinary task—we do whatever we do with a kind of joy.

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51 By caring and by having time "for what the Situation demands". ( _Being and Time_, p. 463. See also p. 13 supra.)

In the state of Sorge Dasein grasps his own reality as projection of the world horizon and, at the same time, as radical finitude. The Dasein who manages, in this sense, to care realizes his responsibility as the unique source of meaning in the world and realizes, in the same instant, his own nothingness as finite being.\textsuperscript{53}

Our everydayness, instead of being a barrier to self realization, becomes the very path to Self and Being. Man looks beyond his everyday world and his finite existence and sees Nothing. He is forced back upon his own inwardness and finds Being and himself. It is in the act of giving thanks for the revelation of Being that speech is born. Man "dedicates the Da-sein he has won for himself to the preservation of the dignity of Being."\textsuperscript{54} Dasein's acceptance of his own non-being--his finitude--has made it possible for him to conceive of the possibility of the non-being of the things-that-are. When all that is is set against this background of non-being--of Nothingness--he sees the importance of his own role as bestower of meaning because it is only by virtue of this meaning that the entities of the world step forward out of the darkness to become part of the world of man. Thus does man's non-existence become the very ground of his existence and the source of meaning in that existence.

\textsuperscript{53}Thomas Langan, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 28.

\textsuperscript{54}"What is Metaphysics?" Werner Brock, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 359.
Death, as the coffer of the Nothing, protects for man the realization of Being in itself. 

"Der Tod birgt als der Schrein des Nichts das Wesende des Seins in sich." 55

CHAPTER III

BEING AND NOTHING
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How did it come about that beings take precedence everywhere and lay claim to every "is" while that which is not a being is understood as Nothing, though it is Being itself, and remains forgotten? How did it come about that with Being It really is nothing, and that the Nothing really is not?\(^{56}\)

Through man's confrontation with death (nothingness) he begins to see the relationship between Being and the Nothing and realizes that he--and he only so long as he lives--is the very condition for the possibility of there being anything at all.

Only as long as Dasein is (that is, only as long as an understanding of Being is ontically possible), 'is there' Being.\(^{57}\)


In the teachings of Hsi Yun, a Ch'\-\'an Buddhist master of the 9th century, we read: "To say that the real Dharma (roughly, "essence") of the Buddha is like the void means that it actually is void and that the void is in fact the Dharma. . . . The void and the Dharma do not differ from each other, neither do sentient beings and Buddhas, the phenomenal world and Nirvana, or delusion and Bodhi (enlightenment). Ordinary people look outwards, while followers of the Way look into their own minds, but the real Dharma is to forget both the external and the internal. The former is easy enough, the latter very difficult. Men are afraid to forget their own minds, fearing to fall through the void with nothing to which they can cling. They do not know that the void is not really void but the real realm of the Dharma." (E. A. Burtt, ed., The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha /New York: New American Library, 1955/, p. 199.

\(^{57}\) Being and Time, p. 255 (212).
Being is, and dwells in the world, only as long as, and when, there is a place for it to dwell. That place is man speaking. Heidegger challenges the traditional Christian view of Being as that which is prior to and independent of entities when he says:

Being never essentializes itself without Seienden, and Seienden cannot be without Being / das Selende, dass niemals ein Seiendes ist ohne das Sein/.\(^58\)

It is to the what-is (Seienden) that man relates in his everyday life and he relates to the what-is in its particular manifestations, as things that are. He doesn't seek the totality to which these manifestations belong, either because he has a religious answer which satisfies him, or because to do so is to trespass into an area outside of that which the rationalism of the tradition would define as the realm of "responsible thought".\(^59\)

As long as life is full and satisfying there seems to be no need to press beyond the particular manifestations of Being to which we relate in our everyday existence. It is only when the meaning of that everyday existence is called

\(^58\)"What is Metaphysics?" Quoted in Thomas Langan, op. cit., p. 97. I have chosen to use this quotation of Heidegger from a secondary source because the translation better suits the thought of Heidegger than does the translation of R. F. C. Hull and Alan Crick which appears in Werner Brock's Existence and Being (p. 354). Hull and Crick have translated the above parenthetic inclusion of German by: "Being may be without what-is, but never what-is without Being."

\(^59\)This definition is given by Laszlo Versenyi in his Heidegger, Being and Truth (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 175. See commentary on this work, p. 78 infra.
into question that we experience uneasiness. If our everyday life does not provide us with a serene sense of being at home in the world, of being at home in our situation, we may begin to question: "What is it all about? Is there any meaning to my existence? Why am I here?" "Why is there anything at all rather than Nothing?" The farther we press on in search, the more uneasy we become because the familiar things of our world seem to lose their concreteness, their particularity. We even begin to have doubts about our own personal identity. All that is seems to merge into a vast amorphous totality which is at once everything and nothing.

Nothingness ... is the radical nullification of the totality of beings \( \text{das Seiende} \). Since, as no-thing, it cannot become an object for the intellect, it manifests itself in such affective states as total ennui or anguish in which the totality of concrete being, including the Self, begins to float in insubstantial unreality, and we are repelled with a shock from the Nothingness which faces us as the imminent possibility which resides in the very heart of human being \( \text{das Sein} \) and in which our being is contained.\(^6^1\)

\(^{60}\)Heidegger uses the word "dread" to describe this uneasiness because "dread" seems to fit that horror which has no known object. Our dread is of or about, but of or about what, we never know, and it is this unknowing that intensifies the dread itself and makes it the mood in which man encounters Nothing. "We ourselves confirm that dread reveals Nothing--when we have gotten over our dread. In the lucid vision which supervenes while yet the experience is fresh in our memory we must needs say that what we were afraid of was 'actually' \( \text{eigentlich} \): also 'authentic'\(^7\) Nothing. And indeed Nothing itself, Nothing as such, was there." (["What is Metaphysics?" Werner Brock, op. cit., pp. 336-7.])

The totality of what-is is not a collection of things and it is only as the thing character of everything vanishes that we experience this blending or melting which yields the totality of Being—the Nothing. The experience is made possible by man's Dasein character enabling him to relate to what-is by being transcendent in the sense of belonging essentially to the Nothing. But as the is character of all that is familiar escapes, and Dasein is engulfed by the is-not, he is gripped by undefined panic. "There is nothing to hold on to." If he stands fast in his panic, however, he will be rewarded with an easing of the terror and an awakening of wonder.

62 This is Heidegger's moment of vision—the moment in which we break through to that dark background against which we see our own potentiality-for-Being. This limited share of potential is that which Whitehead refers to as the "real" potential and distinguishes from the "general" potential which is the sum of all such possibilities. (See Alfred North Whitehead, "Process and Reality", Chap. II, Section II, Part III: The Categories of Explanation (iv), (v), (vi), and (vii), F. S. C. Northrop and Mason W. Gross, ed., Alfred North Whitehead, an Anthology / New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961/, pp. 584 ff, especially p. 590.

63 If my essence is existence and my existence is an amorphous unity of a past which is gone, a future which has not yet come, and a present which never is, then I belong essentially to the Nothing. When tradition speaks of a subject "I" it is regarding man ontically rather than ontologically—it is regarding him as something present-at-hand which maintains a continuing identity. When man speaks of himself, he most often speaks the "I" from his everydayness. The more truly he is hidden from himself, the more loudly does he proclaim the "I".

64 "What is Metaphysics?" Werner Brock, op. cit., p. 336.
The clear courage for essential dread guarantees that most mysterious of all possibilities: the experience of Being. For hard by essential dread, in the terror of the abyss, there dwells awe.  

Heidegger sees the ancient Greek figure of Oedipus exemplifying this "clear courage for essential dread". The ancients stood in awe of the paradoxical nature of that which appeared both as unity and diversity. They embodied it in their gods, and in their poetry. It was the only possible expression of that mystery which, when approached too closely, appeared to be the "very abyss of meaninglessness".

The mortal who has tasted in anguish the great and bitter fruit of his nothingness respects the unnamed and guards the unknown. He does this by refusing to turn night falsely into day, i.e., by respecting mystery.

Whereas the ancients respected mystery, there have been many of us at the other end of the spectrum who have "in sheer timidity, shut our ears to the soundless voice which

65Ibid., p. 355.

66See An Introduction to Metaphysics, pp. 106-7. As Oedipus pressed on in his search for the murderer of his father, he was more and more possessed by a vague horror of what he would find, but his passion for truth (for the disclosure of Being) drove him on. After the disclosure of that to which his search had led, he put out his eyes as if to extinguish the light by which Being stood revealed, only to discover, later in his life, that even in his blindness Being stood illuminated and undisclosed before him. "King Oedipus has one eye too many perhaps." (Heidegger quoting Hölderlin, Werner Brock, op. cit., p. 289.)

67Thomas Langan, op. cit., p. 126, paraphrasing Heidegger, Vorträge und Aufsätze, p. 150.
attunes us to the horror of the abyss." In between the two extremes are those for whom the apparent conflict of differences has to be resolved—they can't live with uncertainty. It requires too much courage to look into the abyss and to listen for the silence that strikes terror to our hearts. But it is in this silence that we experience "that unquestionable, unanalyzable, mute grasp of the Being of something which is present as the very atmosphere in which any grasp of any kind of thing takes place—a notion of Being present . . . ." 69

Man's attempts to deal with the problem of Being have had their origins in this "mute grasp", but not all men have accepted it as unanalyzable, 70 and great differences appear in the explicit formulations which follow the awareness. Despite his primordial understanding, man can make his experiences explicit only through himself as voice, and the interpretation of his experience will always be shaped by that which he is. If he has become aware of his own

68"What is Metaphysics?" Werner Brock, op. cit., p. 354.

69 Thomas Langan, op. cit., p. 82, paraphrasing Heidegger, Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Vittorio Klostermann, 1951), pp. 204-5. It is this mute grasp which Heidegger calls primordial understanding—"the understanding which is prior to the formation of all ideas". (Heidegger, op. cit., p. 205, quoted by Langan, op. cit., p. 82.)

70 One of the paradoxes of the human scene, which bears out Heidegger's thesis, is that even those who recognize and acknowledge the ineffable nature of Being, still try to talk and write about it.
possibilities and has reduced the domination of his past, he
will attempt to make his interpretation authentic, i.e., free
it from the criteria of his "they"-world.

Man's history is a record of attempts to give expres-
sion to the experience of Being, but because of its elusive
nature men have often fallen into the trap of positing more
than is warranted, as is the case in classical ontology and
Christian theology; or less than is warranted, as is the
case in modern science.

When Plato went beyond the intelligible ideas to posit
the Good, he seemed to acknowledge the obscure, unintelli-
gible source of the intelligible, but he established it in
a realm of its own and accomplished, at the same time, a
radical devaluation of Being.

But insofar as the ideas constitute being, ousia
, the idea tou agathou ideo tou ousias,
the supreme idea, stands epekeina tes ousias
, beyond being. Thus being

In Buddhism, the concept of the Void (Sunyata) is
necessary because any attempt at positive identification of
being would limit it to the phenomenal world—the realm of
samsara. Yet Sunyata is a positive principle in that noth-
ing is possible without it. Despite the fact that the
Buddha cautioned against making positive assertions about
the Void, the development of Buddhist thought led to the
Yogacara doctrine of the Void as repository of universal con-
sciousness; (See Heinrich Zimmer, op. cit., pp. 526 ff.)
and to the Zen doctrine of No-mind (See T. D. Suzuki, op.
cit., pp. 190 ff.). The Buddha was not the only one to issue
injunctions against speaking of that which we cannot know
(we might also include Wittgenstein and Suzuki) but men con-
tinue to speak and, I believe with Heidegger, always will,
because questioning is man's way of being, and the attempt
to give meaning to that which he finds in his quest will
compel him to speak.
itself, not as such but as idea, comes into opposition to something other, on which it, being, is dependent. The supreme idea has become the model of the models.  

In the realm of the intelligible he created a dualism in which reality and appearance were separated, with appearance taking on a deficient character. He could not accept, as could his predecessors, the unity and equality of opposites. He seemed compelled to establish a hierarchy and bring order out of the chaos which he saw exemplified in ancient art and poetry.

It was in the Sophists and in Plato that appearance was declared to be mere appearance and thus degraded. At the same time being, as idea, was exalted to a supra-sensory realm. A chasm, chorismos ἕξοπλεύσας, was created between the merely apparent essent here below and real being somewhere on high. In that chasm Christianity settled down, at the same time reinterpreting the lower as the created and the higher as the creator. These refashioned weapons it turned against antiquity (as paganism) and so disfigured it.

Christianity took up Plato's concept of the Good but rejected his devaluation of Being. In Christianity Being and the Good shared supremacy but were located in a creative absolute through whom all that was came to be.

Things are only what they are, if they are, to the extent that they, as created things (ens creatum), correspond to an idea preconceived in the intellectus divinus, that is to say, in the mind of God, and thus conform to the idea...
As created, the human intellect reflects its correspondence with the divine intellect by realizing, in its propositions, ... that approximation of thought to thing, which, in its turn, must also conform to the idea. The possibility of human knowledge being true (granted that all that "is" is "created") has its basis in the fact that thing and proposition are to an equal extent in conformity with the idea and thus find themselves conforming to one another in the unity of the divine creative plan.75

Whereas classical metaphysics had said ex nihilo nihil fit (from nothing, nothing comes), Christian dogma substituted ex nihilo fit—ens creatum (out of nothing all is created).76 The "more than was warranted" which Christianity was guilty of positing was the Creator—God.

Modern science predicates too little of being when it makes it simply the common denominator of entities which, as present-at-hand objects, can be investigated by the methods of the special sciences, classified, and certified in their

75Ibid.

76Heidegger takes this a step further—a step which he sees as making the old proposition more appropriate to the problem of Being: "ex nihilo omne ens qua ens fit—or out of nothing . .. all being as such emerges". ("What Is Metaphysics?", quoted by Karl Lowith, "Heidegger: Problem and Background of Existentialism", Social Research, Vol. 15, p. 355.) I have taken the translation of this proposition from Lowith's article rather than from the Werner Brock work, where the essay appears in its entirety (p. 346), because I find Lowith's interpretation of the Latin more compatible with Heidegger's tone than the interpretation of Hull and Crick in the Brock volume: "every being, so far as it is a being, is made out of nothing". It is the phrase "made out of" to which I object inasmuch as it implies a maker and the important difference between Heidegger's proposition and the Christian proposition is, of course, in the way that entities emerge from nothingness. (See p. 11 supra.)
classifications through the use of truth as agreement between statement and object.\textsuperscript{77}

We shall not get a genuine knowledge of essences simply by the syncretistic activity of universal comparison and classification. Subjecting the manifold to tabulation does not ensure any actual understanding of what lies there before us as thus set in order. If an ordering principle is genuine, it has its own content as a thing \textsuperscript{7}Sachgehalt\textsuperscript{7}, which is never to be found by means of such ordering, but is already presupposed in it. So if one is to put various pictures of the world in order, one must have an explicit idea of the world as such. And if the 'world' itself is something constitutive for Dasein, one must have an insight into Dasein's basic structures in order to treat the world-phenomenon conceptually.\textsuperscript{78}

There must be a coming together in conscious experience of Being and being (a coming-together which is actually only a bringing-out-into-the-open of their essential and already 'there' belonging-together) if there is to be an explicit understanding and a genuine speaking in any sort of investigation of phenomena. One thing necessary for this coming together is "keeping aloof from the attitude of representational thinking".\textsuperscript{79}

This keeping aloof is a positing in the sense of a leap. It is a bounding away from and a leaving behind of the familiar concept of man as the animal rationale, the rational animal, who nowadays has become the subject for his objects.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{77}This definition of truth as agreement between judgment and object is discussed on p. 61 infra.

\textsuperscript{78}Being and Time, p. 77 (52).

\textsuperscript{79}Essays in Metaphysics: Identity and Difference, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{80}Ibid. Heidegger reinterprets the Greek expression \textsuperscript{7}σώφρον ἀληθεῦσεν\textsuperscript{8}, traditionally translated "rational animal",\textsuperscript{8}
Keeping aloof from representational thinking is difficult, but the measure of both science and philosophy is the degree to which they can remain open for the speaking of Being and do so by subjecting their most basic concepts to continuous and radical examination.

Representational thinking examines entities in their present-at-hand character and sets them in order according to an explicit idea of world without adequately exploring the field which gave rise to that idea of world. As a product of his tradition, modern Western man is likely to see himself as a knowing entity at the center of a knowable world. The degree to which his knowledge reflects the character of that world is determined by his success in refining so that it becomes "that living thing whose Being is essentially determined by the potentiality for discourse". This change rests on Heidegger's interpretation of δόξα as discourse (Rede) instead of reason. (See Being and Time, p. 47 /257/.)

William Kimmel, in his Introduction to The Search for Being, says that for Heidegger (as for Marcel and Jaspers): "Being is encountered first in a metaphysical shock at the limits of reason.... Heidegger's dread in the face of death and Nothingness is the occasion for the discovery of Being which is outside and beyond reason and the forms of consciousness but encountered in a relationship to them." (Jean T. Wilde and William Kimmel, op. cit., p. 23.)

The leap away from man as rational animal is a leap essential to Zen Buddhism also. "There is a leap, logical and psychological, in the Buddhist experience.... for when Prajna functions, one finds oneself all of a sudden facing Sunyata, the emptiness of all things. This does not take place as the result of reasoning but when reasoning has been abandoned as futile, and psychologically when the will-power is brought to a finish." (D. T. Suzuki, op. cit., pp. 185-6.)
and ordering his concepts. The important point which he too often overlooks is that he himself is the final ordering principle. He is aware, if he is a scientist, that the instruments he uses for observation and measurement have a distorting influence on the observed phenomena so that he is never quite sure of the character of the entity under observation. He may be less aware of his own role as distorting influence, but if he is aware of it, then he knows that the greater is his understanding of himself, the more clearly will he see his world.

The danger which Heidegger sees in failing to keep aloof from representational thinking lies in the possibility of coming to consider it the only way of thinking, and thereby blocking our access to the primordial relationship between man and his world. Awareness of the primordial relationship is buried when entities are regarded solely in their present-at-hand character.

To forget being and cultivate only the essent—that is nihilism.

To press inquiry into being explicitly to the limits of nothingness, to draw nothingness into the question of being—this is the first and only fruitful step toward a true transcending of nihilism.

Any discussion of Being which is cast in terms of the Nothing will invariably call forth the charge "illogical!"

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81 He may use established categories, etc., but the final decision as to the appropriate category for a given entity is made by him and will be influenced by that which he is.

82 An Introduction to Metaphysics, p. 203.
and the charge is perfectly justified. But unless we accept logic as the final judge of expressions of experience, the charge need not concern us.

"Logic" is only one exposition of the nature of thinking, and one which, as its name shows, is based on the experience of Being as attained in Greek thought. The animus against "logic" ... derives from the knowledge of that thinking which has its source not in the observation of the objectivity of what-is, but in the experience of the truth of Being.83

But what if both our concern for the fundamental rules of thought and our fear of nihilism, which both seem to counsel against speaking of nothing, should be based on a misunderstanding?84

The pre-Socratics spoke of contradiction as the very essence of life. Their search was for some unified source from which this contradiction might spring.85 Truth was

83"What is Metaphysics?" Werner Brock, op. cit., p. 356. Heidegger's view of the inadequacy of logic is one he shares with Indian thought. Heinrich Zimmer (op. cit., p. 25) writes: "Indian philosophy insists that the sphere of logical thought is far exceeded by that of the mind's possible experiences of reality. To express and communicate knowledge gained in moments of grammar-transcending insight, metaphors must be used, similes and allegories. These are then not mere embellishments, dispensable accessories, but the very vehicles of the meaning, which could not be rendered, and could never have been attained, through the logical formulae of normal verbal thought. Significant images can comprehend and make manifest with clarity and pictorial consistency the paradoxical character of the reality known to the sage: a translogical reality, which, expressed in the abstract language of normal thought, would seem inconsistent, self-contradictory, or even absolutely meaningless."


85The Hindus and Buddhists also sought this unitary source of contradiction. The Hindus named it Brahman; the Buddhists named it Sunyata; they both found nothing other. The attempt to describe what they found led them into
that which motivated their search rather than that which they articulated as a result.

In order to find something must we not know beforehand that it is there? Indeed we must! First and foremost we can only look if we have presupposed the presence of a thing to be looked for. But here the thing we are looking for is Nothing. Is there after all a seeking without pre-supposition, a seeking complemented by a pure finding?

Heidegger's attempt to restore the purity of the original word is an attempt to go back of that which has most importantly influenced our tradition to its roots in something more primal. Thus the nihilating with which he is charged is not a nihilating in the sense of a repudiation of history, but is:

... a dismantling, liquidating, putting to one side the merely historical assertions about the history of philosophy. Destruction means—to open our ears, to

paradoxical expressions, such as:

"Brahman is the ritual,
Brahman is the offering,
Brahman is he who offers
To the fire that is Brahman." (From the Bhagavad-Gita, IV, 24, tr. Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood /New York: New American Library, 19547, p. 53.)
And (from Suzuki, op. cit., p. 243): "In the case of Ungan /Yun-yen T'an-Ch'eng, 781-8417, the sweeping and the sweeper and the broom are all one, even including the ground which is being swept."

T. S. Eliot's experience of the still point led him to express himself with words like these:

"The intersection of the timeless moment Is England and nowhere. Never and always."
(From "Little Gidding", op. cit., p. 32.)

86"What is Metaphysics?" Werner Brock, op. cit., p. 332.
make ourselves free for what speaks to us in tradition as the Being of being.\textsuperscript{87}

The task of destruction, therefore, is not one of destroying in order to replace the destroyed with something newly created and equally concealing--it is rather one of destroying in order to remove the accretions of history and to let be the purity of primal insights. Dasein cannot turn his back on his tradition because it is too much a part of him, so he must ask the ontological question of that tradition and carefully destroy those elements which have hidden Being rather than illuminating it. Dasein confronts his task, not from the position of one rejecting his past, but from that of one standing in and being held fast to that from which he would flee.

And what is to be his criterion in this task of destruction? That primordial understanding which precedes all analysis, judgment, and assertion--the understanding which is "mine" alone but which hears the voice of Being in the words of others who have succeeded in making their experience of Being explicit. Where the words have concealed Being, we must go back of them to the experiences which produced them. The error of our tradition has been in freezing that which should have remained fluid, of accepting the words divorced from the dialogue itself. If the essence of

experience could be distilled and preserved for all time in a word, then a representing vehicle such as "idea" would suffice, but such is not the case. The experience is nothing communicable apart from the interpretation, but the interpretation is made by man after experiencing--by man a step away from the experience--and so is never free of that which the interpreter adds from out of himself. The more that is added to an experience by way of interpreting, the more is the experience concealed.  

88In his study, Mysticism and Philosophy (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1960), p. 37, Walter Stace writes: "I use the word 'interpretation' to mean anything which the conceptual intellect adds to the experience for the purpose of understanding it, whether what is added is only classificatory concepts, or a logical inference, or an explanatory hypothesis." Stace distinguishes between "low-level" and "high-level" interpretation--low level interpretation being that which is closest to a merely descriptive report, and high-level that which includes a great deal of intellectual addition. An experience of my own may serve to illustrate this point. Several years ago I was attending a Quaker international conference and on the last morning of the conference took part in a silent meeting. Toward the end of the period of meditation I began to feel strange. The closest I can come to a bare description of the experience is to speak of a heightened awareness accompanied by a much exaggerated heart beat and a powerful urge to speak. Beyond these physiological or psychological manifestations, there was nothing. My subsequent high-level interpretation of the experience as having been in the presence of God was unwarranted by the experience. The idea of God which I had added to the experience had entered my world through tradition.

Alfred North Whitehead deals with this question in his "Concept of Nature": "No characteristic of nature which is immediately posited for knowledge by sense-awareness can be explained. It is impenetrable by thought, in the sense that its peculiar essential character which enters into experience by sense-awareness is for thought merely the guardian of its individuality as a bare entity." (F. S. C. Northrop and Mason Gross, op. cit., p. 207.

"According to Taoism, the Tao (the Way) cannot be told,
It is not easy to take part in the dialogue that preserves the openness for Being, because to do so calls into question everything that we have taken for granted.

If we penetrate to the 'source' ontologically, we do not come to things which are ontically obvious for the 'common understanding'; but the questionable character of everything obvious opens up for us.89

The questioning of our tradition does not affirm the dogma of our religious orientation (unless we refuse to take it seriously) but rather demands a thorough examination of all that we have accepted as true.

But if we decline to be taken in by surface appearances we shall see that this question "why", . . . has its ground in a leap through which man thrusts away all the previous security, whether real or imagined, of his life. The question is asked only in this leap; it is the leap; without it there is no asking. . . . We call such a leap, which opens up its own source, . . . the finding of one's own ground.90

If we are to take this leap, ask this question, "make ourselves free for what speaks to us in tradition as the Being of being",91 we must abandon our religious security, for man cannot really question without ceasing to be a believer and taking all the consequences of such a step. He will only be able to act "as if" . . . On the other hand a faith that does not perpetually expose itself

but only suggested. So when words are used, it is the suggestiveness of the words, and not their fixed denotations or connotations, that reveals the Tao." (Fung Yu-lan, A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, ed. Derk Bodde, New York: The Free Press, 1966/, p. 13.)

89Being and Time, p. 383 (334).

90An Introduction to Metaphysics, pp. 5-6.

91See n. 87, p. 45 supra.
to the possibility of unfaith is no faith but merely a convenience: the believer simply makes up his mind to adhere to the traditional doctrine. This is neither faith nor questioning ... 92

Man cannot question "without ceasing to be a believer and taking all the consequences of such a step" and so too often finds it safer to turn away from the voice that speaks to him out of the silence, disturbing his complacency, or else to coerce that speaking into the framework of his religious or philosophical orientation where it will not bother him. He affirms that in his tradition which has become fixed or static and denies the dynamism which would revitalize that tradition.

But if he has the "courage to be"—the courage to take the leap from security into the Nothing—he may come to see that the lifting of the veil of mystery and the illuminating of Being (which is done in Christianity by a benevolent God choosing to reveal more) depend on him. The "more" is revealed by the originative act of Dasein reaching into the Nothing of his own finitude and illuminating by bestowing meaning. Where the power to reveal is surrendered to an Other, man also surrenders the initiative for the search—he surrenders his own being. Both man and Being suffer as a consequence—both remain hidden—for "Being never essentiallyizes itself without Seienden, and Seienden cannot be

92 An Introduction to Metaphysics, p. 7.
without Being." 93 Being never appears in the world except through man speaking, whether he speaks in the words of philosopher, poet, artist, or musician.

In our everydayness we know that for a thing to be present there must be a place for it, and for the thing to appear in this place, the place itself must be held open.

Man is holding the place open for the complete other of being, so that in its openness there can be such a thing as being present (Being). 94

If Being is not prior to and independent of what-is, then Being is and dwells in the world only as long as, and when, there is a place for it to dwell, i.e., man speaking authentically. If man confines his speaking to those areas in which he feels "factually" secure, then he is, in effect, refusing to give Being a voice in the world and neglecting that whole realm of mystery, the Nothing, which is the ground of Being itself. 95

93See n. 58, p. 32 supra.


95"From What-is all the world of things was born. But What-is sprang in turn from What-is-not." (Verse 40, Tao Te Ching, op. cit., p. 93.)
CHAPTER IV
BEING AND LANGUAGE
CHAPTER IV
BEING AND LANGUAGE

Is it the fault of "Being" . . . that our words fail in referring to it and only that remains on which suspicion is cast all too hastily as "mysticism"? Or is our language at fault for not yet speaking because it is not yet able to adapt itself to a reference to the essence of "Being"?

The question raised here is one that is implicit in the writing of poetry. Being may be present in language but never adequately represented by it. Being is always more than what has been said (or ever will be said) about it. Being present in language means that Being speaks through poets and philosophers for whom the first encounter with Being may have come "in a metaphysical shock at the limits of reason". Heidegger raises a plea for the use of language in such a way that it will reveal Being rather than conceal it. It is not language as we ordinarily think of it which needs reform because that which we refer to as language is but "a stock of words and syntactical rules, and is only a threshold of language". The reform

96 The Question of Being, p. 79.
97 See n. 80, p. 41 supra.
98 "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry", Werner Brock, op. cit., p. 277. For Heidegger, language is a speaking, whether it be in words, in music, or in the media of the artist.
called for is "not a new language but a transformed relationship to the essenc(ing) of the old one". This transformed relationship is one of restoring an original purity which has become clouded by centuries of interpretation in which the interpreters have been serving not only Being itself, but special interests of the "they"-world.

The ultimate business of philosophy is to preserve the force of the most elemental words in which Dasein expresses itself, and to keep the common understanding from levelling them off to that unintelligibility which functions in turn as a source of pseudo-problems.

The first phase in the transforming of the relationship between man and language occurs when man stands at the edge of the abyss and sees Nothing. When the shock has eased, he is confronted with the fact that his tradition has successfully concealed Being from him by building word structures against the dread of the Nothing and by giving birth to the idea of Being as independent of man--perhaps responsible for him but certainly not to him. In his re-examination of tradition he will listen for the voice of Being as and where it speaks but will set aside that which has served to conceal it.

It is not that men cannot benefit from the experience of those who have lived in the past--indeed it is by making


100Being and Time, p. 262 (220).
the past his own that he becomes aware of the possibilities which the inquiry offers.\textsuperscript{101} It is only when man is dominated by his tradition rather than being master of it that he interprets his experience in static terms. He can minimize the domination of tradition by greater understanding of history even as he can minimize the domination of his personal past by a greater understanding of himself and that past.

The second phase of the transformation of man's relationship to language, then, is the explicit awareness that the word has often proved inadequate to its task and that the traditional word is not unassailable.

Western thought has developed in a framework that has given too little consideration to the facts: 1) that Being can be investigated only "insofar as \(\text{it}\) ... enters into the intelligibility of Dasein"; 2) that it "becomes accessible only as meaning, even if it is itself the abyss of meaninglessness";\textsuperscript{102} and 3) that this meaning is not a

\textsuperscript{101}Quoting Scheler (from Edmund Husserl's Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung, Vol. II, p. 243) Heidegger writes: "The person is rather the unity of living-through \(\text{Er-lebens}\) which is immediately experienced in and with our Experiences—not a Thing merely thought of behind and outside what is immediately Experienced." (Being and Time, p. 73/\textsuperscript{147}. The translators of Being and Time use the upper case "\(T\)" for Thing when it translates the German Ding and the lower case "\(t\)" for thing when it translates Sache.) Heidegger is quoting Scheler in support of his own position that the phenomenal content of Dasein cannot be expressed as "subject" or "object" but is rather a unity of experience in which awareness of the past and anticipation of the future join to increase awareness of the present, thus giving meaning (authenticity) to the present.

\textsuperscript{102}Being and Time, p. 194 (152).
property of that which is understood but is, rather, a projection of Dasein's, grounded in that which Heidegger calls "fore-having \(\text{Vorhaben}\)" or that which Dasein has or is, as understanding, before assigning meaning to a new particular of experience.

The interpretation of experience always operates in a context of involvements already belonging to Dasein and is always guided by a point of view which is held in advance of the act of interpretation. Furthermore, such interpretation always involves choice. Being is always more than what is spoken or written and whenever man interprets his experience, he is making choices, judgments, considering the experience from this way and that. Beyond that which he offers as interpretation, there is always more--there is always that on which he has turned his back and that of which he was not even aware. Dasein speaks out of finite experience which is necessarily shaped not only by his conscious choices but by his capability, his vision, and his historical orientation.\(^{103}\)

And just beyond the word he speaks is the hint, the suggestion, the elusive not-quite-clear which may reveal itself to him but then be gone before he can speak the word that would render it available to another.

\(^{103}\)"Historical orientation" is used here in a broad sense. It represents all my past up to and even including part of the moment of speaking. I may begin to speak and then alter what I am about to say on the basis of what I have just heard myself saying.
Dasein — with is already essentially manifest in a co-state-of-mind and a co-understanding. In discourse, Being-with becomes 'explicitly' shared; that is to say, it is already, but is unshared as something that has been taken hold of and appropriated.\textsuperscript{104}

The ancient Greeks saw the \textit{logos} (\textit{λόγος})\textsuperscript{105} as a unifying principle — that which would make us whole and would draw us one to the other, even as our opinionated everydayness tends to alienate us from ourselves and from each other. Heidegger has re-interpreted \textit{logos} to mean discourse (\textit{Rede}). Discourse lets something be seen. Its function is to reveal. It lets us see ourselves and each other and our world. Through discourse the "intrinsic togetherness" of man is realized. \textit{Logos} is effective only when man assumes a receptive, listening attitude\textsuperscript{106} and, for the most part, man operates in the divisive area of opinion. Grasping after fragments of experience sends men off in diverse directions and deceives them into placing undue importance on opinion.

\textsuperscript{104}Being and Time, p. 205 (162).

\textsuperscript{105}See An Introduction to Metaphysics, pp. 130 ff.

\textsuperscript{106}One hears the subtle power of a great symphony by laying oneself open to it. A concentrated effort to hear is much more likely to result in not hearing. One man may sit with a score in his lap and follow the notes with his finger yet, in his concentrated attention, completely miss that which his neighbor with the half-closed eyes is hearing. Even as the soul of the music is not to be found in the score, so Being is concealed from those who would locate it in the minutiae examined by the probing intellect. Heidegger speaks of this as being "present yet absent". (\textit{Ibid.}, p. 130.)
It is one of the tragedies of the modern scene that the divisive force of opinion seems to be greater than the unifying force of logos, and one of its ironies that this is in part a result of man seeking collective security.

Heidegger sees the conversation between the ancients and Plato characterized by the destruction of the felt correspondence with Being and a subsequent orientation of man apart from Being.107 Man is no longer one with Being, he is searching for it and asking about it. Truth is no longer that which unfolds "out of its own essential fullness as the essence of unhiddenness, but shifts its abode to the essence of the idea".108 As man corrects his vision, he approaches the truth and this approach is made possible by the attraction of the ideas themselves. The Idea thus becomes "master, dispensing both unhiddenness (to what emerges) and the ability to perceive (the hidden)".109 Being belongs to

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107This shift in emphasis coincides with the degeneration of religion from a living faith to an intellectual affirmation—that which Martin Buber characterizes as an "eclipse of God". (See Martin Buber, Two Types of Faith (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), pp. 170 ff.) In Judaism it was the confrontation with a living God that was basic and the transition into the complex dogma of Pauline Christianity was accompanied by a loss of vitality.


109Plato, The Republic, Book VII, 517c. Quoted by Heidegger, Ibid. Heidegger's translation was used because the language suited the discussion. But because I also refer to Plato's use of the word "light" I am including the following translation from The Dialogues of Plato, tr. B. Jowett, (New York: Random House, 1937), p. 776: "The idea
the world of ideas. The extent to which men share in that world depends on the correctness of their vision. Our access to Being is through our ideas about entities, our approach to the idea of Good is through the refining of those ideas. Being is confined to the world of ideas and is subordinated to the Idea of Good. The Idea of Good is the "lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual".\(^{110}\)

\(^{110}\)See n. 109 supra. This subordination of Being to the Idea of Good marked the beginning of the radical separation of good and evil which has plagued our tradition ever since. The earlier meaning of Being embraced the belonging-together of antagonisms but the elevation of reason and good acted as a dichotomizing force, separating the world of mind and the world of nature and accomplishing a radical devaluation of natural man. This devaluation carried over into the Christian notion of the supremacy of the perfect immortal over the imperfect mortal. The West, since Plato, has struggled against dualism and toward an ideal of perfection in which the good will be victorious over the evil.

The traditions of India and China have no such struggle against dualism. In Hindu thought, lightness and darkness—as well as all the other pairs of opposites—are but phenomenal manifestations of an all-embracing reality which is beyond such distinctions. Man's enlightenment is the recognition of the illusory nature of the distinctions. This teaching is dramatically symbolized in Indian art by Kali in her role as the Black Goddess. (See Heinrich Zimmer, Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization, ed., Joseph Campbell, New York: Pantheon Press, 1946, pp. 90-102.) Chinese thought does not take the step beyond the phenomenal (except, as in Buddhism, to posit the Void). Since there is nothing outside of the organic whole, all that is belongs, and belongs essentially. The Yin and the Yang, as the elements of opposition, are component elements of everything. Confucianism represents the Yang element of Chinese thought, and Taoism the Yin. This organic unity has made for
Aristotle denied the reality of Plato's independent ideal world and sought in man for that indefinable something which was the reality of being. But for Aristotle the essence of man was being and the primary meaning of being was substance.

And indeed the question which was raised of old and is raised now and always, and is always the subject of doubt, namely, what being is, is just the question: what is substance?\footnote{111}

Aristotle did not neglect existence but he made it that which we come up against as we press back in our investigation of the things that are. How do we know that a thing is? We see it "being tall" or "being white"—giving being to sensible qualities—, or "being a man" or "being a horse"—exhibiting characteristics of a particular kind of entity. Ousia (ἐūσία) is that which "stands under" or supports the various determinants which enable us to know what a thing is. It is that inner principle which accounts for the particular organization of matter in this way or that—the principle which determines whether we call an entity a man or a tree. This principle of organization is Aristotle's form. Both men and trees are, but a man is a man and a tree is a tree,

and a man is not a tree. We are less interested in the shared "is-ness" of the man and the tree than we are in the unshared "what-ness".

Aristotle did say, "Among the many meanings of being, the first is the one where it means that which is", but he went on to qualify this by adding, "and where it signifies the substance". To know Being, we study existing entities but we study them, not in their existence, as such, but in the common attributes which testify to that existence.

The individuals comprised within a species, such as Socrates and Coriscos, are the real beings; but inasmuch as these individuals possess one common specific form, it will suffice to state the universal attributes of the species, that is, the attributes common to all its individuals, once for all. Aristotle's equating of Being and substance led him to seek Being through particular entities in their ontical present-at-handness. But Heidegger contends that "entities with Dasein's kind of Being cannot be conceived in terms of

\[112\] \textit{Ibid.}


In his commentary, Gilson says, "Had Plato lived long enough to read, in the First Book of Aristotle's \textit{Metaphysics}, the criticism of his own doctrine of ideas, he might have written one more dialogue, the \textit{Aristoteles}, in which it would have been child's play for Socrates to get Aristotle entangled in hopeless difficulties." Gilson then treats the reader to a bit of Platonic dialogue which concludes with: "Then, my lad, I wish you could tell me how it may be that beings are through sharing in an essence, which itself is not!" (\textit{Op. cit.}, pp. 49-50.) At this point it seems to me that the primary difficulty Aristotle had was in being unable to acknowledge the essential nothingness of his substance.
Reality and substantiality; we have expressed this by the thesis that the substance of man is existence." In existing, Dasein understands himself (either authentically or inauthentically) and projects that understanding onto the entities which he encounters in the world.

Entities 'have' meaning only because, as Being which has been disclosed beforehand, they become intelligible in the projection of that Being—that is to say, in terms of the "upon-which" of that projection.

A glance at previous ontology shows that if one fails to see Being-in-the-world as a state of Dasein, the phenomenon of worldhood likewise gets passed over. One tries instead to Interpret the world in terms of the Being of those entities which are present-at-hand within-the-world . . . namely, in terms of Nature. . . . Only in some definite mode of its own Being-in-the-world can Dasein discover entities as Nature.

It was in the mode of scientific-inquirer-in-the-world that Aristotle projected his understanding on to the entities of his world. He didn't press his inquiry into the elusive "something" that was the reality of being because he was Aristotle, with a particular historical and personal orientation that shaped his way of interpreting experience—a fact that he either did not recognize or did not consider necessary to his knowledge of entities. He looked at the entities of the world through the eyes of a biologist and from a world which knew that "out of nothing, nothing could come". His underlying reality had to be something.

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114 *Being and Time*, p. 255 (212).
Aristotle could not acknowledge it as nothing because he had not experienced the anguish of modern man—the anguish that has resulted from the attempts to hide this nothingness under metaphysical structures. He stood at the dynamic beginning of a tradition. Modern man stands at the end of that tradition—with nowhere to go.

Aristotle's second contribution to the problem of Being was in giving birth to the definition of truth as agreement between judgment and its object.\(^\text{117}\) Heidegger's Dasein is "in the truth" in the sense that "the disclosedness of its ownmost Being belongs to its existential constitution".\(^\text{118}\) Standing "in the truth", Dasein goes on to uncover or disclose entities in the world, and those entities are "true" to the extent that Dasein succeeds in disclosing them. His first step into assertion about these entities which have stood before him unconcealed, however, is his first step into error, for perceiving is approaching entities in such a way as to let them be, but assertion is an adding to or interpreting of which conceals even as it reveals.

Heidegger has recognized that the traditional conception of truth as agreement has failed to consider the change

\(^{117}\)Although Heidegger defends Aristotle against this misuse of his thesis (Ibid., p. 268 (229)), he nonetheless recognizes that it was Aristotle's, "the false and the true are not in the act (itself) . . . but in the understanding" (Metaphysics, E, 4, 1027b, 25 sq., Cited in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth", Barrett and Aiken, op. cit., p. 266), that gave rise to the definition of truth as "adequation of intellect to thing" (Being and Time, p. 257 (2147, n. 2).

\(^{118}\)Ibid., p. 263 (221).
of character that occurs when disclosedness (or the revelation of the Being of an entity) is expressed, and further when that expression is related to the entity itself. The assertion is one step away from the original disclosedness and the attempt to relate the assertion and the entity is another, which transforms all the elements to present-at-hand elements. The relation is the present-at-hand agreement of a present-at-hand assertion with a present-at-hand entity. In this process of change, truth as disclosedness, as a form of Being which uncovers, disappears, and "truth as agreement between things which are present-at-hand within-the-world" becomes the accepted definition. We have lost sight of the fact that truth as agreement is ontologically derivative from and dependent on truth as disclosure.

The primordial phenomenon of truth has been covered up by Dasein's very understanding of Being--that understanding which is proximally the one that prevails, and which even today has not been surmounted explicitly and in principle. The most primordial 'truth' is the 'locus' of assertion; it is the ontological condition for the possibility that assertions can be either true or false--that they may uncover or cover things up.

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119 It is only in regarding entities as present-at-hand that we encounter properties, an encounter which takes place as we move around entities and observe.

120 Being and Time, p. 268 (225).

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid., pp. 268-9 (225-6).
Whereas Heidegger locates truth in the disclosure itself (in perception), Plato and Aristotle, and the mainstream of Western tradition since, have located it in the interpretation of that disclosure. In both cases truth is dependent on man, but Heidegger recognizes and acknowledges the fact, while classical thinkers posited an absolute truth or source of truth to which man aspired and toward which he progressed coincident with the "correcting of his vision".\^1\^2\^3

Traditional metaphysics sought the Being of the things-that-are and the ground of their intelligibility, their sufficient reason, in another Seinende, a super-thing existing in a world beyond the senses. Heidegger now shows that this "Being", this "principle of sufficient reason", is "no thing", no substance, no creativity on the part of an ideal absolute, but the Dasein-founded possibility that there be a world in which things "can be" and "can be discovered". If this possibility lies in Man it is precisely because he is capable of being more than "thing", more than "substance", without being infinite absolute, yet without being merely "present" as a tree or a house is "present".\^1\^2\^4

The absolute Other of tradition, whether it was God or world intellect or Plato's Idea of Good, was something which was "there" in an independent sense. The phenomena encountered in the world might reflect the absolute but were always inferior to it, and the absolute was in no way dependent upon the phenomena.

\^1\^2\^3Laszlo Versenyi, in his Heidegger, Being, and Truth, charges Heidegger with being caught in the very egocentric orientation that he criticizes in Western tradition. I have dealt with some of the specifics of Versenyi's charge in the Appendix.

\^1\^2\^4Thomas Langan, op. cit., p. 91.
The world, as shared, began in the word—in that which man spoke out of the wonder of his experience and the need to communicate. But when the word became man's master rather than his servant, the world of the concept acquired independence and greater reality than that which it was born to serve and, further, developed to embrace ideas which have no counterpart in the world of experience—those ideas which we refer to as "abstract".\footnote{Arthur Waley, in his book The Way and Its Power (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1958), p. 59, offers a good example of the Chinese attitude toward such ideas. The example is based on Chuang Tzu XXXIII, 7, and deals with the concept of "infinity": "Take a stick a foot long. Halve it. Tomorrow halve that half, and so on day after day. Ten thousand generations hence there will still, theoretically speaking, be something left to halve. But in reality we are obliged to stop short much sooner than this, even though we may suppose that with better eyes and a sharper knife we could still go on."

Whitehead, in his "Concept of Nature" (loc. cit., pp. 199 ff.), deals with the problem of abstraction. He tells us that experience embodies the potential for division into units—which he calls "actual occasions"—but does not give us experiential evidence of such division except as we consciously abstract. Our experience is relational and continuous—not atomically divided. And in this, Whitehead seems very close to Heidegger.}
Dasein and the world". In whatever way man relates to his world, he will know his world. If he merely "tarries alongside" entities in the world, he will look at them, compare them and make assertions about them, but this is a deficient mode of being-in-the-world in which he is not concernfully involved with the entities of his environment but is content to relate to them in the way they look.

Common sense concerns itself, whether 'theoretically' or 'practically', only with entities which can be surveyed at a glance circumspectively. What is distinctive in common sense is that it has in view only the experiencing of 'factual' entities, in order that it may be able to rid itself of an understanding of Being. It fails to recognize that entities can be experienced 'factually' only when Being is already understood, even if it has not been conceptualized.

126 "Being and Time", p. 87 (60). Such a dichotomy arises when we see the known object (world), as wholly other than and separate from the knowing subject (man), and when the knowing faculty itself is seen as a bridge across this gulf but a bridge supported by a supreme intelligence.

127 Does the objective observer ever "know" the piano in the way in which the concert pianist knows it? Could any scientific observer "know" my baby in the way I know her? The objective observer looks at entities in respect of their likeness; the concert pianist knows his piano, and the mother her baby, in respect of their uniqueness—a uniqueness that cannot be perceived by moving around and looking at something, but is known only through concernful involvement with it.

128 "Tarried alongside" is distinguished from "dwelling-alongside" by a lack of concernful involvement. Dasein is Being-in-the-world, and as such is a unitary phenomenon. "Being-alongside" is constitutive of Dasein and conveys the notion of being absorbed in, as in a task. "Tarried" is a deficient mode of dwelling. (See Being and Time, pp. 86 ff. 20 ff.)

129 Ibid., p. 363 (315).
It is in the realm of common sense that opinion is produced. Discourse attempts to give expression to experience but the extent to which it succeeds depends on the relation of man to his world. When he relates in a deficient mode—the mode of tarrying alongside—then his assertions about experience will be concealing. When he is dwelling authentically, i.e., concernfully, in his world and is transparent to himself, his explication of his understanding will be a revealing of Being in the world. Only as man lives his life intentionally and concernfully, while maintaining himself in an open, listening posture, does Being show itself. Only through Dasein is there truth.

Before there was any Dasein, there was no truth; nor will there be any after Dasein is no more. For in such a case truth as disclosedness, uncovering, and uncoveredness, cannot be. . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Once entities have been uncovered, they show themselves precisely as entities which beforehand already were. Such uncovering is the kind of Being which belongs to 'truth'.

Although essentially "in the truth" Dasein dwells for the most part in untruth because every grasp of what-is is at the same time a shrouding of the mystery of the totality,

130 In paraphrasing a section of Verse 40 of the Tao Tê Ching, translator R. B. Blakney writes: The Way "is a return to within one's self where the ultimate mystery of being can eventually be confronted." (p. 93)

From Suzuki (op. cit., p. 165), citing Zen master Hui-Neng, we hear: "Seeing into one's self-nature is seeing into nothingness . . . and this seeing is the illuminating of this world of multiplicity by the light of Prajna [Wisdom, discernment]."

131 Being and Time, p. 269 (226).
and most of Dasein's everyday effort goes into contending with bits of experience which effectively conceal the totality to which they belong. Whatever truth is spoken is always accompanied by the untruth of that which is unspoken, thus remaining hidden and becoming even more so as the spoken truth is positively affirmed. And so it is that man's moments of vision have oftentimes been recorded in words which have actually concealed the truth they were meant to convey.

To what extent is language the "most dangerous of possessions"? 

Language has the task of making manifest in its work the existent, and of preserving it as such. In it, what is purest and what is most concealed, and likewise what is complex and ordinary, can be expressed in words. The pure and the ordinary are both equally something said. Hence the word as word never gives any direct guarantee as to whether it is an essential word or a counterfeit. Therefore, language must constantly present itself in an appearance which it itself attests, and hence endanger what is most characteristic of it, the genuine saying.132

The third phase of the transformation of man's relationship to language involves, then, the task of communicating the awareness he has won for himself while trying to avoid the danger inherent in the use of words—the danger that the pointing finger will be mistaken for the moon.133

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133 "To point at the moon a finger is needed, but woe to those who take the finger for the moon." (D. T. Suzuki, op. cit., p. 8.)
The attempt to communicate is an attempt to share experience, and it is made by means of conversation.\textsuperscript{134} The being of men is founded in language. But this only becomes actual in conversation. . . . But now what is meant by "a conversation"? Plainly, the act of speaking with others about something. Then speaking also brings about the process of coming together. . . . We are a conversation. . . we are a single conversation. . . . Conversation and its unity support our existence.\textsuperscript{135}

Dasein can never be seen wholly in isolation--he is always Being-alongside his world and Being-with other entities who have the character of Dasein. But he is constantly thwarted in his attempts to share his experience because each man gives his own meaning to experience and makes it explicit in terms of that meaning. Each man's experience is unique and so is the interpretation of that experience. Hence there will be variation in the interpretation of even those experiences which seem much alike. As he tries to share his experience through making it explicit he may find that each step into explication takes him a step farther away from the one with whom he is trying to converse.\textsuperscript{136}

\textsuperscript{134}Here, as with the word "language", we must take the broadest possible view of conversation.

\textsuperscript{135}"Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry", Werner Brock, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 277-8.

\textsuperscript{136}". . . Words strain, Crack and sometimes break, under the burden, Under the tension, slip, slide, perish, Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place, Will not stay still. Shrieking voices Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering, Always assail them. . . . (T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton", \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 7-8.)
The attempt to converse meaningfully, however, will be either helped or hindered by the care he takes with the use of language and the degree to which his language reflects its dwelling-place character.

Authentic conversing is carried on through the nurturing of our correspondence with Being. When philosophy attends to this correspondence, it is a basic and authentic speaking, "a being-on-a-path, on the way, a permanent quest in which Being is disclosed." 137

137 Jean T. Wilde and William Kimmel, The Search for Being, p. 491. Here the editors are paraphrasing Heidegger's emphasis in Holzwege.

In Hindu thought, the path is through intellect to beyond—to the acceptance of the identification of Brahman and Atman (Being and Self). The Buddhist takes the further step of predicking the source of this oneness as the Void, but the path to the recognition of the Void leads through self transformation. "To enter the Buddhist vehicle—the boat of the discipline—means to begin to cross the river of life, from the shore of the common-sense experience of non-enlightenment, the shore of spiritual ignorance (avidyā), desire (kāma), and death (māra), to the yonder bank of transcendental wisdom (vidyā), which is liberation (mokṣa) from this general bondage." (Zimmer, Philosophies of India, p. 475.) When one attains this other shore, however, and turns around to look at the river and the land from which he began his journey, he sees nothing: "The whole scene of the two banks and the river between is simply gone. There can be no such thing for the enlightened eye and mind, because to see or think of anything as something 'other' (a distant reality different from one's own being) would mean that full Enlightenment had not yet been attained. There can be an 'other shore' only for people still in the spheres of dualistic perception; those this side the stream or still inside the boat and heading for the 'other shore'; those who have not yet disembarked and thrown away the raft. Illumination means that the delusory distinction between the two shores of a worldly and a transcendental existence no longer holds. There is no stream of rebirths flowing between two separated shores: no saṃsāra and no nirvāṇa." (Ibid., p. 479)

In Taoism, the Way or the Path is a return to primal
Philosophy is the correspondence to the Being of being, but not until, and only when, the correspondence is actually fulfilled and thereby unfolds itself and expands this unfoldment. This correspondence occurs in different ways according to how the appeal of Being speaks, according to whether it is heard or not heard, and according to whether what is heard is said or kept silent. 138

purity—to the mirror knowledge of the identification of Being and Nothing.

"The student learns by daily increment
The Way is gained by daily loss
The world is won by those who let it go." (Verse 48, Tao Tê Ching, loc. cit., p. 101.)

The essence of Zen is the art of seeing into the nature of one’s own being. It reflects both its source in Mahayana Buddhism and the influence of Chinese Taoism but goes beyond both in its complete rejection of conceptualization on the grounds of its inadequacy to the task of a genuine speaking. Suzuki writes: "Reasoning defeats itself, finds itself altogether futile, in its attempt to reach śūnyatā, because reasoning, instead of trying to see śūnyatā itself in the process of reasoning, strives to reach śūnyatā as the goal of reasoning, that is, when all the reasoning comes to an end. When we the reasoners realize that śūnyatā is working, in reasoning itself, that reasoning is no other than śūnyatā in disguise, we know śūnyatā, we see śūnyatā, and this is śūnyatā knowing and seeing itself; and so, we can say that when śūnyatā knows itself it is not śūnyatā but we ourselves as śūnyatā. Śūnyatā knows itself through us, because we are śūnyatā. When śūnyatā is awakened to itself or becomes aware of itself, which is 'knowing and seeing' itself, we have another name for it: śūnyatā is tathatā, 'suchness'." (D. T. Suzuki, op. cit., p. 263.) (In the foregoing passage, the terms tathata and sunyata may be taken as roughly equivalent to Heidegger's terms Being and Nothing.)

When philosophizing is authentic speaking, when it is a being-on-a-path, it is not an isolated and sterile activity; it is serving the end of self transformation—the end of giving Being a place in the world. The Zen master may speak with a crack of a stick over the head, he may speak of an iron flute with no mouthpiece and no holes (See The Iron Flute, ed. Nyogen Senzaki and Ruth Strout McCandless, Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1961, p. 13), but if the disciple gets the message, then the correspondence with Being is fulfilled and unfolded.

138What is Philosophy? p. 75.
The primordial understanding necessary to such speaking is there in man but is often neglected or even spurned. When it is allowed to unfold, however, and Dasein speaks, then he will share his understanding if there is another entity with the character of Dasein who is listening and who hears.

Therefore has language, most dangerous of possessions, been given to man . . . so that he may affirm what he is.139

Being reveals itself to man in the silence of his listening and the attempt to communicate is a form of self affirmation. Insofar as he is able to give expression to his awareness, he lends authenticity to his own existence and gives Being a place of unconcealment. The manner in which he speaks will be determined in part by his own potentiality and in part by his choice of language. The artist shuns the word, the philosopher grapples with it constantly, the poet endows it with new meaning; but regardless of the form, all such speaking has its root in the silence in which Dasein hears and understands, and its motive power in the demand that he "radiate the light of new intelligence from his own resources, i.e., from out of the Nothing, to illumine the Wesen".140

140Thomas Langan, op. cit., p. 118.
CHAPTER V

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Western philosophy was born in the intellectual curiosity of men about a world looked at as "other"; Eastern philosophy was born in the need for intellectual understanding of the suffering of men. Each tradition followed its own course and a gulf of misunderstanding developed.

Martin Heidegger sees modern Western man as suffering from his alienation from Being--living in a time of need and in a mood of anxiety. Having challenged his religious heritage, he has found no satisfactory substitute in a science increasingly aware of its own dynamic nature. He cannot turn to science for the security of static concepts because science today is questioning its own concepts. He still seeks conceptual stabilization of that which he uncovers in the world, while both the world itself and those who attempt to know it are constantly changing.

When Heidegger speaks of alienation and anxiety, he speaks of suffering. When he speaks of suffering he speaks from the same need that has moved Eastern man to speak. I see this as an important step in the direction of bridging the East-West gulf. Modern man's technology is rapidly becoming his master rather than his servant yet his failure to recognize this makes him seek further in the direction
of technological refinement, believing that it holds the promise of relieving the nagging dissatisfaction which he vaguely feels but cannot identify.

Heidegger is calling into question the ontological ground in which most Western thought is rooted and from which come the heretofore unquestioned premises on which our great philosophical systems have been built. He is calling into question the values related to and dependent on that tradition; indeed he is calling into question the very notion of value itself. Yet all of his questioning seems to lead nowhere. There is nothing with which to replace the destroyed—there is only the darkness and emptiness and, perhaps, the awareness that what we have destroyed was created by others who, like ourselves, wanted to dispel the darkness.

But is it not possible that the darkness itself—the Nothing—is the reality in the sense of its being that incomprehensible totality which we encounter in dread—that totality out of which the what-is of our experience steps momentarily in the illumination of insight? Heidegger's answer would, I believe, be Yes, and the Taoist says,

Come with me
To the palace of Nowhere
Where all the many things are one.141

Heidegger's question has been undertaken in the mood of modern Western man—the mood of anxiety. It is not

intellectual curiosity that moves Heidegger to speak—it is the pain of alienation—of isolation—the pain of the lonely individual who would converse with his fellow man but is acutely aware of the danger of using words, the individual who is committed to the task of keeping Being alive in the world, but is circumscribed in his speaking by what he is—by the limitations of his pastness and even of his potential, by all that will make his speaking a concealing even as he struggles to reveal.

He has discovered that the pain eases with the recognition that as we reduce the domination of pastness—of history and tradition—we create the open space into which Being can step for recognition and illumination. His attempts to give expression to this recognition have been variously heralded. To some, his speaking is what he intended—the light of understanding cast into the shadows, giving illumination to much that had been buried and lost to view; to others, his speaking has been an obscuring, or at best a confusing.

We have viewed reality through the eyes of logic and the Judeo-Christian tradition. We have been deaf to the voice of Being speaking in any language other than that of this tradition. Heidegger's speaking is almost as alien to us as is the speaking of the East, for he too speaks of the Nothing as the ground of Being, he too suggests that the path to Being is through oneself, and he too hears the
voice of Being speaking out of the silence that surrounds and encompasses all but makes all speaking possible.\textsuperscript{142}

Now perhaps if we can resist the temptation to ease our alienation by supplying deceptive paliatives and building metaphysical structures which will again, in turn, have to be destroyed, we may come to recognize need as the necessary condition for fulfillment—both for Being itself and for individual human being. In his need, man may come to a greater awareness of himself. His primordial understanding will remain hidden from him until he is able and willing to silence the prattle of the "they" but once he has done this he will begin to hear and have something to say.

Keeping silent authentically is possible only in genuine discoursing. To be able to keep silent, Dasein must have something to say—that is, it must have at its disposal an authentic and rich disclosedness of itself. In that case one's reticence is Schwiegenheit\textsuperscript{7} makes something manifest, and does away with 'Idle talk' Gerede\textsuperscript{7}.\textsuperscript{143}

Genuine discoursing, then, involves not only the ability to speak but the ability to be silent. The single conversation to which Heidegger refers is a conversation consisting as much of what is not said as of what is.

\textsuperscript{142}In the Upani\textsuperscript{a}adic doctrine the syllable OM expresses all that has become, is becoming, and will become. The silence that follows and surrounds the syllable is that sphere which is beyond the phenomenal yet one with it. The phenomenal, represented by the sound of the syllable, is short-lived, but the silence—deep and abiding and ever-present—is the very condition for the possibility of the sound. (See Heinrich Zimmer, Philosophies of India, pp. 372-8)

\textsuperscript{143}Being and Time, p. 208 (165).
History depends on the being-made-explicit of the disclosure of the world (a world that is there in an ontical sense but which can be known only through individual Dasein sharing his understanding and then engaging in an on-going dialogue aimed at re-interpreting those expressions which seem to have been concealing of experience rather than revealing. In this historical process, the on-going dialogue, Dasein makes no radical break with his predecessors and does not fail to acknowledge his indebtedness to them for that which they have revealed. But neither does he fail, out of blind reverence for the past, to challenge them in those areas where their assertions have buried truth. It is being involved in this dialogue that makes man aware of the unity of Being, even though the dialogue is carried on across time and space, even though at times the essence of the dialogue is in the silence between the lines and around the words that are spoken.

It is Heidegger's recognition of the difficulties inherent in giving expression to the encounter with Being that has led him to the side of the poet and also, perhaps, to the side of the man of the East. In the poet he hears the man who cannot ignore the voice of Being, cannot give conceptual formulation to his hearing, but must, nonetheless, say to the world, "I have heard", and in speaking reduce that sense of alienation from Being with which he is afflicted.
It is the poet—whether he speaks out of the tradition of the East or the West—who speaks of "the retreat to one's roots", of "the Way", of a "homecoming" which is at once a coming back to oneself and to the source, of "the great stillness", of the "Void" or the "Nothing", of "the still point".

This speaking is Dasein—Being there.
APPENDIX

Laszlo Versényi, in *Heidegger, Being, and Truth*, levels a number of major criticisms at Heidegger but the two I am interested in discussing are: 1) that his philosophy, while purporting to go beyond the relativistic, subjectivistic, humanism of his predecessors, actually is itself highly relativistic, subjectivistic and humanistic; and 2) that Heidegger abandons himself to the urge to take the "leap beyond the edge of rationality" and in so doing is "carried far beyond the realm of responsible thought". Relative to the first criticism, Versényi writes:

A relativistic philosophy is characterized, according to Heidegger, by giving man a preferential position in the midst of all, by making him the measure of all that is, and by circling, incessantly, about man as the absolute center of all things. By this definition *Being and Time* is relativistic. Since Dasein is concerned about its own Being, the world becomes the complex of Dasein's concerns. Since Dasein is directed toward its own Being as its final purpose, the world becomes the totality of Dasein's purposive relationships (with Dasein at its center), and all that is in the world is encountered as a utensil located within a teleological referential context. Here not only truth but even Being is located in the human understanding.

1) Heidegger's philosophy, far from confining man to the egocentric predicament, offers him real access to the

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144Laszlo Versényi, op. cit., pp. 174-5.
145Ibid., pp. 77-8. 146Ibid., pp. 79-80.
world around him—an access which depends on what I shall call (for want of a better word) Dasein-recognition, or man's recognition of himself as Being-there. Being in other entities becomes more apparent in direct proportion to the degree of self understanding which man achieves. If my only access to the world is through myself (and how can we possibly deny this?) then the more transparent I am to myself, the more clearly I see others and the world around me. Dasein-recognition frees me from egocentrism for the assumption of my place in the unity of Being.

It is a mistake to see man as the "absolute center of all things" in Heidegger's thought. What is at the center of all things in Heidegger's philosophy is Nothing. This is the reason I chose to use Eliot's figure of speech, "the still point", in the title of this thesis: "Without the still point there would be no dance but there is only the dance"; "Without Being, whose unfathomable and unmanifest essence [emphasis mine] is vouchsafed us by the Nothing in essential dread, everything that 'is' would remain in Beinglessness (Sein-losigkeit)."¹⁴⁷

Acknowledging that man does play a most important role in Heidegger's philosophy, we are not "circling incessantly about" him because to "circle incessantly about" is to attempt to know ontically. It is not man in the ontical sense

¹⁴⁷See p. 1, supra.
that is studied by Heidegger, but rather the person that I
am—the entity which is distinguished by questioning its
own existence and is ontologically known in that role of
questioner. In drawing attention to Dasein, Heidegger is
pointing to the error of trying to know Being through en-
tities which we are not, without previously having really
come to terms with the problem of how such knowing is pos-
sible.

Assuming that Versényi would grant me my uniqueness,
then my way of approaching the world will be unique (no
matter how similar it may be to the approach of someone
else). Since my way of approaching the world is my way of
being, then my way of being is also unique.148 I have no
way of approaching the world except through my unique way
of being. My uniqueness is the sum total of all the factors
that contribute to my wholeness. I am "thrown" into the
world with certain characteristics, certain limitations
(which are influencing factors in my potentiality). I grow
up in a world which is bounded by particular restrictions
and defined by those closest to me in my environment. As I
mature, I give some of these definitions priority over
others and so increase my degree of uniqueness. By the time
that I begin the serious inquiry into Being, I have chosen

148It seems important to me that we bear in mind that
the primary use of the word "being" (with a lower case "b")
is as a participle—and sometimes as a gerund—but not as
a substantive. Being is not a property or quality of man.
definitions not only from my own personal environment, but from my larger historical environment, and have at least partially organized these choices into some kind of personal order, further accenting my uniqueness. Thus I am unique biologically, psychologically, and historically. Whatever I disclose of the world of my experience will have been filtered through this unique entity which I am. Since nothing in the world is disclosed except through being made explicit and since man is the only entity who is able to explicate his understanding, then the world is dependent for its disclosure on man. Man is the only entity who feels compelled to inquire about the meaning of his being in the world and to relate to others through the communication of the understanding gained. But this inquiry does not reduce the world to a "complex of Dasein's concerns".

The essent is not changed by our questioning. It remains what it is and as it is. Our questioning is after all only a psycho-spiritual process in us which, whatever course it may take, cannot in any way affect the essent itself.\(^{149}\)

When Versényi speaks of Dasein "concerned about its own Being" he speaks as if Being were something which could be fragmented and doled out in shares, but, as Heidegger says:

Being-there is "in every case mine" means neither "posited through me" nor "apportioned to an individual ego". Being-there is itself by virtue of its essential relation to being in general.\(^ {150}\)

\(^{149}\)Introduction to Metaphysics, p. 29.

\(^{150}\)Ibid.
We must keep in mind that Heidegger has defined Being as presence. Presence is not something which can be so doled out. My being (and this, we must remember, is a present participle) is that which makes it possible for me to concern myself about Being. Being is not a property of man. It is a way of relating to the world.

Versényi's reference to "all that is in the world encountered as a utensil" betrays a failure to understand the way in which we come to authentically "know" the entities in our environment. We do encounter entities as utensils, but in becoming aware of this way of encounter as potential for knowing, our relationship to those entities undergoes radical change. We can only become aware of our concernful involvement in the world when the ready-to-hand character of entities has penetrated our consciousness to the extent that we are compelled to make explicit our understanding. It seems reasonable to say that in his role as a surgeon, a man improves with experience because he becomes more familiar or better acquainted with his instruments, including not only scalpel and forceps but his hands, his nerves, his moods, his reactions, his ability—in short, himself. Should we expect any less of man in his role as inquirer?

\[151\]See n. 31, p. 16 supra.
In saying "here not only truth but even Being is located in the human understanding", Versényi mis-states Heidegger's premise that Being is disclosed in the world only through the human understanding. When Heidegger says, "Language is the house of Being. . . . Whoever thinks or creates in words is a guardian of this dwelling", he is saying that when I speak authentically and you hear me we are, during our speaking and hearing, bestowing meaning on that which has revealed itself to us through our guardianship. If Being seems at times to speak in contradictions it is not the fault of Being but the fault of the interpreter of that speaking. All speaking is at once a revealing and a concealing. If men shared no understanding of anything, then we could perhaps doubt that we are, as Heidegger says, "a single conversation" but when personal experience yields something we have found—or later find—expressed by another human being, then we are forced to ask ourselves what it means. The recognition of kinship and the resulting questions put an end to alienation. As Nietzsche so eloquently said, in reference to his discovery of Spinoza's writing, "My solitude . . . is no more. It has become a dialogue with another man."


153 Letter from Nietzsche to Franz Overbeck, July 30, 1881. I first read this letter in a periodical some years ago. I copied the letter but without noting the source. Later I saw it in Kurt Leidecker, Nietzsche, Unpublished
2) In making his second major criticism, Versényi writes:

All great philosophers knew the restlessness of human reason, its urge to go on to the limits of its own finitude and, in the end, to transcend them. But while these men felt the power of this urge they resisted its compulsion and saw the futility and philosophically self-defeating nature of a leap beyond the edge of rationality. . . . It is one thing to recognize this all-too-human urge, and quite another to abandon oneself to it so completely that one is, like Heidegger, carried far beyond the realm of responsible thought. ¹⁵⁴

The first and most obvious objection to this charge is that most great philosophers have responded to the urge to go beyond the limits of their own finitude. Heidegger may be unique in Western thought in saying that there is Nothing beyond. When others have reached the limit, they have posited God, the Idea of Good, World Reason, Divine Intellect, etc., or else, as in the East, they have taken the leap and acknowledged the Nothing. This going beyond is metaphysics itself and surely Versényi is not excluding the metaphysicians from the roll of great philosophers.

Secondly, in speaking of the urge to transcend the limits as an "all-too-human" urge, Versényi casts a slur on being human. Is he speaking from the Garden of Eden and in

Letters (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), p. 83. I prefer, and have used, the translation which I read first, although the differences would not seem significant to many.

the context of original sin? Why does man have this urge? Is it not because he "knows" (the knowing which Heidegger refers to as the primordial understanding) that there is mystery and because he must (to the extent that he is fully human, i.e., actively questioning) attempt to plumb this mystery, even to the edge of the abyss? If we deny this urge and turn our backs on those who have the courage to respond to it, we impoverish ourselves, and our turned backs will not even be noticed by those who press on to greater understanding.

It is difficult to accept a criticism of Heidegger which is worded almost exclusively in meanings which Heidegger has rejected. Heidegger has rejected "reason" as a translation of ἀγωγός in favor of "discourse", and sees discourse as a mode of being. Conversing is a way of existing. Now what are the limits of ἀγωγός? Dasein converses in words, in oils, in clay, in stone, in the sounds of music, the baking of a loaf of bread, the nurturing of a child or a garden. The finite limit to a particular Dasein's conversing is death—nothing else—and even death is not a limitation if Dasein has so expressed his understanding that he lives on in it.

It is strange that the major portion of this work of Versényi's is an emotional diatribe in which he constantly refers to Heidegger's "failure", yet his closing words are an affirmation of Heidegger's thesis that philosophizing is
a genuine way of speaking and that in speaking man finds a reason for being.

Only by keeping it \textit{philosophy} alive can man--the metaphysical, self-concerned, practical being--hope to keep himself alive in the fullness and richness of his worldly, practical, onto-teleological human existence.\footnote{Ibid., p. 198.}
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DASEIN AND THE STILL POINT

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