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THE HEIDEGGERIAN CONCEPT OF *DASEIN* AND
ITS ONTOLOGICAL MODALITY: *DAS MAN*

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The paper presents a non-standard interpretation of the celebrated Heideggerian existential *das Man* in terms of its oft-underrated unity with *Dasein*—an entity of a special ontic-ontological prerogative. The present authors intend to highlight this essential theme in terms of the specific unity of *Dasein* being-in-the-world, covering many subsequent and adjacent existentials in the analytics of the Heideggerian existential hermeneutics, especially *Mitsein/Mitdasein*. *Dasein's* existence-essence is based on the structure of possibilities, and hence free, spontaneous choices, while *Das Man* is a concrete choice of a certain modus of existence rendering—as it were—all other *modi* invalid and non-operational. Although Heidegger is far from taking up an ethical or moral stance in its traditional understanding, he is quite adamant that the phenomenon of *das Man* invalidates a truly human project of existing one's own possibilities—to wit—be oneself (*Jemeines*).

Keywords: Being *qua* Being, existence, being-in-the-world, authenticity versus inauthenticity, depersonalisation, hermeneutics, existentialism.

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ХАЙДЕГГЕРОВСКОЕ ПОНЯТИЕ *DASEIN* И ЕГО ОНТОЛОГИЧЕСКАЯ МОДАЛЬНОСТЬ: *DAS MAN*

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В статье представлена нестандартная интерпретация знаменитого хайдеггеровского экзистенциала *das Man* в аспекте его часто недооцениваемого единства с *Dasein* — сущего, имеющего особый онтико-онтологический приоритет. Авторы стремятся осветить эту важную тему с точки зрения своеобразного единства принадлежащего *Dasein* бытия-в-мире (*in-der-Welt-Sein*), охватывающего многие последующие и непосредственно соседствующие с ним экзистенциалы в аналитике хайдеггеровской экзистенциальной герменевтики, особенно *Mitsein/Mitdasein*. Существование-сущность *Dasein* основана на структуре возможностей, и, следовательно, свободном, спонтанном выборе, в то время как *das Man* представляет собой конкретный модус существования, делающий, если можно так выразиться, все другие модусы недействительными и непригодными. Хотя Хайдеггер далек от какой-либо этической или моральной позиции в традиционном смысле, он весьма решительно настаивает на том, что феномен *das Man* нивелирует подлинно человеческий набросок собственных возможностей, а именно возможности быть собой (*Jemeines*). Представленный в статье концепт *Dasein* является уникальным примером хайдеггеровской интерпретации гуссерлевской феноменологии, нацеленной на прояснение несобственного существования. Хотя Хайдеггер посвящает этой проблеме лишь пару страниц, аналитика *Dasein* вызвала огромное количество философских и культурных откликов.

Ключевые слова: Бытие *qua* Бытие, экзистенция, бытие-в-мире, собственность против несобственности, деперсонализация, герменевтика, экзистенциализм.

The present paper's focus is on the Heideggerian existential period before the so called *Khere*, the seminal transformation of the fundamental ontology presented by the philosopher some years after his masterpiece *Sein and Zeit* (published in 1927). As is hardly disputed, the initial project of this “unfaithful” and iconoclastic disciple of Edmund Husserl was not only aimed at overcoming, indeed getting rid of, all the remnants of traditional, by then useless according to Heidegger's metaphysics of presence (Mróz, 1997, 14), dogmatic tenets and allegedly clear and “obvious,” “self-evident,” “complacent” concepts (the destruction project), but was first and foremost

aimed at restoring the most critical and essential problem of Being *qua* Being (*das Sein*) as univocally distinguished from beings (*Seienden*) (Pöggeler, 1963). According to Heidegger (time and again he refers to the issue in subsequent texts published after the appearance of *Sein und Zeit*), Being (*das Sein*) had been condemned to total oblivion, while fruitful, revelatory insights into the nature of Being undertaken by the Presocratic philosophers were marginalized in the course of Western philosophy (later Heidegger would prefer to refer to *thinking* rather than philosophy (2000)). What is more, the essential, absolutely vital and fundamental, difference between Being and beings (*das Sein und Seienden*) had been unforgivably obliterated, which brought about long-lasting consequences visible in the nature of those “two parties” so violently misinterpreted (the problem of the so-called *ontologische Differenz*).

In the initial stages of the planned overcoming of the traditional metaphysics (metaphysics of logocentrically oriented—as Derrida has it—thinking) presentifying beings for our rationalistic priggish convenience thus justifying our conquering of the transcendent reality to bend it to our will, the early Heidegger parts company with his former master. It goes without saying that Edmund Husserl, fed up with narrow-minded positivism and all forms of insidious psychologism, in his celebrated battle cry of modernity promising “the return to the things themselves” displayed nothing but right intentions of liberating human thinking from debilitating antinomies, from the utterly misleading opposition of an ever-conflictual nature: subject versus object, existence versus essence, being (phenomenon) versus appearance (constitution taking place in the consciousness of a transcendent thing) (Scruton, 1984, 259).

Heidegger, however, was interested in something of a more essential, crucial nature. Having accepted the Husserlian proposal of phenomenology as a strict science (*strenge Wissenschaft*)—its methods of description, eidetic analysis and to a lesser extent the celebrated *epoche* (reductions) as well as constitution related to specific functions of consciousness, the author of *Sein und Zeit* went straight to the heart of the matter. Disavowing the idea of neutrality, still better, the possibility Husserl pointed out to neutralize or put in brackets the very existence of the phenomena investigated into (the move to invalidate the natural standpoint responsible for so many misconceptions), Heidegger raised the question of the necessary condition of appearing in their bodily form of the constituted phenomena at all (Spiegelberg, 1969, 285). Transforming—as it were—the golden rule of all of the phenomenological approach—“the intentionality” (all consciousness is the consciousness of something transcendent thus differing essentially from it), the early Heidegger declares that the *genitive* “cluste” *Seins des Seienden* (like the Husserlian intentionality phrase: *consciousness of...*) may open up a fresh vista for philosophical activities. As a matter of fact, that move on the part of Heidegger is

an attempt to return to the first Presocratic reflections on the solely important subject of that which is but at the same time cannot be at one with so-called entities. Under no pretext can one justify the bracketing of Being, confused with that “which exists,” as an entity. To put it differently—if phenomenology is to play the role of the only philosophy capable of “turning” us to the world, thus returning it to us as it is—this new way of thinking must be ontology. In other terms, the main, even better the sole, theme of philosophy (thinking) must be Being *qua* Being (Richardson, 1963).

What Heidegger refers to as *Seinsfrage* seems to claim its own rights and tends to occupy the central position in the Heideggerian fundamental ontology (Heidegger, 1962, 21). Opposing the established tradition of Western philosophy, the author of *Sein und Zeit* not only breaks loose from epistemology, psychology, theories of methodology, logic, and all regional ontologies (by and large represented by sciences—formal, empirical and social), but also rejects supreme categories that for several centuries have formed and exerted an influence on the way we used to think about the transcendent world—along with our position and situation in it. The seemingly simple question of *What is Being?* poses, however, great problems, and demands a complete change of what we may call a deeply rooted, hence “closing” thus narrowed paradigm so rife not only among philosophers but visible in such human endeavours like the humanities, poetry and art. The question concerning Being cannot be answered with the self-evident: *Being is...* because it is the very “is” which constitutes an object of our enquiry. Being cannot be defined, grasped in logical/epistemological or anthropological categories. Neither is it the Platonian highest genus, nor the Aristotelian substance, Form or Spirit, God or matter. Still, Being must not be omitted and discarded because of the aforementioned failures and fallacies of the traditional ways of dealing with it (Heidegger, 1993).

In an unprecedented and resolute move, the far-cry of the Husserlian reductions cleansing and purging these notions and ideas which block and stand in the way of human attempts at approaching Being, its sense and meaning (*Sinn und Bedeutung*), Heidegger chooses a unique entity: *Seiende*, displaying a special privilege both ontic and ontological (Heidegger, 1962, 23 ff.). This entity named *Dasein* (in other than *Sein und Zeit* texts often spelt *Da-sein*) has been characterised in terms hardly reminiscent of any predicates we have been accustomed to throughout the long tradition of philosophical anthropology. *Nota bene* Heidegger pays great attention to the very language he employs in his phenomenologically oriented hermeneutics. More often than not has he been severely criticised and even rebuked by philosophers, like some members of the *Wiener Kreis* for his untempered effusions: his cryptic, morbid, and highly metaphorical and poetic style. Most diligent, patient, and unbiased Heideggerian readers,

however, see convincing reasons for this kind of formulating of philosophical—within the framework of his fundamental ontology—ideas and insights. The *Destruktion*, the *Überwindung* (overcoming) of all the traditional metaphysics required—claims Heidegger—a complete change of language which can turn out to be (as will soon be explicated) an enslaving factor. *Dasein* is by no means a pure spirit, a soul, a subject, a consciousness, the Husserlian Transcendental Ego, mind, or organic live matter of highly organised function. This practically untranslatable term (like so many key terms in his texts) shows Heidegger ever returning to the historical, even folklore (*Volkish*) of religious, ecclesiastical undertones going back to the medieval and romantic roots of the various registers of the German language. *Dasein* denotes—as has already been mentioned—a special type of being. Although vehemently dissociating himself from the existentialist movement (paradoxically so strongly influenced by his works), Heidegger resorts to the very human existence in his definition of or rather insight into the ontic-ontological structure of *Dasein* (Heidegger, 1962, 26 ff.). Thus *Dasein* is a being whose existence is its essence; moreover a being capable of understanding (the Heideggerian hermeneutics at its best) its own Being, and hence Being as such, as well as the Being of other beings. That is—the philosopher seems to claim—the ontological (“logical” component entailed in the term—harking intentionally back to the *Logos* of Ancient Greek philosophers) side of *Dasein* marking it off from all other beings in the world. Trying to follow faithfully but critically the Heideggerian path blazed through the thick forest of unresolved metaphysical problems, the present authors hope to reconstruct—to wit, to place—this celebrated concept of *Dasein* and its ontological travesty *das Man* against the backdrop of the whole coherent systematic structure of the Heideggerian ever seminal and thought-provoking issue in question. Unlike the presuppositionless Husserlian phenomenology, the Heideggerian fundamental ontology does not discard a sort of pre-knowledge, still better, pre-understanding or pre-supposition concerning the most vital domain of his enquiry (Marias, 1966, 428).

Each *Dasein* is born with a certain kind of awareness, a sort of power to pre-understand and eventually take advantage of this pre-knowledge, pre-concepts, pre-intuition (the prefix *vor* in German is indicative of this purport in his ontology). Thus the moment we raise a certain issue (mostly of an ontological nature geared up with our situation in the world) an adequate answer must already be somehow, albeit partially, known to us. Otherwise—Heidegger seems to stipulate—we would never be in the know about the subject we are enquiring about. Like a *Gestalt* psychologist, Heidegger conceives of the world and a man—*Dasein*—its capacities and specific cognitive faculties, e.g. moods as a closely knit network of interdependencies, a mutual “exchange” in which, however, *Dasein* is a main point of reference being engaged in

its projects and constantly taking care of its world (*Umwelt*) along with the various entities (beings) *Dasein* encounters and interacts with (*Sorge, Besorgen*).

Following Heidegger's path in view of adequate reconstruction and eventual interpretation of this celebrated pair of concepts in question, that is *Dasein* and its ontological modality *das Man*, requires at least a limited presentation of the Heideggerian key-terms he created in order to reveal the ontic-ontological structure of *Dasein* and its situation (*Befindlichkeit*). These are referred to as categories and *existentialia*. The latter have been divided into two types, and this division serves as a yardstick to measure the authenticity (*Eingentlichkeit*) of our existence, the opening (up) and closing (in) of *existentialia*. Both types are carefully distinguished from categories, which is reminiscent of the old Aristotelian, Thomist and Wolfian metaphysics Heidegger is bent on overcoming, and are mostly used to apply to beings (*Seienden*) other than *Dasein*. Most important to the Heideggerian presentation of the fundamental ontology is unquestionably the existential *in-der-Welt-Sein*, the indelible—so to speak—birthmark of every *Dasein*. It is noteworthy that the used preposition of location has for Heidegger a double connotation. There is an obvious difference between “in” applied to the passive state of, say, a wallet kept safely in my trouser-pocket, a pen in a desk drawer or a clerk in a governmental office, and “in” applied to *Dasein* engaged in a given *Umwelt*: working there, performing its duties, and, more importantly, making choices and realizing its projects. Moreover, this existential dynamism is accompanied by *Dasein's* awareness of its human condition as marked off from the existentially different status of entities other than *Dasein*. Therefore, the Heideggerian presentation of *Dasein's* existence in the world would not be clear without a reference the philosopher finds crucial, one to the specific and unique dimension of human temporality—having an undeniably consequential character for this problem of being-in-the-world (Rubiczek, 1966). In *Sein und Zeit*, the hermeneutical motif of time is imbued with an existential character. Time—announces the philosopher—being evidently under the influence of the concept of both Bergson and Husserl who made a distinction between the objective Chronos and subjective experiential Tempus, is of *Dasein's* providence: temporality is a human *modus* of existing in the world, in the everyday hustle and bustle, as well as the “now” by the immersion in the world of “immutable” laws, in the world of past “by-gone” events implying the course of human culture and civilization. Put differently, *Dasein* was born into the world found, given-as-it-was at a certain point of time thus initiating as it were our ecstatic temporality¹.

¹ For Heidegger the nature of time is never homogeneous. In other terms time is of no linear nature. Three ecstasies of temporality: the past ever present in the now and the future are the epitome of the human condition. The past, present and future co-mingle with each other thus making our

This unique event marks an important fact Heidegger refers to as *Geworfenheit* (the thrownness into, or having-been-thrown into: the latter phrase better renders the past, “already” accomplished aspect of our condition. Although the philosopher is far from excessively highlighting the indisputable fact of a lack of reason whatsoever for our “finding ourselves” here and now, in this place, and not another, of having been born into this and not that family, speaking this not that language, belonging to this cultural formation not the other, the fact of our contingency (constant and insurmountable factor of *Geworfenheit*) constitutes the nature of this important existential². As will have been remembered, *Dasein*’s existence, at one with its essence, is our own unique affair. This concept of existential uniqueness is linguistically rendered by a special term newly-coined by the philosopher, one awkward even for the German ear: *jemeines*, *Jemeinigkeit*. What Heidegger intends to achieve by introducing such a term is of a twofold purpose. For one thing, a human being in its inalienable *ipseity* is ever related to his/her own personal being (*verhält sich zu*). And as we shall see in due course, *Jemeinigkeit* is not a constant ontological state—it will be facing its destruction due to its own choices. Second, *Jemeines* has a strong implication of personal tasks to be performed by each of us in our individuality but invariably carried out against the backdrop of a given situation in a modus of being “already-in” (the past) the *Umwelt* we happen to find ourselves in. This ontological aspect of “to be” (*zu sein*) opens up a vast (and often dreadful in uncertainty) vista of possibilities awaiting us. *Dasein* standing in the open, never knowing what is going to crop up, uncertain as to the future awaiting us, never knowing what others will do (a very important existential *Being-with others—Mitdasein*), and in what intentions and capacities the variable and unpredictable world may appear displaying either threatening or friendly aspects. This undeniably makes our being in the world a challenging affair. It seems our interests in chosen aspects of reality, our projects, plans and endeavours, our likes and dislikes, education, business, all facilities and hurdles demand our engagement, taking up the resolute stance characteristic of free beings-in-the world, aware of their freedom, responsible, resolute, and conscientious.

being ever-open and non-static. What I do is somehow in reference to what I have done, do now and—more essentially shall do in the future. It is *Sorge* that best underlines this unprecedented temporality.

² This motif will be obsessively stressed in the atheistic ontologie radicale in *L’Être et le Néant* in the Sartrean version of existentialism—the neutral fact in Heidegger will assume an inflated aspect in Sartre, Camus, Merleau-Ponty—leading to the declaration of the world and men as being *de trop* (hence absurd and ontologically excessive).

But the world, being our only place to realize our projects, the world of things we can resort to in order to get something done for our sake, is not such a familiar milieu. Turning its attention to things either given as mere physical objects (before our hands—*Vorhanden*), utensils (*Zeuge*) *Dasein* discovers a fascinating regularity. *Zeuge* refer to one another, and form systems of mutual reference of meanings, for tools are by a man and for a man. They appear on *Dasein's* horizon to serve us and be handy. We are in a way united with them, as by virtue of the constitutive nature of *Dasein* united in *Besorgen* acts with others. Thus, the *worldliness* of the world is revealed to *Dasein* (the latter being the point of series of references in the acts of taking care of (*Besorgen*)). This type of knowledge (still better knowing) is not procured, obtained through concepts or ideas, i.e. through acts of intellection. I know how to hammer in a nail, write a letter, or repair a given utensil and do not need to resort to intellect and its “products”: theories and principles. Time and again, we find Heidegger underlining the importance not of cognitive, theoretical acts of cognizance but of a specific unprecedented “practical” *modi* of approaching and not only thus getting to accustom ourselves but to “modify”, transform the world we were thrown into. The existential we are describing now is *Befindlichkeit*, an immersion in and an attachment to the milieu, peopled with other *Dasein*, utensils, relations, projects, choices and accomplishments and/or failures. *Befindlichkeit* is a distinct mark of our existential situation playing a not-to-be underrated role in the Heideggerian hermeneutics. It is best revealed—says Heidegger—in special kinds of awareness, experiences, and insights. These are *moods* (*Stimmungen*) revealing the real structure of the world. It stands to reason that Heidegger parts company with traditional “metaphysical,” “epistemological,” “theological” ways of dealing with the transcendent reality. As *Dasein* is a unique part and parcel of the world it has been situated into, as this world is the only human space for realization of our possibilities (*zu Sein*) including the constitution of our authentic (*eigentlich*), unique, “essence” being at one with our existence. Let us recall once again—and this point is vital in the light of our analysis that what Heidegger regards as his existential hermeneutics—that the analytic of *Dasein* is based on the fundamental assumption that *Dasein's* essence is identified, is “at one with” its existence. The univocally pronounced formula *zu sein* “imposes” (although it is our free, unhampered choice) a certain way of existing in the world we were thrown into. Still better, it bears strong implication to transcend itself, to be what we are in the ecstatic structure of our temporality: to resolutely face our past (not treated, however, as a rigid limitation) in view of future projects—actually one: to be oneself in the world now and the world to come. But the world treated by *Dasein* as its natural, familiar (*heimlich*), cosy environment—the place where our projects are realized, our essence

constituted, tools used, and relations activated can display another, quite unfamiliar, aspect, that of *unheimlich*. This psychoanalytic Freudian category irrespective of the proved or not influence on Heidegger was in the cultural, literary, and philosophical air at the time the philosopher was working on his *opus magnum*. Moods—as has already been said—reveal the genuine structure of *Dasein's* being-in-the-world, which Heidegger claims is among other things related not only to the *hic and nunc* dimension of our existence, but its temporality: its three-fold—as it were—alloy of the past and the present couched in the now and hence colouring the future — the sphere of *Dasein's* possibilities (Blackham, 1965, 93).

The hermeneutical circle of explication—Heidegger has proposed—works like a rotating mechanism set in slow but constant circular movement. The latter displays existentials and categories operating at one time and disappearing after they have displayed their possible application insofar as obtaining the sense and meaning of our condition is concerned. *In-der-Welt-Sein* seems to be a central point of reference—having been endowed with a critical role in this process. Through this existential all other existentials are shown in the light of us approaching Being *qua* Being, which fulfils the sense of our authentic existence.

One can be fully justified in stating that Heidegger presented two models, two structures of our being-in-the-world. For the sake of clarity, let us call them a positive model and a negative one.

Befindlichkeit may be treated as multifaceted experience. It is our passage to accessibility to the worldhood of the world: things—tools, relations, references—but other *Dasein* as well. Not only are we supposed to be our own centre of possibilities, decisions, choices, and projects, but others are to be treated in a similar way. Moreover, being in the world, each *Dasein* enters into a special relation with others, thus becoming aware of the imperative of standing in-the-open-to-the-world. But the world revealed in the existential *Befindlichkeit* does not hide anything from our awareness. The task *to be* is—so to speak—perfectly matched with identical tasks others are due to perform. United we may stand in the mutual stance of *Jemeinigkeit*. If only ...

Now it is high time we introduced this negative aspect, still better aspects of our condition revealed by our possibilities. It appears to be a kind of a reverse process, movement on the part of *Dasein* in the world. Instead of seeking to constitute its essence, to “present” it to the surrounding world thus marking off our *Jemeines* from other *Daseins*, we try to deface or obliterate it. Attunement to the world, a constant taking care of Being which absorbs our attention, while obstacles, broken tools, and thwarted plans may all evoke a kind of uneasy, discomfiting *Stimmungen*. But there is still a far more important source of a negative, depressive mood. In its acute awareness

of a self-imposed task of *to be*, *Dasein* at one point has an uneasy glimpse of the inalienable possibility: one's own death. On considering the latter's nature, *Dasein* comes to a disturbing conclusion that it is the possibility terminating all possibilities, thus becoming the pure impossibility of any possibility (Mróz, 1997, 17). Death is truly my own affair—the affair dis-colouring the whole world I deemed to be “my own” cosy, homely sphere. Apart from the ultimate possibility of my own death, of my only true experience nobody but we can go through. Being may reveal itself as something disconcerting. Along with this uneasy awareness there may come a mood opening up the other aspect of Being: a threatening burden, a structure I cannot assimilate—which cannot serve me as a neutral if not friendly milieu for my projects. Thus the celebrated Heideggerian quartet takes the stage: Fear, Anxiety, Nothingness, and Boredom. Moods disclose uncanny (*unheimlich*) reality, of which I feel fear when something unbearable or frightening but concrete stands in my way. In his widely known (although not of Heideggerian origin) distinction between fear and anxiety (*Angst*), the latter is caused literally by nothing. *Das Nicht* is not, however, a mere opposition to the plenum of beings. It constitutes the ontologically closely knit whole—capable of disclosing (the *Altheia* of later Heidegger) Being *qua* Being—its finite temporal nature. These four moods initiate—as has already been hinted at—an opposite to the *zu Sein* project, the authentic approach. In other words, in a welter of possibilities, inherent in the essence-existence of *Dasein*—free, responsible, future-oriented situational being-in-the-world is drastically reduced to only one, albeit conflicting, pair: the authentic versus the inauthentic. *Das Man* (as a distinct possibility of *Dasein*) is associated in the fundamental ontology with what is referred to as fall (*Verfallen*)—what is taken up by *Dasein* as an inauthentic modus of existing in the world. Now we are quite prepared to present this epitome of the flight from resoluteness of being-in-the-world *Dasein* chooses in order to hide from itself its true *conditio humana*.

In the fourth chapter of *Sein und Zeit* (intended as a further step to deepen insights into the essence=existence of *Dasein* in not more than four pages of a very condensed and reader unfriendly text), Heidegger presents an impressive example of his hermeneutic phenomenology. To adequately expose this subject, according to tenets of the Heideggerian existential approach of his onto-ontological analysis and description, the present authors begin this final section of their reconstructive presentation with a note on the very language he employs (Małecka, 2018).

As is generally known, translators of Heideggerian texts find it almost impossible to render some of the Heideggerian philosophical terminology into their mother tongues, and *Sein und Zeit* is no exception to this challenging regularity. *Das Man*, shrouded in a kind of cryptical, somewhat murky atmosphere evoking such

diverse connotations ranging from thought-provoking associations to poetical images, serves as a pertinent illustration of the Heideggerian style, one which is always closely geared up with his purport: saving Being from oblivion and revealing Being *qua* Being through the agency of *Dasein*. Like in so many cases, the philosopher transgresses both the grammatical and lexical *status quo* and the language code of his native tongue. To our mind it is not mere wordplay or an iconoclastic, purely rebellious gesture of defiance, but an act of expression of a philosopher who is deeply convinced that he has new, fresh ideas to propound, and resorts to unique methods to make these ideas resound in our souls.

Das Man is an iconic term coined in a somewhat different manner than other Heideggerian terms. Although like all other key terms it does reveal a new aspect of reality, the philosopher wants to share it with first his students, then with his regular albeit not so numerous readers. As should be borne in mind, Heidegger chooses unique ways of coining terminology he needs at a given moment. Some essential nouns are provided with verbs sounding similar to the native ear, but on closer look are deprived of the status of the accepted members of the current code of *philosophische Sprache*. Examples are legion: *das Nichts nichtet*, *das Welt weltet*, etc. In the case of *das Man* we are dealing with the unusual combination of the neutral article *das* with a word it does not collocate with. In such an astounding manner of expression Heidegger intends to introduce his seminal analysis of “closing-in” existential. His analysis will concentrate on the very existentiality of *Dasein*’s being in the world in its negative reverse aspect, as it were. For example, the construction of the phrase *Man spricht* clearly displays Heidegger’s intentions, with *Man* used in standard German to describe general but mostly trivial everyday ‘performances,’ like *Man raucht*—“one smokes cigarettes,” or “they smoke cigarettes.” Close reading of the four pages on this existential is designed to enlighten the area of the Heideggerian interest in *Alltäglichkeit* (*Everydayness*)—the time and milieu of *Dasein*’s existence and “doings” which the philosopher approaches in the perspective of both man and his/her most fundamental project. The latter implies that my being-in-the-world must—due to my choices, projects, application of tools (*Zeuge*), in a word: owing to the structure of *Sorge* (care)—involve being with others.

Heidegger uses two cognate terms which are operational insofar as the so-called *Mitwelt*, the world shared with others, the domain of our actual existence, is concerned. The examples he produces are simple, imbued with a feeling of familiarity if not banality. *Dasein* encounters—we find Heidegger announcing his insights into the matter of the social world—others (beings like us) in a series of implications, references, and mutual relations. Thus one is fully justified in regarding the existence of

others not as a purely accidental affair, nor a mere neutral problem to be tackled in philosophical or sociological reflection but as an existential shibboleth, constitutive of my being-in-the-world. There is no need to recall once again the celebrated Heideggerian examples of a pen, a letter to be written by a particular *Dasein*—all “parties” implying wider and longer structures. What is at stake now (to wit the fourth chapter and its last section) is the question raised by the philosopher: What do we imply while pointing to a barber and their client, or a shopkeeper in their grocery store providing their customers with basic food products to meet their needs and wants. Taking care of (*Sorgen*) and using/taking advantage of e.g. tools and various materials for realizing our diverse projects refer to *Dasein* in-the-world-with-others. That is quite obvious, but what is apparently simple and taken for granted must nevertheless be scrutinized in the light of fundamental ontology and its unique hermeneutics of *Dasein*—Heidegger seems to be saying. No wonder that the question of the carrier of all those actions, engagements and “participations” crops up and begs an answer. As may be easily surmised in his disparaging stance towards both traditional metaphysics and the positivistic paradigm (including many regional ontologies to use the Heideggerian term), the author of *Sein und Zeit* in light of his hermeneutics rejects the Cartesian and parts company with the Husserlian proposals concerning the allegedly certain basis for all philosophical thinking that is the *Ego* (its transcendental version included).

It stands to reason that *Ego*, consciousness or subject or subjectivity, spiritual substance, soul, mind—regarded for ages as the only acceptable solution by many traditions and schools of thought—cannot and must not be regarded as an adequate constituent of *Selbst* or *Ichkeit*, my own existence. *Dasein* is in the domain of existentiality, which means that *Ego* would be an entirely unreliable element in the hermeneutical procedures of coming closer to embracing the meaning of Being *qua* Being through this ontic-ontological privilege of unique understanding which *Dasein* is endowed with. The philosopher delegates *Dasein*—endowed with this unique onto-ontological privilege—to understand its own self, hence Being as such. But *Dasein* is invariably a playground of its own possibilities—which can make or break its (our) authentic being. In other terms *Dasein* may choose and enter the path leading to the process of *Verfallen*, a fall, but also inversely the path of *Sorge*, *Angst* (Anxiety), *Befindlichkeit*, and first of all this unique possibility entailed in *Sein zum Tode*: our onto-ontological finality, with all that follows being true markers of the authentic existence in the world.

All these called here existential properties—for lack of a better term—of *Dasein* come to constitute what Heidegger refers to as a series of conditions (provided they are resolutely and bravely met) making *Dasein*'s existence *eigentlich* (authentic). But possibilities are of a twofold nature. There occurs simultaneously the other side of the

existential coin: a retreat, even an attempt at escaping one's being which is to be (*zu Sein*) my own existence, not that of the other.

What follows in the last section of the fourth chapter is a cascade of astounding ideas. Being authentic is for Heidegger isomorphic with one's being, "my own" being. At a certain point in human time and space, however, for unspecified reasons there may occur a "dialectical" move of negation of the authentic modus of existence. Still better, it is *Dasein* itself that can enter into the negative (identified with the inauthentic) mode of being in the world. Heidegger categorically states that while *Dasein* wants to distinguish itself, mark itself off from others, this distancing from beings I am with in the world (*Mitwelt*) is at the same time a turning towards them. Now the problem raised by the question of *who* the subject of this social interaction is finds at least a partial explanation (Heidegger, 1962,151). For the philosopher, being with others (*Mitsein*) is treated as an existential closely related to being-in-the-world. The point of great significance is the *Mitsein*, which entails our determination or decision to overcome the difference between "me" and "them". It may unfortunately turn out to be my disastrous undoing. The difference may consist in our "inferiority," a lack of certain qualities/values/assets "they" have got but I have not. So (we feel tempted to use this hackneyed psychological form) our motivation may express an endeavour to catch up with them. Likewise, when we have the upper-hand over the other we share the world with (*Mitdasein*) we want to retain this status, but in such a way as not to make it felt by others (Heidegger, 1962, 155). All in all, there is a strong resolution to obliterate anything that would make me "stand out," to be different from them. To put it differently, this modus of being-in-the-world, classed as *uneigentlich* (inauthentic) is based on a paradox, although Heidegger does not use this term. The more I want to distance from the crowd the more quickly I become one of them. This is the Heideggerian example of everyday, personal life caught by its would be consequences, still better in the process of what he calls *Verfallen*.

Any rational narration, metaphysical, psychological, or sociological, referring to for example the universal nature of humanity, a drive to be one in order to feel safe, or G. H. Mead's concept of the *generalized other*, would not meet with Heidegger's approval. The state of "fall" (*Verfallen*) is an inalienable component of being of *Dasein*, like the very modus of being-with-others within the structure of a shared world. But annihilation of the difference first triggered by keeping oneself at a proper distance from other people leads us straight into a state of subservience. What does it mean? Why does it take place? For one thing this impersonal subject, anonymous and invisible, imperceptible in its vicious, treacherous power, is our inherent possibility. That is why, let us recall, Heidegger does not show either approval or disapproval, or condescension or contempt, while analysing this *Durchschnittlichkeit* phenomenon. In other words, this

commonest (Heidegger, 1962, 156), equated with giving up a conscious choice of individuality is welcome by all of those who seek a kind of refuge, a safe haven escaping from the world disclosed by moods—the world of Anxiety (which imperceptibly permeates our existence inducing a “tingle” of nothingness, still more important facing the most individual of all possibilities: my own death eliminating all possibilities. This hasty but insincere “yes,” I am mortal but look it is not yet, not now, not here, is a stance characteristic of inauthenticity. Pertaining to the commonest brings a kind of solace, soothes all incertitudes, alleviates pains, keeps nothingness away from *das Man* but not from us as individual *Dasein*. Moreover, when conforming to the call of *das Man* we readily accept all established usages, judgements and—of the utmost importance—we carefully but uncritically listen to what Heidegger calls the public opinion. Our resignation from one’s being *jemeines*, being one’s own is an indelible sign of accepting the “harsh” but imperceptible dictatorship of this ubiquitous dictator having such a great impact on our life.

In the impressive, memorable fragment of the concluding section of the Heideggerian insights we read about the “evaporating” of each individual being of us, becoming everyone but not anyone at the same time, of a dissolution of all diversity, of an eventual perdition of an individual involvement in the process of taking care of what we really think valuable and worth preserving. Instead, one follows the heavily trodden path thousands have entered on before us. And thousands will in future. It is of a particular interest to quote Heidegger on the deleterious influence *das Man* exerts on our views of art, literature, and poetry (Heidegger, 1962, 158–159). These domains of *Dasein*, demanding an inalienable personal attitude, become victims of this terrible levelling out. We give up (although we would vehemently deny it) our own views and ideas in unopen confrontation with others. Likewise we change our way of communication: one’s individualized language (*Sprache*) transforms itself into “meaningless” prattle to locate itself in everyone’s small talk.

Although the fourth chapter of *Sein und Zeit* does not undertake the problem of authenticity versus inauthenticity by using the very terms *eigentlich* and *uneigentlich* covering—as it were all negative aspects of *Verfallen*—*Dasein*’s distinct, inherent possibility of *to be*, any presentation of this critical problem without reference to a wider Heideggerian context would lack clarity and coherence. Moreover, this problem did to a great extent influence many theories and artistic expression: poetry, literature, and visual arts of the late 1920s and 1930s which owed a great deal to the Heideggerian handling of the human being’s true identity³. It is not a question which can be reduced

³ The writers like Ernst Jünger, Alfred Döblin, Alfred Kubin, Witkacy, and T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence in England all take up the subject of depersonalized masses in modern industrial societies.

to our compliance with certain established thus generally approved of (if not imposed upon us) opinions, ideas, and current concepts (Heidegger uses the term “fashionable” in his subsequent texts), aesthetic tastes or preferences of the day. Once we decide—in an act of freedom—to overcome the difference between “me” and “them” (the latter taking the form of undefinable vague power of *das Man*), we choose the other side of the existence in the world and immediately lose our unique way to become ourselves. It is—says Heidegger—a long, arduous process of establishing our true *Ichkeit*—not, however, to be treated as a subjective, spiritual, or cognitive faculty.

Like in the case of all other existentials, Heidegger directs our attention to a prominence of the being-in-the-world which is the true basis of the analytics of *Dasein*. As our essence lies in existence, such requirements (with no ethical or moral undertones) as resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) and the voice of conscience (*Gewissen*) are wake-up calls directed to us to constitute being as our being, hence Being as such. It should be borne in mind that what really counts for the philosopher is the hermeneutically exposed resoluteness with which we must face and grapple with what stands in our way to achieve and retain this *zu Sein*—the process of procedural making of ourselves, but not escaping from it. The voice of conscience is a constant reminder of the task to be accomplished. When the question of who the object and subject of these endeavours is raised, no concrete personal agent was referred to. Similarly, when we want to trace the sources we invariably see nothing (literally and metaphysically) behind it. In other words, we see our freedom, our loneliness and being on our own, but within the limits of the world, e.g. within its structures of *Bewandtnis Struktur* of an oft-complicated network of interdependencies. What is more, all these opening-up moods—*Stimmungen*—the moods providing us with priceless knowledge about the world and others—their “friendliness,” their “hostility,” and “aloofness,” the inaccessibility of many phenomena may simply scare us. If we add to this somewhat grim picture of our reality the condition of our insurmountable finality, the possibility terminating all possibilities thus breeding Anxiety, exerting pressure to be ourselves in the face of this unique moment we may turn to the other side of our existence-essence, and make its own travesty.

In the face of the lack of universal systems of values, rules, and norms (we are supposed to make them valid in our choices throughout human history), we may experience this ontological strangeness, a kind of alienation, a mood (*unheimlich*—uncanniness). At some point in our life (although Heidegger does not specify an exact moment) we may turn our attention to the imperceptible but all pervasive presence of *Das Man*—the sphere of the commonest—we may tend to seek comforting refuge there, a kind of solace, an alibi as it were. The assimilation of the way one talks, one thinks and perceives the world, one reads most popular daily newspapers, one dresses in certain

garments, but more importantly the way one is supposed to regard this unique experience of one's death and ontological nothingness appears to be an existential solution to the problem of being in the world and being with others. Our human condition seems to have gained the solidarity and a kind of assurance of the "massive existence"—due to familiarity, the psychic comfort, the state of balance having gained ever-ready approval flowing from the rest of "them" (Caputo, 1984). But Heidegger—although not employing any moral stance, not harking back to established ethical systems or theological solutions—takes up the existential point of view of yet another distinct possibility of *Dasein* inherent in our existence. Besides being-in-the-world entailing being with others, *Dasein* is being-in-common. That is an alluring possibility on the horizon of the human being: raising the fundamental question whether one can lead an authentic existence or not. Heidegger maintains that, unlike categories, existentials are not to be removed from our condition: *zu Sein*, authenticity, and *das Man* are—so to speak—at our disposal. As we are part and parcel of this risky but valuable essential *Mitdasein*—we can perform the negative constitution and take on the identity which will bear the commonest traits and be like "them," or we can at least try to lessen the impact of *das Man* and modify it (humanize it in the Heideggerian sense). And that would make all the difference Heidegger would have consented to.

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