

University of Alberta

Heidegger's Critique of the Cartesian Problem of Scepticism

by

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Abstract:

This thesis deals with Martin Heidegger's critique of the Cartesian problem of scepticism in *Being and Time*. In addition to the critique itself, Heidegger's position with regards to the sense and task of phenomenological research, as well as fundamental ontology, is discussed as a necessary underpinning of his critique. Finally, the objection to Heidegger's critique that is raised by Charles Guignon in his book, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, (namely, that it suffers from the *problem of reflexivity*) is evaluated.

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Abbreviations¹

Works by Descartes:

- MED “Meditations on First Philosophy” in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes Volume II*. trans. Cottingham, John; Stoothoff, Robert; Murdoch, Dugald. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, 1985.
- PP “Principles of Philosophy” in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes Volume I*. trans. Cottingham, John; Stoothoff, Robert; Murdoch, Dugald. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, 1985.
- RDM “Rules for the Direction of the Mind” in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes Volume I*. trans. Cottingham, John; Stoothoff, Robert; Murdoch, Dugald. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, 1985.

Works by Heidegger:

- BP *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. trans. Hofstadter, Albert. Indiana University Press. Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1982.
- BT *Being and Time*. trans. Macquarrie, John; Robinson, Edward. Harper & Row Publishers. New York, 1962.
- HCT *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*. Indiana University Press. Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1985.

¹ Due to the existence of multiple English translations of both the works by Descartes, as well as Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, citations for these texts refer to the standard pagination of these texts in their originally published languages. As such, the citations of the works by Descartes will refer to the standard pagination of the twelve-volume edition of Descartes’ works by Adam and Tannery, which should be noted in the margins of any of the most common English translations. The citations of *Being and Time* will refer to the pagination of the later German editions of *Sein und Zeit*, as indicated in the margins of the Macquarrie and Robinson translation.

MFL *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. trans. Heim, Michael. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, 1984.

IPR *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*. trans. Dahlstrom, Daniel O. Indiana University Press. Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2005.

Works by Husserl:

LI *Logical Investigations Vol. 1&2*. trans. Findlay, J. N. Routledge. New York, 2001.

Secondary Works:

BIW *Being-in-the-World: a commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I*. Dreyfus, Hubert L. MIT Press, Cambridge, 1991.

HPK *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*. Guignon, Charles. Hackett Publishing Company. Indianapolis, 1983.

HTPT *Heidegger; through phenomenology to thought, third edition*. Richardson, William J. Martinus Nijhoff. The Hauge, 1974.

Introduction: Heidegger's Critique of the Cartesian Problem of Scepticism

For as long as I can remember, I had been deeply troubled by what is commonly known as the Cartesian problem of scepticism, that is until I had occasion to study Martin Heidegger's central work, *Being and Time*. It used to seem very plain to me that what I am, what we all are, are merely a number of thinking things, which exist in a world of corporeal objects. That which did not seem so plain, was how it is that a thinking thing such as myself could transcend my inner sphere of consciousness to live, dwell, or causally interact with the world outside of this inner sphere. How could I ground my knowledge of the world in-itself in truth?

Descartes himself assigns this task to God, *ens perfectum*, perfect being. However, for various reasons, this answer left me unsatisfied. The Kantian ontology, which does away with the need for God to secure true knowledge, nevertheless perpetuates the problem of scepticism through the distinction between the immanent world of appearances, and the unknowable world of things in-themselves. Since Kant, philosophers have attempted to solve the problem of scepticism by making *this* or *that* modification to the traditional ontological dichotomy between mind and matter – subject and object – that was handed down by Descartes, and passed along through Kant. Certainly, some were more subtle and sophisticated than others, however each failed to fully pacify my worries with regard to the Cartesian problem of scepticism.

Heidegger's answer to this problem in *Being and Time* is unique in that it does not attempt to solve the problem *per se*, but rather shows how it arises, and is

fundamentally embedded within the structure of traditional Cartesian ontology. This problem, according to Heidegger, necessarily follows from any ontology that posits a fundamental difference in being, between subject and object, such that the subject must transcend an inner subjective sphere in order to know an objective world that is essentially distinct from itself. Thus Heidegger's critique of the Cartesian problem of scepticism, although narrowly construed, concerns itself specifically with Descartes' ontology, more generally applies to any ontology that follows this basic dichotomy between subject and object. Thus the central aim of this thesis, is not to provide any substantial interpretation of Descartes' ontology *per se* – it is not the subtleties of his ontology that are of interest for this study – but rather to use Heidegger's critique of the Cartesian tradition as a means of making sense of Heidegger's own fundamental ontology, and the ontological structure of Dasein's being-in-the-world as a unitary phenomenon in which the problem of scepticism is not essentially embedded.

The main thrust of Heidegger's critique concerns Descartes' failure to consider the meaning of being as such before distinguishing between the various kinds of being that make up his ontology. Descartes distinguishes between perfect being, and created being, and then again between thinking being, and corporeal being, without having first done the work of *fundamental ontology*. As opposed to uncovering these categories from the being of the world as it is given, Heidegger charges that Descartes superimposes these categories of being onto the world as a means of securing for himself an absolutely certain form of knowledge. The charge is that Descartes allows this preoccupation with absolute certainty to ground, or to guide his ontology, rather

than allowing the givenness of the world to manifest itself in truth. The resulting ontology, or any ontology for that matter, which is underpinned by this *subject versus object* dichotomy, according to Heidegger, will always suffer from a form of this Cartesian scepticism.

As a means of situating Heidegger's critique, or even more so, as a means of grounding Heidegger's alternative ontological structure of Dasein's being-in-the-world, Heidegger's methodology, and overall project in *Being and Time* must be discussed at some length. Thus the first chapter of this thesis will concern Heidegger's methodology as *phenomenology*, its sense and its task; and the second chapter will concern Heidegger's goal in *Being and Time* of establishing that which he calls a *fundamental ontology*, through an uncovering of question of the meaning of being as such. Our discussion in the first two chapters will form a necessary underpinning for our central discussion in chapter three.

In chapter three, we will discuss Heidegger's understanding of the general Cartesian project of securing absolutely certain knowledge, and how this in turn leads to the dichotomous ontology of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. We will then discuss the inevitable relationship between this Cartesian dichotomy and the problem of scepticism. Finally, we will discuss Heidegger's own ontological structure of Dasein's being-in-the-world, its roots in the phenomenological method and its role in fundamental ontology, and how, as a unitary phenomenon, being-in-the-world overcomes the problem of Cartesian scepticism.

In the final two chapters of the thesis, we will aim to evaluate Heidegger's critique by considering a crucial criticism raised by Charles Guignon, in his book, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*. Here, Guignon charges that in Heidegger's rejection of the Cartesian dichotomy, he inadvertently undermines his overall project of a truly *fundamental* ontology. Guignon argues that the goal of fundamental ontology, as presented by Heidegger, is to uncover the meaning of being as such, and that this goal requires of the meaning of being that it be *timelessly* and *immutably* true. However, Heidegger's ontological structure of Dasein's being-in-the-world, according to Guignon, does not allow for the sort of timeless, unworlded standpoint from which to grasp one true, universally applicable, meaning of being as such. Rather Guignon points out that Dasein, as being-in-the-world, is always culturally and historically contextualised by its world, and the conception of Dasein's absolute unity with this world as the unitary phenomenon of being-in-the-world, prevents the possibility of any thought or inquiry whatsoever, which is not relative to a particular culture, at a particular time. Guignon terms this tension, *the problem of reflexivity*, which we will explore in detail in chapter four.

The criticism that Guignon raises is not only severe, but is so fundamental as to involve every aspect of Heidegger's philosophy as presented in *Being and Time*. As such, we lack the space as well as the time to provide a complete evaluation of the problem of reflexivity, here and now. However, we will conclude this thesis by discussing some of the fundamental assumptions, which underpin Guignon's criticism, and explore a new starting point, unconsidered by Guignon, from which to evaluate the reflexivity

problem. Specifically, we will consider Heidegger's discussion of *reticence* – or keeping silent – and *resoluteness*, as authentic modes of disclosedness of Dasein, which although they do not pull Dasein out of its being-in-the-world, or provide quite the unworlded standpoint that Guignon calls for, seem to facilitate the transcendental validity that Guignon equates with this unworlded standpoint. Thus the aim of this final chapter of the thesis will be modest in that it will not attempt to solve the reflexivity problem outright, but significant and valuable, in that it will attempt to provide the proper groundwork, or starting point from which to do so.

Chapter 1: The Sense and Task of Phenomenological Research

As we will see in chapters two and three, Heidegger's project in *Being and Time*, and thus his critique of Cartesian ontology, is grounded in his phenomenological method. As such, we will begin our investigation of Heidegger's critique with a discussion of his methodology, its roots in Husserlian phenomenology, and Heidegger's own understanding of this methodology. The word *phenomenology* is quite vague. It is rooted in two Greek words, namely, *phainómenon*, and *lógos*, which roughly translate to *that which shows itself*, and *discourse*.² As such, phenomenology can be broadly defined as the body of discourse, or the study of, that which shows itself – or the study of phenomena. However, this vague definition does little to explain the actual sense, or task with which phenomenological research provides itself. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to elucidate Heidegger's concept of phenomenology, its sense and its purpose. This elucidation will include a brief investigation the emergence of phenomenology in the research of its founder, Edmund Husserl, and more substantially, a working-through of that which Heidegger takes to be Husserl's three fundamental discoveries of phenomenological research, namely, *intentionality*, *categorial intuition*, and the *ontological sense of the a priori*. This will provide us with a foundation with which to better understand Heidegger's own conception of phenomenology, which he uses to ground his investigations in *Being and Time*.

² Heidegger, BT H28, H32; HCT 81, 84.

§1 The Emergence of Phenomenological Research: Husserl and the *Logical Investigations*

The emergence of phenomenological research is thought to begin with Husserl and his first major work, the *Logical Investigations*. Heidegger describes Husserl's text as "the basic book of phenomenology".³ As such, Heidegger takes his own particular methodology to be rooted in the early work of Husserl. The project of the *Logical Investigations* is to identify and secure the objects with which logic is preoccupied, in order to secure logic as the proper ground for scientific research. One of Husserl's goals in this endeavour is to formulate a response to the theories of *logical psychologism* of the time; a set of related theories that he felt hindered the advancement of logic as a true science.⁴ This psychologism, which Husserl describes as paradigmatically exemplified by Christoph von Sigwart, is the view that logical laws, such as the law of non-contradiction, are merely grounded in human psychology, rather than in necessary truth. For example, the logical truth of the proposition $\sim[A \ \& \ \sim A]$, according to Sigwart, is not a necessary truth *per se*, but merely an inductive fact, based upon the empirical observation that the human faculty of judgment cannot concurrently hold that both $[A \ \& \ \sim A]$.

Husserl questions the validity of this supposed inductive fact, arguing that it is in fact possible to for a human judgment to hold that $[A \ \& \ \sim A]$. He further argues that Sigwart's brand of psychologism leads to a vicious relativism which does not allow for

³ Heidegger, HCT 24.

⁴ Husserl takes himself to be responding to thinkers such as J.S. Mill, H. Spencer, C. Sigwart, *et cetera*. – see Husserl, LI, PPL, §§25, 26, 39.

the sort of necessary truth required by logic, if conceived as a proper science. In response to Sigwart, Husserl states that,

The same anthropological tendency pervades all the statements relative to basic logical concepts and in the first place to the concept of truth. It is, says Sigwart, 'a fiction... that a judgment could be true if we abstract from the fact that some intelligence thinks such a judgment'. A philosopher who speaks in this manner has accepted a psychologistic reinterpretation of truth.⁵

This quote is in line with Husserl's general rejection of the idea that logical truth can be directly dependent upon human psychology. He thus searches for the correct method in which to ground logical truth.

The insight gained from Husserl's rejection of logical psychologism, as well as the insights with reference to the concept of intentionality that Husserl developed under the influence of Franz Brentano, led Husserl to a phenomenology of pure logic.⁶ Husserl's project sought to ground logic in something more fundamental than the contingencies of naturalistic psychology, which led him to that which Heidegger considers to be the three fundamental discoveries of phenomenological research.

§2 Husserl's Three Discoveries: Intentionality, Categorial Intuition, and the Ontological Sense of the Apriori

Heidegger, who was a student of Husserl, continued on with this newly branded methodology of phenomenological research. To be sure, he disagreed with Husserl with

⁵ Husserl, LI, 85.

⁶ For a discussion of Husserl's conception of intentionality as it relates to Brentano, see LI, Investigation V, Chap. 2, §§9-11.

regards to certain fundamental issues about the sense and task of phenomenology; most notably the priority of the question of the meaning of being.⁷ However, he credits Husserl with three fundamental discoveries that underpin his own phenomenological research; namely, *intentionality*, *categorical intuition*, and the *ontological sense* of the *apriori*. Thus, a detour through these three Husserlian discoveries as understood by Heidegger, is an essential step in preparation for an investigation in Heidegger's own conception of the sense and task of phenomenology.

a) Intentionality

Intentionality, according to Husserl, is the structure of all lived experiences. It may be the least difficult of Husserl's discoveries to understand, but as we will see, it is also essential as the foundation for the subsequent two discoveries. The concept of intentionality as the structure of lived experience comes down to Husserl from Brentano, who appropriated it from the Scholastics, who had inherited it from Aristotle. The word itself is derived from the Latin word *intentio*, which literally means *directing-oneself-toward*. Husserl asserts that, since every act of consciousness is necessarily made up of a *directing-oneself-toward-something*, it must also include a corresponding *that-toward-which-one-directs-oneself*. Intentionality just is this structure of consciousness, or of lived experience.

⁷ In addition to the question of the meaning of being, Heidegger was quite critical of that which he saw as Husserl's naïve acceptance of a traditional Cartesian ontological view, as well as that which he considered to be a naïve understanding of the notion of truth, also influenced by an overzealous Cartesian view of truth as certainty. For a more substantial account of the differences between Heidegger and Husserl in terms of their views of phenomenology, see Heidegger, IPR, §48, and HCT §13.

It might be objected however, as does H. Rickert, that the intentional structure breaks down in certain cases of perception, for instance, in cases of hallucination or deception, where consciousness does not really direct itself toward anything at all.⁸ For example, let us assert that every perception, as a psychic compoment, is thus intentionally structured, and made up of a perceiving, and of something perceived. The traditional philosophical interpretation of this intentional relationship, which spans back at least to Descartes, begins with a psychic event that occurs within consciousness, which corresponds to an external object, which is posited as that which triggers the psychic event. However, one could be deceived as to the reality of the external object; in the perception of reading this very page, one could currently be dreaming, or hallucinating. And thus, there might be no real external object corresponding to the psychic experience of reading this very page.

However this objection serves to further elucidate the phenomenological discovery of the structure of intentionality in Husserl, which Heidegger adopts as his own, and then broadens in *Being and Time*. Ontologically prior to any discussion of the real, or external world, consciousness is already necessarily structured as a *directing-oneself-toward*, and a *that-toward-which-one-directs-oneself*. In cases of hallucination, or deception, *et cetera*, consciousness nevertheless necessarily directs itself toward that which is a hallucination or deception. Thus, whether or not there is a corresponding object *outside* of consciousness, consciousness in itself, directs itself toward a perceptual object, or a hallucination, or a certain judgment; toward some intentional

⁸ See Heidegger, HCT 31.

object. As such, the first discovery that comes down to Heidegger from Husserl is the necessary structure of intentionality, composed of two inseparable moments; namely, the *directing-oneself-toward*, and *that-toward-which-one-directs-oneself*.

b) Categorical Intuition

It is only once the structure of intentionality is clarified in this sense that *categorical intuition* becomes open for discovery as the second fundamental discovery of phenomenology. The discovery of categorical intuition is the discovery that all perceptual experience, or all that which is directly apprehended by consciousness, is *categorical*; in other words, all direct apprehension has, as its constituents, elements of the ancient Greek, or Aristotelian, categories. Sense perception may be the paradigm case of intuition, however, as we will see, sense perception is the founding level, but not the only level of intuition. Thus, as opposed to the empiricist view, which is still well accepted today, that perceptual experience is exhausted by sensual apprehension of quality, Husserl holds that categories such as relation, place, time, position, *et cetera*, are also directly apprehended by consciousness. As will become clear in chapter three, this discovery will help facilitate Heidegger's discussion of the intentional comportment of Dasein, which will allow for the discovery of the primary ontological character of entities within-the-world as ready-to-hand. However, for now, we must elucidate this discovery further, by way of a deeper investigation into the structure of intentionality as such.

α) Intentional Presuming and Fulfillment as they Relate to Evidence and Truth

Let us now make a further distinction within the structure of intentionality between intentional *presuming* and intentional *fulfillment*. Intentional presuming is the sort of *empty* intending that occurs when the object of intention is not presently perceived; such as in cases of imagination or memory. For example, imagine Edmonton's High Level Bridge, or for those unfamiliar with the bridge, imagine some other bridge with which you are familiar. Inherent in this imagination is a certain intentional presumption. Given to consciousness through this very imagining, is a certain intentional object, a bridge, with a certain structure, columns, railings *et cetera*. However, this imagining, or recollecting is always unfulfilled in a sense. As Heidegger puts it, "But however great the perfection of the fullness may be, it always manifests a difference from the fullness of perception, which gives the entity bodily."⁹ Concrete perception is the intentional fulfillment of the intentional presumption, or the empty intention. Thus, as the reader imagines, or recalls the bridge, they emptily intend it, and this intention can be fulfilled by concrete perception of the bridge.

Husserl's account of *evidence*, just is the specific intentional act of fulfilling an empty intention. This understanding of evidence as an intentional act is considerably more robust than, for example, Rickert's definition of evidence as mere 'feeling'. As Heidegger explains,

If we see that the acts of identifying apprehension are defined by intentionality, then we do not resort the mythical account of evidence as a psychic feeling or psychic datum, as

⁹ Heidegger, HCT 49.

though a pressure were first exerted and then it dawns on one that the truth is indeed there.¹⁰

The intentional structure thus outlined, provides a threefold description of the phenomenological possibilities for the conception of truth. The *first* concept of truth is the being-identical of the presumed and intuited; the *second* sense is not the being-identical of the two constituents of evidence *per se*, but rather the structure of evidence itself – the presumed, the intuited, as well as their being-identical; and *finally*, truth can be described as the intuited entity itself, as the being, or being-real of the intuited entity. In chapters four and five, we will discuss Heidegger's conception of truth as the uncoveredness of entities and the disclosedness of Dasein, and we shall see that this conception of truth has its roots in Husserl's discussion of this structure of intentional fulfillment.

β) Intuition and Expression

On the basis of our threefold phenomenological definition of truth, the reader may come to question how it is that we can call an assertion true, when made within a concrete perception. As we shall soon see, when we express communicative ideas through assertion, there is more that is intentionally presumed than can be fulfilled through sense perception alone.

Consider, for example, the assertion, '*This bridge is black and paved*'. Through sense perception I can see the bridge, I can see its colour, I can see its pavement; however, I

¹⁰ Heidegger, HCT 50.

cannot see its being-a-bridge, its being-black, nor its being-paved. In other words, I see neither the being of the bridge, nor the unity of its properties, nor the *thisness* that distinguishes the bridge from other objects in the world. These things are non-sensuous, thus not inherent in the object, in what is perceived as such. They are rather something 'subjective', and something that must be studied from the subject, from consciousness. These moments of things perceived, which are expressed through assertions, are thus not apprehended through the senses. However, they are essential in communicating the perception of the bridge; these moments necessarily exist in any perception at all. Thus, there must be some non-sensory mode of apprehension that gives these non-sensory moments of perception, which we necessarily express when expressing the perception of the bridge; whether in language, as a communication with others, or merely in thought. These moments are the objects of *categorial intuition*, which is the mode of apprehension of the non-sensory moments of perception. Having now discovered these moments, let us discuss how it is that these moments are apprehended.

γ) Simple and Multi-level Acts

In order to understand *categorial intuition*, one must see that the world is apprehended in multiple layers, and that although sense perception is foundational for all perceptual acts, other levels of perception are required. *Simple intuitive acts*, are equal to sense perception. The objects of sense perception are bodily given; they are given through a series of perceptions or perception-phases, i.e. from different angles, at

different times, however the objects are given as singular, and identical to themselves. As Heidegger puts it, "...the continuum of the perceptual sequence is not instituted by a supervening synthesis, but that what is perceived in this sequence is there at one level of act."¹¹ Thus simple apprehension consists of simple rather than multi-level intuitive acts. Husserl uses this concept of simple apprehension to provide the definition for *reality*. A *real* object is defined by Husserl as any possible object of a simple perception.¹² However, the intentional moments described above, such as being, or unity, or thisness, given in apprehension, are non-sensory, and thus not part of *reality*. Simple perception, as Heidegger explains, provides only the foundation for the fulfillment of such non-real moments, which are necessarily part of the intentional presumptions of our full assertions. Multi-level acts are founded upon simple apprehension in that they direct themselves toward these simple acts, however their fulfillment is not a mere repetition of the fulfillment of simple apprehension. To illustrate this point, we shall investigate two examples of such multi-level acts, namely, acts of *synthesis*, and acts of *ideation*.

δ) Two examples of Multi-Level Acts: Acts of Synthesis, and Acts of Ideation

Acts of synthesis give the certain states of affairs concerning the relations of things to their properties. Imagine again the High Level Bridge. In the simple perception of the bridge, at the fundamental level of sense perception, the entity is given in all of its real, or sensuous, moments. At this level of the simply given, the real parts, or moments of

¹¹ Heidegger, HCT 61.

¹² For more, see Husserl, LI Investigation VI §44.

the perception of the bridge do not stand out, apart from the unity of the simple apprehension. Through acts of expression of the perception, however – for instance, through acts of assertion about the perceived bridge – a new layer or ‘level’ of apprehension is given.

Consider the assertion, ‘*This bridge is black*’. The accentuation of the colour of the bridge through this assertion gives the being-black of the bridge as a moment of apprehension that was not present in the simple perception of the bridge. The accentuation of the colour of the bridge gives the relation between the simple perception of the bridge as a unity and its constituent parts, or properties. The being-black of the bridge is given to consciousness in an act of expression that is founded upon, but not directly given in the simple perception of the bridge. Thus it is not *real*, in the strict Husserlian sense of the word, but however, is apprehended by consciousness in a founded manner. This act of synthesis is a paradigm example of *categorial* act, or an act of *categorial intuition*. It is important to note that in acts of synthesis, the founding objectivity of the act is *cointended* along with the object of the act itself. Thus, in our example, the founding objectivity of the bridge as an apprehended unity of real moments, is cointended along with any synthetic apprehensions, for instance, its being-black.

Acts of ideation are once again founded upon simple perception, however, they do not *cointend* their founding objectivities as do acts of synthesis. Heidegger calls these acts of ideation “the intuition of the universal”.¹³ Thus, the intended objects in these

¹³ Heidegger, HCT 66.

acts are not the real objects at all, but rather the universals abstracted from the real objects. Take for instance the apprehension of the colour red. Through *ideating abstraction* of the simple perception of many moments of red – perceived, imagined or otherwise intended – the founded categorial apprehension of the universal, or idea of red becomes possible. As Heidegger states, “The objective here, which ideation allows us to see anew, (is) the idea itself, the identical unity red: this objective is not the individuation, (not) this particular red”.¹⁴ As such, ideation gives universal ideas to consciousness in a founded but objective manner.

We have seen with our investigation into multi-level acts of intuition that there is more that is apprehended by consciousness than that which is simply apprehended through the senses. Sense perception is indeed the foundational mode of apprehension, however, we have seen examples of founded modes of apprehension, of categorial intuition, which help to flesh out and give a more robust account of conscious experience. This discovery, though preliminary, provides a basis for more vigorous investigation into these apriori structures of consciousness, and as Heidegger proclaims, “As a result of this discovery, philosophical research is now in a position to conceive the *apriori* more rigorously and to prepare for the characterisation of the sense of its being.”¹⁵ Let us now investigate how it is that Heidegger characterises Husserl’s third discovery, the *ontological sense of the apriori*.

c) The Ontological Sense of the Apriori

¹⁴ Heidegger, HCT 67.

¹⁵ Heidegger, HCT 72.

The term *apriori* stems from the Latin word *prius*, which means prior, earlier, or before. Thus *apriori* means literally, *from before*, or *what is earlier*. In modern philosophy, most notably since Kant – although Kant’s roots are grounded in Cartesian thought – the term has been principally attributed to knowing. Thus *apriori knowledge* is knowledge that is not grounded in empirical experience. It is knowledge that is independent, and prior to experience. As such, *apriori* knowledge is restricted to knowledge of the subjective sphere, of the necessary subjective structures of all possible objective knowledge. *Objective, or empirical, knowledge*, on the other hand – that which is based upon experience – is termed *aposteriori knowledge*. *Aposteriori*, meaning later, or that which comes after. This is the knowledge that comes after the *apriori*, or purely subjective knowledge.

This characterisation of the *apriori* as limited to subjective knowledge has become an accepted dogma of modern philosophy. However, the discovery of *categorial intuition* shows that the *apriori* is not limited to subjectivity. As Heidegger says, “In the ideal as in the real, once we accept this separation, there is in reference to its objectivity something ideal which can be brought out, something in the being of the ideal and in the being of the real which is *apriori*, structurally earlier.”¹⁶ As such, the *apriori*, phenomenologically understood, is not epistemological in nature, but rather ontological. The *apriori* in this sense describes that which is prior to reality in its ontological structure, rather than that which is epistemically prior to reality in a merely subjective structure. Heidegger asserts that, “The *apriori* is a *feature of the structural*

¹⁶ Heidegger, HCT 74.

sequence in the being of entities, in the ontological structure of being".¹⁷ He further claims that this discovery of the *apriori* which is grounded in ontology, rather than epistemology, is consistent with the notions of the *apriori* discussed by Parmenides, and later Plato, which is why he terms it the *original* sense of the term.¹⁸

As we shall see in chapter two, this ontological understanding of the *apriori*, is necessary for Heidegger's overall project of the question of the meaning of being. The being of an entity as such is nothing real, nothing empirical, rather, an entity's being is ontologically prior to any such distinction between real and ideal. This insight will allow Heidegger to re-pose, or reawaken the question of the meaning of being as such.

§3 Heidegger's Conception of Phenomenology

We have now touched upon the origins of phenomenology, as well as that which Heidegger takes to be the three fundamental discoveries that underpin phenomenological research, but we have yet to explain exactly what phenomenological research means to Heidegger. What does he see himself to be doing?

a) The Principle of Phenomenology: To the Matters Themselves!

Phenomenology, despite the suffix *'-logy'* not a field of research, but a rather a methodology, the principle of which is to get at *the matters themselves*. In generality, this principle is meant to be the principle of all scientific research, namely, to get at the objects of research in question, in themselves. But what does this principle mean for philosophy and for Heidegger?

¹⁷ Heidegger, HCT 74.

¹⁸ Heidegger, HCT 75.

Let us return to Husserl's project of securing the objects of logic – such as meanings, concepts, assertions, judgments, *et cetera* – in order to ground logic in necessary laws rather than the contingencies of human psychology. We now find these objects within the field of intentionality, in the phenomenological sense of the *apriori*, and we apprehend them via *categorial intuition*. As Heidegger says,

The characterization of the apriori as well as the specification of categorial intuition have already shown that this [phenomenological] mode of treatment is a simple originary apprehension and not a kind of experimental substructuring in which I construct hypotheses in the field of the categorial. Instead, the full content of the apriori of intentionality can be apprehended in simple commensuration with the matter itself.¹⁹ Thus, phenomenology, for Heidegger, is a manner of describing the intentional structures of the *apriori*, in the ontological sense of the word, by way of *categorial intuition*. Or as he puts it himself, "Phenomenology is the analytic description of intentionality in its apriori".²⁰ As such, phenomenology does not name a particular field of study, but rather *the way in which* things are to be studied. Phenomenology is a *methodological* term.

b) *Phainómenon* and *Lógos*

If we return for a moment to the Greek roots of the word phenomenology, we can gain further insight into Heidegger's sense of its meaning. Recall that the term *phenomenology*, is rooted in the two Greek words, *phainómenon*, and *lógos*. We shall

¹⁹ Heidegger, HCT 78.

²⁰ Heidegger, HCT 79.

investigate the origins of these founding terms separately in order to come to that which Heidegger sees as a genuine understanding of the term.

α) *Phainómenon*

Phainómenon, once again, means roughly, ‘that which shows itself’. However the primary sense of the word is not associated with any sense of mere appearance. The Greeks referred to the totality of *phainómenon* simply as *ta onta*, or entities.²¹ Thus, that which shows itself, for the Greeks, just is an entity. However, there are two senses of the word *phainómenon*; an entity can show itself in one of two ways. An entity can show itself *manifestly* as that which it is, or it can show itself *falsely* as something, which it is not. However, only the former sense of *phainómenon* can be equated to the English term *phenomenon*, whereas something that shows itself falsely is called a *semblance*. As such, the authentic sense of the English term *phenomenon* has nothing to do with mere appearance but rather describes the showing of itself, in itself, of an entity. This confusion with the word *appearance* has to do with the association of *phainómenon* with *semblance*.

Through a return to the original Greek meaning of *phainómenon*, Heidegger rejects the modern association of the term *phenomenon* with the idea of mere appearance; and regard the phenomenal as a showing of itself, in itself of an entity. In doing so, he also rejects the Kantian, dichotomy between the phenomenal world of appearance, and the world in-itself, which is thought to exist behind the phenomenon. Through this

²¹ Heidegger, HCT 81.

rejection, one can foresee the link between Heidegger's method, and his critique of the Cartesian scepticism still present in the Kantian dichotomy.

β) *Lógos*

The suffix –logy, which comes from the ancient Greek word, *lógos*, is generally used to signify the science of *this* or *that*. For instance, biology is the science of the life, psychology is the science of the psychical, *et cetera*; but the Greeks did not understand *lógos* in such a way. Aristotle, for instance used the word *lógos* to denote *discourse*, however, his sense of discourse was much more broad than the modern usage of the word. For Aristotle, the meaning of the word *lógos*, was not restricted to the mere formation and recital of language or words, but also included the process by which the entities were made manifest *through* language. *Discourse* lets something be seen *in* itself, as well as *from* itself. Heidegger explains that, "In discourse, to the extent that it is genuine, what is said should be drawn from what is talked about, so that discursive communication in its content, in what it says, makes manifest what it is talking about and makes it accessible to the other party."²² Thus, Heidegger sees the meaning of the word phenomenology – the *lógos* of the *phainómenon* – as denoting the letting be seen *in itself* and *from itself* of the *matters themselves* as they are given.

c) The Unified Meaning of Heidegger's Two Definitions of Phenomenology

²² Heidegger, HCT 84.

Heidegger presents the sense and meaning of phenomenological research in two ways; first, through an analysis of Husserl's project in the *Logical Investigations*, and second, through an investigation into the etymological meanings of the components of the word. Thus, we are left with two definitions of a single term. First, *phenomenology is the analytic description of intentionality in its apriori*; and second, it is also *the letting be seen in itself and from itself of the matters themselves as they are given*.

Much insight is gained when one recognises that both definitions are different ways of saying the same thing. The *phainómenon* – the matters themselves, as they are given – just is *intentionality in its apriori*. And the *analytic description* just is the *lógos*, or a form of letting these matters be seen in themselves and from themselves. As such, Heidegger's two definitions of phenomenology are really two aspects of the same definition; two ways of saying the same thing.

The sense and task of phenomenological research is thus to analytically describe the structures of intentionality in its *apriori*. This is equivalent to making manifest the matters themselves as they are given, in and from themselves. We have arrived at this task through an analysis of the original phenomenological research performed by Husserl, and upon the foundation of his discovery of *intentionality* and the subsequent discoveries of *categorial intuition* as well as the *ontological sense of the apriori*. Having secured Heidegger's methodology, we will, in the subsequent chapter, examine the primary theme of Heidegger's investigation in *Being and Time*, namely, the question of the meaning of being. We have secured the *how* of Heidegger's investigation, we must now secure the *what*.

Chapter 2: The Question of the Meaning of Being, and the Existential Analytic of Dasein

In the last chapter we outlined Heidegger's methodology, the 'how' of his philosophy in *Being and Time*. Before we move on to his critique of Cartesian ontology, we must also come to know his overall project, or the 'what' of Heidegger's philosophy in *Being and Time*. In the following chapter, we shall outline Heidegger's project in two sections. In section *four*, we will discuss how it is that Heidegger sees the question of the meaning of being as having been forgotten throughout the history of philosophy, and how it needs to be reawakened. In section *five*, we will look into Heidegger's object of study, his way of access to the meaning of being; namely *Dasein*. We will explore *Dasein*'s pre-understanding of being, and show how *Dasein* is the only entity for which the question of being arises. Then, we will briefly discuss the apparent problem of *Meno's Paradox* that seems to accompany any discussion of *Dasein*'s access to the meaning of being as such. Once we have grounded Heidegger's overall project, we will stand upon firm ground from which to explore his critique of Cartesianism, and his overcoming of scepticism.

§4: The Question of the Meaning of Being

Heidegger's self-stated project in *Being and Time* is to concretely work out the question of the meaning of being as such. He begins his treatise with a quote from Plato's *Sophist*, "For manifestly you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the expression 'being'. We, however, who used to think we understood it, have

now become perplexed".²³ Through this quote, Heidegger foreshadows two issues, which are central to both his overall project, as well as this chapter; namely, the philosophical neglect of the question of the meaning of being, as well as Dasein's pre-understanding of the meaning of being. In this section we will focus on the former issue, whereas the latter issue will be discussed in section *five*.

a) The Ontological Difference

In order to discuss the question of the meaning of being, we must first digress slightly to highlight a distinction, which Heidegger terms the *ontological difference*. The ontological difference, simply put, is the differentiation between being in general and beings themselves – or entities. Entities, broadly construed, are those things which make up the world; in other words, every real object, ideal object, phenomenon, *et cetera*, is, in itself, an entity. As such, *every-thing* is an entity. However, being is not a thing, and thus not an entity. Being is, rather, that which determines entities as entities; it is that on the basis of which, entities are already understood as what they are. Being is always the being of an entity, and in that sense, being belongs to entities, however, is never an entity itself.²⁴

At this point our definitions of both entity and being may seem vague, as we are merely attempting to grab hold of our object of research. However, the vagueness also points toward our next topic of discussion; namely, the philosophical neglect of the question of the meaning of being. For our purpose in this chapter, it must suffice to

²³ Plato, *Sophist* 244a.

²⁴ Heidegger, BP 17.

recognise that there exists a difference between entities themselves, and being in general, and, as we shall soon discuss, that the meaning of being in particular is not well understood.

b) The Neglect of the Question of the Meaning of Being

The question of the meaning of being was prominent in the work of the ancient Greeks, such as Parmenides, Plato, and Aristotle. However, Heidegger explains that the problem has been neglected, and covered-up throughout the history of philosophy ever since. This is not to say that the concept of being has not been discussed, but rather that the *meaning* of being as such, has been taken for granted throughout these traditional discussions. According to Heidegger, this covering-up of the question of the meaning of being stems from three traditional ontological assumptions; namely that being as such is taken to be *universal, undefinable, and self-evident*. The meaning of being is traditionally taken to be universal in that it is already included in the conception of anything that one apprehends; to conceive of an entity is necessarily to conceive of it in its being, that is, to conceive of it as being something. Being is also taken to be undefinable in that it is not, in itself, an entity; it is not a thing. As such it eludes the traditional sense of definition, since it is not a thing, it becomes difficult to answer the question '*What is it?*'. Finally, being is traditionally taken to be a self-evident concept. It seems that whenever the concept of being is expressed, it is universally understood. Otherwise assertions such as 'The sky is blue.' or 'This coffee is too cold.' would be unintelligible.

Thus, Heidegger explains that,

That which ancient philosophers found continually disturbing as something obscure and hidden has taken on a clarity and self-evidence such that if anyone continues to ask about it he is charged with an error of method.²⁵

Once again, this is not to say that the concept of being has not been discussed throughout the history of philosophy, which would certainly be false. It is merely to say that, although being has been discussed, its meaning, since antiquity, has not been questioned, and as such, subsequent discussion of being remains ungrounded. For example, during the scholastic period, St. Thomas Aquinas discussed the distinction between divine being, and created being without first grounding this distinction in a concept of the meaning of being as such.²⁶ Likewise, during the modern period, thinkers such as Descartes and Kant distinguished between the being of nature and the being of mind, once again, without discussing the meaning of being as such.²⁷ Thus, it is Heidegger's thesis, that, prior to the sort of traditional ontological research exemplified here by Aquinas, or Descartes or Kant, the meaning of being must be secured, and this is his project in *Being and Time*.

c) The Tripartite Structure of the Question of the Meaning of Being

In order for the question of the meaning of being to be posed, we must first flesh out the structure of this question, thus securing our object of investigation. According

²⁵ Heidegger, BT H2.

²⁶ See Heidegger, IPR, Part Two Chap. 4.

²⁷ See Heidegger, BP, Part One Chap. 3.

to Heidegger, every form of inquiry necessarily contains a tripartite ontological structure. The three structural moments of any question are: *that which is asked about*, *that which is interrogated*, and *that which is to be found out by the asking*.²⁸ Thus in order to formulate the question of the meaning of being, we must explicitly identify its particular structure, in order to determine our way of access into the elusive concept of being. The first and third moments of the structure of our inquiry seem fairly self-evident. We are asking about being, and we wish to determine its meaning. That which is less self-evident is what it is that should be interrogated in order to gain access to the meaning of being.

It is clear that being always belongs to entities, and that some sort of entity must be interrogated in order to access being's meaning. However, it is not clear which entity should be interrogated. Heidegger maintains that (human) Dasein is the entity that provides the way of access to the meaning of being. Thus, we must now explain what is meant by Dasein, and how it is that Dasein provides access to the meaning of being.

§5: The Existential Analytic of Dasein

In discussing the existential analytic of Dasein, we must first explain what it is that Heidegger means by *Dasein* before moving on to Dasein's special access to the meaning of being. Following a preliminary discussion of Dasein and its pre-understanding of being, we will attempt to elucidate Heidegger's project by discussing an apparent problem with Dasein's access to the meaning of being; namely an apparent version of Meno's Paradox, and show how Heidegger sees himself as having overcome this

²⁸ Heidegger, BT H5.

problem; this will also allow us the opportunity to tie the existential analytic back in to Heidegger's phenomenological method.

a) Da-sein, or Being-there

Dasein is Heidegger's designation for the entity, that as human beings, we all are.²⁹ More broadly, Dasein can refer to any entity with the way of being of *existence*.³⁰ It is a conjunction of the German words *da* and *sein*; the latter translates as *being*, while the former translates as *there*. So directly translated, Dasein means being-there or there-being. However, this particular piece of Heideggerian jargon takes on a central role in his philosophy, as it primarily designates *human* existence. As we will discover in the following chapter, Heidegger's conception of Dasein as human existence is radically different from the traditional conception of the human subject. But for now, a preliminary definition of Dasein as being-there – or human-being, will allow us to begin to explain why it is that Heidegger asserts that Dasein is to be interrogated as the second structural moment in the question of the meaning of being.

b) Dasein's Access to the Meaning of Being

There are three ways in which Heidegger explains that Dasein has a special relation to being, such that it provides access into its meaning. Heidegger terms these ways the

²⁹ Heidegger, BT H11, BP 28.

³⁰ We will discuss Heidegger's concept of existence briefly in this chapter, and more extensively in chapter three. For our purposes we can take Dasein to mean human Dasein, which proximally and for the most part Heidegger does. However, for secondary discussion of Heidegger's concept of Dasein as such, which, properly defined, indicates any entity with this way of being called existence, refer to Dreyfus, BIW 23-24, or Richardson, HTPT 44-46.

ontological, the *ontical* and the *ontico-ontological* ways.³¹ Here, by ontological we refer to Dasein's structure of being as such; by ontical we refer to Dasein's particular characteristics as an entity; and by ontico-ontological, we refer to the ontical possibilities of Dasein that are founded upon an ontological understanding of the being of entities. These distinctions should become lucid as we discuss concretely Dasein's three special relations to being.

To begin, Dasein has an ontological relation to being in that its own being is disclosed to it, and that it comports itself toward its being understandingly. Here we do not mean merely that Dasein has the capacity to do ontology – which would be an ontical relation – but rather that it *is* in such a way that it has an understanding of its own being. This is part of the structure of Dasein's being, and thus ontological.

Further, Dasein has an ontical relation to being in that it *exists*. Here, existence is a technical term that denotes the capacity for self-interpretation. Heidegger explains that, “Its [Dasein's] ownmost Being is such that it has an understanding of that Being, *and already maintains itself in each case as if its Being has been interpreted in some manner.*”³² Real objects such as stones or trees do not *exist* in this Heideggerian sense of the term, rather Heidegger designates the term *presence-at-hand* to denote the common sense of term existence. Thus, because Dasein is unique in its capacity for self-interpretation, only Dasein exists, whereas stones and trees are merely present-at-hand. In other words, Dasein is unique in its capacity for the interpretation of its own way of

³¹ Heidegger, BT H13.

³² Heidegger, BT H15. (my italics)

being.³³ As this is a particular characteristic of Dasein *as an entity*, it is an ontical relation to being.

Finally, Dasein relates itself understandingly to all other entities in their being. This, Heidegger terms the ontico-ontological relation of Dasein to being. This relating understandingly to other entities is exemplified by the sciences; namely, the natural sciences, mathematics, *et cetera*. As an ontico-ontological relation, it refers to the ontical possibilities of Dasein that are founded upon an ontological understanding of the being of all kinds of entities.

Let us now explain how it is that this relation is indeed ontico-ontological. Heidegger states that being-in-a-world is something that belongs ontologically to Dasein; in other words, it is part of the ontological essence of Dasein that it must always exist in a world, alongside entities which are in some way accessible to it. He explains further that,

Dasein's understanding of Being pertains with equal primordially both to an understanding of something like a 'world', and to the understanding of the Being of those entities which become accessible within the world.³⁴

As such, any ontical understanding of other entities, which is always to some degree an understanding of these entities in their being, is made possible only by an ontological understanding of something like a world. We have yet to discuss Heidegger's

³³ See Dreyfus, BIW 14-16.

³⁴ Heidegger, BT H13.

conception of worldhood, and how this is essentially ontological, however the point that needs to be made is that Dasein's understanding of being is not restricted to its own particular kind of being, but as being-in-a-world, Dasein also understands the kind of being of entities within the world. Thus Dasein has three unique relations to being that provide a way of access into its meaning. Dasein comports itself toward its own being understandingly, it has the capacity to interpret its own way of being, and it also relates itself understandingly to all other entities in their being. However, we seem to have arrived at a paradox in the above discussion of the question of the meaning of being that is analogous to Meno's Paradox, in Plato's dialogue *Meno*.

c) Meno's Paradox

Meno's paradox is problem of the apparent circularity of understanding that applies to any inquiry whatsoever. In the dialogue of *Meno*, Socrates and Meno stumble across a methodological paradox in an attempt to discover the true meaning of virtue, and as we shall see, this paradox can be equally applied to Heidegger's search for the meaning of being as such. In the dialogue Meno asks Socrates,

Why, on what lines will you look, Socrates, for a thing of whose nature you know nothing at all? Pray, what sort of thing, amongst those that you know not, will you treat us to as the object of your search? Or even supposing, at the best, that you hit upon it, how will you know it is the thing you did not know?³⁵

Socrates elucidates the problem:

³⁵ Plato, *Meno* 80 d.

Do you see what a captious argument you are introducing – that, forsooth, a man cannot inquire either about what he knows or about what he does not know? For he cannot inquire about what he knows, because he knows it, and in that case is in no need of inquiry; nor again can he inquire about what he does not know, since he does not know about what he is to inquire.³⁶

Thus it seems that, according to Plato, one must already possess an understanding of any answer sought in any inquiry, in order to be able to know that one has indeed obtained the correct answer. Further, if one already has the answer to the inquiry, then nothing further can be learned by inquiring. If we apply this insight to our current study of the question of the meaning of being, we see that in searching for access to the meaning of being through Dasein, Heidegger asserts that Dasein, in all three ways mentioned above, is related to being by way of understanding, but it is precisely an understanding of being for which we are searching! Thus, Heidegger must explain how it is that we can be in want of the meaning of being as such, and yet at the same time, have access to this meaning through Dasein's special way of relating to being understandingly.

For Heidegger, Dasein, as the kind of entity that it is, always in some sense understands the meaning of being. However, this understanding is vague, or in some way covered-up, or hidden from Dasein. As he explains,

So the meaning of Being must already be available to us in some way. As we have intimated, we always conduct our activities in an understanding of Being. Out of this understanding arise both the explicit question of the meaning of Being and the tendency that leads us towards its conception. We do not *know* what 'Being' means.

³⁶ Plato, *Meno* 80 e.

But even if we ask, 'What is 'Being'?', we keep within an understanding of the 'is', though we are unable to fix conceptually what that 'is' signifies.³⁷

Thus, according to Heidegger, his project does not intend to *discover* something that is completely novel, or unknown to Dasein, but rather to *uncover* the meaning of being which must necessarily be understood by any and every human Dasein. In order to elucidate this last point, we must return to a discussion of Heidegger's understanding of the phenomenological method, and relate it more explicitly to the question of the meaning of being, and the existential analytic of Dasein.

d) Phenomenology, and the Existential Analytic

Recall from chapter one, that the general task with which phenomenology provides itself is to make manifest that which is given in itself, and from itself; and further, that this is equivalent to analytically describing the structures of intentionality in its apriori. In relating the phenomenological task to the question of the meaning of being, we come up against the question as to how it is that phenomenology as such can provide any insight into the meaning of being. For Heidegger, in analysing any entity phenomenologically, there is a 'part' of that entity which is proximally and for the part given, not explicitly, but rather, hidden within the givenness of the entity. That which lies hidden within the intuiting, or givenness of any entity, according to Heidegger, just is its being.³⁸

³⁷ Heidegger, BT H5.

³⁸ Heidegger, BT H35.

Recall our discussion in chapter one about simple and multi-level, or categorial, intuitive acts. We discovered at that point, that more is given to consciousness in perception than mere *sense* intuition. We saw that through categorial intuition, the ontologically apriori structures of the being-black, or being-a-bridge, or merely being-a-real-object of the High Level Bridge were given – though not explicitly – in any perception of the bridge as such.

As we shall see in chapter four, it is Heidegger's thesis that Dasein's understanding of being as such, though given to Dasein in any and every intuition of an entity, becomes covered-up, and is thus hidden from Dasein, through traditional assumptions about this meaning. As such, Heidegger's project in *Being and Time* is not to discover something, about which Dasein is completely unfamiliar – as this sort of inquiry would indeed suffer from a form of Meno's Paradox – but rather to return to an investigation of the givenness of entities themselves to Dasein, in order that the meaning of being as such, already given to Dasein in any apprehension of entities by Dasein, may be uncovered, or unhidden.

Thus, at this point, it should clear as to how, and why Heidegger has chosen to undertake a phenomenological study of Dasein in order to uncover the traditionally neglected question of the meaning of being as such. As we shall see in chapter three, some insights into Heidegger's methodology, and overall task in *Being and Time* will be necessary in order to understand his critique of the traditional Cartesian ontology. Therefore, having this preliminary understanding of the philosophical foundation that underpins Heidegger's critique, we now move forwards to discuss the critique itself.

Chapter 3: The Critique of Cartesian Ontology – The Overcoming of Scepticism

Having, in the first two chapters, explored Heidegger's broad project in *Being and Time*, as well as the method used to undertake this project, we stand upon firm ground in our task for the next three chapters, which will be the explication and evaluation of his critique of traditional Cartesian ontology, and the subsequent overcoming of scepticism. The present chapter will restrict itself to a presentation of the critique itself and of Heidegger's ontology of being-in-the-world. An evaluation of this critique will be the topic of chapters four and five.

In section six, we will explore the basic principles of the Cartesian ontology as understood by Heidegger. In this section we will begin with a discussion of Descartes' notion of substance as determinative of his ontology, we will then discuss his overall philosophical project as a quest for certain knowledge, and finally explore the ontological dualism that appears in the world of created substance as a result of Descartes' care about certainty. In section seven, we will explore Heidegger's specific critique, which includes a critique of the Cartesian subject, the determination of the world as extended substance, and an explication of the necessary link between a dualistic ontology of world and the problem of scepticism. Finally, in section eight, we will conclude the chapter with a presentation of Heidegger's own basic analysis of the unitary phenomenon of Dasein's being-in-the-world as a means of overcoming Cartesian scepticism.

§ 6: The Cartesian Ontology: Substance, Certainty, and Dualism

Descartes grounds his understanding of being in the notion of substantiality. Substantiality, as defined by Descartes, is the mode of being of any entity that can exist independent of all other entities. In the *Principles of Philosophy* he states that, “By substance we can understand nothing other than a thing which exists in such a way as to depend on no other thing for its existence.”³⁹ This is to be contrasted with attributes, or properties, which require the existence of some sort of substance in order to maintain their own existence.⁴⁰ As such, all entities have substantiality as their mode of being, or are attributed to a substance, and thus *dependent* upon substantiality for their existence.

After grounding all being in this concept of substantiality, Descartes then distinguishes between the way of being of two kinds of substance; one of which belongs to God, and the other, which belongs to all other entities. The former he calls *ens perfectum* – or perfect being – and the latter, *ens creatum* – or created being. However, there is an ambiguity in Descartes’ thought such that there is a sense in which one can say that both kinds of being – perfect being and created being – are indeed substances, and another sense in which only God is truly substantial. This is because, in a strict sense, the existence of all other entities is dependent upon the existence of God, but God is not dependent on any other entity for its own existence. Descartes explains:

³⁹ Descartes, PP AT VIII A 25.

⁴⁰ Descartes, PP AT VIII A 23.

And there is only one substance which can be understood to depend on no other thing whatsoever, namely God. In the case of all other substances, we perceive that they can exist only with the help of God's concurrence.⁴¹

Thus all other entities are substances only in a secondary sense.

Hence the term 'substance' does not apply *univocally*, as they say in the Schools, to God and to other things; that is, there is no distinctly intelligible meaning of the term which is common to God and his creatures... But as for corporeal substance and mind, these can be understood to fall under this common concept; things that need only the concurrence of God in order to exist."⁴²

This last quote prefigures the next part of our discussion of Cartesian ontology, namely, the Cartesian dichotomy *within* the realm of *ens creatum*; the dichotomy between corporeality, and mind.

Among all created substance, Descartes distinguishes once again between two possible types of substance; between *substantia corporea* – or corporeal substance, and *substantia cogitans* – or thinking substance.⁴³ This distinction has remained prominent throughout modern ontology and is often times referred to as the distinction between nature and spirit, or between matter and mind. With the Cartesian notion of substance in hand, we will, in what follows, restrict our discussion to the realm of created substance, as it is to this realm that Heidegger's critique applies, and within which the problem of scepticism occurs. In order to ground this ontological dichotomy between

⁴¹ Descartes, PP AT VIII A 24.

⁴² Descartes, PP AT VIII A 24-25.

⁴³ Heidegger, HCT 174.

thinking and corporeal substance, we must inquire into the sense of Descartes' overall project, and the method used to ground his ontology.

a) Descartes' Project as an Epistemic Project and the Determination of the Subject as Absolutely Certain

Descartes' project, as understood by Heidegger, is to provide a foundation for securing the certainty of knowledge.⁴⁴ In the Preface to the French edition of the *Principles of Philosophy* Descartes maintains that,

The word philosophy, means the study of wisdom, and by 'wisdom' is meant not only prudence in our everyday affairs but also *a perfect knowledge of all things that mankind is capable of knowing*.⁴⁵

It is this Cartesian focus, which Heidegger characterises as a focus on the certitude of knowledge, that motivates the *method of doubt* that Descartes outlines in his *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Here, Descartes explains that,

Reason now leads me to think that I should hold back my assent from opinions that are not completely certain and indubitable just as carefully as I do from those patently false.⁴⁶

Through his '*First Meditation*', Descartes discovers that the majority of his beliefs are less than certain, and thus according to his method, must be called into doubt. He notes that, in the past, he had held fundamental beliefs that had turned out to be false, and further, that from time to time, even the senses had shown themselves to be deceptive – especially when the mind is in a state of dreaming.

⁴⁴ Heidegger, IPR 96-97.

⁴⁵ Descartes, PP AT IXB 2. (my italics)

⁴⁶ Descartes, Med. AT VII 18.

In his '*Second Meditation*' Descartes concludes that the only thing of which he can be absolutely certain is his own existence. Despite all possibility of deception or error of thought, the occurrence of his own thought necessitates his own existence. He explains that, "I must finally conclude that this proposition, *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind."⁴⁷ Descartes also presents this idea a few years later, in the *Principles of Philosophy*, where he states, "I am thinking, therefore I exist" – or '*cogito ergo sum*' – and therefore this idea has become known as the *cogito sum*.

Thus Descartes secures at least one perfectly certain epistemic proposition, and as Heidegger explains, with this perfectly certain proposition, the criteria for perfect knowledge emerges. "With the grasping of the *cogito sum*, the *clara et distincta perceptio* [clear and distinct perception] is given at the same time."⁴⁸ Here, Heidegger is referring to the explanation that Descartes gives at the beginning of the '*Third Meditation*' where he explains his criterion of truth, which has now become known as the *regula generalis*, or the *general rule*. Descartes explains that he is certain that he exists, due to the fact that he *clearly and distinctly perceives* the truth of this proposition. He goes on to explain that if perceiving something clearly and distinctly was not a sufficient criterion for truth, then he could be certain of nothing at all.

The question now arises: 'What is it that Descartes means by clear and distinct perception in relation to the general rule'? And as Heidegger explains,

⁴⁷ Descartes, Med. AT VII 25.

⁴⁸ Heidegger, IPR 96.

If one looks upon the rule purely in terms of its content, it is not at all immediately apparent in what sense this rule and what it says are supposed to be related to a particular domain of objects. Nothing is said in the rule about the specific object-character of what is supposed to be grasped in the rule.⁴⁹

In other words, what is meant by the general rule, and by clear and distinct perception is vague. However Heidegger reminds us that the general rule is a rule for knowledge and that the Cartesian paradigm of knowledge is scientific knowledge. He directs us to a quote from Descartes' scientific treatise *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, where Descartes states that, "We should bear in mind that there are two ways of arriving at a knowledge of things – through experience and through deduction."⁵⁰ With reference to the *cogito sum*, Descartes sees the proposition as fundamentally certain in that, through the immanently given experience of one's own thinking, one can deduce one's own existence as a necessary condition of the above mentioned thinking.

Thus, to recapitulate, Descartes' overall project is to secure the certainty of his knowledge, and by the method of the general rule of accepting as true only that which he perceives clearly and distinctly – through experience or deduction, he has determined as perfectly certain, that he exists.

b) *Res Cogitans, Res Extensa*, and the Influence of the Cartesian Ontology upon the Western Philosophical Tradition

We now have, at least, a basic understanding of Descartes' overall project and methodology, as well as the grounding certainty, which is meant to underpin the whole of his ontology. With all this in hand, we are prepared to present the dualistic ontology

⁴⁹ Heidegger, IPR 156.

⁵⁰ Descartes, RDM AT X 364-365.

of the world of created being, which is to be the focus of the Heideggerian critique. As mentioned above, within the world of created being, Descartes distinguishes between two kinds of substances, namely *substantia cogitans* – or thinking substance, and *substantia corporea* – or corporeal substance. He goes on to characterise these two kinds of substance as *res cogitans* – or thinking subject, and *res extensa* – or extended thing. We must now explore these two characterisations in order to gain a clearer picture of the Cartesian ontology, which is the object of the Heideggerian critique.

α) Res cogitans

Descartes' characterisation of the thinking subject is simple, yet vague. The thinking subject, according to Descartes, is merely a thing that thinks. In the 'Second Meditation' he states,

But then what am I? A think that thinks. What is that? A thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, is willing, unwilling, and also imagines and has sensory perceptions.⁵¹

As Heidegger points out, this is roughly equatable with the phenomenological concept of intentional experience. Thus the *ego cogito* essentially restricts itself in content to the clear and distinct proposition of the *cogito sum*. In other words, from the assertion that 'I am thinking therefore I exist' Descartes characterises the *I* simply as a thing that thinks.

β) Res Extensa

⁵¹ Descartes, Med. AT VII 28.

Descartes' discussion of *res extensa* is slightly more complicated. The basic thesis in his discussion of *res extensa* is that all corporeal objects, in their essence, have the mode of being of extension. In order to follow Descartes in this discussion we must recall his definition of substance as that which exists in such a way as to depend on no other thing for its existence. As such, Descartes searches for the basic property shared by all corporeal objects that remains unchanging through any possible change in object properties, which he determines to be extension. Descartes explains that,

Everything else [besides extension] which can be attributed to body presupposes extension and is merely a mode of an extended thing... For example, shape is unintelligible except in an extended thing; and motion is unintelligible except as motion in an extended space.⁵²

He believes that the same goes for hardness, colour, *et cetera*. However, extension, according to Descartes, is intelligible without reference to any other attribute. As such extension is the simplest and most fundamental attribute of any corporeal object. Therefore, Descartes characterises corporeal substance as most basically extended substance.

γ) Cartesian Dualism and its Influence upon the Western Philosophical Tradition

We have now characterised the two kinds of substance that make up Descartes' ontology of the world of created substance. As such we are left with a dualistic ontology with two radically different kinds of being, namely thinking being, and extended being. The Cartesian ontology has been a fundamental starting point for both

⁵² Descartes, PP AT VIII A 25.

epistemic and ontological discussion in post-Cartesian philosophy up to the present, particularly within debates concerning realism and idealism.

As Heidegger explains, the dualistic Cartesian ontology was tremendously influential in Kantian philosophy, as well as the post-Kantian idealism of Fichte and Hegel, and even Husserlian phenomenology.⁵³ We can see the same Cartesian influence in the philosophical discussions of Heidegger's contemporaries, especially within the discussions of realism in analytic philosophy by thinkers like Russell, Moore, and Wittgenstein. Thus, as we will soon see, Heidegger's critique of the Cartesian ontology is radical in that, rather than working within the traditional confines of Cartesian dualism, he calls into question one of the fundamental underpinnings of traditional western philosophical debate.

§ 7: Critique of Cartesian Ontology: Descartes' Failure to Inquire into the Being of the Subject, the Mathematical Prejudice in his Determination of the World, and How This Inevitably Leads to Scepticism

As mentioned earlier, Descartes defines substantiality as the mode of being of any entity that can exist independent of all other entities. However, this definition is ambiguous in that there are two senses in which the concept of substance gets used, namely as perfect substance, or as created substance. God is the only perfect substance, as the existence of all other entities is dependent upon God, but God is not dependent on any other entity for its own existence. All other entities are created

⁵³ See Heidegger, BP §7 & §13, as well as IPR §47-48.

substance, and only called substance in a secondary sense in that they depend upon God for their existence, but nothing else.

Thus as Heidegger points out, “The word ‘is’, cannot be meant to apply to these entities in the same sense, when between them there is an *infinite* difference in Being”.⁵⁴ The infinite difference to which Heidegger refers just is the difference between being created, and being uncreated. As such, Heidegger charges that Descartes’ conception of substance is fundamentally lacking in that it refers to two ontologically distinct kinds of being, without properly grounding them in a unified definition of substantiality. He explains that,

Descartes not only evades the ontological question of substantiality altogether; he also emphasizes explicitly that substance as such – that is to say its substantiality – is in and for itself inaccessible from the outset.⁵⁵

Rather than questioning substantiality as such, Descartes derives his notion of substantiality from a preoccupation with his epistemological concern for certainty. In what follows, we shall explore Heidegger’s critique that Descartes’ preoccupation with certainty leads him to overlook the being of the thinking subject, as well as the corporeal world. Further, we shall outline Heidegger’s discussion of the necessary link between the resulting dualistic ontology of the created world, and the problem of scepticism.

⁵⁴ Heidegger, BT H93.

⁵⁵ Heidegger, BT H94.

a) How Descartes' Care About Certainty Leads to an Overlooking of the Being of the Subject

As mentioned earlier, Descartes' project is to provide a foundation for securing the certainty of knowledge. As Heidegger explains, in Descartes' discussion of the *res cogitans*, the determination of character of the thinking subject's being is secondary to the fundamental goal of obtaining some sort of certain proposition. He explains that,

It is instead the case that precisely the being of the *res cogitans* must, as it were, set aside its specific being in order to become formal and enter, as a mere something, into the proposition.⁵⁶

Thus, Descartes' preoccupation with the securing of a certain proposition leads him to pass over any serious inquiry of the being of the thinking subject, and rather he suffices himself with the mere *certainty* of the being of the subject. In other words, Descartes overlooks the ontological character of the thinking subject, in his quest to determine that it does in fact exist.

b) How Descartes' Care About Certainty Leads to his Mathematical Prejudice in his Determination of the World, and How This Leads to a Covering-up of the Basic Phenomenon of Worldhood

With reference to the corporeal world, Heidegger charges that Descartes suppresses the phenomenal composition of corporeal objects and the world, and develops a mathematical prejudice toward the being of the world motivated by his care about certainty. As Heidegger explains, the Cartesian conception of the corporeal world is

⁵⁶ Heidegger, IPR 195.

such that only that which can be defined mathematically can be truly known, and thus, only what is mathematically known can be true.⁵⁷ Descartes states that,

For I freely acknowledge that I recognize no matter in corporeal things apart from that which the geometers call quantity, and take as the object of their demonstrations, i.e. that to which every kind of division, shape and motion is applicable. Moreover, my consideration of such matter involves absolutely nothing apart from these divisions, shapes and motions; and even with regard to these, I will admit as true only what has been deduced from indubitable common notions so evidently that it is fit to be considered as a mathematical demonstration.”⁵⁸

Thus the corporeal world of *res extensa*, according to Descartes, consists strictly of the objects that can be defined or deduced through mathematical physics.

The ontological problem with this characterisation of the world, according to Heidegger, is that the corporeal world is not first interrogated with regards to its being. Rather, the concept of extension is imposed upon the corporeal world for its particular conduciveness for the provision of *mathematical* knowledge – which is to be regarded as *certain* knowledge, and thus *true* knowledge. As such, Heidegger charges that the world as it is apprehended phenomenally, gets passed over by this mathematical prejudice, and preoccupation with certainty; or as Heidegger states more elegantly, “A

⁵⁷ Heidegger, HCT 181.

⁵⁸ Descartes, PP AT VIII A 79.

particular *ideal of knowledge* with the criterion of *certainty* decides on what in the world is taken as authentic being.”⁵⁹

c) The Necessary Link Between Cartesian Dualism and the Problem of Scepticism

The problem of scepticism arises, according to Heidegger, whenever the ontological dichotomy is maintained between an inner subjective sphere, and an outer objective world ‘in-itself’. This *subject versus object* dichotomy presents an ontological puzzle, such that true knowledge of the world in-itself would then require that the subject somehow transcend the inner subjective sphere to which it is restricted, in order to know the world, as it is in-itself. Heidegger frames the problem by asking rhetorically, “How can this ego with its intentional experiences get outside of its sphere of experience and assume a relation to the extant world?”⁶⁰ According to Heidegger, it cannot.

In the case of Descartes, his preoccupation with certainty, leads him directly to this dichotomy. He restricts his inquiry of the being of the subject to the certainty of the *cogito sum*, and imposes a mathematical conception of being upon the corporeal world of *res extensa*. But this creates the need for the subject to transcend its inner subjective sphere in order to know the outer corporeal world in truth. Although this ontological dichotomy explicitly begins in the philosophy of Descartes – which is the reason for his selection as the object of Heidegger’s critique – the problem of Cartesian scepticism

⁵⁹ Heidegger, HCT 182.

⁶⁰ Heidegger, BP 61.

extends through the philosophy of Kant, as well as into nineteenth-century idealism and twentieth-century realism.⁶¹

The fundamental problem with such conceptions of ontological dualism stems, according to Heidegger, from a failure to begin with an inquiry into the being of both the subject, and the world as they are phenomenally given. He explains that,

No matter how this inner sphere may get interpreted, if one does no more than ask how knowing makes its way 'out of' it and achieves 'transcendence', it becomes evident that the knowing which presents such enigmas will remain problematical unless one has previously clarified how it is and what it is.⁶²

This can be seen throughout post-Cartesian philosophy, namely in the forms of ontological idealism and realism, which both, as Heidegger explains, "presuppose a concept of 'subject' and 'object' without clarifying these basic concepts with respect to the basic composition of Dasein itself."⁶³

As such, Heidegger's critique of Cartesian ontology is really a critique of the history of post-Cartesian western philosophy. In order to overcome the problem of scepticism, which has been of primary philosophical concern throughout the modern era, the Cartesian dichotomy between subject and object must also be overcome. Heidegger provides a path to just this sort of overcoming through his discussion of Dasein's being-in-the-world. As we will see, Heidegger's ontology is unique in that – unlike ontological

⁶¹ Heidegger, BP 125.

⁶² Heidegger, BT H60-61.

⁶³ Heidegger, HCT 222-223.

idealism or realism, which attempt to solve the problem of scepticism by simply modifying the Cartesian ontology – he grounds his interpretation of both Dasein and world in a *unitary* phenomenon.⁶⁴

§ 8: The Phenomenological Discovery of Dasein’s Being-in-the-world and the Overcoming of Cartesian Scepticism

As discussed in Chapter Two, Heidegger’s overall task in *Being and Time* is to secure the meaning of being as such. And to accomplish this task, we must perform an existential analytic of Dasein in its facticity – in its average everydayness – in order to interpret the ontological structures of its being, since it is this entity that understands or has access to being. It is through this existential analytic that Heidegger discovers the unitary phenomenon of Dasein’s being-in-the-world. Here we are presented, not with a Cartesian dichotomy between subject and object – or Dasein and world – but rather with a unitary phenomenon. Despite the ontological unity of this phenomenon, Dasein’s being-in-the-world can be looked at from three different perspectives, or in Heideggerian terms, we can highlight three constitutive moments of Dasein’s being-in-the-world; namely Dasein, being-in, and worldhood.⁶⁵ Thus, in order to understand the

⁶⁴ With reference to this last comment about the debate between ontological idealism and realism, I mean simply to point out that in a broad manner, each school of thought begins with the basic Cartesian ontological structure, and then denies, in a sense, the existence of one or the other constituents of the dichotomy. Generally speaking, idealism denies the existence of *res corporea*, and realism attempts to reduce *res cogitans* to *res corporea*. Heidegger’s ontology, which describes Dasein and world as two moments of a unitary phenomenon, rejects the Cartesian starting point in such a way that it completely avoids debate between idealism and realism. For Heidegger’s discussion of these two schools of thought in relation to his own philosophy, see BT H207.

⁶⁵ Heidegger, BT H53.

structure of this phenomenon, which is determinative of Heidegger's ontology, we will now investigate each constitutive item.

a) Dasein

As mentioned earlier, Dasein is the entity of our inquiry, and our mode of access to the question of the meaning of being. Dasein is Heidegger's term for the entity that, as human-beings, we each are, and Dasein is unique as an entity, in that Dasein has the way of being called existence. Recall that, existence is to be distinguished ontologically from being merely present-at-hand. Existence, as Dasein's unique way of being, is characterised rather by the capacity for self-interpretation. Heidegger states that,

*The 'essence' of Dasein lies in its existence. Accordingly those characteristics which can be exhibited in this entity are not 'properties' present-at-hand of some entity which 'looks' so and so and is itself present-at-hand; they are in each case possible ways for it to be, and no more than that.*⁶⁶

What Dasein *is*, cannot be defined in the same manner as something present-at-hand – for instance a stone – because Dasein, as an entity that exists, does not exhibit properties, but rather existential possibilities, or as Heidegger terms them, *existentialia*.⁶⁷ Thus the concept of Dasein is radically unlike that of the Cartesian thinking subject, which is a thing, not corporeal, but still present-at-hand, with the essential property of thinking. Heidegger explains further, that what Dasein *is*, is rather its own possibility of being, which is in each case its own.

⁶⁶ Heidegger, BT H42.

⁶⁷ Heidegger, BT H44.

Hubert Dreyfus elucidates the Heideggerian concept of existence in his commentary on the first division of *Being and Time*, “To exist [which is the essential way of being of Dasein] is to take a stand on what is essential about one’s own being and to be defined by that stand.”⁶⁸ Thus what Dasein is, is its own possibility of self-interpretation, which is to say, its own possibility of being. Dreyfus explains further that,

It makes no sense [for Heidegger] to ask whether we are essentially rational animals, creatures of God, organisms with built-in needs, sexual beings, or complex computers. Human beings [Dasein] can interpret themselves in any of these ways and many more, and they can, in varying degrees, become any of these things, but to be human is not to be essentially any of them.⁶⁹

Thus Dasein, essentially, is nothing other than its own possibility of being.

b) Being-in

The next constitutive item, which we must elucidate, is the ‘being-in’ of being-in-the-world. Just as Dasein’s existence cannot be defined in the same manner as entities that are present-at-hand, neither can its ‘being-in’ the world. Dasein is not *in* the world in the same way that one might say that ‘the water is in the glass’, or ‘the bench is in the lecture room’. Rather, Heidegger uses ‘being-in’ in the sense of the of the proto-Germanic term *innan*, from which the word ‘in’ is derived. Here, the word *innan* means to reside, or to dwell alongside, and the suffix ‘an’ signifies being familiar with, or

⁶⁸ Dreyfus, BIW 23.

⁶⁹ Dreyfus, BIW 23.

looking after something.⁷⁰ Being-alongside-the-world, in the sense of being familiar with, or being absorbed in the world, is the character of Dasein's being-in-the-world.

As Heidegger explains, the being-alongside of Dasein's being-in is distinct from any being-present-at-hand-together of Dasein and world. Dasein's being-alongside the world is rather the possibility of Dasein's encountering entities within-the-world. Being-in, is the ontological structure that allows Dasein to encounter entities within-the-world. Factually, being-in manifests itself positively by,

Having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining... *et cetera*.⁷¹

The way of being of all these ontical manifestations of being-in is called *concern*. Further, "leaving undone, neglecting, renouncing, taking a rest" are also concerned ways of being-in, but rather deficient modes of concern.⁷² As such, Dasein can never *be*, without being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world is constitutive of Dasein's ontological structure.

This is to be contrasted with the notion of the Cartesian *ego cogito*, which as a thinking thing, is conceived as being present-at-hand-together with *res extensa*, and can at least theoretically *be* without the corporeal world. In fact, this is precisely the

⁷⁰ Heidegger, BT H54.

⁷¹ Heidegger, BT H56.

⁷² Heidegger, BT H56.

Cartesian characterisation of the *ego's* substantiality, namely the requiring of nothing else in order to exist. It is only when human being is conceived as present-at-hand-together with the world that the problem of scepticism can arise. When Dasein's being-in is conceived as being-already-alongside-the-world, the ontological gap of Cartesian scepticism disappears.

c) The Worldhood of the World

To this point we have discussed Heidegger's conception of Dasein as a possibility, and being-in as concern. We have stressed the point that Dasein's way of being is not present-at-hand, and that its way of being-in-the-world is not a matter of being present-at-hand-together with the world. Likewise, in our discussion of the third constitutive item of Dasein's being-in-the-world, namely the worldhood of the world, we shall see that the world, proximally and for the most part, is not merely present-at-hand. As such, when we discuss the worldhood of the world, we cannot take it to be the totality of objects in the world, taken as present-at-hand. Nor can we take it to be the ways of being of all the entities within the world, as worldhood refers to the being of the world *simpliciter*, and any discussion of the being of the entities within the world already presupposes the being of a world. Rather, when discussing the worldhood of the world, which is the third constituent item in Dasein's being-in-the-world, we will be discussing the primordial sense of the world as the *wherein* of factual Dasein as an entity. In other words, the world is the *where* in which Dasein concerns itself with its own possibilities of existence.

α) Dealings and Concern

As mentioned above, we are not in search of the being of the entities within the world *per se*. Rather, we are in search of the meaning of worldhood, as the way of being of the wherein of factual Dasein. However, a brief discussion of how it is that entities within the world are given to Dasein proximally and for the most part, will help to illuminate the concept of worldhood as such.

As discussed earlier, Dasein's being-in allows for Dasein's encountering of entities within-the-world. Heidegger terms the ontical manifestations of Dasein's encounterings as *dealings*. Thus, Dasein's producing, attending to and looking after, as well as its neglecting, renouncing, and leaving undone, *et cetera* are all instances of Dasein's dealings in the world. As we recall, these ontical manifestations of being-in – or dealings – have their way of being as concern. And as Heidegger explains,

The Being of those entities which we encounter as closest to us can be exhibited phenomenologically if we take as our clue our everyday Being-in-the-world, which we also call our '*dealings*' in the world and *with* entities within the world.⁷³

Thus, we must phenomenologically analyse Dasein's dealings within the world, to determine the fundamental being of entities within the world, which will then illuminate the ontological structure of worldhood.

β) Equipmentality and the Being of Entities as Ready-to-hand

As Heidegger cautions, in order to see the ontological character of entities within the world, we must refrain from the presupposition that these entities are *mere things*

⁷³ Heidegger, BT H66-67.

in the Cartesian sense of the word. He explains, “For in addressing these entities as ‘Things’ (res), we have tacitly anticipated their ontological character.”⁷⁴ The traditional concept of thinghood is tangled up in several Cartesian presuppositions regarding substantiality, extension, and side-by-side-ness. It presupposes the nature of entities within the world as being present-at-hand. If we are to rather examine entities within the world as they present themselves in our concerned dealings, we shall see that, proximally and for the most part, entities in the world present themselves as equipment for Dasein to use pragmatically in its dealings in the world.

An example is probably necessary here. In Dasein’s average everydayness, when it encounters a hammer, it is not first given as a mere thing, with a certain quantity of extension, a certain material make up – say a particular piece of steel, fastened to a particular piece of hickory wood – rather, Dasein encounters the hammer as a tool for hammering; as a *thing for hammering*. A hammer, proximally and for the most part, is not a mere thing, but rather an item of equipment for use in hammering. But as Heidegger explains, in a strict sense, an item of equipment cannot *be* equipment as a solitary entity. Rather, the being of equipment is structured such that any item of equipment belongs essentially to a totality of equipment. As Heidegger explains,

⁷⁴ Heidegger, BT H67.

Equipment – in accordance with its equipmentality – always is *in terms of* its belonging to other equipment: ink stand, pen, ink, paper, blotting pad, table, lamp, furniture, windows, doors, room.⁷⁵

As such, equipment always has the way of being of '*in-order-to*'. The structure of equipmentality is always composed of an assignment, or a reference of something to something else; the ink stand is assigned to the ink in that it *is* in order to contain the ink. The ink is assigned to the pen in that it *is* in order to write. Both pen and paper are assigned to the writing *per se, et cetera*. It is out of this equipmental arrangement that the individual item of equipment appears, and it is preceded by the discovery of the totality of the equipmental arrangement.

The kind of being that belongs to equipment, when taken as it presents itself proximally and for the most part in its equipmentality, Heidegger terms *readiness-to-hand*.⁷⁶ Readiness-to-hand is easily passed over in the mere empirical 'looking' at the outward appearance of entities within the world. Rather the readiness-to-hand is given to Dasein directly through its concerned dealings with equipment, Heidegger calls this mode of apprehension, or givenness, *circumspection*. As he explains, the practical behaviour in our concerned dealings in the world is not mere observation, but also, it is not sightless. In our example of Dasein's encounter with the hammer as a tool for hammering, the hammer is not apprehended as such by mere theoretical looking at the hammer – nor touching the hammer, nor any other of the senses. Rather the hammer,

⁷⁵ Heidegger, BT H68.

⁷⁶ Heidegger, BT H69.

in its readiness-to-hand, is apprehended through hammering. The 'sight' or the way of apprehension of the hammer, or any other entity in the world, is called circumspection, and it is a practical apprehension.

As Heidegger warns, the readiness-to-hand of entities within the world – or equipment – cannot be taken as a mere 'subjective colouring' given to entities, which are fundamentally present-at-hand. Rather presence-at-hand is a deficient mode of readiness-to-hand. A brief overview of Heidegger's discussion of equipmental *conspicuousness* may serve to elucidate the relation between readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand.

γ) Readiness-to-hand and Presence-at-hand

So far we have defined the being of entities within the world as readiness-to-hand, which is to say that the entities within the world are, proximally and for the most part, equipment for Dasein to use pragmatically in its concerned dealings in the world. However, we have also just mentioned that mere presence-at-hand is a deficient mode of readiness-to-hand, which means that readiness-to-hand is the condition of the possibility of presence-at-hand. In order to get a clearer picture of the being of entities within the world, we must explain the phenomenon of presence-at-hand, and how this is dependent upon readiness-to-hand.

The mere presence-at-hand of entities first becomes illuminated within breakdowns of the equipmental arrangement of entities ready-to-hand. During instances when an entity ready-to-hand becomes unusable, or unsuitable in its in-order-to, essentially un-

ready-to-hand, it becomes conspicuous, or obstinate within its equipmental arrangement. Heidegger explains that within such breakdowns of the equipmental arrangement, it first becomes apparent that,

What cannot be used just lies there; it shows itself as an equipmental Thing, which looks so and so, and which, in its readiness-to-hand as looking that way, has constantly been present-at-hand too.⁷⁷

As such, although the being of entities within the world is fundamentally readiness-to-hand, it always also has the character of presence-at-hand, though never merely, or exclusively. As Heidegger goes on to explain,

Such [conspicuous, obstinate, un-ready-to-hand] equipment still does not veil itself in the guise of mere Things. It becomes 'equipment' in the sense of something which one would like to shove out of the way. But in such a Tendency to shove things aside, the ready-to-hand shows itself as still ready-to-hand in its unswerving presence-at-hand.⁷⁸

If we return to our example of the hammer, and consider what happens if the hammer breaks, we see that it becomes conspicuous in its breaking, and shows itself, in a sense, as merely present-at-hand, in that it has lost its equipmentality as a thing for hammering. However, it then re-enters the totality of equipmental arrangement, and becomes ready-to-hand once again, now as a thing to be discarded, or replaced, or repaired.

⁷⁷ Heidegger, BT H73.

⁷⁸ Heidegger, BT H74.

These equipmental breakdowns allow presence-at-hand to come forth, as an ontological constituent of readiness-to-hand, but they also serve to highlight the basic phenomenon of worldhood in that they highlight the structure of the equipmental arrangement – which is broken in the breakdown – that will lay open the horizon of the worldhood of the world.

δ) Worldhood and Significance

As we have just discussed, the ready-to-hand is that which is encountered within the world through Dasein's concerned dealings in the world. Through circumspection, we apprehend these entities as ready-to-hand within an equipmental structure of reference and assignment; we see the structure of the in-order-to of the ready-to-hand. The character of being, which belongs to readiness-to-hand, as it *is* within the equipmental structure of reference and assignment, Heidegger calls *involvement*.⁷⁹

In each case, the ready-to-hand's involvement is directed towards some other entity within the totality of involvements. For example, the involvement of the hammer is directed toward the construction of something, say a table, and the involvement of the table is directed toward furnishing the room. However, the totality of involvements does not regress infinitely. There is a primary direction to which all other directed involvements lead. Heidegger states that this directedness-toward of involvement at some point becomes rather a '*for-the-sake-of-which*' that all involvements direct themselves towards. That for the sake of which all involvements are directed towards is

⁷⁹ Heidegger, BT H84.

always Dasein.⁸⁰ The relational character of totality of the structure of involvement, Heidegger calls *significance*. Thus, the hammer is involved in the construction of the table, which is involved in the furnishing of the room, and the room is involved in the providing of shelter, which is for the sake of Dasein's existence. The totality of involvements is always for the sake of, and thus significant for, Dasein.

Significance just is that which makes up the structure of the world. As Heidegger explains,

*The 'wherein' of an act of understanding which assigns or refers itself is that for which one lets entities be encountered in the kind of Being that belongs to involvements; and this wherein is the phenomenon of the world. And the structure of that to which Dasein assigns itself is what makes up the worldhood of the world.*⁸¹

In other words, the wherein of any act of circumspection is that for which Dasein lets entities ready-to-hand be encountered in significance; and this wherein is the phenomenon of the world. Further, the structure of this phenomenon is what makes up the worldhood of the world.

d) Being-in-the-world as a Unitary Ontological Structure and the Problem of Scepticism

When we analyse the three moments of Dasein's being-in-the-world, as we have above, we see that they form a unitary ontological structure, where each moment is

⁸⁰ Heidegger, BT H84.

⁸¹ Heidegger, BT H86.

dependent upon each other. There can be no world without Dasein, no Dasein without world. Dasein is always already-alongside-the-world. Its being-in, and its worldhood, are part of its very own ontological structure.

The problem of scepticism, as mentioned earlier, is a direct result of the ontological gap between subject and object in any Cartesian ontology. This gap simply does not occur in Heidegger's ontology, and thus, the problem of scepticism is overcome, due to the unity of the structure of Dasein's being-in-the-world. In order to further elucidate this point, let us conclude this chapter by briefly exploring Heidegger's discussion of the phenomenon of knowing the world.

e) Knowing as a Founded Mode of Being-in

We have above determined that the basic ontological state of Dasein is being-in-the-world, and have determined that the problem of scepticism disappears when one sees that this Dasein's being-in-the-world is a unitary phenomenon, which does not require a transcendental leap from subject sphere into objective world. But what of knowing the world? If knowing is not, as traditionally conceived, a leaping outside of a subjective sphere, and returning to oneself with knowledge of the world outside – inherent as it may be with the problem of scepticism – what does Heidegger offer as a positive alternative for understanding knowledge?

As Heidegger explains, "Knowing is a mode of Being of Dasein as Being-in-the-world, and is founded ontically upon this state of Being."⁸² More specifically, knowing is a

⁸² Heidegger, BT H61.

mode of being-in, which has as its way of being; namely concern. However, knowing is a deficient mode of concern, in that, as opposed to Dasein's average everyday concerned dealings in the world – which consist in producing, attending to, looking after, *et cetera* – knowing involves rather a holding back from Dasein's concerned dealings, and observing entities within the world as present-at-hand.

As a mode of being-in, knowing is still always already-alongside-the-world, however, in its deficient state. Heidegger explains that knowing is a way of just-tarrying-alongside-the-world, and that,

In this kind of '*dwelling*' as holding-oneself-back from any manipulation or utilization [just-tarrying-alongside], the *perception* of the present-at-hand is consummated⁸³

Thus 'knowing the world' is still a manner of being-in-the-world, albeit a holding-oneself-back from Dasein's concerned being-in-the-world. As such, even in knowing the world, Dasein is always already-alongside-the-world. The problem of Cartesian scepticism is overcome in that the ontological gap, which underpins this problem, does not occur.

⁸³ Heidegger, BT H62.

Chapter 4: The Problem of Reflexivity in Heidegger's Critique of Cartesian Scepticism

In chapter three, we discussed Heidegger's critique of the problem of Cartesian scepticism, and the dualistic ontology of subject and object that determines it. We explored, as an alternative, the unified ontological structure of Dasein's being-in-the-world. However, our exploration restricted itself to being-in-the-world in relation to this particular *subject versus object* dichotomy. Being-in-the-world was analysed in terms of Dasein's concerned dealings with objects within the world, which are, proximally and for the most part, ready-to-hand, rather than present-at-hand. In the next two chapters, we will aim to evaluate Heidegger's critique with regards to a criticism raised in Guignon's book, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*; namely, that Heidegger's critique of Cartesian scepticism suffers from the *problem of reflexivity*. However, in order to understand Guignon's criticism, we must take a broader look at Dasein's being-in-the-world with respect to Dasein's *contextualisation* in the world.

Thus in section nine, we will begin by introducing, in a rather general form, Guignon's conception of the problem of reflexivity, in which he charges that Dasein's contextualisation in the world, which is discovered through the existential analytic, inadvertently undermines *Being and Time's* overall project of truly fundamental ontology. We will then investigate this contextualisation through a brief discussion of Dasein's being-with others, and the historicity of truth.⁸⁴ Then in section ten, we will

⁸⁴ Two points must be made with reference to our discussion of historicity. The first is a minor terminological point, and the second point is more substantial and methodological. Firstly, in their translation of *Sein und Zeit*, Macquarrie & Robinson use the term *historicality* to refer to Heidegger's term *Geschichtlichkeit*, and the term *historicity* to refer to the rarely used *Historizität* (see footnote, BT H10). However, Guignon translates *Geschichtlichkeit* as

focus more narrowly on Guignon's division of the problem into two specific questions – one focusing on the linguistic and cultural contextualisation of the they-self, and the other focusing on the historicity of truth. With him, we will work through what he takes to be the strongest attempts at providing the transcendental validity required to guard Heidegger's fundamental ontology from slipping into the sort of relativism that he argues the existential analytic implies, and why he sees these attempts as ending in failure. We will conclude our evaluation of the reflexivity problem in chapter five, by considering Heidegger's discussion of authentic discourse and authentic disclosedness in an attempt at providing a foundation for a possible overcoming of the problem of reflexivity on Heidegger's behalf.

§ 9: A Brief Look at Guignon's Problem of Reflexivity, and Dasein's Contextualisation in the World

In his evaluation of Heidegger's critique of the Cartesian problem of scepticism, Guignon, I think rightly, characterises the Heideggerian critique as a rejection of the ontological picture painted by Descartes of disengaged subjects contemplating an ontologically distinct world of objects, both merely present-at-hand. Guignon goes

historicity and makes no reference at all to *Historizität*. In keeping with the Macquarrie and Robinson translation, we will be using historicity with reference to Heidegger's *Geschichtlichkeit*. The second point that must be made refers to a distinction that Guignon makes between two possible interpretations of *Geschichtlichkeit*, or historicity. Guignon goes so far as to assert that, "the concept of historicity has two distinct meanings" (see HPK 214). In one sense, historicity describes an existential and transcendental structure of Dasein. However, in another sense, historicity can be understood *existentiell* as the manner of Dasein's contextualised being in history (see again HPK 214-215). As we shall soon see, it is this existentiell interpretation of historicity that will come to be of most importance to our evaluation of the problem of reflexivity. As such, for the sake of brevity, and in order to keep our focus on the particular problem at hand, our expository discussion of historicity will restrict itself to this latter, existentiell, sense of contextualised being in history, as presented in the first half of *Being and Time*.

further to explain that, through Descartes' care about epistemic certainty, the practical affairs of the subject, which take up a central role in Heidegger's ontological analysis of being-in-the-world, are to be ignored, or even avoided, as they are seen merely as constraints upon clear and distinct perception.⁸⁵ Through the *regula generalis* Descartes determines the *ego cogito* to be most certain, and thus epistemically – as well as ontologically – prior to the corporeal world. In doing so, Descartes begins his inquiry from the vantage point of an unworlded subject, upon which the corporeal world with which it concerns itself, is to be retroactively imposed.

Guignon points out that in Heidegger's conception of being-in-the-world, on the other hand, "practical affairs are not something superimposed over the pristine condition of the pure 'I' set over against a collection of items".⁸⁶ As we discussed in chapter three, Dasein, being-in, and worldhood are equiprimordial aspects of a unitary phenomenon. There is no pristine vantage point of an unworlded subject in Heidegger as there is in the Cartesian tradition. This is precisely the insight that Heidegger provides that allows for the overcoming of Cartesian scepticism. However, Guignon contends that this conception of being-in-the-world as an absolutely unitary phenomenon, not only undermines the Cartesian dualism that is the cause of scepticism, but also inadvertently undermines Heidegger's overall project of fundamental ontology.

Guignon argues that Heidegger,

⁸⁵ Guignon, HPK 197.

⁸⁶ Guignon, HPK 198.

calls into question any conception of philosophy that works from the assumption that there is a sphere of inquiry that can attain a vantage point from which reality can be investigated and systematized in such a way as to find the ultimate truth about how things are. For such a conception of philosophy would be possible only if there could be a standpoint outside of ordinary Being-in-the-world from which the world could be examined.⁸⁷

He reminds us that the primary goal of *Being and Time* is to answer the question of the meaning of being as such, and further that the answer to this question, it would seem, must necessarily be '*timelessly*' and '*immutably*' true. Guignon reasons further, that in order for the meaning of being to be *timelessly* and *immutably* true, "the findings of the existential analytic must be *transcultural* and *transhistorical* and not limited to any particular world view".⁸⁸ However, as we shall soon see, Dasein's being-in-the-world is not only determined by one's own Dasein, along with a totality of objects, ready-to-hand, but also by being-with others with the same kind of being as Dasein, as well as by Dasein's being-historical.

Dasein's being-in-the-world, its sense of self, and its sense of worldhood, are proximally and for the most part determined by, as Guignon puts it, our cultural and historical contextualisation in the world. As such, Dasein's being-in-the-world is, in a sense, relative to its own particular cultural and historical contextualisation. But it would seem that Heidegger's philosophy, in order to properly answer the question of the meaning of being as such, would be required to provide the sort of unworlded, or decontextualised standpoint that he criticises in Descartes' philosophy. This tension,

⁸⁷ Guignon, HPK 206.

⁸⁸ Guignon, HPK 208.

Guignon terms *the problem of reflexivity*. But before we pursue this problem further, we must briefly explore that which Guignon calls Dasein's *contextualisation* in the world.

Dasein's contextualisation in the world, according to Guignon, is composed of two important phenomena that we have not yet discussed. The first is Dasein's contextualisation in the 'they', and the second is the historical contextualisation of truth. These two phenomena must be understood before any further elucidation of the problem of reflexivity can be undertaken. Thus we will begin with a discussion of the existential structure of Dasein's being-with, from which the phenomenon of the 'they' becomes apparent. From there we will be properly equipped to discuss that which Heidegger calls the they-self, which is determined by what Guignon calls Dasein's contextualisation in the 'they'. Finally, we will discuss Dasein's historical contextualisation and the historicity of truth, before further elucidating the problem of reflexivity.

a) Dasein's Being-with

In chapter three we saw that entities in the world are first encountered in the equipmental context of readiness-to-hand. Likewise, Dasein first encounters other entities with the same kind of being as Dasein, or simply others, from out of this same equipmental context. As Heidegger explains,

When, for example, we walk along the edge of a field but 'outside it', the field shows itself as belonging to such-and-such a person, and decently kept up by him; the book we

have used was bought at So-and-so's shop and given by such-and-such a person, and so forth.⁸⁹

Thus, it is through entities as ready-to-hand that others are first given from out of the equipmental context of the world, either as the producers of such objects, or as eventual consumers, *et cetera*.

Although it is out of this equipmental context that others are first encountered, they are not encountered with the same kind of being as equipment; they are not encountered as ready-to-hand, nor are they encountered as merely present-at-hand. They are rather encountered as entities with the same kind of being as Dasein. Here the others are not encountered as a sort of 'everyone else except me', but rather as "those from whom, for the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself – those among whom one is too."⁹⁰ As such, Dasein's *being-in* the world, in addition to having the character of being-already-alongside equipment in the world, also has the character of being-there-too; or in other words, being-with others, among whom one is, in the world.

This being-with is an existential structure of Dasein, and thus Dasein is *with* others as a condition of the possibility of its being. Even when Dasein is completely alone, it is still *with* others. Heidegger explains that "The Other can *be missing* only *in* and *for* a Being-with. Being-alone is a deficient mode of Being-with."⁹¹ Being-alone might be thought of as equivalent to Dasein's just-tarrying-alongside the *work-world*.⁹² When Dasein is just-

⁸⁹ Heidegger, BT H117-118.

⁹⁰ Heidegger, BT H118.

⁹¹ Heidegger, BT H120.

⁹² Although Heidegger may informally refer to the *work-world* (the world of equipmental concern), or as we shall soon discuss, the with-world, in a manner that may make them

tarrying-alongside the world, it is holding back from equipmental concern. However, it must first be already-alongside-the-world, as a condition of the possibility of this kind of holding back. Likewise, Dasein must already *be-with* others, in order to hold oneself back and *be-alone*. As such, Dasein's world is always a *with-world*, and the others, from which Dasein is never completely distinct, have the character of being that Heidegger calls *Dasein-with*.

α) Distantiality, and the 'They'

Recall our discussion of worldhood from chapter three, the work-world is made up of a totality of referential involvements, also called a totality of significance. We discussed the example of the hammer, which is involved in the construction of the table, which is involved in the furnishing of the room, *et cetera*. Heidegger states that this directedness-toward of involvement at some point becomes rather a '*for-the-sake-of-which*' toward which all involvements direct themselves, and that this for-the-sake-of-which must always have the kind of being of Dasein. From our earlier discussion, it would seem to follow that each individual Dasein would be its own for-the-sake-of-which, and as such, would be individually responsible for its own sense of significance. As significance is that which makes up the structure of worldhood, it would seem as if each Dasein would essentially *be* in its own solipsistic world. However, in his discussion of the existential structure of being-with, Heidegger states that, "As Being-with, Dasein

seem like distinct worlds, this is merely a convenient, albeit imprecise use of language. The being of the world is absolutely singular, the work-world and the with-world are merely different aspects of the same unitary world.

'is' essentially for the sake of Others."⁹³ Since the worldhood of the world is constituted not only by Dasein's work-world, but also in being-with, by the with-world, Dasein's significance – the worldhood of the world – is determined proximally and for the most part, not by one's own Dasein, but rather by the others, among whom one is too.

Dasein's average everyday sense of significance is determined existentially by the character of Dasein's being-with, which is called *distantiality*.⁹⁴ As Heidegger explains, in being-with, Dasein's concern is constantly tied up in the way that Dasein differs from the others,

whether that difference is merely one that is to be evened out, whether one's own Dasein has lagged behind the Others and wants to catch up in relationship to them, or whether one's Dasein already has some priority over them and sets out to keep them suppressed.⁹⁵

It is through being-with's existentiell character of distantiality, that the others take over Dasein's everyday possibilities of being, its everyday for-the-sake-of-which – its everyday sense of significance.

It is not any particular other that takes over Dasein's everyday possibilities, but rather the generic others from whom, for the most part, one does not distinguish oneself. This generic sense of the others, by whom Dasein is taken over in distantiality,

⁹³ Heidegger, BT H123.

⁹⁴ Heidegger, BT H126.

⁹⁵ Heidegger, BT H126.

Heidegger calls *das Man*, or the 'they'.⁹⁶ As Heidegger explains, proximally and for the most part,

We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the 'great mass' as *they* shrink back; we find 'shocking' what *they* find shocking. The '*they*', which is nothing definite, and which all are, though not as the sum, prescribes the kind of Being of everydayness.⁹⁷

Dasein's distanciality, which is characteristic of the 'they', and which is grounded in being-with, concerns itself always with averageness. Heidegger explains in his lecture *the History of the Concept of Time*, that averageness is existentially determinative of the 'they'.⁹⁸ The 'they' interprets the world in such a way as to even out, or as Heidegger puts it, 'level down' Dasein's possible interpretation of the world, as well as its possibilities of being. In other words, the 'they', as a part of its existential constitution, is in a perpetual state of opposition to any challenges or contradictions to what may be described as common sense. Heidegger elucidates this point by explaining that,

The anyone [the 'they'] holds itself factually in the averageness of what belongs to it and what it takes as valid. This polished averageness of the everyday interpretation of Dasein, of the assessment of the world and the similar averageness of customs and manners watches over every exception which thrusts itself to the fore. Every exception is short-lived and quietly suppressed.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ In keeping with the Macquarie & Robinson translation, I will use the 'they' to refer to Heidegger's term *das Man*. As we shall see, Guignon translates *das Man* as *the Anyone*, which seems to better capture the meaning behind the term, as a designation of the generic, or indistinct others with which Dasein always *is*.

⁹⁷ Heidegger, BT H127.

⁹⁸ See Heidegger, HCT 246.

⁹⁹ Heidegger, HCT 246.

β) The They-self

The 'they', in its ways of being, namely distanciality, leveling down and averageness, constitute what Heidegger calls the publicness of the with-world. But also, the 'they' is an existantiale, and belongs to the positive constitution of Dasein. As such, Heidegger claims that, "The Self of everyday Dasein is the *they-self*, which we distinguish from the *authentic* Self – that is, from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way."¹⁰⁰ We will discuss the authentic self later on in this chapter, but for now, it is important to understand what Heidegger means by the they-self, and how this fits into Guignon's problem of reflexivity.

The they-self is the subject of everyday Dasein. It determines what each of us, as Dasein, are, proximally and for the most part. As the they-self, Dasein receives its interpretation of the world and of its possibilities of being from public world; from the 'they'. As Heidegger articulates, "Dasein is for the sake of the 'they' in an everyday manner, and the 'they' itself articulates the referential context of significance."¹⁰¹ In other words, the public with-world, the common world of the others – which just is the 'they' – is determinative of the everyday being of Dasein.

As mentioned above, Dasein sees and judges, *et cetera*, just as the 'they' sees and judges. As the they-self, which Dasein is proximally and for the most part, Dasein interprets itself, the world, its being-in-the-world, just as the 'they', or the public with-

¹⁰⁰ Heidegger, BT H129.

¹⁰¹ Heidegger, BT H129.

world, does. It is this, as Guignon calls it, cultural contextualisation in the world that seems to pose a problem for Heidegger's fundamental ontology. The question remains, however, as to how it is that the 'they' takes over Dasein's self-interpretation, and sense of significance. Thus we must briefly discuss the public language that Heidegger refers to as *idle talk*, which is the language of the 'they' and the cause of its domination over Dasein's self.

γ) Idle Talk – The Language of the 'They'

Idle talk, according to Heidegger, is the phenomenon that constitutes Dasein's everyday understanding and interpreting.¹⁰² Through idle talk, which is really Heidegger's existential interpretation of that which we might colloquially refer to as public language, an average everyday interpretation of both Dasein and its being-in-the-world is implicitly contained. Recall our discussion of the notion of discourse from chapter one. Heidegger conceives of discourse as a letting of something be seen *in* itself, as well as *from* itself. Idle talk is a form of discourse, however it is a deficient form. Although idle talk, or public language, is a form of letting something be seen, a form of uncovering something, idle talk at the same time uncovers whatever it uncovers in a deficient manner. As Heidegger puts it,

Because this discoursing has lost its primary relationship-of-Being towards the entity talked about, or else has never achieved such a relationship, it does not communicate in such a way as to let this entity be appropriated in a primordial manner, but communicates rather by following the route of *gossiping* and *passing the word along*.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Heidegger, BT H167.

¹⁰³ Heidegger, BT H168.

As idle talk spreads, it gains authority through its ubiquity, however, this public language becomes groundless, as it drifts further from the entity that it uncovers. It might be helpful to think of this phenomenon as somewhat analogous to the children's game *Telephone*, where a group of children whisper a phrase or sentence from one to the other, and by the end of the game, the sentence or phrase differs significantly from the original, as it has lost any connection to the primordial experience that gave rise to it. This analogy is not perfect, but it helps to illustrate the sort of groundlessness that public language generally accumulates. Dasein's average interpretations of both itself and the world stem from public language. As Heidegger elucidates, "This everyday way in which things have been interpreted is one into which Dasein has grown in the first instance, with never a possibility of extrication."¹⁰⁴ This is how Dasein's everyday self is taken over by, and contextualised into the 'they'. This is why we see and judge as *they* do. Idle talk determines what might be referred to as *common sense*, which though rarely objectionable, is most often grounded not in any particular phenomenon, but rather merely grounded in the 'they'.

This concludes our explication of Dasein's cultural contextualisation in the 'they', however, before we move on to elucidate the problem of reflexivity, we must also explore a similar, yet distinct phenomenon of Dasein's historical contextualisation in the world, and the historicity of truth.

b) The Historicity of Truth

¹⁰⁴ Heidegger, BT H169.

Dasein's possibilities for being, and for self-interpretation are not only contextualised by its immediate culture, as the they-self, but also by what Heidegger calls Dasein's historicity. As Heidegger explains,

Whatever the way of Being it may possess, Dasein has grown up both in to and in a traditional way of interpreting itself: in terms of this it understands itself proximally and, within a certain range, constantly.¹⁰⁵

Dasein's cultural contextualisation in the world is always also determined by its history. Its cultural history does not merely follow along behind it, but rather it is determinative of its cultural future, or as Heidegger puts it, "Its own past – and this always means the past of its 'generation' – is not something which *follows along after* Dasein, but something which already goes ahead of it."¹⁰⁶ In other words, the public world, or the 'they', which determines Dasein's everyday possibilities of being, is in turn determined, or at least contextualised by its historical situation. However, we have yet to explain how it is that this historical contextualisation affects the being of truth.

α) Historicity and Truth as Disclosedness

Recall our discussion from chapter one concerning the structure of intentionality, and the three corresponding phenomenological possibilities of the conception of truth. Recall that for Husserl, the phenomenon of truth can be conceived either as the specific being-identical of an intentional presumption and intuition, or rather it can be conceived more broadly as the unified structure that includes the presumption, the intuition and their being-identical, or finally, truth can be conceived quite narrowly as

¹⁰⁵ Heidegger, BT H20.

¹⁰⁶ Heidegger, BT H20.

the being, or being-real, of that which is intuited. We shall soon see that Heidegger's discussion of his own conception of truth in *Being and Time* is rooted in Husserl's discussion of these three possibilities in that for both philosophers, the being of truth must always involve that which Husserl might call an intentional act, and which Heidegger might reinterpret as the intentional comportment of Dasein. Thus, it will be helpful to keep in mind the three Husserlian possibilities of truth, as we discuss Heidegger's levels of the phenomenon of truth.

In his discussion of the being of truth at the end of the first division of *Being and Time* Heidegger introduces a tripartite conception of truth.¹⁰⁷ The phenomenon of truth according to Heidegger manifests itself most immediately as a *being-uncovering*; in a sense derivative of being-uncovering, truth also manifests itself as a *being-uncovered*; and most primordially, as a condition of the possibility of these first two senses, truth manifests itself as the *disclosedness* of Dasein.¹⁰⁸ Once this basic ontological structure of truth is broadly understood, it should be plain to see how it is that the historical contextualisation of Dasein affects the being of truth as such.

Heidegger begins his discussion of truth by characterising truth as the phenomenon of the being-uncovering of Dasein. He states that,

¹⁰⁷ See Heidegger, BT §44.

¹⁰⁸ Heidegger, BT H220.

To say that an assertion '*is true*' signifies that it uncovers the entity as it is in itself. Such an assertion asserts, points out, 'lets' the entity 'be seen' in its uncoveredness. The *Being-true (truth)* of the assertion must be understood as *Being-uncovering*.¹⁰⁹

Thus for Heidegger, this first level of truth is not characterised by a mere passive agreement between a knowing subject and an epistemic object, reminiscent of the conception of truth involved in the Gettier problem still commonly discussed in contemporary epistemology. Rather being-true as being-uncovering is an activity performed by Dasein that lets entities be seen through assertion. Heidegger further elucidates that,

This uncoveredness is confirmed when that which is put forward in the assertion (namely the entity itself) shows itself *as that very same thing*. 'Confirmation' signifies *the entity's showing itself in its selfsameness*.¹¹⁰

Thus Heidegger's conception of truth as being-uncovering is quite similar in structure to Husserl's second possibility of phenomenological truth. For Husserl, in the second possibility, truth is composed of the structure of intentional presumption, intuition, as well as their being-identical. For Heidegger, truth as being-uncovering involves an assertion, an entity, as well as the being-uncovering of the assertion about the entity.

The second level of Heidegger's basic discussion of truth, is of truth as being-uncovered. This level might be seen as analogous to Husserl's third possibility of truth as merely the being, or the being-real, of the intuited. Heidegger states that in a

¹⁰⁹ Heidegger, BT H218.

¹¹⁰ Heidegger, BT H218.

secondary sense, that which is uncovered, in Dasein's being-uncovering – in other words, the entity itself – can also be called true, as being-uncovered.¹¹¹ Heidegger's motivation for calling this a *secondary* sense of truth, is that it is derivative of that which Heidegger wants to stress as the primary locus of truth; namely the intentional comportment of Dasein. As shall soon become apparent, our primary interest – which Heidegger shares in *Being and Time* – is this primary locus of truth. As such, we shall move on to discuss that which is of most interest to us for our present purposes, namely, Heidegger's discussion of truth as disclosedness.

At its most fundamental level, Heidegger explains that the phenomenon of truth is to be characterised as disclosedness. He states that “only with Dasein's disclosedness is the most primordial phenomenon of truth attained”.¹¹² Recall that truth as being-uncovering always involves the uncovering of an *entity*. However, the *being* of entities, their significance, *et cetera* cannot be uncovered in the same way. Rather existential structures, worldhood, the being of entities, being as such, *et cetera*, must already be disclosed to Dasein, as a condition of the possibility of the uncovering of entities within the world. In other words, Dasein, worldhood, Dasein's being-in-the-world, are ontologically prior to entities within the world, and their disclosedness constitutes the condition of the possibility of anything like the uncovering or being-uncovered of entities within the world.

¹¹¹ Heidegger, BT H220.

¹¹² Heidegger, BT H220-221.

Because truth as uncoveredness is constituted by disclosedness, which is a relation between Dasein and its world, between Dasein and significance, Heidegger states that, “*There is truth only in so far as Dasein is and so long as Dasein is.*”¹¹³ In other words, truth, which is uncovering disclosedness, is dependent upon Dasein.¹¹⁴ Recall that Dasein’s *being-in* the world is contextualised by the ‘they’ and by historicity. As such, truth is also culturally and historically contextualised through Dasein’s being-in-the-world.

An elucidatory example is probably necessary here, and Heidegger provides one in the form of a brief discussion of Newton’s laws and the scientific revolution. According to Heidegger’s discussion of historicity and truth, before Newton’s laws were discovered, they were not true.¹¹⁵ This is not to say that they were false, but rather that before Newton’s laws were discovered, the objects of Newtonian physics – namely, natural entities in general – were not uncovered in such a way that their being-entities-that-follow-Newton’s-laws was disclosed to Dasein. Before Newton’s laws were discovered, they were neither true nor false. Furthermore, if at any point Dasein were no more – had ceased to exist – Newton’s laws would again cease to be true. As

¹¹³ Heidegger, BT H227.

¹¹⁴ Here and hereafter, I am using the term *uncovering disclosedness* simply to refer in a very general sense to Heidegger’s conception of truth as disclosedness while at the same time highlighting the fact that truth as disclosedness is the condition of the possibility of truth as being-uncovering.

¹¹⁵ Heidegger, BT H226.

Heidegger explains, "Because the kind of Being that is essential to truth is of the character of Dasein, all truth is relative to Dasein's Being."¹¹⁶

Guignon is quick to point out that if Dasein's being is both culturally and historically contextualised, then so too is truth. He states that,

The shared background of practices which make possible the projection of totalities of significance is the foundation for discovering entities and for determining the truth and falsity of sentences within any regional projection.¹¹⁷

Thus, truth as uncovering disclosedness is always a disclosedness to an historically contextualised Dasein, and as truth just is this uncovering disclosedness, it must always be interpreted from out of Dasein's historical contextualisation. In other words, according to Guignon, truth, in its dependency on Dasein, is also historically contextualised.

c) A Return to the Problem of Reflexivity

Having now in hand some understanding of what it is that Guignon refers to as Dasein's contextualisation in the world, we are in a somewhat better position to explore, in more depth, Guignon's stated problem of reflexivity. Guignon outlines the problem as follows:

Either it is true that cultural and historical factors determine our sense of what it is to be, in which case the results of *Being and Time* must themselves be seen as cultural and historical products. Or it is false, in which case the concrete conclusions of the work

¹¹⁶ Heidegger, BT H227.

¹¹⁷ Guignon, HPK 200.

concerning Dasein are undermined, and Heidegger loses a large part of his grounds for criticizing the Cartesian model.¹¹⁸

Guignon's fear is that Heidegger's critique of Cartesian ontology, which calls into question the strict dichotomy between subject and object – Dasein and world – leads to a sort of relativism that leaves Heidegger unable to ground a general, or universal, meaning of being as such. Because Dasein and world are not separable, but different aspects of a unified phenomenon, because Dasein is contextualised, and thus, in part, determined by various cultures throughout an ever changing history, Guignon worries that Heidegger's critique is incompatible with the assumed access that Dasein, thus construed, can provide to a meaning of being which might apply to all cultures, throughout time. Thus is the general problem of reflexivity, however, Guignon further divides the problem into two specific questions that we shall explore in section ten.

§ 10: Elucidation of the Problem of Reflexivity: Guignon's Division of the Problem Into Two Questions

Guignon, I think for the sake of clarity and precision, further elucidates the problem of reflexivity by breaking it up into two questions, which he thinks cannot be sufficiently responded to on behalf of Heidegger. In this section we will undertake a careful investigation of these two questions, and how it is that Guignon sees them as problematic for the Heideggerian ontology. The two questions posed by Guignon are as follows:

¹¹⁸ Guignon, HPK 208.

If the ultimate ground for our beliefs and practices is the clearing articulated by the Anyone in public language, how can the results of fundamental ontology attain universal and, indeed, transcendental validity?¹¹⁹

And

If all truth is ultimately historical, how can the results of fundamental ontology be immutable, and eternal?¹²⁰

a) Question One: Public Language and Deep Grammar

The first question, according to Guignon, “concerns the cultural and linguistic contextualisation of any form of inquiry”.¹²¹ Guignon explains, that according to Heidegger, every form of discourse, and thus any form of inquiry – such as the inquiry into the meaning of being as such – becomes meaningful only through public language, or idle talk. Accordingly, there is no standpoint, which is not contextualised by the cultural perspective of the ‘they’. As Guignon puts it, “there is no ‘horizonless horizon’ for a purified mode of inquiry liberated from the imprint of our everyday linguistic articulation of the world”.¹²² However, it would seem, according to Guignon that this is exactly the sort of standpoint that Heidegger must assume, in order to discuss a meaning of being that transcends any particular language or culture. Guignon explores one possible manner of overcoming this particular version of the reflexivity problem on behalf of Heidegger.

¹¹⁹ Guignon, HPK 209.

¹²⁰ Guignon, HPK 209.

¹²¹ Guignon, HPK 209.

¹²² Guignon, HPK 209.

According to Guignon, Heidegger does not see his project as necessarily requiring an horizonless horizon, or an unworlded standpoint, in order to access the meaning of being as such. As we discussed in chapter two, Heidegger believes that Dasein essentially already has a pre-understanding of the meaning of being. The project of *Being and Time* is merely to elucidate, and articulate this understanding. As Guignon explains, Heidegger means only to provide “a widening and deepening of the understanding of Being that is implicit in everydayness”.¹²³ Upon this interpretation, Heidegger’s goal is never to escape our linguistic contextualisation, but rather to elucidate an understanding which is already present in what Guignon refers to as the ‘deep grammar’ of any everyday language.

Guignon explores this idea of deep grammar further, and wonders if our cultural and linguistic contextualisation necessarily entails radically different interpretations of the world. He considers the idea that although the linguistic relativity of understanding might lead to slight differences in a culture’s interpretation of the world, it need not necessarily lead to the discovery of different essential structures of Dasein. Indeed, he recognises that Heidegger himself allows for the possibility that the relation between readiness-to-hand and significance might be slightly different in certain primitive cultures that do not differentiate between signs and that which they signify.¹²⁴ Nonetheless, Guignon points out that fundamental existential structures such as situatedness, goal-directedness, understanding of being, *et cetera*, are absolutely

¹²³ Guignon, HPK 210.

¹²⁴ See BT §17, specifically H81-82.

necessary structures of Dasein, and that, if an entity were not to have these underlying structures, then we would not identify them as Dasein.

Guignon states that “entities without plans or goals, without care or disclosedness, would not be intelligible to us as human beings”.¹²⁵ He suggests that it is possible that all imaginable languages might be underpinned by the same deep grammar conditioned by the same pre-ontological understanding of being. However, Guignon warns that this line of reasoning leads down a slippery slope. He reminds us that languages are dynamic, and ever-changing entities, and that languages, or cultures that may seem unimaginable from our particular contextualised point of view, may not always seem thus.¹²⁶ As such, the idea of deep grammar as a ground for overcoming the problem of reflexivity, according to Guignon, seems to lack a sense of necessity.

b) Question Two: Truth, Historicity and Authentic Transparency

In addition to Dasein’s linguistic contextualisation, Guignon also addresses Dasein’s historical contextualisation and Heidegger’s conception of the historicity of truth. Recall that Guignon asks: “If truth is ultimately historical, how can the results of fundamental ontology be immutable and eternal?”¹²⁷ We have discussed how truth, as disclosedness, is dependent upon the existence of Dasein, and becomes historically contextualised due to Dasein’s own historical contextualisation. This leads to a problem in grounding the meaning of being as such in truth, as truth may change over the course

¹²⁵ Guignon, HPK 213.

¹²⁶ Guignon, HPK 213.

¹²⁷ Guignon, HPK 209.

of history depending on the historically contextualised uncovering disclosedness of Dasein. The meaning of being as such, which as we discussed in chapter two, must be the basis upon which entities are understood as entities, and cannot, according to Guignon, be grounded in a conception of truth that is historically contextualised, and thus historically relative. However, Guignon explores an idea that may yet overcome this historical contextualisation and secure the meaning of being as such. Guignon suggests that perhaps the meaning of being, which is evidently not *suprahistorical*, might still be *transhistorical*.¹²⁸

Recall, as we have discussed more than once, that according to Heidegger, Dasein already possesses a *pre-ontological* understanding of being, and that for Heidegger the goal of *Being and Time* is to elucidate, and make this meaning explicit. The assumption is that the meaning of being, to some extent runs through the history of Western thought, but that our understanding of this meaning has been covered-up by traditional philosophical schematisations.¹²⁹ We discussed this covering-up of the meaning of being briefly in the beginning of chapter two. Guignon suggests that it is possible to argue that although

Heidegger's choice of words and means of expression are historically determined, the deep grammar of the concept expressed in this way is drawn from the transhistorical content of Western thought.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Guignon, HPK 215.

¹²⁹ Guignon, HPK 216.

¹³⁰ Guignon, HPK 216.

However, a problem still remains, according to Guignon, with reference to how it is that one is to distinguish between a deep understanding of the meaning of being and a superficial understanding which has been distorted, or partially covered-up through tradition.

Guignon discusses Heidegger's notion of *authenticity* as the intended solution to this problem. He states that, "We are told that the 'transparency' of authenticity will enable us to detect and diagnose the distortions of the tradition."¹³¹ Up to now, we have not discussed Heidegger's conception of authenticity. It was foreshadowed in our discussion of they-self, and through this discussion, we did learn that the authentic self is to be contrasted with the they-self. However now we shall introduce ourselves to Heidegger's conception of authenticity through a discussion of Guignon's interpretation of the phenomenon in relation to our second question of the problem of reflexivity.

Authenticity is an existential mode of being of Dasein that is, as Guignon puts it, "a mode of existence in which one has access to the things themselves".¹³² As it relates to truth, and thus the problem of reflexivity, Heidegger states that "truth which is primordial and authentic must guarantee the understanding of the Being of Dasein and of Being in general".¹³³ So authenticity is an existential mode of Dasein that allows Dasein access to the meaning of being as such. The authentic self is to be contrasted with the they-self in that it is an existentiell modification of the they-self. Recall that in the mode of the they-self, Dasein's sense of significance – its worldhood – has been

¹³¹ Guignon, HPK 218.

¹³² Guignon, HPK 132.

¹³³ Heidegger, BT H316.

taken over by the 'they'. However, Dasein can also exist in another existential mode, namely the mode of authentic being-one's-self. In this mode of existence, Dasein appropriates its own possibilities of being – its own sense of significance or worldhood – from the 'they' and makes them its own. Authentic Dasein understands its own contextualisation in the 'they' and can thus take hold of its possibilities of Being and make them its own.¹³⁴ As such, the authentic self opens itself up for authentic disclosedness, authentic uncovering, authentic truth, which would seem to allow Dasein to differentiate between the transhistorical meaning of being we suggested earlier, and the traditionally covered-up and historically contextualised conception of being which leads to the problem of reflexivity.

Nevertheless, Guignon argues that the solution of authentic transparency faces a problem of its own. Heidegger states that Dasein is equiprimordially *in the truth* and *in untruth*.¹³⁵ As we mentioned, the authentic self is an existentiell modification of the they-self. As such, Guignon explains that “there does not appear to be any room for a *total or complete* transparency for Dasein”.¹³⁶ We may gain the insight, through the existential analytic that we are contextualised, both culturally and historically. And Guignon argues that this may provide a partial transparency in Dasein's understanding of its own being. However, this insight, according to Guignon is not enough to provide the sort of unworlded standpoint from which to do fundamental ontology. The

¹³⁴ Our discussion of authenticity thus far is admittedly vague, however it must suffice for our current exposition of the problem of reflexivity. This concept will be further elucidated in section eleven.

¹³⁵ Heidegger, BT H222.

¹³⁶ Guignon, HPK 219.

authentic recognition of our contextualisation is not enough to decontextualise Dasein from either its culture, its language, or its history.

Thus, Guignon argues that the notions of deep grammar and transhistorical authenticity are not enough to save Heidegger from the problem of reflexivity. It seems, according to Guignon, that a partial extrication from Dasein's contextualisation in the world is not enough to provide the certainty that he believes is required in order to do fundamental ontology. He accuses Heidegger of hoping "simply to by-pass the epistemological tradition and its concern with rational grounding and justification".¹³⁷ And concludes that without a pure and entirely untainted vantage point from which to work, the possibility of a truly fundamental ontology, or the answer to the question of the meaning of being as such, is unattainable.

In this chapter, we have outline the problem of reflexivity, and with Guignon, looked at the notions of deep grammar and transhistorical authenticity as potential ways of overcoming the problem of reflexivity. In the next chapter, we will look into concepts that Guignon may have overlooked, in an attempt to provide, at least a starting point from which to possibly deal with the problem of reflexivity.

¹³⁷ Guignon, HPK 219.

Chapter 5: A New Starting Point From Which to Evaluate the Problem of Reflexivity

If Guignon is correct in his evaluation of Heidegger's critique of Cartesian scepticism and its seemingly unintended results for the broader aims of fundamental ontology, then he seems to have uncovered a very severe problem indeed. The problem of reflexivity points to a purported tension at the very heart of Heideggerian ontology, one which indubitably must be worked out in order to maintain the integrity of *Being and Time* as one of the most important philosophical works of the twentieth century. The reflexivity problem is indeed so fundamental that any complete refutation of this problem would require an investigation far lengthier than our current discussion will allow. As such, in our evaluation of Guignon's problem, the goal will not be to completely refute the problem of reflexivity as such, but rather, we will aim to present a new starting point, or a foundation from which to evaluate this apparent tension.

The first question of the problem of reflexivity calls for a form of discourse, which is uncontextualised by the 'they', in order that Dasein may attain a linguistic vantage point for discussion of the meaning of being which is not culturally relative. The second question calls into doubt the possibility of any meaning of being that can be considered absolutely true, in light of the historical contextualisation of Heidegger's notion of truth. Here, in the second question, Guignon considers the notion of authenticity as a guarantor of the absolute truth of the meaning of being, however he rejects this guarantee, on the grounds that Dasein never becomes completely unworlded, or decontextualised in authenticity. Nevertheless, I suggest that we take a closer look at

the idea of authentic transparency, as a way of working out both halves of the problem of reflexivity.

In relation to the first question, we will discuss Heidegger's notion of authentic discourse, which he calls *keeping silent*, and which was not seriously considered by Guignon in his evaluation of the problem. Through our discussion of keeping silent, we will come across the phenomenon, which is disclosed in this authentic form of discourse, namely *the call of conscience*. In regards to the second question, we will discuss the relation of the call of conscience to a state of Dasein's being called *resoluteness*, and the relation of this state of being to freedom, transcendence, and authentic truth.

In conclusion I will suggest that the authentic discourse of keeping silent, and the authentic truth offered by resoluteness, provide a promising ground from which to access the meaning of being as such and overcome the problem reflexivity. As mentioned above, the aim here is not to dismiss the reflexivity problem, or claim to have fully refuted it, but simply to gesture toward a new starting point from which to evaluate it, to point out a path, unconsidered by Guignon in his book, which seems promising.

§ 11: Keeping Silent, the Call of Conscience and Anxiety

In our discussion of the first part of the problem of reflexivity, we saw that Guignon claims that every form of discourse gains meaning only through the idle talk of public

language. Guignon states that, “For Heidegger, every mode of discourse gains its meaning from the public background of intelligibility opened by *logos* and deposited in the public language.”¹³⁸ This becomes a problem because, upon this interpretation, Dasein has no access to any form of discursive disclosedness that is not tainted by the cultural relativity of the ‘they’. Guignon considers the idea that there might be a deep grammar that transcends all languages as a possible way overcoming of this problem, but argues that this is not necessarily so, as languages are dynamic and constantly changing. Thus even if this deep grammar might be a contingent fact of current languages, we have no reason to believe that it is a necessary linguistic fact. However, in the above quoted statement by Guignon, which expresses the essence of the problem in the first question, Guignon fails to consider Heidegger’s discussion of *keeping silent*, which is a peculiar form of discourse that does not partake in the idle talk of public language.

a) Keeping Silent

Guignon tells us, that for Heidegger, every mode of discourse gains its meaning from the background intelligibility of public language, or idle talk. However, Heidegger explains that there is another essential possibility of discourse, which he calls *keeping silent* or *reticence*. He states that

¹³⁸ Guignon, HPK 209.

As a mode of discoursing, reticence [or keeping silent] articulates the intelligibility of Dasein in so primordial a manner that it gives rise to a potentiality-for-hearing which is genuine, and to a Being-with-one-another which is transparent.¹³⁹

That which interests us in this quote is the genuine, or authentic potentiality-for-hearing that is given rise to in this peculiar mode of discourse. Keeping silent is a mode that facilitates the possibility of a sort of hearing in Dasein, which hears something other than the inauthentic idle talk of the 'they'. But what could possibly be heard in this peculiar mode of discourse, that is not contextualised by the public language? For Heidegger, in keeping silent, and only in keeping silent, Dasein is freed up to hear the call of conscience.¹⁴⁰ In what follows, our discussion of the call of conscience will elucidate how it is that keeping silent can be a mode of discourse that is not only unaffected by idle talk, but actually allows Dasein to authentically disclose itself to itself, without the distortions of public language.

b) The Call of Conscience

As the they-self, Heidegger explains that Dasein is lost in its contextualisation in the 'they'. The 'they' through public language has taken over Dasein's sense of significance, its worldhood. However, Dasein has the essential capacity to appropriate its sense of significance, its worldhood, from the 'they' in authenticity. As Heidegger explains,

¹³⁹ Heidegger, BT H165.

¹⁴⁰ Heidegger, BT H273.

In order to find *itself* at all, it must be 'shown' to itself in its possible authenticity. In terms of its *possibility*, Dasein *is* already a potentiality-for-Being-its-Self, but it needs to have this potentiality attested.¹⁴¹

In other words, Dasein needs to have its own essential potentiality for taking over its worldhood from the 'they' attested. However, this attestation cannot come from others, from the 'they', as all public discourse – as we know – is that which allows the 'they' to take over Dasein's worldhood in the first place. Rather this attestation must come from Dasein itself, as the *call of conscience*.

As we mentioned above, the call of conscience can only be heard in the mode of discourse called keeping silent. In keeping silent, Dasein frees itself up for hearing the call of conscience, which comes, not from others, but from Dasein itself. Heidegger states that, "It is essential to Dasein that along with the disclosedness of its world it has been disclosed to itself, so that it always *understands itself*."¹⁴² Thus we are presented with a mode of discourse, where Dasein calls from itself, to itself, and as Heidegger explains, Dasein's worldhood, as determined by the 'they' gets passed over in this call; it gets ignored. As Heidegger puts it,

The sort of Dasein which is understood after the manner of the world both for Others and for itself [in other words, the sort of Dasein which is understood by the 'they'], gets *passed over* in this appeal; this is something of which the call to the Self takes not the slightest cognizance.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Heidegger, BT H268.

¹⁴² Heidegger, BT H272.

¹⁴³ Heidegger, BT H272.

But how does a call from Dasein to itself allow Dasein to take over its worldhood from the 'they'?

As Heidegger explains, "The call reaches the they-self of concerned Being with others."¹⁴⁴ and "Because only the *Self* of the they-self gets appealed to and brought to hear, the 'they' collapses."¹⁴⁵ The call that Heidegger is here describing comes from the *authentic self*, and reaches the *they-self*, but it is not to be thought that these are somehow two separate entities. Rather these are two possible modes of being of Dasein. Heidegger explains that proximally and for the most part, Dasein is not itself, but rather the they-self.¹⁴⁶ What this means is that, for the most part, Dasein's being, its sense of significance, its worldhood, is determined not by its authentic self, but by its contextualisation in the 'they'. However, Dasein can be "authentically itself in the primordial individualisation of the reticent resoluteness which exacts anxiety of itself".¹⁴⁷ Thus Dasein's reticence, its keeping silent, that which allows for Dasein to authentically call itself in the call of conscience, and discourse with itself without partaking in the idle talk of the 'they', that which causes the 'they' to collapse in being passed over by this call, and Dasein to be disclosed to itself authentically, having shed this linguistic contextualisation of the 'they', is the phenomenon called *anxiety*.

c) Anxiety

¹⁴⁴ Heidegger, BT H272.

¹⁴⁵ Heidegger, BT H273.

¹⁴⁶ Heidegger, BT H317.

¹⁴⁷ Heidegger, BT H323.

Anxiety is an existential phenomenon of Dasein that is analogous to the factual phenomenon of *fear*. Fear is a turning away, or fleeing from some worldly entity that is perceived as threatening to Dasein. Where anxiety differs from fear, is in that from which it flees. As Heidegger states, “That in the face of which one has anxiety is *Being-in-the-world as such*.”¹⁴⁸ In fleeing from being-in-the-world as such, Dasein is not fleeing in the face of any particular worldly entity at all. Rather, as Heidegger explains,

What oppresses us is not this or that, nor is it the summation of everything present-at-hand; it is rather the *possibility* of the ready-to-hand in general; that is to say, it is the world itself.¹⁴⁹

In anxiety, that which Dasein flees from is its own existence, its own possibility of being as such. However, for our particular purpose, we are interested in that which anxiety discloses; that which allows for keeping silent, and for the hearing of the call of conscience.

That which the phenomenon of anxiety discloses is twofold. To begin, in fleeing from Dasein’s being-in-the-world, this being-in-the-world as such is disclosed. But in this fleeing from the world as such, Dasein’s authentic self is also disclosed, which is nothing other than Dasein’s authentic potentiality-for-being. As Heidegger explains,

Anxiety makes manifest in Dasein its *Being towards* its ownmost potentiality-for-Being – that is, its *Being-free for* the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Heidegger, BT H186. [my italics]

¹⁴⁹ Heidegger, BT H186.

¹⁵⁰ Heidegger, BT H188.

In other words, in turning away, or fleeing from its own being-in-the-world, in anxiety, Dasein, through keeping silent, frees itself for the call of conscience, frees itself for authentic discourse with itself, which frees itself from the linguistic contextualisation of the they-self, and allows itself the possibility of taking over its own sense of significance, its own worldhood, its own potentiality-for-being-itself. Thus, in relation to the first half of the problem of reflexivity, it seems that Guignon is mistaken in assuming that *every* mode of discourse gains meaning only from the background intelligibility of the public language of the 'they'.

In authentic keeping silent, which is enabled by anxiety, Dasein can call itself to itself in the call of conscience without contextualising itself in the public language of the 'they'. This insight, in and of itself, is not enough to overcome the reflexivity problem. We have said nothing of the character of the call of conscience, of what is contained in it. We have said nothing of how Dasein's self-understanding, as disclosed in the call of conscience might be expressed or communicated without public language. These sorts of questions must indubitably be addressed in order to fully defend Heidegger's work in *Being and Time* from the conception that it inadvertently undermines itself. However, the recognition of Dasein's potential for a truly authentic and uncontextualised discourse, does provides us with a starting point, an invaluable clue, unconsidered in Guignon's book, that promises to reconcile Heidegger's existential analytic with the broader goal of truly fundamental ontology.

§ 12: Resoluteness, Freedom, Truth and Transcendence

In our consideration of the second half of the problem of reflexivity, we discussed Dasein's historicity, and how this phenomenon affects the Heideggerian notion of truth as disclosedness. As Dasein, proximally and for the most part, is contextualised by its historical situation, Dasein's disclosedness – which just is Heidegger's fundamental conception of truth – thus also becomes relative to this historical contextualisation. Recall that this leads Guignon to question how the results of fundamental ontology might be *immutable*, and *eternal*, when truth itself seems to be historically relative.

We explored with Guignon the idea that the meaning of being might *be*, not as some sort of *suprahistorical* truth, but rather as a deep *transhistorical* truth; that the meaning of being might perpetually manifest itself in different forms throughout history, and that Dasein might distinguish between deep and superficial interpretations of the meaning of being by way of authentic transparency. We saw that Guignon dismisses this line of reasoning due to a perceived lack of a *total* or *complete* transparency of Dasein in authenticity. As Guignon reminds us, Dasein *is* equiprimordially in the truth, and in untruth.

To elucidate this last point, truth is that which discloses the world to Dasein, and also allows Dasein to uncover entities as they are in themselves, and as such it is a relation between Dasein and world. In so far as Dasein is in a state of perpetual uncovering, through the constant disclosedness of the world to Dasein, Heidegger explains that Dasein *is* perpetually *in the truth*.¹⁵¹ However, Guignon reminds us that Dasein is not only in the truth, but as contextualised both culturally and historically, is

¹⁵¹ Heidegger, BT H221.

equiprimordially in untruth. What this means is that, although being-true means being-uncovering, and Dasein's uncovering is facilitated by its existential state of disclosedness – which means that, as constantly uncovering, Dasein is constantly in the truth – Dasein's disclosedness, as a relation between Dasein and world, is also proximally and for the most part, culturally and historically contextualised – which means at the same time that Dasein's disclosedness is uncovering, it is also covering up; which means that Dasein is, at the same ontological level, both uncovering, and covering up, or in the truth, and in untruth. Guignon takes Heidegger's discussion of the equiprimordiality of Dasein's being in the truth and being in untruth as evidence that Dasein, even in authenticity, is always, at least partially in untruth, and thus can never achieve a standpoint from which to discover the meaning of being as such. Nevertheless, I suggest that we take a deeper look at Heidegger's notion of authentic truth, specifically with reference to its relation to his discussion of resoluteness, freedom, and transcendence, in order to identify a possible path that might lead to a reconciliation of the tension between historicity and existential truth in *Being and Time*. Before we begin, however, it seems necessary to make a slight adjustment to the particular formulation of Guignon's second question.

Guignon asks, "If truth is ultimately historical, how can the results of fundamental ontology be immutable, and eternal?"¹⁵² However, Heidegger makes it quite clear, that because truth is constituted by Dasein's disclosedness, truth, much like Dasein, must indeed be finite. As Heidegger explains, "That there are 'eternal truths' will not be

¹⁵² Guignon, HPK 209.

adequately proved until someone has succeeded in demonstrating that Dasein has been and will be for all eternity.”¹⁵³ But this lack of eternality in truth cannot be thought of as a hindrance to the question of the meaning of being, in that both truth and being are dependent upon Dasein in this same way. Heidegger states that “Being (not entities) is something which ‘there is’ only in so far as truth is. And truth *is* only in so far and as long as Dasein is. Being and truth ‘are’ equiprimordially.”¹⁵⁴ As such, it seems prudent to reformulate this second question on behalf of Guignon in such a way as to capture this essential tension of the reflexivity problem, without the misguided implication that either being or truth are to be properly thought of as eternal. The question might be reworked into something such as, ‘If all truth is ultimately historical, how can the results of fundamental ontology be thought to transcend Dasein’s particular historical contextualisation?’ Thus, in our evaluation of this second half of the problem, we will not concern ourselves with immutability, or eternality, but rather with the transcendental validity that Guignon calls for in the first half of the problem of reflexivity.

a) Resoluteness, and Authentic Truth as Freedom

We have just recently discussed Heidegger’s conception of truth as disclosedness, which, proximally and for the most part, situates Dasein as equiprimordially in the truth, and in untruth. At the core of Guignon’s problem of reflexivity is this state of being in untruth that Dasein is in, proximally and for the most part, as an effect of its cultural and historical contextualisation. However, Heidegger does indeed speak of a distinctive

¹⁵³ Heidegger, BT H227.

¹⁵⁴ Heidegger, BT H230.

mode of disclosedness that is not so contextualised, and thus frees Dasein from its contextualised being in untruth. This mode of disclosedness, Heidegger calls *resoluteness*.

In his book, Guignon does briefly recognise this phenomenon of resoluteness, but quickly dismisses it as if unworthy of serious consideration. Guignon states that

Heidegger makes it clear that a necessary condition for grasping primordial and authentic truth is that one actually be in the authentic existentiell mode. This mode is characterized as 'resoluteness'.¹⁵⁵

However, according to Guignon, "Resoluteness has nothing to do with transcending the Anyone [the 'they'] to attain the position of an 'Übermensch'".¹⁵⁶ In other words, Guignon believes that the phenomenon of resoluteness has nothing to offer as a means for the existential analytic to transcend its cultural or historical contextualisation in answering the question of the meaning of being as such. Guignon refers us to a passage in *Being and Time* in which Heidegger states that

Even resolutions depend upon the 'they' and its world. The understanding of this is one of the things that a resolution discloses, inasmuch as resoluteness is what first gives authentic transparency to Dasein.¹⁵⁷

From this Guignon gathers that, because resoluteness is, as Heidegger states, dependent upon *the 'they' and its world*, this form of disclosedness is nevertheless culturally and historically contextualised, and thus incapable of allowing Dasein to fully

¹⁵⁵ Guignon, HPK 136.

¹⁵⁶ Guignon, HPK 136.

¹⁵⁷ Heidegger, BT 299.

transcend this contextualisation in the existential analytic.¹⁵⁸ In what follows, we shall attempt to look more closely at the phenomenon of resoluteness in an effort to show that as a mode of disclosedness, it does indeed allow Dasein to transcend its worldly contextualisation, possibly not to attain the position of a superman, but rather to allow Dasein to understand the meaning of being as such.

We will begin by picking up, more or less, where we left off in our evaluation of the first half of the reflexivity problem; namely in our discussion of the call of conscience. In the call of conscience, which is heard in authentic discourse through keeping silent, and which is factually disclosed by the phenomenon of anxiety, Dasein calls itself to itself. In this calling of Dasein to itself, Dasein's authentic self is first disclosed to the self of the they-self, and through this disclosedness, as Heidegger explains, the 'they' collapses.¹⁵⁹ This authentic disclosedness of the self, attested to in the call of conscience, just is that which Heidegger calls resoluteness.¹⁶⁰ Heidegger states that "In resoluteness we have now arrived at that truth of Dasein which is most primordial because it is *authentic*."¹⁶¹

Guignon admits this, but then argues this 'authentic' truth, which is disclosed in resoluteness, must still be at least partially contextualised, as Heidegger states that resoluteness is dependent upon the contextualised world of the 'they' and that Dasein is

¹⁵⁸ In the above quote from *Being and Time*, Heidegger refers not to *resoluteness*, but rather to *resolutions*. Heidegger explains that *resoluteness*, as authentic being-one's-self can exist only as a *resolution*, which just is an ontical act of authentic being-one's-self. This distinction is made, merely to highlight the idea that *resoluteness* as an ontological structure manifests itself ontically as a *resolution*. For Heidegger's discussion of this see BT §60.

¹⁵⁹ Heidegger, BT H273.

¹⁶⁰ Heidegger, BT H297.

¹⁶¹ Heidegger, BT H297.

equiprimordially in the truth and in untruth. Building upon this interpretation, Guignon goes so far as to assert that resoluteness indeed has nothing to do at all with transcending the 'they'. However, Heidegger seems to conceive of resoluteness as doing exactly this. He states that

Resoluteness signifies letting oneself be summoned out of one's lostness in the 'they'. The irresoluteness of the 'they' remains dominant notwithstanding, but it cannot impugn on resolute existence.¹⁶²

There is a tension here. How can resoluteness, as a mode of disclosedness, be dependent upon the contextualised world of the 'they', and yet disclose something to Dasein which is uncontextualised? How can Dasein be equiprimordially in the truth, and in untruth? And if this is merely to mean that Dasein is primordially in partial truth – contextualised truth – how can Heidegger ever discuss authentic truth; the sort of truth that is to be disclosed in resoluteness?

We seem to be given a clue for solving this tension, when Heidegger explains that, "Resoluteness appropriates untruth authentically".¹⁶³ This may seem like an oxymoron, and it may be the cause of the tension that Guignon brings to light in the problem of reflexivity, but it may also guide us toward the right path for a solution. Heidegger makes it clear that although resoluteness is a distinctive kind of disclosedness that summons Dasein out of its contextualisation in the 'they', and discloses to Dasein a truth that is wholly authentic, "it does not detach Dasein from its world, nor does it

¹⁶² Heidegger, BT H299.

¹⁶³ Heidegger, BT H299.

isolate it so that it becomes a free-floating 'I'.¹⁶⁴ Rather, "resolute Dasein *frees* itself for its world".¹⁶⁵ Resoluteness frees Dasein to choose to take over its own sense of significance, its own for-the-sake-of-which, from the 'they'. This freedom just is the aforementioned authentic truth of Dasein. Resoluteness authentically discloses to Dasein its freedom.

Heidegger explains that Dasein, in resoluteness,

understands the possibility of anxiety as the possibility of the very mood which neither inhibits nor bewilders [Dasein]. Anxiety liberates [Dasein] *from* possibilities which 'count for nothing', and lets [Dasein] become free *for* those which are authentic.¹⁶⁶

What Heidegger means here, is that in resoluteness, anxiety frees Dasein *from* the possibilities imposed upon Dasein by the 'they', and *for* the possibilities that Dasein freely chooses. Heidegger explains that in resoluteness, anxiety makes manifest in Dasein,

its *Being-free for* the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself. Anxiety brings Dasein face to face with its *Being-free for* the authenticity of its Being, and for this authenticity as a possibility which it always is.¹⁶⁷

What this means is that in resoluteness, the call of conscience, which is the first instance of the authentic discourse of Dasein, calls Dasein back to itself, and discloses Dasein to itself as free. But how does this freedom allow Dasein to transcend its historical contextualisation, and thus understand the meaning of being as transcendently true?

¹⁶⁴ Heidegger, BT H298.

¹⁶⁵ Heidegger, BT H298. [my italics]

¹⁶⁶ Heidegger, BT H344.

¹⁶⁷ Heidegger, BT H188.

To understand this, we must discuss Heidegger's conception of transcendence, and its relation Dasein's existential freedom.

b) Freedom and Transcendence

Transcendence, in *Being and Time*, according to Heidegger, is discussed in a derivative fashion in order to highlight the phenomenon of temporality; a concept that we have neither the need, nor the time to discuss for our current purposes.¹⁶⁸ However, in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, which is based upon a lecture course in 1928, just one year after the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger delivers a much more focused and straightforward account of the phenomenon of transcendence. Thus, we shall focus primarily on the account given therein. In coming to an understanding of Heidegger's conception of transcendence, it should become clear how Dasein's freedom, as disclosed by resoluteness, might serve as a promising starting point, unconsidered by Guignon, from which to evaluate the problem of reflexivity.

Heidegger begins his discussion of the meaning transcendence by looking at its etymological roots. The word *transcendence* has its roots in the Latin term *transcendere*, which according to Heidegger, means "to surpass, stop over, to cross over".¹⁶⁹ Thus the literal meaning of transcendence, which is admittedly vague, means simply to surpass, or to go beyond. This vagueness has given rise to various interpretations of the phenomenon of transcendence throughout the western

¹⁶⁸ See MFL 167 for Heidegger's discussion of his treatment of transcendence in *Being and Time*.

¹⁶⁹ Heidegger, MFL 160.

philosophical tradition. In regards to its traditional usage, Heidegger describes the two most influential interpretations of this elusive phenomenon, which he terms the *epistemological* and *theological* conceptions of transcendence.¹⁷⁰ In defining his own conception of transcendence, Heidegger wishes to distinguish his conception from these two traditional conceptions, which he rejects. Thus we will begin our discussion of Heidegger's conception of transcendence with a brief overview of these two traditional interpretations, and the reasons why Heidegger rejects them.

Our discussion of the epistemological conception of transcendence will be brief, as it is intimately related to Heidegger's rejection of the Cartesian tradition discussed in the first half of this thesis. The epistemological conception of transcendence defines transcendence in contradistinction to immanence. In this sense, the *immanent* is a term that describes that which remains within consciousness, as opposed to the *transcendent*, which lies outside of consciousness.¹⁷¹ For example, upon this conception of transcendence, the simple perception of an object of nature, perhaps a stone, would include both an immanent and a transcendent constituent of the perception. The perceptual image of the stone, or perhaps the inner thought of the stone would constitute an *immanent* object of consciousness. The stone in itself, the actual object of nature, would constitute something which is thought to be outside of consciousness, and thus transcendent. Transcendence itself, upon this conception, is conceived as the

¹⁷⁰ Heidegger, MFL 161-162.

¹⁷¹ Heidegger, MFL 160.

relationship between, or the passageway between objects of nature, which are external to consciousness, and mental objects, or thoughts, which are internal and immanent.

We should be able to see without difficulty, Heidegger's reasoning for rejecting this conception of transcendence. This manner of transcendence would be necessary only within the framework of the exact sort of Cartesian ontology that Heidegger rejects. The Cartesian problem of scepticism just is the problem of accounting for this sort of epistemological transcendence, where subjectivity is conceived as a sort of ontological box, which the subject must leap out of, or surpass in order to gain knowledge of the world outside. Within the ontological framework of Dasein's being-in-the-world, this conception of transcendence simply does not make sense.

The theological conception of transcendence, according to Heidegger, suffers from the same sort of problem. Upon this conception, transcendence is to be conceived as the opposite of contingency.¹⁷² Contingency, in this sense, describes that which we discussed in the beginning of chapter three as *created being*. Recall that Descartes distinguishes between *ens creatum* – created being, and *ens perfectum* – perfect being. *Ens perfectum*, is that which lies beyond the created world; the divine. As lying beyond the world of both subject and object, of both Dasein and world, perfect being, the divine, God, that which is uncreated or unconditioned, non-contingent, and absolute, is transcendent; it is that which lies beyond absolutely.

¹⁷² Heidegger, MFL 161.

Here we are presented with a view, where not merely the subject, but the contingent world of both subject and object, are ontologically boxed off from the divine, the unconditioned, or the absolute. Transcendence, once again would require an ontological leap outside of the created world into some unknown and unknowable realm of the unconditioned absolute. As such, Heidegger too rejects this theological conception of transcendence.

Heidegger concludes his discussion of the traditional conceptions of transcendence by stating that,

Against both conception so of transcendence, the epistemological and the theological, we must in principle state that transcendence is not a relation between interior and exterior realms such that a barrier belonging to the subject would be crossed over, a barrier that would separate the subject from the outer realm. But neither is transcendence primarily the cognitive relationship a subject has to an object, one belonging to the subject in addition to its subjectivity. Nor is transcendence simply the term for what exceeds and is inaccessible to finite knowledge.¹⁷³

Rather, according to Heidegger, transcendence is precisely the essential constitution of the subjectivity of the subject; it is the primary way of being of any subject, any Dasein, as such. For Heidegger, to be a subject, to be Dasein, just is to be the kind of entity that transcends. Accordingly, transcendence “is the basic constitution of [Dasein’s] being, on the basis of which Dasein can relate to beings in the first place”.¹⁷⁴ But what is this transcendence of Dasein, if not traditionally conceived as a crossing over, out of the

¹⁷³ Heidegger, MFL 165.

¹⁷⁴ Heidegger, MFL 165.

subjective sphere, and into the either realm of objects, or the realm of the unconditioned and divine?

For Heidegger, Dasein's transcendence is a crossing over of any being, or entity, that can become manifest to Dasein whatsoever.¹⁷⁵ In other words, that which Dasein crosses over in its transcendence is not a barrier between subjectivity and that which lies beyond subjectivity, but rather, as a transcendental subject – which would be a redundant term for Heidegger – Dasein crosses over, or surpasses, the totality of entities within the world; it surpasses any and everything that can become manifest to Dasein as an entity. Thus in transcendence, entities within the world become manifest to Dasein. However, that toward which Dasein transcends is not these entities *per se*. In fact, that toward which Dasein transcends is not a worldly entity at all. Rather Dasein in transcending worldly entities transcends towards worldhood itself.¹⁷⁶ It is only in surpassing the entities within the world, according to Heidegger, that something like a world can *be*.

Recall from chapter three that for Heidegger, worldhood, the world in general, is not merely the totality of entities within the world, but rather, worldhood is Dasein's for-the-sake-of-which. Thus, in transcendence, Dasein surpasses worldly entities, and transcends to its own for-the-sake-of-which, its own world in which entities can make themselves manifest. But how does freedom factor into this interpretation? Heidegger explains that “Only where there is freedom is there a purposive for-the-sake-of, and

¹⁷⁵ Heidegger, MFL 166.

¹⁷⁶ Heidegger, MFL 166.

only here is there world. To put it briefly, Dasein's transcendence and freedom are identical!"¹⁷⁷ Thus Dasein's transcendence manifests itself in the freedom to choose that for-the-sake-of-which Dasein is.

We must now return to the issue of how the disclosedness of Dasein's freedom through resoluteness might allow Dasein to transcend its historical contextualisation, and thus understand the meaning of being as transcendently true. Dasein, as free, as transcendent, can always choose to be its authentic self, or to be the they-self. It can choose to allow the 'they' to dominate its possibilities for being, or it can choose to take these possibilities over for itself. Dasein's world is nevertheless always a with-world. It is still, in a sense, always conditioned, in that its possibilities for being are always in part determined by the 'they', and its world. However, Dasein need not transcend this conditioning in order to achieve transcendental validity. The sort of transcendental validity that Guignon requires for fundamental ontology seems to stem from a theological conception of transcendence. Rather, Dasein's freedom, which is its transcendence, which is disclosed to it in authentic resoluteness, assures transcendental validity by allowing Dasein the freedom to distinguish for itself between the truth and untruth of its disclosedness.

Is the recognition of Dasein's transcendence as freedom enough to overcome the problem of reflexivity completely? Probably not. Between Heidegger and Guignon we are presented with differing views of transcendental validity. It might still be argued that Heidegger's essential goal of fundamental ontology presupposes, or requires a

¹⁷⁷ Heidegger, MFL 185.

theological form of transcendental validity, and that Heidegger's conception of transcendence does nothing but undermine the entire project. If this is the case, then Heidegger's project in *Being and Time* might still indeed suffer from the reflexivity problem. However, Guignon's evaluation of this problem seems to have left too much unconsidered. In our own evaluation we have discovered that there is indeed a form of authentic discourse that is uncontextualised by the 'they', we have begun to explore the authentic disclosedness of Dasein's freedom, its transcendence, through resoluteness.

Concluding Remarks: Where We Have Been, and Where We Have Yet to Go

Where We Have Been

This thesis originally began as a means of exploring and evaluating Heidegger's overcoming of the problem of Cartesian scepticism. The problem seems quite simple, as presented by Heidegger in *Being and Time*. The radical dichotomy between subject and object that stems back to Descartes, and has become so embedded within the philosophical tradition as to have, in a sense, become unquestioned, necessarily leads to a problem of epistemological transcendence such that the subject must mysteriously leap out of its inner subjective sphere to know the external world in truth. Heidegger makes it seem quite evident that Descartes, in his discussion of the *ego cogito*, quite simply failed to pursue the question of the being of the *ego* any further than was necessary to secure its being-certain. Furthermore, his preoccupation with certainty led him to equate the being of *res extensa* with the certain being of mathematics.

With a foundational understanding of the sense and task of phenomenological research, and the necessity of fundamental ontology, the discovery of Dasein's being-in-the-world, as a unitary phenomenon, through the existential analytic, seems at first glance, and even when one probes more deeply, to be a relatively simple and unproblematic solution to the problem of scepticism, which is in no need of such a mysterious leap required for an epistemological transcendence. For Heidegger, Dasein is always already-alongside-the-world, and has no need of transcending any ontological

gap. In fact, through our discussion of the phenomenon of being-in-the-world, it seemed quite evident that knowing is merely a founded mode of being-in.

However, through our investigation of Heidegger's critique, we came across Guignon's problem of reflexivity, which not only calls into question Heidegger's critique itself, but also highlights a major tension that permeates the whole of *Being and Time*. According to Guignon, the existential analytic, through its discovery of Dasein's cultural and historical contextualisation, and through the discovery of the absolute unity of Dasein, being-in and worldhood, undermines the possibility of the discovery of a universal and transcendentally valid meaning of being as such, as it would seem that any possible meaning of being would *be* relative to a particular culture, at a particular time.

In our evaluation of the reflexivity problem we discovered that Guignon overlooks some fundamental aspects of Heidegger's philosophy in *Being and Time*, all which are related to authentic disclosedness. We saw, contrary to Guignon's claim that all meaningful discourse is culturally contextualised, that Dasein's reticence, or keeping silent, is an uncontextualised form of meaningful discourse. Further we saw that through reticence, Dasein hears the call of conscience, which allows Dasein to authentically appropriate untruth in resoluteness. We saw how the authentic truth of Dasein just is its freedom to choose itself, and appropriate its possibilities for being from the 'they'. Finally we saw that for Heidegger, freedom and transcendence are identical.

Where We Have Yet to Go

We admitted, however, that our discussion of authentic disclosedness through Dasein's reticence and resoluteness, and our discussion of Dasein's transcendence as freedom, provides only a starting point from which to overcome the problem of reflexivity. Yet there appears to be at least one significant issue, which needs to be addressed in order to potentially overcome the reflexivity problem outright. Specifically, the tension between Heidegger's and Guignon's understanding of transcendence must be discussed more thoroughly.

For Heidegger, transcendence just is Dasein's freedom to choose to take control, or at least responsibility for its own sense of significance, its own worldhood. It is only through this freedom that Dasein can transcend entities within the world, and reach anything like a world within which entities can manifest themselves. Guignon's sense of transcendence, or transcendental validity, which is called for in *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, seems to be a transcendence of Dasein's cultural and historical contextualisation. That which would thus necessarily be transcended towards, would be a viewpoint that is uncontextualised, unworlded and thus absolute. Heidegger rejects this view of transcendence, which he would term a theological conception, as this view constitutes the same sort of requirement as the problem of scepticism; namely, it requires a leaping out of the inner sphere of Dasein's being-in-the-world, to obtain an absolutely unworlded, or timeless and immutable, meaning of being as such.

The principal problem that would need to be addressed in such a discussion of transcendence would be whether Heidegger's conception of transcendence is indeed compatible with his project of fundamental ontology. Can his rejection of both the

possibility as well as the need for an unworlded and absolute viewpoint, still lead to the discovery of the meaning of being as such? If this problem is to be solved, it must indubitably be preceded by an in-depth discussion of the relation between Heidegger's project of fundamental ontology, and his conception of transcendence. As such, it may, in some sense seem that the critical part of this thesis has achieved little more than the relocation of the reflexivity problem from a tension between fundamental ontology and the contextualisation of Dasein, to a tension between fundamental ontology and Heidegger's conception of transcendence, however I maintain that this insight marks an important first step in reevaluating a tension in *Being and Time* that must be resolved if its integrity as one of the most important works of western philosophy in the twentieth century is to be preserved.

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