

Worldsharing and Encounter

**Heidegger's ontology
and Lévinas' ethics**

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Worldsharing and Encounter

ἐκ τούτων οὖν φανερόν ὅτι τῶν φύσει ἡ πόλις ἐστὶ, καὶ ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῶον, καὶ ὁ ἄπολις διὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐ διὰ τύχην ἥτοι φαῦλός ἐστιν ἢ κρείττων ἢ ἄνθρωπος.

Aristotle *Politics* 1253a3

From this therefore it is clear that the pole around which living together is situated arises of itself and that humans by their nature are living beings that live together and that a human divorced from the pole of living together either through their nature and not through fortune is either worthless or better than human.

1. Sharing the truth

Being together means sharing a world. A world is not just the totality of everything that is, as analytic philosophy would like to have it, but is this totality in its openness *as* such in which all of us stand. Beings are always given in their truth, their openness, their disclosedness, i.e. their de-cryptedness, which here also includes their un-truth, i.e. their closedness, obscurity, distortedness, their encryptedness, i.e. the modes in which they are taken, withdrawn from us. ‘We are’ is only possible because the openness of the truth of being encompasses all of us, in the plural. We are gathered up *together* into this standing-out into the openness of the truth of beings in their being. We stand out into this openness together, therefore, we *are* together, we human beings. Because we are, i.e. stand gathered, in the openness of truth, beings come to stand defined over against us and can be taken in as they show themselves in their self-definition to a plural *us*. Insofar, we-ness is

inescapable; in another sense, however, it is fragile, provisional, well-nigh impossible.

Standing out in the open, you or I can respond to the beings standing over against us by way of speaking. What shows itself of itself in the openness of the truth of being comes to language. Articulated expressly in language, beings in their being are communicated from one Dasein to another. This communication can be taken in by the other because the other also stands out exposed, gathered into the open and also takes in beings as such as they reveal themselves.

We share the truth, not, in the first place, because we *agree* on how things show themselves, but, prior to this possibility and underlying any possibility of agreement or disagreement, because we *share in common* the openness within which beings as such can come to stand over against us *at all*. This granting openness is *common* to us and also allows all *difference*, not only in beings themselves in their self-definition, but also between us in what we take to be true (correct). You or I can call up beings to stand over against us in their definite, defined outline by using language; language summons things (which are themselves granted by being to language) to stand in presence and allows them thus to be shared. Sharing the truth in this ordinary sense does not mean that you and I tell the truth as opposed to lies, nor that you or I see things in their true light as opposed to a false or distorted light. That things can deceive us, or that one of us can speak deceptively to the other is only possible because we both already stand in the truth of being within which beings as such reveal themselves and *therefore* can also conceal themselves, or reveal themselves only obscurely, partially or distortedly. Deception or illusion is not the opposite of truth, but an essential part of it as the eventuation of openness. Deception or illusion are the dis-essencing or de-generation of truth, but nevertheless likewise belong to the same openness.

Seeing eye-to-eye is by no means the precondition for us standing together in the truth, but is only one possible, even exceptional, mode of standing together in the truth. Even my lying to you presupposes that we are both standing out in the truth (openness, clearing) of the being of beings. (I cannot lie to my dog, and my dog cannot lie to me.) Truth in

the sense used here is all-encompassing,¹ thus making possible the yoke, or conjugation,² of being together. Truth as the openness of the being of

¹ Apart from the all-encompassing clearing of the truth of being, there is more to be said on the different levels of truth ranging from the shared, fundamental casting of the truth of beings as a whole in a given historical epoch through to the most concrete, particular level of truth in a given situation for an individual Dasein and also the singular, perhaps unsayable, merely inkled truth of an individual Dasein's existence. Cf. my *Social Ontology: Recasting Political Philosophy Through a Phenomenology of Whoness* ontos, Frankfurt 2008 xiv + 688 pp; second extended (771 pp.) e-book edition 2011 from www.arte-fact.org

² **Being's conjugation**

Being not only enables world, but also 'we are' (in the world). 'Are' is a conjugation of the verb 'to be' which performs the primal unity. It is not that language first accomplishes unity, but that language itself is an answer, a response to this primal, unifying gathering of being into the unified openness of being (for Dasein). The unity of being enables the conjugation 'we are'. How is this conjugation or, literally, yoking together, that brings us together possible? It cannot be a matter of a grammatical explanation in terms of the facts of grammar, for grammar itself is based on an understanding of being. What does the grammatical category of conjugation mean on a more fundamental, phenomenological level?

The conjugation 'we are' in English is not so pronounced as in other languages such as German, where the modifications of the verbal stem are stronger. But, for the sake of a starting-point, what does conjugation mean according to the dictionary?

The OED says: "conjugate v: ... from L. *conjugare*, to yoke together..." This Latin origin, in turn, is derived from the Greek: *συζυγία*. The OED once again:

Conjugation 3. Grammar. a. A connected scheme of all the inflexional forms belonging to a verb; a division of the verbs of a language according to the general differences of inflexion. A table of the series of 'conjugate' forms of a verb was called by the Greeks *συζυγία*, and this was in Commianus and Charisius, Latin grammarians of the 4th c., rendered by the corresponding L. term *conjugatio*. (OED)

συζυγία, in turn, is derived from *ζυγόν*, 'yoke'. Thus the inflexions or, more specifically, the conjugations of a verb, yoke together the various forms of a verbal stem, i.e. the various forms of voice, mood, tense, number, and person, under a unified stem. According to this, 'we are' as a conjugation of the verb 'to be' is subsumed under a yoke formed by a single verbal stem.

But what is this stem in the case of ‘to be’? In the OED we can also read:

Be v. [An irregular and defective verb, the full conjugation of which in modern Eng. is effected by a union of the surviving inflexions of three originally different and independent verbs, viz. (1) the original Aryan substantive verb with stem **es-**, Skr. *as-*, ‘s-, Gr. $\epsilon\sigma$ -, L. *es-*, ‘s-, OTeut. **es-*, ‘s-; (2) the verb with stem **wes-**, Skr. *vas-* to remain, OTeut. *wes-*, Gothic *wis-an* to remain, stay, continue, to be, OS, OE, OHE *wesan* OFris. *wes-a*, ON. *ver-a*; (3) the stem **beu-**, Skr *bhu-*, *bhaw-*, Gr. $\phi\upsilon$ -, L. *fu-*, OTeut. **beu-*, *beo*, OE. *beo-n* to become, come to be...] (OED)

For the verb “to be” there is no single stem, but instead three distinct stems, each of which originally had an independent meaning. The yoke thus has to be very strong, presumably, to compel these stems together to make one unified verb. No fewer than three stems have to be compelled under the yoke for the verb “to be” to come about, even before any conjugation in the usual sense. The meaning of the original Aryan stem **es-**, is not explained any further by the OED, but the entry under *Sein* in Grimm’s German Dictionary can help out at this point:

a) the oldest and propermost verbum substantivum is ‘es-. The sensuous meaning here which as a rule is at the base of such general and abstract usages has been extinguished most completely. Nevertheless it is probable that East-Aryan *asu-* (Skr. ‘*asus*, *avest. anhus*) “life, breath of life” was associated with it, which would give a basic meaning of the verb as “breathe, live” (in contrast, Uhlenbeck Etym. Dic. of the Old Indian Language assumes “dwell”...) (Grimm Band 16; transl. ME)

The verb “to be” is thus a conglomeration of three distinct stems meaning 1) “breathe, live”, 2) “remain, stay, continue, dwell, while”, 3) “become, emerge”. Unified under a single yoke, the verb “to be” means “to live and dwell” or “to come to living and dwelling”. For inanimate things, which also are, the “living” component has to be eliminated, but their being means that they are incorporated in a way of dwelling, a way of (human) life and *are* not otherwise. (Human) “whiling” and “dwelling” or “coming to while” and “coming to dwell” are thus the more palpable meanings behind the abstract verb “to be”.

This triple origin is bent once again under the yoke of conjugation to form the “various forms of voice, mood, tense, number, and person”. Here we are only concerned with the conjugation of number. We have:

Person	English sing.	English pl.	German sing.	German pl.
1	I am	we are	ich bin	wir sind
2	you are	you are	du bist	ihr seid

3		he/she/it is	they are		er/sie/es ist	sie sind
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Everyone is familiar with such tables from school days. The *wes-* stem only comes into effect in tenses other than the present. In fact, in English, all the conjugations of person and number in the present tense are derived from the oldest stem *es-*, although in ME “I be”, “you be”, etc. was also possible. So far these are only lexicological comments; what do they mean phenomenologically, i.e. when we open our eyes, with regard to the question of being together? Togetherness (Mitsein) is only possible because of ‘we are’. The ‘are’ of being brings us, gathers us together, allowing ‘we’ to arise into being. In some still simple and mysterious way, being itself gathers not only everything that is together, but also, or in particular, it gathers *us* together and lets us *be*. What is the nature of this gathering into being? And what is it that does the gathering? Being itself? But what does being mean? This has already been said: “whiling dwelling”, “coming to while, dwell” in an openness that allows what is present and presented to be taken into a way of dwelling by understanding.

On the one hand, there is everything that is. On the other hand, I am and we are. What is the difference between ‘is’, ‘am’ and ‘are’ here? The ‘is’ is only *for* an ‘I am’ and ‘we are’. I am open to taking in, understanding and being attuned by everything that is, including that which I do not understand, i.e. a deficient or deprived mode of understanding. But we too are open to understanding, taking in everything that is presented in the clearing of being. What does this difference between ‘I am’ and ‘we are’ point to?

‘I am’ points to an irremediable and irrevocable individuation of existence as self; I am always myself and nobody else, non-interchangeable and non-substitutable. The world of everything that is, is presented to this, my individual selfhood. But it is also presented to us as selves. Apart from an individual understanding of everything that is, there is also a shared understanding of everything that is. Whence comes this possibility of sharing? It can only come from being itself, which unfolds and folds itself into ‘I am’ and ‘we are’. This means presumably that ‘I understand’ and ‘we understand’ are two different phenomena whose origins in being and their interwinings and interfoldings have to be further investigated. Cf. also my ‘Dialectic of Self and Other: Wrestling with Plato, Hegel, Heidegger’ at <http://www.arte-fact.org/untpltcl/dlctcslf.html> and *Social Ontology* op.cit., especially Chapter 3 on whoness, Chapter 10 vi) ‘The individualization of the truth of being’ and Chapter 11 ‘The ontological constitution of ‘we ourselves’.

Understanding is rooted in being, i.e. in dwelling, in practical (action-related) everyday life. It is one of the modes in which the world is taken in by human

beings in their totality is a unity not only for the beings that are thus unified under the One (τὸ ἓν), but also for us who stand out *together* in the *common* (i.e. catholic, τὸ καθόλου) openness of truth. The openness of being is thus (at least) two-fold, on the one hand, enfolding everything that is into one, and on the other, enfolding us together into a unified togetherness of being out there in the open while at the same time keeping us apart as distinct and individual Dasein.

The oneness of the openness of the truth of being goes so far that those who lie to and deceive each other, who even loath, despise and hate each other *are* together nonetheless, inextricably and ineluctably. In other words: Dasein inevitably and ineluctably means Mitsein, and such a statement about being comes before any factual specificity. Misunderstanding each other, not seeing eye-to-eye with each other are further deficient or deprived modes of sharing the truth of being. The world is open for beings to show themselves *as* they are. This showing of themselves is taken in by understanding, which in its details (singularity) can and does vary from individual to individual. Since the way beings present themselves to understanding is always individual (i.e. to an individual who individually takes in what is granted to it in the openness of being's truth), misunderstanding prevails between individuals for the most part. Understanding between people (Dasein) happens for the most part as misunderstanding. I cannot, by contrast, misunderstand a stone or a dog, for we are not together in the same dimension of openness (of being). Between me and the dog there is neither understanding nor misunderstanding. We have, in truth, nothing

being. The yoking performed by being means that we are gathered together into a unified openness for the world within which we both or all dwell. My taking in the world is a matter for my self as an individual; we taking in the world implies two or more individuals taking in the world; it implies that these respective takings-in of world are in common and can be shared. Because they are in common, they can be shared explicitly — by expressly articulating them in language. This does not necessarily mean each talking about their own individual experiences directly — the sharing can take place in many indirect and implicit ways as well. We must already share a world in common to be able to talk about it and to understand each other.

in common.

2. I am

The phrase “standing in the truth of being” and suchlike have been used frequently in the text up to this point, and it has been asserted that “we” stand together in the truth of being. Being and truth are thus obviously intimately interrelated, but up to now we have not paid any attention to elucidating or spelling out these ontological fundamentals. Such a clarification must recur to Heidegger, whose thinking forms the backdrop for all the considerations presented here. That such a clarification is necessary is shown by the fact that it is not yet clear what the essential difference is between “it is”, “I am”, “you are”, “we are”, or in German: “es ist”, “ich bin”, “du bist”, “wir sind”. In these various expressions, the verb “to be” or “sein” is taken through its conjugations. Thus I will start with an attempt to elucidate “I am” against the background of Heidegger’s thinking, keeping his lectures in Summer Semester 1928 in Marburg in mind, which are entitled “Metaphysical Principles of Logic Starting from Leibniz”³ as well as the lectures from Winter Semester 1928/29 in Freiburg.⁴

“I am” is a simple statement, and so is “I am myself”. The deceptive simplicity of these statements hides their ontological depth, since the reflexivity of “myself” points to the selfhood that I can never shake off. “I am” implies “I am myself”, although the two statements are not equivalent. In the present context, “I am” is not just an ontic statement of fact, but should be taken in its ontological weight and depth. “I am” means “I am myself”, i.e. selfhood is an essential moment of Dasein. But what does selfhood mean? It has been referred to as individuation, as my-very-ownness, as non-substitutability, as non-interchangeability. These are all aspects of selfhood, but they do not get to the core of the

³ M. Heidegger *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz* GA26 ed. Klaus Held, Klostermann, Frankfurt 1978, 2. revised edition 1990.

⁴ M. Heidegger *Einleitung in die Philosophie* GA27 ed. Otto Saame und Ina Saame-Speidel, Klostermann, Frankfurt 1996. Cf. also my *Social Ontology* op. cit. Chapter 3 iii) a) 4. ‘Heideggerian selfhood as a “shining back” from being-in-the-world’.

matter which can only be achieved if “I am” is shown in its essential connection with being, and being is shown in its essential connection with time. For it must be kept in mind that Heidegger’s main work is called *Being and Time*, and the philosophical explication of the “and” which conjoins being and time constitutes the guiding thread of his thinking in the twenties and beyond. There is an intimate relationship, an essential connection between Dasein and time, which has to be presented here in order to make sense of “I am”.

The essential connection between Dasein and time is that Dasein is nothing other than a generative coming about of time. This does not mean of course that Dasein is a generator which generates time, but that Dasein is nothing other than this generation itself as a coming about. “Generative coming about” here is the translation of a peculiar German noun “Zeitigung” derived from the verb “zeitigen” which in turn bears an intimate relationship to “Zeit”, “time”. How does time come about, how is it gezeitigt or generated? It comes about in the generative coming about of the ecstasies of time which remove and transport (entrücken) Dasein into the three dimensions of time: future, past (been-ness) and present, whereby the future has a primacy, as will be explained below.

In the first place, Dasein has a future, which means that it always already stands out or is ex-static toward the future. Standing out toward the future is a casting of itself, i.e. Dasein casts itself in the sense of shaping and moulding its own future in relation to other beings. Casting is taken here in the dual sense of throwing itself into the future (with its projects) and of shaping and moulding the future it is to have out of its powers and possibilities. This casting is a casting of itself, i.e. in casting into the future, the self of Dasein also opens up as an abyss of possibility; it casts and can cast only for itself (which has nothing to do with it being selfish). Dasein is necessarily for its own sake, for the sake of its self which *is* in casting into its very own projects according to its abilities, powers and possibilities, all of which represent renderings of the German, *Seinkönnen*. Dasein’s sake is the issue which it is and remains for its self as long as it exists.

In the second place, in casting itself into the future, Dasein comes back to itself as the who it has been, i.e. Dasein always has its own

history, and any project it casts for itself always has to recur to this history which, in having passed by, conjoins with the future in this way. Dasein's history is thus precisely *not* past, but, in having passed by, *is* in determining how Dasein has been cast thus far. In having been, Dasein stands out into its own past, its own beenness. What Dasein has been is not irrelevant (un-related) for how it casts itself into the future. Any possibility of Dasein casting itself must return to whom Dasein has been. Dasein only has a future in returning to its own history that has already cast it into its present situation.

In the third place, in returning to who it has been in casting itself into the projected future of its projects, Dasein brings to presence what is necessary for realizing its project of self-casting. This is only possible because Dasein also stands out into the present which is brought to hand as Dasein exists its self. This bringing to presence-at-hand is bound up essentially with Dasein's bodiliness. Both things and other Dasein have to be made to present themselves in presence for an individual Dasein's project to be realized. Thus, everything and everybody that surrounds Dasein in the present is always already *transcended* in Dasein having always already cast its self in one way or the other and incorporated them into its projects. Incorporation means that other beings must be within Dasein's grasp for them to be present, even if it merely is the grip that holds the telephone receiver. Everything and everybody are enmeshed in Dasein's projects and seen from their perspective. This transcendence takes place starting from Dasein's casting itself beyond beings into the future, which is always its very own future, the future of its self. Dasein is nothing other than this coming about of time granted for its casting of its self with which both what it has been and what it is at present must also dovetail.

Dasein existing for the sake of its self in casting itself within the coming about of time is synonymous with its *freedom*. Freedom is thus, in the first place and always, individual freedom, i.e. political and social freedoms, if they are anything at all, are also always ultimately individual. The three ex-stasies of time that come about as Dasein form the horizon of its world, which however is not only its very own. The

horizon of world is the envelope that envelops the ex-stasies of time. Heidegger refers to this enveloping horizon as “ekstematic”:

Das Ekstematische zeitigt sich schwingend als ein Welten; nur sofern dergleichen wie ekstatische Schwingung als je eine Zeitlichkeit sich zeitigt[e?] ⁵, geschieht *Welteingang* [des Seienden ME]. (GA26:270, emphasis in the original)

Ekstematic [dimensionality] comes about resonantly as a worlding; only to the extent that something resembling ecstatic resonance comes about individually as a temporality does the *entrance* [of beings ME] *into the world* happen.

Because casting my self, returning to myself and turning to others and other things all occur for the sake of my self on the basis of how I understand the world, i.e. beings in their being and as a whole, it appears that existence in this sense of a coming about of a temporal horizon of world for an individual, very own self is solipsistic. However, because self-casting always also involves understanding, being affected by and thus casting others in the third person within the project of my self, there can be no solipsism (even in the case where this casting of self is egoistic through and through). Others are always already included in my world, which is a worlding of my self, even if only privatively in my excluding them from consideration or by my ‘using’ them for my own ends. World is the timespace, i.e. the temporal horizon, that envelops the ex-stasies of time that come about as Dasein’s being. The coming about of future in self-casting, the coming about of having been in returning-to... and the coming about of presence in turning-to... and calling-to... and being-with..., all these three temporal moments or ex-stasies together constitute the temporally happening horizon of my world.

The casting of my self occurs in terms of others from the very start, so that casting for the sake of my self already includes casting others within my world. The others do not first appear in turning to them in the present. Casting into the future from the undetermined nothingness of my Da and returning to my self in my already having-been-cast is my freedom. All casting takes place in terms of others *in both the second and third person* (a point that Heidegger does not make), for, in casting

⁵ There seems to be a printing error in the German text at this point.

myself, I can only cast the role that others are to play in my own self-casting. My self, my freedom is irrevocably individual and exclusively my own. This individuality of self implies that the others are cast a role in my self-casting at first and for the most part in the third person, no matter whether my self-casting is egoistic or altruistic, i.e. the others enter my world at first and for the most part through me understanding them and integrating them into a casting that I posit, no matter how much my self-casting may be for the 'good' of the others or take others into account or be sensitive to their needs and desires. Others are thus initially at the disposal and the 'mercy' of my self-casting. Only in the second person do I enter into the world of others and am confronted directly (*unmittelbar*) with their freedom (see below).

The temporal horizon of world that envelops time in its ongoing coming-about is universal (one, *ἓν*), i.e. valid for all Dasein, but it is Dasein's individual self that in each case is cast within it. Dasein's self is the first person, whereas the others are (at first) only incorporated into Dasein's self-casting in the third person. The first person thus signifies the individualization, selfhood and freedom of Dasein as a being enclosed within its self-world. Dasein's self-casting transcends (swings over) not only things, but also other Dasein in casting its very own project (for the sake of its very own good) onto the horizon of time. Thus, the universal oneness of the temporal horizon allows other beings, including other Dasein, to enter Dasein's world, which however nevertheless is and remains the world in which and into which Dasein casts its own individual self. Incorporating other beings, including other Dasein, into my self-casting (in the first person) initially in the third person amounts to approximating others ontologically to other things at hand in the third person that I employ in daily life, e.g. my car is for getting me around, and the shoemaker is for repairing my shoes.

The phenomenological origin (in the truth of being) of the (grammatical) difference between first person and third person lies in this structure of Dasein as self and *Mitdasein* as an other who is at my disposal like a thing. The other only enters into my world *as* a separate self who eludes my disposition in the second person.

3. Addressing others⁶

Now we turn to how others become present in my world in the second person. This mode of presencing has to be kept distinct from how Dasein casts others within its self-casting, for now it is a matter of others being called directly to presence, i.e. of us directly entering each other's world. Calling-to... (appellating) is the primary mode in which turning to the other takes place ontically in the present. The other comes to presence directly in the openness of my Da in being invoked, called to, in being addressed, appellated. The other cannot be simply manipulated like a ready-to-hand thing which I likewise turn to in realizing my projects of self-casting in the present, even though I may regard the other simply as a means to my end. The other cannot be simply manipulated because the other is also Dasein and thus free, a free self open to being. Taking account of other Dasein and casting them into a role within my self-casting into the future has to be distinguished from calling to or addressing other Dasein in turning to them in the present. In writing a letter, for example, I am addressing the other directly in the present, even though the other is not immediately present to sense perception or within my bodily grasp or reach. I am not just addressing some representation of the other that I have in my 'head' but am turning directly to the other. Being present to my senses in the same space or, say, on the telephone, is only *one* mode in which the other or anything else can be present to me.

Only by addressing the other in the present does the *second person* happen (ontically); only by addressing the other does Dasein open up the possibility of *encountering* the other (cf. below), and such an encounter can only take place, if at all, in the temporal ecstasy of the present. This holds even when there is no simultaneity of address and response, as when writing a letter and receiving a reply, for both addressing and responding are acts that belong to the individual present of each Dasein

⁶ Within the dialogical tradition it has been Rosenstock-Huessy, Ebner and Grisebach who emphasize most of all the phenomenon of addressability. Cf. Michael Theunissen *Der Andere* de Gruyter, Berlin 1977 §§70-71.

involved, albeit with a forward projection into the future. In the other temporal ecstasies of future and past, in my casting of my self and returning to my self in who I have been, others are always already there, but there in the third person, whereas in the present, in addressing others and being addressed by them, the other presences immediately in a singular mode in my world which can be designated as *second person presencing*. The second person as mode of being together is the condition of possibility of becoming involved immediately with other Dasein as Dasein, i.e. of allowing our respective worlds to intermingle. This intermingling is only possible (ontologically) because each Dasein has a world and these worlds can be shared, and in one sense always already are shared, under the oneness of being (cf. below).

4. Reciprocity of meeting

So what does it mean for Dasein to presence another Dasein in the *second person*, or, in other words, what does it mean for me to *meet* you (ontically)? First of all, only a precondition of meeting is discussed. A meeting with the other can take place only by turning to the other — or by the other turning to me. Turning-to... (Zuwendung) takes the form of calling to the other, invoking the other by way of addressing the other, or *vice versa*: in being called, invoked, addressed by the other. There is thus a *reciprocity* in the relation between first and second person, a mutual recognition of each other's presence, a reciprocity that is possible because both are Dasein and free in their Dasein to address and respond to each other. The other can address me only because s/he is likewise free Dasein, i.e. a freely casting self who likewise incorporates me in their self-casting within the temporal horizon of world. There is a further meaning of reciprocity here, namely, that a meeting can only come about when the address made by the addresser is reciprocated, i.e. when the addressee responds to and thus acknowledges the addresser as Dasein.

Being addressed or addressing is the way an other Dasein enters my world in the second person. Such presencing takes place only in the present and not, say, in casting out into the future. Other things can and do enter my presence not through me addressing them or through me being addressed by them but by them happening to me (thus calling for a

response or, more strictly, a reaction from me) or by me taking them to hand in using them for some purpose or other. My reaction to things happening to me and thus intruding into or at least impinging upon my world always implies some kind of modification to my casting, i.e. a re-casting, no matter how slight, based on a revised understanding of my world that calls for a re-action. On a trivial everyday level, e.g. if my car breaks down, this impinges on my world and I have to re-cast my existence to arrange for my car to be repaired, or more seriously, if my house burns down, my entire existence may have to be re-cast. When things intrude unwilling or unwantedly into my presence without being turned to on the basis of a self-casting, what happens to me immediately becomes what *has* happened to me, thus altering how I have been cast and compelling me to react by re-casting my self to a greater or lesser extent, in other words, by adapting my self-casting to changed circumstances. The ecstasy of the present is where things can and do happen to me within the temporal world-horizon. This happening-to... in the present changes who I have been and forces a modification of the casting of my self out of the future, which has to dovetail with who I have been. In this happening-to..., the present and my having-been as temporal ecstasies gain ascendancy over the future and compel me to modify my self-casting.

When the other addresses me, s/he enters my world in the temporal ecstasy of presence. Only in the present do I come to taste the other immediately in their freedom, i.e. *as* Dasein. The other happens to me, but in a mode that differs from the way things impinge upon my world, for things cannot address me. Their impingement calls on me to react, not to respond. The other, in addressing me, evokes a *response*, not a *reaction*. This terminological convenience is introduced only to keep the differing modes of incursion of the other and things into my world distinct. In the response to the other who is addressing me there is acknowledgement, recognition of the addresser. As what is the addresser acknowledged and recognized? As Dasein, i.e. as also here in the openness of the truth of being. It is not just that each perceives and understands the other as Dasein, but that each *recognizes* and *acknowledges* the other as Dasein, i.e. as a free being. This does not

necessarily mean that the other's freedom is conceded, for even in brutally denying the other's freedom, it must be fundamentally acknowledged, albeit negatively.⁷

We always meet *each other*; there can be no unilateral meeting. If I ignore someone who addresses me, no meeting in the second person comes about. The ignoring is a refusal and foreclosure of the second person and injures the other by denying their status as free Dasein. But even ignoring, in its negativity, is only possible because of an underlying positive recognition of the other as Dasein.

Addressing each other is the way we immediately enter into each other's world in our respective involvement with things. By entering into each other's world, we are also able to share each other's concerns. Forging a joint undertaking in a meeting is only one possible way in which we can share each other's world. For the most part, meeting each other is a fleeting passing by. The transactions of daily life too which are performed in taking care of everyday matters are a fleeting occurrence, but they are nonetheless based on a reciprocity of acknowledgement of the other as Dasein, no matter how politely formal this acknowledgement may be.

5. Meeting and resistance

Dasein as casting its self in the on-going coming about of time transcends beings in swinging out over them. Heidegger writes regarding this:

Aufgrund dieses Überschwunges ist das Dasein jeweils dem Seiendem über, wie wir sagen, aber freilich gerade so, daß es das Seiende in dem Widerstand allererst erfährt als das, wogegen das transzendierende Dasein ohnmächtig ist. (GA26:279)

⁷ Lévinas describes this in the following way: "The other holds and confirms himself in his otherness as soon as he is called to, even if only to say to him that one cannot speak to him, or to classify him as sick, or to announce his death sentence. While he is being grabbed and injured, while violence is being done to him, he is simultaneously 'respected'." (Lévinas *Totalité et Infini: Essai sur l'Extériorité* p.41, cited according to the German edition S. 92f.

Because of this swinging-over, Dasein is, as we say, above beings in each situation but of course in such a way that it only ever experiences beings in their resistance, as that against which transcending Dasein is impotent.

Dasein's transcendent freedom is, on the obverse side, nothing other than the resistance of beings. Without freedom, no resistance, and conversely: the resistance of things is the ontological reaction of things to Dasein's freedom. This resistance, as Heidegger points out, is a metaphysical resistance, i.e. it lies on the (ontological) plane of being. In this generality, all beings offer resistance to Dasein, not just other Dasein. Dasein is always already beyond beings by incorporating or casting them within its own cast of self. The overswing over beings is the metaphysical origin of their resistance, a resistance that cannot be overcome because it is an essential moment of Dasein's very metaphysical transcendence. So beings only enter Dasein's world with resistance and Dasein is metaphysically impotent against their resistance, i.e. Dasein's impotence is the essential, obverse side of its freedom *as* Dasein. As the coming about of time, Dasein is enveloped by the unified horizon of world that provides the shared, unified temporal dimensions for Dasein's freedom, and this freedom comes up against the resistance of other beings, including the resistance of other Dasein.

But the resistance of other Dasein, as discussed so far, is its resistance in the third person and is thus so far on a par with the resistance of things. In the sense of the metaphysical superiority introduced by Heidegger in the above passage, Dasein is metaphysically "above" other Dasein in the *third person*. The metaphysics of the second person encounter of Dasein and Dasein, including the resistance encountered in the second person, have yet to be considered.

Can it be said that in meeting you I am confronted fundamentally with your resistance? This is a question not pursued or even posed by Heidegger. But Heidegger does at least admit the following question:

... muß dann nicht auch die Duheit in der gleichen Weise zum Thema werden und muß nicht Duheit gleich ursprünglich mit Ichheit zusammengenommen werden? Gewiß ist das ein mögliches Problem. (GA26:242)

...doesn't you-ness too have to become a topic in the same way, and doesn't you-ness have to be taken together as equally ordinary with I-ness? That is certainly a possible problem.

And he adds as qualification:

Aber die Ichheit als Gegenphänomen zur Duheit ist immer noch nicht die metaphysische Egoität. Hier wird klar, daß der Titel 'Ich' immer in die Richtung der Isolierung meiner selbst drängt, im Sinne einer entsprechenden Abschnürung vom Du. Wogegen Ichheit eben nicht das faktische Ich meint, als vom Du unterschiedenes, sondern Egoität meint diejenige Ichheit, die auch dem Du zugrunde liegt und welche gerade verhindert, das Du faktisch als ein alter ego zu fassen. Warum ist aber ein Du nicht einfach ein zweites Ich? Weil das Ichsein im Unterschied vom Dusein gar nicht das Wesen des Daseins trifft, d.h. weil ein Du ein solches nur ist qua es selbst, und ebenso auch das / 'Ich'. Daher gebrauche ich meist für die metaphysische Ichheit, für die Egoität den Ausdruck *Selbstheit*. Denn das 'selbst' kann vom Ich und Du in gleicher Weise ausgesagt werden... (GA26:242f)

But I-ness as counter-phenomenon to you-ness is still not metaphysical ego-ness. It becomes clear here that the title 'I' always tends in the direction of an isolation of my self in the sense of a corresponding cutting of ties with you. As opposed to which, I-ness does not mean the factual ego, as an ego different from you, but ego-ness means that sort of I-ness which is also the basis of you and which is just the thing that prevents you from being comprehended factually as an alter ego. But why is a you not simply a second I? Because I-being as distinct from you-being does not capture the essence of Dasein at all, i.e. because a you as such is only qua itself, and the same holds for the 'I'. Therefore I usually use the term *selfhood* to designate metaphysical I-ness, for ego-ness. For 'self' can be said of I and you in the same way...

This possible question and its extensive qualification never comes to enjoy concentrated attention in Heidegger's thinking. In fact, Heidegger does not consider the phenomenon of the second person in its own right at all. His treatment of Mitdasein, i.e. of other Dasein, and Mitsein in *Sein und Zeit* and elsewhere is largely restricted to the encounter (Begegnung) with Mitdasein in the *third person*. Where the phenomenon of the *second person* comes to light, as, say, in the phenomenon of listening-to... (*Sein und Zeit* § 34), this is not explicitly underscored. This is apparent throughout § 26 of *Sein und Zeit*, where Mitsein is dealt with most extensively. Cf. e.g. the following passage:

Dasein versteht sich zunächst und zumeist aus seiner Welt, und das Mitdasein der Anderen begegnet vielfach aus dem innerweltlich Zuhandenen her. (SuZ 120⁸)

Dasein understands itself at first and for the most part from its world, and the Mitdasein of others is encountered variously from the things at hand in the world.

Thus e.g. the “boat anchored on the beach” (SuZ 118) refers to an acquaintance who is thus “encountered” via the boat. The person-to-person encounter is left or pushed aside in favour of the encounter mediated by what each Dasein is currently involved with. Thus Heidegger employs a very general usage of the word ‘encounter’, for in his usage an encounter with the other takes place ‘at first and for the most part’ in the third person, mediated by things, i.e. impersonally. As we have pointed out above, a (personal) meeting in the second person only takes place in the present, and I reserve the term ‘encounter’ here precisely to an exceptional possibility within personally meeting the other in the present (cf. below ‘Barely encountering you’). Being with others in the broad sense that Heidegger uses the term is not, properly speaking, an encounter with the other but a *coming-across* the other and *sharing a common concern*. Here however we are involved with the problem of the meeting of two free selves. How can the meeting of individual freedom and individual freedom be thought? It will be necessary to make a distinction between *encounter* and *meeting* in order to keep the various aspects of the phenomenon now at the focus of attention apart. This question demands some further preparation.

6. Addressability and proper-namedness: Dasein’s inviolable freedom

Each factual Dasein carries its own sphere of openness with it in which the beings it is with appear as such. These spheres of disclosure of beings can be mutually entered. As Heidegger puts it:

⁸ M. Heidegger *Sein und Zeit* Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 15th edition, 2nd. printing 1979.

... wenn ein Dasein neben ein anderes Dasein tritt, so tritt das eine in den Raum der Offenbarkeit des anderen, genauer ihr Sein bei... bewegt sich in demselben Umkreis von Offenbarkeit. [...] Wenn nun ein anderes Dasein faktisch zugegen ist, dann ist dieses nie lediglich auch da, sondern seinem Wesen nach mit da, und zwar ist es nicht auch seiend, sondern mit seiend, weil es Da-sein ist, sich in denselben Umkreis von Offenbarkeit stellt. [...] Wenn nun aber Dasein und Dasein nie neben dem anderen existiert, dann heißt das: Jedes ist als wesenhaft heraustretendes auch schon eingetreten in die Offenbarkeit des anderen. Sie halten sich notwendig, auch wenn sie sich nicht umeinander kümmern, als Dasein, das sie sind, in derselben Sphäre von Offenbarkeit; diese qua Dasein mit sich bringen, heißt: sie mitteilen mit Seiendem seinesgleichen. (GA27: 134, 137, 138)

... when one Dasein steps next to another Dasein, the one Dasein steps into the space of openness of the other, or more precisely, their being-at... moves within the same surrounding circle of openness. [...] Now, when another Dasein is factually close by, then this Dasein is never merely also there but is essentially there together, or in other words, it is not also (a) being, but it is (a) being-together... because it is Da-sein and places itself in the same surrounding circle of openness. [...] However, if Dasein and Dasein never exist next to each other, this means that each Dasein, as essentially stepping-out, has also already stepped into the openness of the other Dasein. Even when they are not involved with each other, they necessarily hold themselves, as the Da-sein which they are, within the same sphere of openness; they bring this openness qua Dasein along with them, which means: they share it with beings of the same kind.

This means that Dasein cannot help but share the truth, its sphere of openness, with other Dasein. The truth as the sphere of openness in which beings are disclosed as such, is always already shared, it is always already in common, so that Dasein and Dasein are always together or with each other and never merely alongside or next to each other. This essential insight of Heidegger's, which is key to overcoming the metaphysics of subjectivity and its attendant theories of intersubjectivity, must be held onto in any attempt to think through the phenomena of meeting and encounter as essential possibilities of existence which are not to be equated simply with the existenzial-ontological condition of togetherness (Mitsein).

You and I are both Dasein. The meeting or encounter between Dasein and Dasein has to be thought without losing sight of what constitutes

Dasein as such: its ‘Da’, or presence (including absence) here. Each Dasein brings its temporal circle of presence-here along with it. Its Da is the three-dimensional temporal openness that allows it to exist and cast itself as self. For a meeting in the second person, however, something more is involved. For other Dasein, I have always already opened myself *as* Dasein, i.e. other Dasein understands me and is attuned to me *as* Dasein, as being that has its own Da. The possibility of meeting is only given by virtue of Dasein’s being *addressable*. *Addressability*, however, goes hand in hand with Dasein bearing its own *proper name*. Without a proper name, Dasein cannot be properly addressed. *Proper-namedness*⁹ is thus likewise a condition of possibility for a meeting between you and me to take place.

The second person comes about as an ontic event through invocation of another Dasein which is always already disclosed as addressable and as bearing a proper name, even though this name might be factually unknown and thus generic names such as Madam or Sir or Dr substituted for the sake of politeness. Addressability goes hand in hand with a deference to other Dasein’s freedom and its own individual openness to the truth of being. Although other Dasein is always already (preontologically) understood as such, so that the openness of its Da in which beings as such appear is always already shared, an entry into other Dasein’s world on the basis of an interchange or commerce between Dasein and Dasein can only factually occur in the present and on the basis of the existential-ontological conditions of addressability and proper-namedness. These two existential-ontological features constitute conditions of possibility for the *dimension of the second person*, which is a *dimension of invocation* in which you and I can immediately (i.e. ‘personally’) enter each other’s Da. You and I invoke each other in the second person in addressing each other by our proper names.

⁹ An extensive treatment of the phenomenon of proper-namedness is included in my *Phänomenologie der Männlichkeit: kaum ständig noch* Verlag Dr. Josef H. Röhl, Dettelbach, 1999 266 pp., available at <http://www.artefact.org/kaumstan.html>. Proper-namedness is an aspect of being *somebody*, and my book is a phenomenology of *whoness*. The present essay, first written in 1997, will not make an explicit approach through the phenomenon of *whoness*.

Addressability is the ontological gateway to Dasein and Dasein sharing world in the second person and is at the same time the way in which Dasein is implicitly acknowledged and recognized by other Dasein as free. As a rule, other Dasein does not simply man-handle Dasein (which would negate its freedom by way of physical assault), but addresses it, no matter how minimally (thus implicitly acknowledging its freedom and its essential metaphysical resistance). Even in negating, i.e. riding roughshod over Dasein's freedom through rudeness, violence, compelling subjugation, etc., other Dasein has acknowledged it, albeit negatively. The commerce between Dasein and Dasein when they meet is always essentially an interchange based on the mutual acknowledgement of Dasein as free.

Even when Dasein is addressed as "You!" or "You, dog!",¹⁰ even then, it's existential-ontological freedom is acknowledged. Just as Dasein's freedom comes up essentially against the resistance of beings against which it is metaphysically impotent, Dasein comes up essentially against the freedom of other Dasein, which is metaphysically *inviolable*. Just as all the unleashed power of technology cannot overcome the metaphysical resistance of beings, even immeasurable violence done to other Dasein cannot violate its metaphysical-existential freedom.¹¹

Heidegger writes with regard to Dasein's metaphysical impotence:

Die Ohnmacht ist metaphysisch, d.h. als wesentlich zu verstehen: sie kann nicht widerlegt werden durch den Hinweis auf die Naturbeherrschung, auf die Technik, die heute wie eine entfesselte Bestie in die 'Welt' hineinwütet; denn diese Herrschaft ist der eigentliche Beweis für die metaphysische Ohnmacht des Daseins, das die Freiheit nur in seiner Geschichte sich gewinnt. (GA26:279)

The impotence must be understood metaphysically, i.e. as essential; it cannot be refuted by referring to the domination of nature, to technology which today rampages into the 'world' like a beast unleashed; for this domination is properly speaking the proof for the metaphysical impotence of Dasein which only wins freedom for itself in its history.

¹⁰ Cf. Samuel Beckett's plays, e.g. *Words and Music*, with music by Morton Feldman.

¹¹ This could be a key to interpreting Robert Antelme's account of the German SS's murderous treatment of prisoners in *L'espèce humaine*, 1957.

In the same way it can be said that all the violence done to Dasein by Dasein which factually negates its freedom is impotent to touch Dasein's essential metaphysical freedom as Dasein, which is therefore metaphysically inviolable. Not only is other Dasein's freedom inviolable, but other Dasein's freedom is always acknowledged as such, even in violating it factually. Dasein has always already opened itself up as Dasein so that it is always already disclosed as such. This means in particular that its freedom is always already disclosed, and other Dasein always (implicitly, preontologically) comprehends it as *free* Dasein. Even in being factually denied, it is not possible to do away with the disclosedness of Dasein's freedom. *The disclosed truth of Dasein's freedom is existential-ontologically inviolable.*

One misunderstanding should be avoided here. Dasein's freedom being existential-ontologically inviolable has to be distinguished from a declaration of fundamental human rights or an enunciation of an ethical principle about the value of human freedom. The inability and impotence (Nichtseinkönnen) to violate Dasein's freedom stems from its ontological status as belonging to Dasein's being, so that any ontic actions of others, no matter how violent, brutal and atrocious, cannot impinge on its ontological condition, which is situated on a completely different plane — the plane of being. Dasein's inviolable freedom is the ontological condition of possibility for declaring human rights or enunciating any ethical principle and therefore comes prior to any political or moral considerations.

7. Meeting you

When can we say that a meeting between you and me takes place? Do we have to tell anything about each other? Do we have to address each other verbally? Is there any difference in meeting a friend from childhood or a stranger on the steps of the subway? How is the phenomenon of familiarity to be brought into play here? What about the mode in which we meet? Does it make any difference whether we talk on the telephone or meet each other physically, bodily, in person, in the same room? What does being together have to do with being bodily together in the same space? Do we have to see each other face-to-face to

meet? These can all be made into philosophical questions if the self-evidence of the phenomena involved is made questionable; but what has to be made questionable first and foremost is what you and I meeting means and what its conditions of possibility are. Where and how does it take place?

This has already been said: We meet within the openness of the truth of being; but this answer leads only to further questions, for it is the specificity of the first and second person, of you-and-me that is in question here. The first person of being consists in my being myself; first-person being is selfhood. I am this singular, singled, indivisible, individual existence, and there is no getting away from or around that. I am my very own existence, an ontological condition that Heidegger calls *Jemeinigkeit*, my-very-ownness. But what is the gist of the *second* person, its ontological peculiarity?

You and I share a world that we are both cast out into, opened up to taking in beings granted in their being, i.e. we are 'blessed' (or 'cursed') with an understanding of being and, for the most part, take it for granted. Not taking it for granted means engaging in ontology that works up implicit preontological understanding into explicit ontological concepts. The preontological understanding of being can be shared in speech, and any dialogue at all presupposes an implicit sharing of an understanding of being. Beings are called into presence by being talked about and, in being called or invoked to come forward into the opening of being to which Dasein is inevitably 'witness', we can share the presence of these invoked beings. The dialogue that arises between you and me reveals the invoked beings from various angles and perspectives; they are decrypted (i.e. removed from the crypt of concealedness) and become malleable in the medium of our speech. Our respective callings and namings of the matter at hand may diverge widely at first call, and these views may either converge or diverge even more widely during the course of our dialogue, i.e. our speaking-through of the matter at hand.

In talking about matters the whole problematic of interpretation opens up. Hermeneutic dialogue allows the matters at hand to come to presence. Usually it is assumed (hopefully) that a dialogue will lead to a convergence of interpretation of the phenomena concerned. Dialogue

and hermeneutics in this sense is a sharing of the truth of beings in the third person. Beings show themselves *as such* to our understanding, and this understanding can be shared and re-formed through speech.¹² A political dialogue, by contrast, aims not at an eventually shared interpretation, but at a compromise of interests or at defeating the opponent at a vote, and is therefore a power struggle.

But talking about matters in dialogue is not the encounter of you-and-me.

8. Barely encountering you

Viva la gioia! was in her eyes. A transient
spark of amity shot across the space
betwixt us—She looked amiable!
Laurence Sterne *Tristram Shandy*
Vol. VII Ch. 43

You and I only show ourselves as selves in a mutual showing of each other that takes place in the interstices of (and almost incidentally to) the showing of beings in the third person. For, the world of beings in the third person never drops away entirely when you and I meet each other. Or said the other way round, the phenomenon of you-and-me only flickers on the sidelines of our mutually having dealings with things. The phenomenon of you-and-me — the point at which the meeting turns into encounter — only barely takes place, but it takes place nonetheless. *Barely-but-nonetheless* is the essential hallmark of you-and-me as an event-uation that scarcely ‘is’ if measured against the traditional metaphysical yardstick of substance, i.e. well-defined, standing presence.

¹² What has been said so far, of course, does not exhaust the topic of meeting between Dasein and Dasein, whose treatment here is therefore insufficient. This has been taken further in later work on the exchange and interchange between human beings. Cf. my ‘Heidegger’s Restricted Interpretation of the Greek Conception of the Political’ from 2003-2004, the section on the ‘Metaphysics of exchange’, available at <http://www.artefact.org/untplcl/rstrpltc.html#5>, and later still, my *Social Ontology* op. cit.,ontos, Frankfurt 2008.

If there is a sharing of world between us in talking about matters, there is yet another between, an in-between, which is the dimension of our *encounter* proper as you-and-me. Whereas the between of worldsharing can be brought out into the open by language in talking about our concerns and other issues when we meet, the in-between of you-and-me is scarcely perceptible, for it is the dimension in which we experience each other in our mutual singular openness for each other and the world, which is at the same time the openness of our profound withdrawal from each other into our ineluctable respective individualities. When we experience you-and-me in an encounter, we each gaze into the abyss of the other's being-here and share it *as such*. It is as if the metaphysical isolation of the my-very-ownness of my existence had been suspended in a moment of union, but only as if. This union is not a symbiotic melting of one into the other, nor is it the tearing away of the veil to reveal our innermost souls to each other; but rather it is the *inkled sharing* of our mutual self-encryption, the sharing of its aura. At the innermost soul there is nothing to see. When lovers look into each other's eyes and feel one *with* each other, they feel simultaneously the pain of their insurmountable metaphysical isolation *from* each other as individuals. This contradiction expresses the impossibility of encounter that is barely possible nevertheless. You-and-I is a 'we' that does not exist or ek-sist, standing out in the open, but hovers ever so slightly in a resonant inkling. Its fuzziness makes it suspect for 'logical' thinking. Therefore, today's philosophy almost entirely ignores the phenomenon of encounter and passes it on to religion.

You-and-I is the immediate experience of a complicity of being together in the world. It is the fleeting moment in which each of us realizes that we are both cast out into and exposed to the openness of being's truth. You-and-I is the chimerical sharing of ecstasy as such, but ecstasy by no means in the usual sense of a state of intoxication or, say, erotic rapture, but rather ex-stasy in the sense of standing-out into the openness of being's timespace. This sharing of world in the sharing of our individualized out-standing temporal ecstasy is the ever so slight communion of realization that we are together in the world as Dasein. In

the moment (Augen-Blick, the look into each other's eyes) of you-and-me, a flickering realization takes place that each of us exists their singular existence in the timespace of being, each casting their self chasmally out of nothing. We both share the timespace and are located here in the dimensions of past, present and future, although forever separated from each other within our respective individual selves. Although forever (i.e. metaphysically) separated and isolated in our individual selves, this individuation can paradoxically be shared in certain fleeting moments that cannot be held on to, seemingly suspending isolation momentarily. Thus being enables us to come together as you-and-me in togetherness while at the same time keeping us apart in our respective very-own selves. The truth of being allows the sharing of third person beings in their being, and, in the interstices, it barely allows also the sharing of you-and-me when we brush against each other ever so slightly.

This possibility of brushing against each other slightly and unexpectedly does not depend on familiarity, for familiarity is more akin to knowing about each other in the third person, i.e. knowing each other's histories and personalities and characters in terms that can be gathered into language and understood. Understanding each other is not the experience of you-and-me in the encounter. There is an aura, a nimbus of selfhood surrounding each of us which can perhaps mutually eventuate and commingle in an encounter. This aura does not persist or endure; it is a momentary eventuation perceptible in the inkling of mood rather than in understanding; it cannot be brought to stand within definite contours.

The encounter between Dasein and Dasein in which you-and-I come about in the present is only possible because as Dasein we always already share the clearing of being's truth in which beings appear as unencrypted and disclosed. This a priori ontological sharing of truth is the basis, i.e. the condition of possibility, of having any commerce and communication with each other at all and also of encountering each other. Thus in a sense one Dasein never steps into the open circle of truth surrounding another Dasein, for the circles of truth are always already shared simply by being here. But in another sense, one Dasein

does step into another Dasein's circle or horizon of openness by entering into the concrete, factual present situation of another Dasein. Such a concrete situation is always specific to the Dasein concerned and ever-changing and open to contingencies of all sorts. The specificity of an individual Dasein's situation is particular, not singular, and therefore can be specified coming from a general understanding of being; another Dasein can comprehend this specific situation on the basis of the shared openness of truth, but this comprehending is still — as long as Dasein and Dasein do not address and enter into a dialogue with each other — a comprehension of truth in the third person, even when the one Dasein has particular empathy (*Mitbefindlichkeit*) and sensitivity for the other's situation. Empathy means that Dasein is able to take in the attunement of the situation that the other Dasein is in and to be itself attuned by it. All truth of individual Dasein is attuned, and this attunement is always already shared, along with the truth of beings given to understanding.

One Dasein steps into the open horizon of disclosed truth of another Dasein in an essentially different way by *addressing* the other Dasein. This addressing of the other transforms the other from third person to second person and initiates a relation in the second person which we have called a meeting. The existential-ontological preconditions for addressing the other are the essential addressability and proper-namedness of Dasein, as introduced above. This kind of *personal* sharing of truth has to do not just with the situation that is shared, but the mode of *immediacy* in which one Dasein is present and presents itself to the other. Only when Dasein and Dasein move on from a common involvement with a matter at hand in a concrete situation in which they meet to an immediacy of presence as selves for each other as such is an *encounter* in the second person initiated. Thus, not all second person relations with the other are encounters. Nor can an encounter be intentionally willed by one or other or by both; it is beyond willing and just 'happens'. The you-and-I relation of meeting that comes about in the present when one Dasein enters concretely into the sphere of another Dasein's truth by addressing them is essentially different from the third person ('impersonal') sharing of truth that otherwise takes place in the *Mitsein* of one Dasein with another in dealing with a common concern.

In the dimension of the second person broached by addressing the other, the other's Dasein as selfhood is implicitly acknowledged, even though the intercourse may be purely formal and directed towards a shared matter of concern. In the encounter this implicitness turns into explicitness, and two selves as such recognize each other directly, albeit only in the mode of inkling. The selves themselves are disclosed to each other in their mutual withdrawnness and nakedness, where nakedness is here understood in the sense of being stripped of all involvement with beings and thus as the nothingness from which each self casts itself into involvement with the world.

Whereas the sharing of a common circle or horizon of unconcealedness is the ontological precondition for Dasein and Dasein sharing the truth of a concrete situation (by meeting), an encounter in the second person is the possibility of the mutual 'blind' insight of Dasein into each other, i.e. a mutual appreciation in which each Dasein sees, or rather, resonates and empathizes with the individualized Dasein of the other *as such*. This resonant, empathic appreciation is eery, for it is an in-sight into nothingness that sees nothing. The mutual, seeming insight of encounter is akin to two fleeting windows through which two Dasein can appreciate each other *as Dasein*. It is a 'blind' insight into nothingness because each Dasein is essentially exposed to being and its own being, and has to cast its self freely out of the temporal openness of its possibilities. On the one hand, Dasein is cast into the world and is always powerless vis-à-vis having-already-been-cast. Thus it has always already gotten itself into situations, "through others, through circumstances and contingencies" (GA27:337). Dasein can never get on top of its thrownness and master it. On the other hand, since it is open to and even confronted by its very own possibilities, it is always called upon by the openness of being to *be* its self, i.e. it is always confronted with the decision to cast itself one way or the other, into one mould or the other, into one possible role or other and thus, despite its already-having-been-cast, to *be* a beginning, over and over again, from scratch. Its freedom of self-casting is at the same time its nothingness, since as existence Dasein is nothing other than the ongoing coming about of its very own timespace as the horizon of world within which it casts its self

out of a starting-point (ἀρχή) which itself has not been effected by a preceding cause, nor is tied irrevocably to a future telos. Dasein is essentially exposed to the struggle for its self-stand in a free casting. As a free casting out of nothingness, Dasein is also responsible and to blame for how it casts itself in the world; the buck stops with Dasein's nothingness as a free starting-point. (This is not Dasein's "Schuldigsein" as it figures in §58 of *Sein und Zeit*, usually translated with overly moral undertones as 'being-guilty', but rather its photographic negative.)

In certain moments of Dasein, this existential condition of being cast into the nothingness of freedom, can be seemingly shared with another Dasein. This eery moment of empathic appreciation of each other across the gulf of metaphysical isolation is *encounter* (as distinct from meeting). Such inadvertent moments, occurring, as has been noted, not through a willed, intentional turning-toward, are fleeting, they are almost nothing at all, they are in-significant. But this fleetingness, nothingness and in-significance of the encounter between Dasein and Dasein as you-and-me does not mean that the encounter is *ontologically* insignificant. The encounter is the ontic possibility of directly experiencing worldsharing as such, i.e. the Mitsein of Dasein and Dasein as such in their respective selfhood, thus providing an experiential basis for the fundamental existential-ontological structure called Mitsein in such a way that even the metaphysical isolation of Dasein from Dasein in their very Mitsein becomes a mutual, unverifiable, inkled experience.

The encounter is a unique possibility of worldsharing that in turn opens up the possibility of sharing a world-attunement, a resonance which lingers on and continues to resound in each Dasein. The bare touching of Dasein and Dasein as you-and-me, in which each fleetingly gains an appreciation of the eery nothingness of the other and thus shares the predicament of existence, is enough to attune each other lingeringly. Being together in the world is thus coloured and attuned by a mood/mode of shared existence. How *we* are in the world is momentarily, seemingly shared. This experience of encounter is only possible in the second person, or rather, it *is* essentially the experience of the second person on its deepest, purest, most fragile level, a level on

which an ontological significance can be made out, even though the experience itself seems in-significant and eludes signification.

In the third person, the other is not you in a personal reciprocity but other Dasein that is understood, even empathetically and sympathetically, as another being and mostly via the mediation of other beings (since the other is being-in-the-world and thus involved with beings in their referential structure). This does not mean that in the third person the other is understood objectively or with cool rationality or the like as opposed to a subjective understanding of the other in the second person in which, say, the heart is involved. A mood or attunement with the other is by no means lacking when experiencing the other in the third person, nor are inclinations toward, say, compassion or responsibility or charity in a moral dimension excluded. Between the third person and the second person the pertinent difference is not that between objectivity and subjectivity. The difference is rather that in the second person encounter, Dasein and Dasein are immediately present to each other as such in mutually invoking and recognizing the other, which in turn opens up the possibility that the essential temporal nothingness of individual Dasein in their selfhood is shared directly, no matter how fleetingly and misunderstandably (for an encounter can never be validated and is, in a certain sense, a mere auto-suggestive chimera, an impossible experience of an intimate 'we' ruled out in principle by the metaphysical state of isolation).

Dasein's irrevocable (metaphysical) individuation is seemingly briefly suspended in a fleeting and unpredictable moment of mutual appreciation of each other's terrible exposure to the time granted individually by being, i.e. to freedom. The fleetingness of encounter and its terrible insight may cause Dasein to take flight into a faith in God, who is imagined as reliably 'there' for me. The faithful togetherness with God apparently remedies the defects of a mere encounter with you in its barely fleeting presence. God fills the terrible nothingness of freedom. Each of us has to play the game of being in being thrown and drawn into the necessity of each of us casting a self out of the open possibilities arriving from the future, and this destiny of belonging to

being as individual, free selves can apparently be shared directly in rare moments of a mutual inkling of each other's selves *as such*.

The terrifying existential nothingness out of which each Dasein gains or has gained its self remains totally concealed in third person togetherness (in which others appear alongside other thingly beings) and also for the most part in second person togetherness (when we meet and perhaps exchange views). In fact, second person togetherness takes place for the most part *as if* Dasein were not essentially a fragile self-casting out of nothingness, but instead *as if* it were the commerce between firmly constituted, substantial subjects with a standing having intercourse with each other.

To recapitulate: Second person togetherness takes place for the most part by no means scarcely and barely but on the basis of apparently *consolidated, standing selves*, of selves that have already posited through will their own stance in the world and have thus established themselves as selves. Everyday intercourse does its utmost to cover up the nothingness lying at the core of every individual, and philosophy overwhelmingly goes along with this cover-up. A scarce sharing of world with each other is enabled not simply by the openness of the common, shared truth of being but presupposes beyond that the appreciation of each other as such in the immediacy of the second person, which in turn opens up the possibility of gaining a fleeting, eery, apparent insight into each other's terrible nothingness. *We may scarcely have anything to do with each other, but we are, in the fleeting truth of encounter as you-and-me, together and open to each other as essentially cast into and cast out of temporal nothingness.* Having-been-cast into the world in situations, against which Dasein is powerless, is Dasein's beenness, its having-been. Being cast into nothingness is the free spontaneity of the present moment. Casting out of nothingness means that each of us has to gather up and cast its self forward into the future out of the individual possibilities to which it is empowered, and which, for the most part, are simply adopted from the self-images mirrored from the world, from 'people'.

The being of Dasein, being in the Da of timespace generated by Dasein's existing, is thus shared, but in essentially different ways.

Mitsein is folded into various modes or dimensions, namely, Mitsein in the third and second persons; and second person Mitsein as having to do with each other in turn bears the exceptional, scarce (im)possibility of encounter within it. The question of Mitsein is that of the being of togetherness. The phenomena of solitude and loneliness point to togetherness, not by dint of pointing to the natural opposite or complement to them, but as an essential aspect of togetherness itself, for solitude and loneliness are only possible within the dimension of togetherness. Here on this ontological level, opposites belong together as belonging to the same, namely, the $\epsilon\nu$ of the clearing of being that gathers together, but ineluctably gathers together *individually*. Being together or alone as ontic possibilities are only possible because Dasein is essentially Mitsein and individual Selbstsein at one and the same time ($\alpha\mu\alpha$). Simultaneous solitude and togetherness is no contradiction ontologically; Dasein itself ex-ists this contradiction.

The fleeting moment of, if not recognition, then inkling each other as individualized Dasein is not simply an ontic occurrence or an ontic option, but is an exceptional ontic (im)possibility that signals an existential-ontological peculiarity, namely, that Dasein's selfhood and thus its metaphysical isolation is paradoxically shared in togetherness (Mitsein). This experience of 'existential solidarity' may mean (ontically) that Dasein is more able to bring itself to stand in selfhood in its individual existence. The apparent ephemeral suspension of the metaphysical isolation of one Dasein from another may enable an individual Dasein to better come to terms with its ineluctable lot of having to gain a foothold in the world by casting and establishing its self in the world. Such sharing of the predicament of existing, by gaining momentary, apparent insight into the truth of the 'common lot' that the other is in the same predicament, may give heart, it may encourage. Being's call to (come to a) stand as self is a common call to all Dasein, enabling a certain kind of 'solidarity'. This ontic possibility is just one way of indicating the tension between the metaphysical isolation of individualized Dasein and its essential Mitsein. A fleeting, inadvertent encounter in the second person allows togetherness to be experienced *apparently* with existential immediacy as a chimerical, intimate 'we'.

For the most part, everyday life is not encounter, i.e. you and I do not encounter each other in everyday life, but rather we only have to do with each other indirectly in our common involvement with the matters that currently concern each of us. In coming together in a meeting we take care of the business at hand, and the abyss of encounter, which takes place only rarely and suddenly and ineffably in the unpredictable interstices of the world, remains in withdrawal.

The encounter of you-and-me in rare, unforeseen moments is a mere brushing by one another as if nothing had happened. And *nothing* has indeed *happened* — the reciprocal inkling of the nothingness of each of our ex-sistences. The truth of encounter is non-graspable. The phenomenon of you-and-me is still a phenomenon experienced individually, i.e. only I experience the immediacy of the encounter as shared with you. I can never experience immediately what you experience, and the encounter as a fleeting experience of sharing mutual, apparent insight into each other is *my* experience. Paradoxically, it is I who experiences the togetherness of encounter with you in its immediacy, thus imputing a mutuality of recognition and insight to us both that can never be validated. It is precisely this imputation that constitutes the encounter: the moment of immediate togetherness in the world in which our metaphysical isolation is paradoxically mutually shared. The experience of apparent, mutual recognition and insight in the encounter is an uncertain, implicit and even impossible imputation that respects the other's essential concealment and withdrawnness into their own irrevocable, individual selfhood. The insight is blurred, atmospheric, merely inkled. The in-betweenness of encounter is the shared presence of withdrawal from each other, a presence for each other of each other's absence from each other. Even (and especially) if the other asseverates our intimate togetherness verbally, this asseveration confirms also the distance between us as individual selves that have come apparently near through the encounter.

Speech is always already one step removed from the immediacy of encounter, whose disclosive truth remains always essentially precarious and chimerical, ambiguous, ineffable and incommunicable. The moment of togetherness as such remains withdrawn beyond language; it cannot

be thematized without turning into something *about* which we speak. Only the directness of a gesture can perhaps match the directness of an encounter. The ineffability of encounter is not because it is too great for words, like a mystical vision, but because it is too slight and evasive for words. In the very moment of the seemingly most intimate, though fleeting, togetherness with you (who may be a complete stranger), I am thrown back onto my individualized self, forever encapsulated in metaphysical isolation, and even the immediate sharing of this isolation remains uncertain, beyond the grasp of a gathering into language, a mere atmospheric, resonant inkling.

9. The reciprocal openness of self-encryption

What does this imply for sharing truth with the other? We have seen that as Dasein we share the common truth of being insofar as we are open to the beings that surround each of us and can share this openness. The fundament of a common understanding of the world is always an historical constellation of being that provides the scaffolding for an historical world. Furthermore we are disclosed as Dasein to each other, each with its own circle of openness. But the other is also always withdrawn within its very own, singular selfhood, even when the other in its comportment is very open, candid, forthright, ingenuous, undeceiving and outgoing. The other's Da, its circle of truth, is open to me and the truth of beings that appear within this circle of truth can be explicitly shared in communication with each other by way of speech. In this respect, the other is ontologically an 'open book'. But the other's self remains a delicate nimbus which I can sense and inkle, without penetrating it, for the self is cast out of the insubstantial nothingness of the other's individual freedom. The momentary encounter opens the truth of each other's selfhood by way of a direct, transient, precarious, apparently mutual experience, but your self is enclosed in disclosing itself; it is always encrypted, i.e. sheltered and hidden as the freedom of your individuality. I cannot see or comprehend your self in its truth because your self is merely the nothingness to which you return reflexively in freely casting yourself. Your self, metaphysically

individual and insubstantial, withholds itself, sheltered in its very own encryptedness.

As a free individual I remain, by virtue of metaphysical necessity, forever encrypted in my freedom, inaccessible to any other. Each of us holds onto and withholds its own self in openly encountering the other in the world. Withholding ourselves within the singularity of our respective isolated selves, we mutually give of ourselves in apparently appreciating each other's status as a self. (Our exchange of proper names can be a sign of this acknowledgement.) The encounter does reveal our selves to each other but it does so in revealing that we as selves are essentially withdrawn and hidden from each other, even though our being-in-the-world is necessarily reciprocally transparent. This withdrawal is something that in no way depends on us or our respective wills and is not an ontic state that could be otherwise; rather it is an ontological withdrawal and encryption against which we are metaphysically impotent to undertake anything at all, just as we are metaphysically impotent to make our being-in-the-world opaque to others. The others always already understand me implicitly, preontologically as Dasein, and they always are able to see me as self insofar as my self is both a mirroring from the world and is mirrored in my way of living in the world.

Because it is free and cast spontaneously and individually out of nothing, the self is essentially encrypted within itself. Even the most ruthless and desperate attempt to be brutally frank or unreservedly open, to strip one's self to nakedness cannot overcome or suspend each Dasein's withholding of its very own self, for Dasein cannot elude its existential condition of freedom, its insubstantial nothingness. Insofar it can also never be understood and grasped by the other, since it is ultimately and essentially unfathomable. Any explanation of the other has to resort to the third person and the causality of circumstances and imputed motives, which necessarily misses the other's free individuality. So it would seem that truth, in being ineluctably shared between us, can only be shared deficiently insofar as withdrawal of self is a kind of concealment. But this concealment is itself revealed, since the encounter opens up each other's encryption as such to a momentary, uncertain,

impossible view. The ontological truth of the encounter is the truth of our existential-ontological withdrawal from each other precisely at the point where one could say that we are closest to each other. The truth (disclosedness) of the encounter is the shared openness of the encryption (enclosedness) of each other's self, analogously to how Heidegger thinks the self-encryption of being itself in the clearing. The self-encryption of Dasein itself as free self corresponds to, is a response to the eventuation of the clearing of self-encryption.

Encryption of the self is open in the encounter and forms the backdrop to all (everyday second person) commercium between Dasein and Dasein, in which beings in their (third person) being are decrypted as a matter of course and mutually shared explicitly in their truth and untruth, especially through speaking with one another. Whereas thingly beings can show themselves of themselves, albeit perhaps incompletely or distortedly, they are not essentially encrypted because they have no selves, no essential nothingness as a site of withdrawal. On the contrary, their being-in-the-world is necessarily open to view, cast within a definite historical world-understanding. Thus even Dasein in the third person — say, as the subject of psychology — has no secrets and can be subjected to unconcealment, for it is not essentially encrypted. The subject of psychology can be empirically interrogated and theoretically modelled. Modern science, to *be* science, must take a third-person view of the human being, for only in this way can it adhere to the modern scientific method first consummately articulated by Descartes. Encryption here does not mean that the other is encoded and has to be decoded, as if you and I were a puzzle or mystery or enigma for each other that had to be deciphered or decrypted, but rather: encryption signifies the empty, open crypt (not a being) in which each and every individual Dasein is enclosed and encapsulated and sheltered (*geborgen*) within its very own, singular, individual, free self. This free self is the openness for the world itself out of which it freely casts and moulds itself, thus showing its self off in the world for all to see, mostly in the third person.

The crypt of the self is both openness and closedness, decryption (of beings in standing out in the world) and encryption (of itself),

decalyption and encalyption at one and the same time (ἄμω). The encounter between you and me, as an ontic experience, is more than this; it is not just the (ontological) insight into the simultaneity of openness and closedness, etc., but the mutually shared openness of enclosedness of the self, the precarious, uncertain, mutual decryption of the self's encryption, the decalyption of encalyption for each other. The encounter is the flickering, experienced truth of our reciprocal withdrawal from each other into ourselves, which is thereby apparently shared in a mood of togetherness. It is the ontic indication of the existential-ontological truth of mutual self-encryption.

It is not just that in the encounter, which is of its nature fleeting, I do not know everything about you, for, even on getting to know you, and even after knowing you for a long time, and hearing your personal history, this in no way overcomes or outflanks or suspends the encryption in which you withhold yourself as free self with your very own openness for the world. Nevertheless, your withholding yourself, your self-encryption as such is open or obvious to me because I am open to your freedom, even and especially (in the case of power relations) in denying it. This is why the idea of an intersection and overlapping of open circles of truth between you and me is entirely inadequate to the phenomenon of encounter being interpreted here, for it is adequate only for considering intercourse between Dasein and Dasein in the second person of a meeting in which the truth (disclosedness) of beings in the third person is shared in a common concern with a matter at hand, perhaps a political issue. It is our very closedness, hiddenness or self-encryptedness from and for each other as free selves that we *share with each other* in an encounter, not just by each of us taking in the truth of such encryptedness but by sharing it with each other in a flash of apparent mutual recognition.

The reciprocity of recognition is only ever inkled and surmised, since there is no overarching vantage point from where a reciprocity between you and me could be established with certainty. Togetherness as such is without a topos from where it could be observed from the outside; it is U-topian. Only our two selves can each inkle in a mood that the isolation of individual selfhood has been fleetingly held in abeyance in the

togetherness of a moment. The 'we' of encounter is only barely present in a chimerical inkling, so that its ontological status is more fragile than the 'we' of an agreement that can attain third-person presence, say, in a written contract.

The encounter is also always unique, and that in two senses. Firstly, each encrypted self is singular, individual; I cannot confuse you in your encryptedness to me with anyone else in their encryptedness to me, because your self in its encryptedness bears your name, a mark of your singularity, even when you remain completely anonymous. (For anonymity itself is situated within namedness as a deficient mode of namedness.) Moreover, the encounters that may happen between you and me at different times have no continuity and history, but are unique each and every time. The encounter as singular moment does not achieve any stability, constancy or continuity in time, so that, in not constantly presencing, it is scarcely an entity; you-and-I (in the second-person fold of encounter) are neither you nor I, and are scarcely beings at all but only the rare event-uations of momentary encounters. In encountering each other, we have no identity in the sense of a sameness that maintains itself through time (although we are named and thus in this sense identified). The encounter contradicts any meaning of being as a standing constancy of presence. A repetition of encounter is always an unexpected surprise. Rarity here means temporal sparseness. The coming about of Dasein's individual existential time is punctuated by rare encounters whose rarity is not simply an ontic fact but an index of the ontological status of (second person) encounter as an interstice in the event-uation of the prevailing third-person world and the everyday commerce among Dasein in which the involvement with beings in the third person predominates.

The simple withdrawal from each other into our respective selves is what is most obvious, although, precisely because of its obviousness and simplicity, it is mostly overlooked, and that first and foremost in philosophy with its foundations in an ontology of standing, well-defined and therefore constant presence where the 'soul' or 'ego' is postulated as a kind of entity alongside other entities. The withdrawal from each other cannot be overcome, nor, on the other hand, can the withdrawal from

each other into our respective selves be covered up. No matter how much you may try to disguise yourself or refrain from telling me pertinent details about yourself, this has no effect on the ontologically fundamental obvious disclosedness of your withdrawal from me into your individual, singular self, for this withdrawal is your ontological destiny, granted, or rather dealt out, by the truth of being, and disclosed explicitly by the existential ontology of Dasein as a self.

This ontological destiny becomes obvious as such in the second person encounter where the synapses of you-and-me briefly flash. Dasein's being essentially Mitsein of Dasein and Dasein means that the self's encryption is necessarily shared; moreover, this encryption can be fleetingly shared *as such*, i.e. as the disclosedness of self-encryption, in an encounter. This sharing of the truth of encryption can take place either (non-mutually) in the third person or (mutually) in the second person (i.e. in the encounter). In the third person, this sharing means that I, and you too, have always already understood the other preontologically as Dasein and thus as a self, but this sharing of encrypted selfhood is not a sharing *with* each other *as such*. In everyday intercourse, where we meet in the second person, the truth of encryption is also not shared with each other but is only acknowledged implicitly in addressing each other as Dasein. Only in the experience of the encounter in the second person do we explicitly share *with each other*, no matter how fleetingly and uncertainly, our common existential predicament as free selves, each casting itself temporally for the sake of its self out of nothingness.

10. The mood of encounter: eery mildness

Mood is here related to mode, the way in which we affect each other or, more precisely, the way in which we share a mood that opens up the world. Mood is the silent resonance of being which tunes each of us and, perhaps, in a fleeting moment, allows us to share being's resonant vibration with each other. This sharing of the mood of being should not be taken as an occasion for rapturous hyperbole or for an existentialist pathos about our sharing of world but is rather a possibility granted by Dasein's existing as Mitdasein which Dasein itself has to come to terms

with. The way in which we affect or impinge upon each other as you-and-me is not simply a matter of sharing 'subjective' feelings or becoming sentimental and effusive about realizing that we are both specimens of a fragile humanity. Nor does the experience of you-and-me mean that, on realizing our common humanity, we have compassion or love for each other as humans, for the experience of you-and-me can just as well be one of realization of the profound estrangement from each other. The encounter of you and me is the flickering uncovering or decalypation of our shared exposure to and belonging to the openness of being in a *shared* resonant opening-up to being. This belonging as a shared experience means also being attuned to each other in being tuned by the resonances of being in opening up to it. This is not the experience of mystical union in which you and I realize that you and I are One with the great unity of the universe, for, belonging to the openness of being in its oneness is far simpler and more inconspicuous and should not be confused with a feeling of union with the (ontic) totality of beings in the sense of what is called the universe. Such belonging to being is the precondition for being able to share an understanding of any thing, whether it be in dialogue or in co-operating together on a common project. When this shared belonging is experienced flickeringly *with each other as such*, that is when you-and-me eventuates.

The sharing of a mood in being brushed by the resonant experience of you-and-me in the world is not mystical, i.e. esoteric, and should not be put on a higher plane that depreciates the understanding for each other we may develop in getting to know each other. Such understanding and familiarity are not to be spurned as objectification or reification of an 'authentic union' with the other in some sort of mystical 'encounter' (which is mysterious nonetheless). Nor should the converse misunderstanding arise: the encounter between you and me in its flickering, ephemeral slightness should not be regarded as a mere vacuous, passing feeling that has to be translated and gathered and solidified into a rational understanding to gain substance. Togetherness as you-and-me does not have any substance; there is nothing solid underlying it. And yet, this flickering moment of togetherness draws us together *as* beings each of whom is open to being and thus *belong to*

each other — although forever withdrawn from each other in singular self-encryption — in a shared ontological destiny. This shared *as*, the *as* as shared *with each other*, is already an ontological clarification of the experience of encounter. We belong to each other in belonging to the open clearing of being which is itself in withdrawal, encrypted. In the experience of the shared *as*, the world can shape up and be shared in speech; it can be spoken about and turned this way and that (cf. below). But the encounter as such is the mutual recognition of each other's non-substantial selfhood in its singular self-encryption. In this moment, matters at hand (the daily concern with taking care of things) fall away and become momentarily (i.e. in the interstices of time's movement) inconsequential (analogous to how, in the experience of Angst, the world falls away for *me* in my solitude and becomes meaningless¹³). There is no thing, no common matter at hand that brings or holds us together, but only the terrible moment of shared, blind insight into our individual freedom as selves in our common belonging to being.

How is the mood of being together as you-and-me to be named? What is the attunement of the encounter that attunes us? Is it only one mood, one resonance? In the encounter, you and I interface; you in your withdrawal into your very own, singular self flickers and lights up for an instant, and my very own individuality lights up fleetingly in your eyes. It is the brief (non-)experience of mutual recognition that we are both Dasein, each encrypted in the very-ownness of their own individual existence. This experience of each other attunes us to *mildness*, a mood neither rough nor sharp nor severe, but calm and moderate, since the encounter, in momentarily and apparently lifting the curtain that separates one individual existence from the other, shows that each of us *is* existing, i.e. cast out into and exposed to the clearing of being in which each has to lead and mould their own existence. The encounter is the shared experience of an eery realization of having a common,

¹³ Cf. M. Heidegger *Sein und Zeit* § 68b, “Die Welt, worin ich existiere, ist zur Unbedeutsamkeit herabgesunken, und die so erschlossene Welt kann nur Seiendes freigeben im Charakter der Unbewandtnis.” S. 343. Eng.: “The world in which I exist has sunk into insignificance, and the world opened in this way can reveal beings only in the mode of inapplicability/irrelevance.”

although individualized, destiny as belonging to being. *Eeriness* and mildness paradoxically go hand in hand here and complement each other; they stake out the dimension of the mood of encounter. Eeriness is the mood of catching a glimpse of each other's self in its encrypted nothingness, whereas in the face of each other's metaphysical isolation each of us is attuned to a mildness that tends to encourage a gentle and conciliatory disposition toward each other rather than the opposite of a sharp and severe one. The latter disposition is suited rather to defining and marking off one's own self-stand against the other's.

What does this attunement mean? Nothing but itself. The mildness commingling with eeriness is not associated with any specific action towards each other. In particular, the attunement of mildness does not call on one of us to perform, say, any charitable act such as a Levinasian "giving the other the last morsel of bread from one's own hungry mouth". The encounter is before any obligation and therefore does not place any obligation on you or me, but rather confronts us with each other's freedom as cast individually into being and casting one's own being as a common destiny. It is not in itself a call to take responsibility for the other (cf. below 'Freedomsharing'). Rather, the mood of mildness emerging out of eeriness is the fleeting experience of *Mitdasein as such*, i.e. of sharing being-here with another, forever individualized individual. The mood of mildness carries me beyond you to being, disclosing that we each belong to it as individuated selves. So mildness as mood says precious little; but this precious little that is overlooked at first and for the most part is the in-significance of being itself in our shared, but singular way of belonging to it. Hence, precious little is very much.

Mildness *does* open up the potential for an acceptance for the other also being here, for as Dasein we are metaphysically impotent against togetherness and insofar we belong to each other. You and I both share the destiny of being cast out there in the clearing as free individuals, so we have to make 'the best' (τὸ ἀγαθόν) of it. Being free means having to make the best of existence, including being-together in the world. The encounter, with its attunement to the eeriness of metaphysical isolation and the mildness of togetherness accepted, does not necessarily mean

that you and I like each other, for liking presupposes an inclination toward and an acquaintance with and thus an understanding of each other's individual ways of being in the world to provide a basis for judging the other in their singularity according to one's own attitudes, interests, background and predilections. The encounter undercuts all such knowing and judgements, for it is 'only' the experience of recognizing each other in our naked existence as Dasein, stripped of any worldly importance we may have or any specific involvement with the world. It is a passing moment in which the moments of the simple contradiction between individuality and togetherness in the world fuse.

11. Talking to each other (again)

'Beings that talk to each other' is a possible translation of τὸ ζῶον λόγον ἔχον. How is this talking to each other to be thought? I proceed on the basis of Heidegger's treatment of speech (Rede) in *Sein und Zeit*. Along with understanding and moodedness, speech is an equiprimordial way in which the world is opened up (erschlossen) for Dasein. Speech, however, on its most essential level, is not conceived as spoken language but as the "articulation of understandability", i.e. the 'segmenting' of understanding into ordered sections, which "already underlies all interpretation and statement" (SuZ 161). All three modes of the opening up of being to Dasein are intertwined:

Die Rede ist die bedeutungsmäßige Gliederung der befindlichen Verständlichkeit des In-der-Welt-seins. (SuZ 162)

Speech is the signifying articulation of the mooded understandability of being-in-the-world. (translation ME)

Each Dasein has a temporally horizontal world in which beings show themselves in the openness of the truth of being. In this showing lies Dasein's understanding of the world, which is always an understanding on the basis and from the perspective of Dasein's casting of itself towards its very own possibilities, i.e. understanding is always within the context of Dasein's self-casting in a given direction which provides the sense (including the possibility of senselessness) of its existence. This understanding of oneself can be expressed in language. This is

where Dasein and Dasein come to explicitly share the truth of being (which is always the individualized truth of their own being as self-casting selves) with each other. This does not mean, of course, that each Dasein simply has a 'subjective standpoint' but that each Dasein always understands out of the directing sense of their own self-casting (thrown and moulded) existence. Because Dasein is Mitsein, the truth of the being of beings is always already essentially shared implicitly, but this sharing only becomes an explicit, realized (ἐνέργεια) sharing when Dasein and Dasein actually speak with each other. The truth of the being of beings opens up to Dasein in understanding as well as in the moodedness which permeates Mitdasein in its essential immersion in an attunement to being. Dasein is inundated by the resonances of being. Speaking is never merely the transfer of information from one Dasein to another but is always also a sharing of attunement through the *way* in which Dasein speaks i.e., "in the tone of voice, modulation, the speed of speaking, in the 'way of speaking'" (SuZ 162). Self-understanding as well as the moods of being to which Dasein is open can be shared with other Dasein in speaking with them.

Talking to each other does not necessarily have anything to do with encounter in the specific sense employed here. There are many modes of talking to each other, ranging through the reporting of information, providing facts, instructing and teaching, making a business proposition, refusing a request, exhorting to a political or moral stance, calling for critical consideration of a state of affairs, discussing a problem, working out a common way forward, proposing marriage, etc. etc. For the most part, talking to each other is a matter of discussing daily concerns arising from the involvement with things, from inter-ests, whether it be at the personal level or the political, social or economic levels. Encounter is already an exception that enables a special kind of talking to each other. Talking to each other is usually directed towards taking care of things in a daily life which has already assumed a firm, habitual cast. Daily life is usually daily routine which moves in a certain pre-determined direction in the circles and well-worn ruts of habit. But this habituality of daily existence should not deceive us into thinking that Dasein is ontologically predetermined, for it is essentially free (i.e. beyond beings) and involved

in a free play with the world in which and into which it casts and has to cast its self ever anew. The exceptional nature, i.e. the ontic rarity, of an encounter that may possibly lead to a recasting of self should not be allowed to obscure its fundamental significance in an ontology of existence, for it shows how Dasein's self-casting is essentially open to the malleability inherent in Mitsein. Heidegger writes:

Das Hören auf... ist das existenziale Offensein des Daseins als Mitsein für den Anderen. Das Hören konstituiert sogar die primäre und eigentliche Offenheit des Daseins für sein eigenstes Seinkönnen, [...] Das Aufeinander-hören, in dem sich das Mitsein ausbildet, hat die möglichen Weisen des Folgens, Mitgehens, die privativen Modi des Nicht-hörens, des Widersetzens, des Trotzens, der Abkehr. (SuZ 163)

Listening to... is the existential openness of Dasein as Mitsein for the other. Listening even constitutes the primary and proper openness of Dasein for its ownmost possibility of being [...] Listening to one another, in which togetherness [Mitsein] is cultivated further, has the possible modes of following, accompanying, the privative modes of not listening, resisting, defiance, of turning away. (translation ME)

As essentially Mitsein, Dasein cannot help but listen to others and thus explicitly share the world in speech. Even in not following what others say, in disagreeing with them, Dasein is sharing its being-in-the-world with others. Listening to others is an essential way the world is reflected to Dasein and is taken up into its casting of its self.

What does talking with and listening to each other have to do with encounter? This question is taken up in the next section.

12. Freedomsharing, strife and the possibility of intimacy and commitment

The encounter is not a call to share our existences, but is rather the direct, inkled, characteristically mooded experience that we always already share our existence on a fundamental ontological level by virtue of being here together, although enfolded into individuality, within the clearing of being's truth. The encounter does not necessarily lead to anything in particular, to any specific commitment toward each other or even to a kind act. In particular, for the most part it does not lead to any

constancy in the sharing of individual existences, nor to any on-going responsibility for each other. Nor is an encounter even the momentary, unwelcome realization that I am morally responsible for you. Why not? Because an encounter is merely the immediately and barely experienced interface of individual freedom and individual freedom, the direct confrontation with the metaphysical circumstance that we, as *individuals*, are nevertheless in the world *together*.

Responsibility can only be the response to an appeal on the part of the other who, in one way or another, signals that they are unable to cope with (the burden of) their own existence. Being *unable* to cope is only possible, however, because the other as free Dasein is a being-*able*, i.e. it is Seinkönnen. (*In-ability* is nevertheless still *in-ability*, i.e. located within the same dimension of ability, Seinkönnen.) The other as free Dasein must decide for themselves if they are able to cope with the demands of existence and signal this in an appeal to individual Dasein it meets to assume responsibility for it. For Dasein to presume it has to assume responsibility for the other without responding to an appeal would be to deny the other's freedom to its self-casting out of its own possibilities in caring for itself. Dasein must also *understand* the appeal being made by the other when they appear on the horizon of its world in order to be able to respond to the appeal, i.e. it must interpret the signal of appeal given by the other as such. Only then can Dasein either accept responsibility for the other or refuse it as an act of its own freedom within the overarching casting of its own self. The entire interchange of appeal and response/responsibility eventuates in the dimension of freedom which, in any case, is not restricted exclusively to such a narrow spectrum of relations between Dasein and Dasein.

An encounter is in itself a fleeting interruption to the absorption in our daily concerns with taking care of things and indicates, just as fleetingly, the in-significance of the ties to the beings with which each of us is involved by momentarily suspending this involvement. In the encounter, by un-willingly allowing things and the world as an interrelated, meaningful assemblage of things we use in daily life to recede into insignificance, the mood of eery mildness also allows our individual status as being *some* who with an established status through an

involvement with everyday affairs to recede or momentarily fade into insignificance. Thus it is insignificant for you and me as belonging to and sharing being who we are in terms of the ties we have to beings, i.e. it is insignificant that each of us has a particular occupation and understands their self in terms of this occupation, which is an involvement with beings in the structured totality of the world recognized and estimated also by others. In this sense, in the encounter you and I are stripped of our usual self-understanding that arises out of our respective involvements with and thus stances in the world. Differences in social standing, for example, are suspended and dissolve momentarily into insignificance in a mood of mildness born of an eery empathy which corresponds to and resonates with the simplicity of our metaphysical destiny.

Encounter is an unexpected surprise and an exceptional happening which, as an interface, opens up the crossroads of a possibility available in the present moment of a decision. "What might have been and what has been / Point to one end, which is always present."¹⁴ One such possibility is that of talking to each other in the *intimacy* which the encounter opens up *as* a possibility. Intimacy is the mutual disclosing to each other of one's self in its casting temporality and temporal casting. In such a dialogue it is not just that the truth of beings is shared, nor that a consensus or agreement can be reached in dialogue about an issue within the clearing of being's truth, nor that a matter of concern which is at hand is discussed in order to agree on a course of concerted action, but, beyond that and because all understanding and sharing of understanding is embedded in a self-casting, the freedom of the self-casting selves that encounter each other in the encounter can itself come into a common play or, more precisely, an interplay.

Since each self is essentially self-casting, the sharing of world in speech with you can possibly bring movement into and influence the direction of my self-casting. The crossroads of an encounter can lead to existence taking on a new direction, i.e. to it assuming a new sense. The ontological significance of the fleeting, disclosive truth of an encounter

¹⁴ T.S. Eliot, *Burnt Norton I*.

must therefore not be under-estimated, for it can reveal another direction for self-casting. Dasein is the free temporal casting of its self out of nothingness, which is thus of its nature temporary. The temporality of Dasein implies the temporariness of its casting. The self is always temporal and thus provisional and temporary, no matter how much ontically it may be set in its ways (which is ontologically rooted in its castness out of already-having-been-cast). It is always subject to re-vision (without notice) under the vision of an alternative self-casting, cast as it is out of the coming about of Dasein's three temporal ecstasies in which the future holds open possibilities of existence. In being open to re-vision, self-casting is always subject to re-casting, to re-moulding in which other possibilities of existence are taken up that, for a time and based on a definite understanding of the world, bind Dasein in another commitment and engagement. This does not imply that the self is simply buffeted hither and thither by the winds of mere fancy and caprice but that Dasein's self is a free play with the world that is essentially open-ended because any commitment to existing in a particular way and direction can be revoked by the world's opening up in another way, and another way for life's movement, thus giving rise to another understanding, perhaps mediated, or at least triggered by an encounter with other Dasein.

By providing the barely present interface to an (unlikely) possible intimacy, the encounter holds also the unlikely possibility of recasting one's self, no matter whether this recasting involves the intertwining of two existences or whether the encounter provides simply a passing, decisive impulse at crossroads. The world that is invoked and evoked in talking with each other can show a different face. The truth of beings in the world is multifaceted and can shimmer this way and that, depending on which way the light of truth falls upon them and from which vantage point of self-casting the world is viewed. The truth of beings, their openness to view, is never unrelated to Dasein's casting out of its situational understanding of the world, so that truth is always tied to the current temporal direction of existence, the current orientation within the three dimensions of time from which Dasein finds and takes its sense of self, i.e. its self-understanding, and directs the current of its own

existence. All kinds of sharing of the world in its truth can impinge on Dasein's self-casting, not just sharing by way of encounter. A single piece of world news can alter the direction of Dasein's existence, not necessarily by changing the factual circumstances of life (as in the case, say, of momentous political events), but by presenting Dasein with an other possibility of existence that fires it to grasp this possibility. Although, ontically speaking, youth is more prone to the openness of possibilities, since the castness of having-already-been-cast does not yet weigh heavily upon it, Dasein remains self-casting into the future as long as it ek-sists, i.e. stands out temporally into the openness of the truth of the world in its play.

As just one exceptional possibility of the interface opened up by an encounter, there is that of you and me coming together to share our freedom concretely, i.e. to mould a shared casting of our selves in which our self-castings in our respective finite lifetimes are freely intertwined in a commitment to each other. Even this free binding of one self to the other is subject to recasting and revision during the course of existence. The free we of a shared existence can be dissolved once again because the (ontological) individuality of self can never be essentially obliterated, even though factually it can be extinguished if Dasein ontically allows itself to forfeit the independence of its existence, and represses and denies its ineluctable freedom. On the other hand, the sharing of the routine of daily life in the habits of domesticity — so-called family life — does not necessarily imply an intertwining of individual self-castings, since a casting of self reaches far beyond the ambit of daily routine and the adoption of social roles which may be, and mostly are, merely a superficial shell to the core casting of self, assuming that Dasein has chosen its self at all. Sharing family life may be lived alienation from the self.

For the most part, Dasein does not share its existence with other Dasein in the mode of an intertwining of existences; nor does Dasein for the most part encounter other Dasein in a transient moment of shared insight into each other's naked selves. Nevertheless, Dasein as *Mitsein* is fundamentally world-sharing. In sharing the world opened by being, each of us shares the freedom granted by being even though each of us

leads our own lives and spends our own individual life-time in a singular direction. This is the fundamental ontological issue facing us: to think through the existence of oneself and the other each as free selves who are together in the world. This problematic comes before any ethical considerations aimed at channeling freedom in one direction or the other by means of, say, a priori moral imperatives or obligations or responsibilities.

Each of us exists for the sake of our selves (even in self-sacrifice), and our respective self-casting always incorporates others (even, and especially, in living selfishly). Each Dasein is a self who individually casts their self onto the temporal horizon of the world. For-the-sake-of-self is not a formula for solipsism or egoism but is a translation of Heidegger's "Umwillen seiner selbst" which is in turn derived from the Aristotelean οὐ ἔνεκα of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. What does for-the-sake-of-self mean? "Sake" itself is an old word that survives today almost solely in the phrase 'for the sake of...'. The sake is a cause or issue. The issue can be a contention at law, guilt, a charge or accusation, or a ground for accusation. To say that Dasein exists for the sake of itself means that its own existence as a self is an issue. How it exists, i.e. how it casts itself, always remains an issue for it as a self that is ineluctably free. The world *is* only for Dasein, and it is for Dasein only in passing through the mediation of self.

All understanding of the world is understanding for an individual Dasein who has always already cast itself and can only recast itself on the basis of its own, individual, concrete understanding. Beings in the world, including other Dasein, only enter Dasein's world through the filter of Dasein's self. Selfhood is the ineludible gateway for anything to enter Dasein's world, not because Dasein is self-obsessed but because it cannot be other than an individual self — even when it 'follows the crowd' and is a timid conformist. Even guilt and responsibility, for example, phenomena in which Dasein loses its unencumbered autarchy, is the guilt or responsibility of a self for which guilt or responsibility becomes an issue for its freedom. The *Umwillen* or *wherefore* of Dasein is its self, for which it exists nolens volens. Dasein in its selfhood is free; it has always already cast itself beyond beings to the horizon of time

onto which it projects its own projects, and the timespace granted to it provides the dimensionality for these projects. This implies in particular that any relations between Dasein and Dasein are the relations between freely casting selves for each of which its free self is an issue. In self-casting, each Dasein refers to a common, shared horizon of time, however.

For Dasein's self to be an issue means that its self remains an open project for as long as it exists. In particular, Dasein is open to the advent of other Dasein into its world which can in turn lead to a modification of its self-casting. For the most part, relations between Dasein and Dasein do not subtend any modification of self-casting since worldsharing usually consists merely in taking common cognisance of happenings in the world: the news, the weather and suchlike, or in passing transactions of everyday life. Such everyday worldsharing does not amount to a *shared commitment*, which is at the heart of the question confronting us here, but is simply Dasein and Dasein passing by each other or tangentially connecting in daily life. Each Dasein, in casting its self, holds up to itself a certain concrete understanding of beings in the world on which its self-casting is based; it commits itself to a definite understanding of the world and to itself as cast and casting being-in-the-world. If each commitment is the commitment of an individual self, then how is a shared commitment at all possible?

The possibility of the intertwining of existences has already been mentioned above, but this problematic has to be deepened in terms of the sharing of the individual timespace which each Dasein is and inhabits ex-sistentially. Any shared commitment is by its very nature (its essence) *dividual*. Whereas at the one extreme each individual Dasein cannot escape its individuality, at the other, there is no possibility of a *dividual* commitment becoming *in-dividual*, i.e. indivisible, even though being-in-the-world is always essentially shared in the sense that the world in its basic historical ontological truth is always 'held in common'. The *dividual* commitment of a shared self-casting between Dasein and Dasein can always fall apart but, so long as it holds, it involves the commingling of two individual existences in timespace. But how can individual existences commingle in timespace at all? Because time itself

is a unified, shared horizon ($\tau\acute{o}\ \xi\nu$) and as such it is the perimeter of the clearing for truth (unconcealedness).

From trying to get the phenomenon of Dasein and Dasein sharing the world into view, we have now ended up with at least a provisional insight into Dasein and Dasein sharing the horizon of time. This initial insight needs to be deepened. Whereas any common commitment of Dasein to a shared project is essentially *dividual*, since Dasein itself is always individual, the shared horizon of timespace for any such common projects is itself *in-dividual*, i.e. it cannot be divided up, but remains an indivisible unity. Each individual Dasein leads its own existence in disposing of its life-time. So long as it exists, Dasein can share its life-time with others in common projects which, however, remain essentially *dividual*. Since Dasein is essentially *Mitsein*, it has always already entered into common projects with other Dasein, no matter how trivial and commonplace they may be.

For the most part, everyday Dasein's projects consist of mundane, little transactions such as greeting each other or purchasing some everyday item. These mini-projects are always embedded in an overarching existential project, no matter how conventional. These little transactions presuppose that Dasein and Dasein share a *being-involved-with* the matter at hand. This shared *being-involved-with*... need not be associated with a bodily closeness to each other in a common environment, and the matter at hand does not have to be anything 'physical', but the shared *being-involved-with*... does require a sharing of time, even if it is only the time of the present, the moment in which the matter is dealt with. Such 'little projects' in the present are quickly settled, but there are more momentous shared projects as well which require claims being made on a shared future, within whose ambit the project can come to fruition. Between the present, in which the shared project is decided and agreed on between Dasein and Dasein, and the future, there is an intervening temporal space within which the necessarily individual projects of both (or all) Dasein involved have to cohere with each other so as to realize the shared project. That is, the shared project always remains ultimately *dividual*, since it depends on

individual Dasein that can never take leave of its individuality, despite a firm commitment to a shared project.

A sharing of projects within the shared timespace of the world is an essential characteristic of Mitsein (togetherness). Dasein is always already involved with other Dasein, either directly or indirectly, i.e. its projects have always already intermeshed with those of others. This means that Dasein's projections into the future always rely on those of other Dasein, i.e. the realization of any project always involves mutual commitment and to that extent a common claim on the temporal ecstasy of the future. Thus Dasein as Mitsein is essentially interested in stabilizing the future, i.e. of controlling how the future arrives in the present and this requires commitments to be made to each other that shape the future and lend constancy and thus viability to projects that have been initiated.

Perhaps one of the simplest and ubiquitous examples of a common claim on the temporal ecstasy of the future is that of the marketplace for goods and services made available on the market and among which Dasein can pick and choose (at a price) in realizing its everyday projects in dealing with everyday affairs. The offer of goods and services is a holding-open of the future on the part of suppliers for consumer/purchaser Dasein to take advantage of in one or another of its projects. Any sort of offer means holding the future open for other Dasein to choose as a possibility for its own projects. Such holding-open is only possible because the Da of Dasein is such an open timespace that is shared by individual Dasein.

Because Dasein, as long as it exists, is always projected forward into the future, it is always unfinished and open. The future always withholds that toward which Dasein has projected its self in self-casting, so Dasein is always and essentially *lacking* and *unfinished* (πένης, ἀτελής, στέρησις). It is always and essentially *desirous* of a desideratum situated within the withheld dimension of the future and a *movement* toward what is desired. Since, however, Dasein's projects always essentially involve others, it always has to rely on others making commitments to the future in accord with its own projects. The future is always withheld, but in its advent into the present, the past commitments

of others have to be fulfilled if Dasein's projects are to come to fruition. Dasein thus always has to rely on others making and sticking to common future commitments, e.g. on them giving their word, keeping their word, fulfilling agreements. The phenomena of *commitment* and *reliability* (in the broadest sense which includes also their opposites of non-commitment and unreliability) are essential aspects of Mitsein as the sharing of the temporal ecstasy of the future. These phenomena are reciprocal, which implies that Dasein and other Dasein are always dependent on each other in realizing their projects thus shaping the future together, although this dependency is not necessarily simultaneous or to the same extent.

The obverse side of this is the *strife* that arises in togetherness when commitments are not fulfilled, i.e. when the self-castings into the future do not *intermesh* or *synchronize*, but diverge unexpectedly. Strife is an essential moment of Dasein's being-toward-the-future. Strife can emerge when Dasein and other Dasein cannot reach agreement on a common projection into the future on which both or all depend, but, even once agreement is reached, the future also has to arrive in a synchronized way corresponding to the fulfilment of the common agreement. Since any agreement is open not only to being broken, but also to interpretation in which a common understanding is laid out, any agreement is open to misunderstanding and thus to strife igniting between Dasein and other Dasein. Because all truth is mediated by individual selves, the shared truth needed to take on any shared project is always at risk of falling apart. Concrete togetherness, in its reliance on an intermeshing of Dasein's individual projects in the future, is thus necessarily and of its essence full of misunderstandings and strife as well as a blatant breaking of word on the part of an individual. The openness of the future and Dasein's projections into it do not just mean that Dasein is essentially exposed to the fickleness of fortune, i.e. of 'things' not turning out as planned, but especially to others' *refusal* to fulfil their commitments, their promises which mostly happens through other Dasein withdrawing into a non-committal stance or disputing the interpretation of the common agreement. Disagreement arises; one no longer sees eye to eye. In standing out into the future, Dasein's existence is thus essentially

subject to *disappointments* resulting from its projects not being realized, some of which can be attributed to others not reliably fulfilling their commitments. Misunderstandings and disappointments are necessarily and essentially the lot of temporally constituted, individualized Dasein in sharing the truth of beings with others. Freely given commitment to each other and keeping one's word, of course, are to be distinguished from an a priori, all-encompassing, ethical responsibility for one's fellow human being.

Mitsein is situated within the openness of truth, in which beings shows themselves of themselves, and this openness of truth is temporal. Temporality and truth are intimately intertwined. The sharing of time as the open clearing for the disclosive truth of beings is what essentially characterizes togetherness, and this sharing of truth in time is the lot of human being, which exposes it essentially to discord; for truth is for the most part and essentially subject to distortion and illusion, to occlusion and encryption, and this is only compounded by a sharing of truth temporally, in particular and especially with regard to the future and not, say, disputes over what has happened in the past, in 'history'. Dasein is essentially a being-able, i.e. an enablement and empowerment, to cast itself into the future and hence a living movement toward the future. In this sense it disposes over its own future. But since its projects always involve a shared casting with other Dasein, the realization of projects is essentially associated with misunderstanding, disappointment, disagreement, discord, in short, with strife. For these misunderstandings to arise, shared projects must be launched, and shared projects can only be projected because beings appear in their truth in the openness of the future, proffering concrete possibilities of mutually shared existence. It therefore has to be said that Dasein exists for the sake of its self, and this sake is essentially a *contentious issue* where the contention arises from Dasein being Mitsein, and Mitsein essentially requiring mutual commitment and a sharing of concrete truth in shaping the arrival of the temporal dimension of the future.

The contentiousness of the issue of Dasein's self does not arise simply from Dasein being egoistically self-interested with the result that there are inevitably clashes of interests; nor does it arise simply from one

party to a commitment blatantly breaking its word; rather, the contentiousness of Dasein's shared sake is an essential aspect of Mitsein as such whose origin lies in the ambiguity of the shared concrete truth on which any shared projects, i.e. any having-to-do-with-each-other, are based. The ongoing attempt to harmonize contentious issues is thus the lot of Dasein, and harmony is an exceptional, transient state of Dasein's affairs rather than the rule since the shared projects of Mitsein are essentially subject to potential divisions. This implies in particular that egoism or, more crudely, greed cannot be blamed solely for the dissent and disharmony in Mitsein; its ontological origins lie deeper, namely, i) in Dasein being exposed to the ambiguity of the truth of its common projects and ii) in Dasein's individuation on the one hand, and its dividual togetherness on the other, at one and the same time. The open truth of being, Dasein's inevitably intertwined freedom and the strife over truth, for the most part mediated through others, are ontologically inseparable.

There is no consistent coherence possible which could achieve a harmony of existence, nor is it simply that Dasein is imperfect as compared with a perfect being that is One, without division and outside time. Rather, Dasein as lived temporality is exposed to the double negation of what it is not yet, its un-finishedness (and thus in this sense imperfection), on the one hand, and what it has been, its individual no-longer, which it is powerless to change, on the other. Only in certain rare moments of presence does Dasein experience a fulfilment. These are those 'perfect moments' in which Dasein is at one with a fulfilled presence, and past and future recede into the background. But Dasein as ex-sistence is essentially a three-dimensional standing-out into time. Moreover, it shares this three-dimensional temporal ex-posure with other individualized Dasein with whom it essentially has to forge shared projects in shaping its existence.

One therefore needs no recourse to the moral failings of Dasein to see why the sharing of world is full of strife. Nor is there any possible projection of history in which the strife of togetherness would be sublated (waived and raised) into a final state of harmony. Nor is there a need for a modern, up-dated ethics to instil moral virtue into humankind,

or at least regulate its excesses through normative regulation. Rather, Dasein, in being exposed to the future, remains essentially un-finished and has to start perpetually anew, Sisyphus-like, in resolving the strife of togetherness. This is a matter of gaining clear insight into the predicament of shared-but-individualized human being situated in the open timespace of being's truth, rather than of ethical appeals or prescriptions.

Excursus: Lévinas' ethics of the Other

Above all it is a matter of finding a place where the human being ceases to concern us from the horizon of being, i.e. to offer himself to our powers.

Lévinas 'Is Ontology Fundamental?'

i) Lévinas' move against fundamental ontology

To set the contours of worldsharing and the encounter more starkly into relief, it is useful to study a widely diverging account of the same phenomena. Lévinas' philosophy is eminently suited to such a contrast for it engages, albeit from a critical distance, the tradition of dialogical philosophy that surged in the early twentieth century associated with names such as Buber, Rosenzweig and Rosenstock-Huessy, on the one hand, as well as with Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, on the other. This latter work — together with certain elements in Heidegger's later thinking — is latently or explicitly present in all of Lévinas' writings and forms one of the major touchstones for his alternative to what he regards as “the honourable tradition that Heidegger continues”,¹⁵ viz. the tradition of ontology. Thus, in one of his main works, *Totality and Infinity*, his efforts are turned to claiming the priority of what he understands by metaphysics over ontology, of metaphysical desire over ontological totalization.

In an article first published in 1951¹⁶ entitled 'Is Ontology Fundamental?', Lévinas briefly presents a case for a negative answer to

¹⁵ In E. Lévinas *Spur des Anderen: Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Sozialphilosophie* Alber, Freiburg 31992, S.109/p.92. All pages references are to the German translations of Lévinas' works followed by the original French editions. The English renderings of the German translation are all my own. The motto to this Excursus is at *ibid.* S.115/p.96.

¹⁶ The original French publication of 'L'Ontologie est-elle fondamentale?' is in *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* LVI (1951) pp. 88-98. Reprinted in *Phénoménologie - Existence* Vrin, Paris 1953 pp. 193-203. An English translation

this question. This negative answer bears and marks his entire thinking, and that to such an extent that it is by and large a negative movement, akin even to negative theology. There is no doubt that Lévinas has a genuine phenomenon in view, a phenomenon that opened up and provided the essential impetus for dialogical philosophy and is roughly indicated by the grammatical difference between the third person and the second person. Lévinas is also correct in pointing out that Heidegger's fundamental ontology, as presented in *Sein und Zeit* and lecture courses throughout the twenties, does not enter into an interpretation of this phenomenon but rather keeps it at arm's length. But whereas Lévinas argues for a strong distinction between what he calls metaphysics, which is concerned with infinitude, and ontology, which he claims to be totalizing, the thesis presented in the present excursus is that Heidegger, even in shying away from the dialogical phenomenon, provides an indispensable placeholder and starting-point for adequately interpreting it. To put it colloquially, Lévinas throws the baby out with the bath water. Moreover, he insists on mixing theology with philosophy, with the result that his texts take on the hue of a dogmatic, morally exalted, incantatory insistence. This will be shown in the following by selecting passages from the above-mentioned article which is representative of and quintessential to Lévinas' enduring stance toward Heidegger's thinking. Some comments will also be made on *Totalité et Infini* and *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence*.

ii) **Opening up to the world: understanding and moodedness**

Lévinas claims that, in spite of fundamental ontology locating itself in the midst of lived existence, it nevertheless interprets existence narrowly as understanding:

But philosophy of existence immediately pales in the face of ontology. This circumstance of being involved, this event in which I find myself entangled, this fact of being bound, as I am to that which is supposed to be my object, through

is in E. Lévinas *Basic Philosophical Writings* Indiana U.P., Bloomington 1996 pp. 1-10.

ties that cannot be traced back to thoughts, this existence is interpreted as understanding. (S. 107/p. 91)

This claim is astonishing since it is plain to any reader of *Sein und Zeit* that understanding is only one mode in which the world opens up to Dasein; the other, equiprimordial mode is moodedness or disposition (Befindlichkeit), the mode in which Dasein is how it is and how it has been cast. Lévinas even makes mention of attunement (Gestimmtheit) in passing but returns nonetheless to the claim that understanding is all-dominating in fundamental ontology:

To understand our situation in reality does not mean to define it but to find oneself in an affective attunement; to understand being means to exist. (106/90)

This is the only point in the article where moodedness enters the discussion, in a statement that could almost have flowed from Heidegger's pen. Lévinas' opposition to fundamental ontology rests on a movement counter to the primacy of understanding in which he attempts to show that the relation to the other "cannot be traced back to understanding" (108/92). Lévinas' counter-movement can only be undertaken at the price of wilfully overlooking that for Heidegger's fundamental ontology, moodedness is a fundamental way in which Dasein opens up to the world and takes it in and in fact so fundamentally that it can reach further than knowing (which, it should be noted against Lévinas' lax use of terms, Heidegger distinguishes from understanding). Consider, for example, the following quotation from *Sein und Zeit*:

Das Sein des Da ist in solcher Verstimmung als Last offenbar geworden. Warum, *weiß* man nicht. Und das Dasein kann dergleichen nicht wissen, weil die Erschließungsmöglichkeiten des Erkennens viel zu kurz tragen gegenüber dem ursprünglichen Erschließen der Stimmungen, in denen das Dasein vor sein Sein als Da gebracht ist. (SuZ 134, italics in the original)

The being of the here has become obvious in such a bad mood as a burden. One does not *know* (*weiß*) why. And Dasein (being-here) cannot know (wissen) suchlike because knowing's possibilities of opening up fall far too short compared with the originary opening up performed by moods (Stimmungen) in which Dasein is brought before its being as Da.

Cf. also the following passage from *Holzwege*:

Vielleicht ist jedoch das, was wir [...] Stimmung nennen, vernünftiger, nämlich vernehmender, weil dem Sein offener als alles Vernunft...¹⁷

Perhaps however, what we call [...] attunement is more reasonable, i.e. more perceptive, because more open to being than reason could ever be...

Moodedness opens Dasein up to the world more deeply than knowing it, and moodedness is on a par with understanding in opening up the world. Lévinas does not acknowledge this and even uses the terms ‘understanding’ and ‘knowing’ interchangeably, which only causes more confusion. Is this only a cavil? I think not because, by omitting moodedness and confusing understanding with knowing, Lévinas is able to put Heidegger too comfortably back into the philosophical tradition which the former claims does violence to the other through the totalizing hegemony of reason. It is Heidegger, however, who put reason into question before Lévinas came along. The conflation of these differences allows Lévinas to make the following exemplary movement:

Truth does not exist because there are humans. Humanity exists because being in general is inseparable from its opening-up, because there is truth, or because, if you like, there is insight into being. [...] All non-understanding is only a deficient mode of understanding. The analysis of existence and what is called its Here is thus nothing other than the description of the essence of truth, the condition of the understandability itself of being. (105/89; 108/91)

The quintessence of ontology in Lévinas’ eyes is the understanding of being, which is interpreted as the opening up of being in its truth through which beings, including the other, are disclosed or unconcealed from the horizon of universal being, as opposed to a being as such in its particularity. On the basis of this conception of ontology there is no room for truth consisting in the openness of self-concealment, and it is precisely moodedness that can be interpreted as a mode of opening-up in which concealment itself comes into its truth. Moodedness must be regarded, contra Heidegger, privatively as the mode of “non-understanding” par excellence but, as we have seen, it is by no means merely “a deficient mode of understanding” but a mode of the opening

¹⁷ M. Heidegger ‘Der Ursprung des Kunstwerks’ (1935/36) in: *Holzwege* Klostermann Frankfurt/M. 6th revised edition 1980 p. 9.

up of world in its own right. Allowing concealment to *be* in its openness is a possibility that Lévinas apparently does not consider. Lévinas curiously distinguishes between metaphysics and ontology by contrasting “relations with beings as such, as pure beings [...] rather than with an horizon” (117/97), which is strange because already the traditional Aristotelean formulation of metaphysics is as an investigation into “beings qua beings” (τὸ ὄν ἢ ὅν). Even when the other is addressed *as* an other, this other is ineluctably always already understood *as* an other, that is, from within one of the most venerable categories of being that address beings as such, viz. τὸ ἕτερον (cf. Plato’s *Sophist*), a crucial point that is lost on Lévinas. Lévinas apparently believes naively that ontological categories can be avoided, while contradicting himself with every word he speaks.

iii) Understanding and addressing the other

Lévinas wants to say that the relation to the other is “prior to understanding” (108/92). The priority of the other, he claims, is grounded in the priority of particularity over universality, which universality is seen as a characteristic of Western philosophy that Heidegger simply accepts and continues in his fundamental ontology.

The particular being is understood by assuming a position that is already beyond the particular; understanding means relating to the particular by means of knowledge which is always knowledge of the universal. (109/92)

Lévinas wants to save the particular “mere individual” as a “being as such” (112/94) from the totalizing horizon of universal being in general. But this opposition is spurious because the individual as a “being as such” is still a being, and so the attempt to save individuality from the universality of being (assuming for the moment that being is universal) always comes too late. Moreover, Lévinas does not distinguish between the particular and the singular, individual; the particular, as the word itself says, is a particularization. Of what? Of the universal. In fact, understanding a being as such is precisely the task of ontology: a being as such means that the individual is always already encompassed by the universality (ἔν) of being. For Aristotle, to think the being as such, i.e.

τὸ ὄν ἢ ὅν, is the task for metaphysics. And in referring to the other (ἕτερος) as an other, Lévinas is also situated ineluctably within the universality of being. Even the terms ‘individuality’, ‘particularity’, etc. are designations of being and thus universal. The distinction between particularity and universality is entirely inadequate for showing up the phenomenon that Lévinas has in view. The relation to the other as a “being as such” still has to be thought as a phenomenon *of being*. But being is manifold; it has many folds, and it is in one of these folds that the other as such is situated. The fold in being I am referring to is its folding into second and third person, and the further folding of the second person into meeting and encounter, as elaborated in the main body of this study.

In approaching the other in what he regards to be a non-totalizing way, Lévinas introduces the existential of addressability, which is indeed one of the essential characteristics of the relation to the other in the second person. Addressability is introduced in contradistinction to understanding, or knowing, the other:

Certainly our relation to the other consists in wanting to understand him, but this relation goes beyond understanding. Not only because knowledge of the other, independently of curiosity, also demands sympathy or love, modes of being which are different from disinterested observation. But because the other in our relation to him does not affect us on the basis of a concept. The other is a being and is regarded as such. (110/92f)

Understanding and knowledge are conflated here once again. The former is an ontological existential of world-opening involved in *any* relations to beings as such, whereas knowledge proceeds on the basis of the a priori understanding of being and is thus not originary. Lévinas is correct in pointing out that the other “affects” us and that this affectedness “goes beyond understanding”, but this in no way gainsays fundamental ontology, as already noted above. The existential of addressability is, however, not a way of going beyond understanding to consider moodedness (in which Dasein is affected), but is precisely the way in which the other is *understood*, *recognized* and *acknowledged* as other Dasein, i.e. as Mitdasein. Addressability (which plays a major role in dialogical philosophy) is indeed an existential not considered by

Heidegger, but it is fully compatible with fundamental ontology once it turns its attention to the phenomenon of relations to other Dasein in *Mitsein*. Addressability is an existential (even a universal existential) adequate to the phenomenon of *Mitsein* in the second person. Thus, Lévinas' claim, "Is the one to whom one speaks already understood in advance in their being? Not at all." (110/93), has to be denied.

Without being already "understood in advance in their being", the other *as* other would not be addressable at all, i.e. addressability belongs essentially to the being of *Mitdasein*; it is one of the existentials which open up other Dasein and make it accessible, namely, in the second person. Lévinas is setting up specious oppositions here but is at the same time pointing to concepts adequate to thinking the other as other. Addressability is the condition of possibility of entering into a relation with the other as other Dasein. Such addressability is, in turn, the condition of possibility of understanding the other in the sense of an ontic understanding or knowledge of this particular being, as Lévinas rightly points out: "To understand a person means to already speak with them." (111/93) This is no contradiction to Heidegger's conception of Dasein and Dasein sharing the *Da*, as already laid out in Section 1. Sharing the truth.

Mitdasein is unique in that, because it is itself Dasein, it has a world, its very own world, to which it is opened up and which it takes in both comprehendingly and moodfully; and because it is also addressable (by virtue of the dimension of the second person), it can also be spoken with. Understanding and knowing other Dasein is not restricted to understanding and knowing them from the 'outside', i.e. in a third person understanding, but deepens into knowing them directly from the 'inside', i.e. in the second person. This inside is not a psyche or an inner life or the depths of a soul but the inside of *Mitdasein*'s very own world which is nevertheless open in the universality of a shared truth. Because the other is *Mit-dasein*, Dasein as being in its world within the openness of truth can be shared, and because the other is *Mit-dasein*, it is itself within the openness of truth. Addressability and speaking with the other are essential aspects (existentials) of the ontology of being in the second person, of you-and-me-ness. Addressability is the condition of

possibility of talking to you and speaking with you. You and I are only possible in a you-and-me relation by virtue of addressability, which is the potentiality of calling you into being, of invoking you *as you* for (a) me. It cannot be assumed that you pre-exist our you-and-I relation, just as little as I exist in a second person way outside the relation. You and I come about through the realization of the potentiality of addressability. You and I exist only in between, in the present. Addressability holds open the door to a potential sharing of world by talking to each other. Only by virtue of addressability do we not just share the world, but can share the world *with each other*.

Lévinas has no concept of sharing the world, but only of a shared relationship between the one and the other because he rejects the fundamental-ontological concept of Dasein and operates instead within the metaphysics of subjectivity, for which there is no openness of truth, no clearing. Hence his express sympathy for Kant's subjectivist philosophy with its emphasis on morality (cf. 114/95, 118/98). Contrary to his intention of treating the other in their particularity (more properly: singularity), he does not take care to distinguish between the third person and the second person with the result that the other is dealt with in just as impersonal a manner as in other philosophical discourses. Addressability and speaking with the other does not mean that the plane of "universal being" has been left in order to engage with the "particular being" (112/94); it does not mean that the understanding of being has been dispensed with, but that another dimension in the folds of being has been entered, and this entry into another dimension demands another kind of language than the one we find in Lévinas' thinking.

iv) A hole in the horizon of being?

Lévinas has singled out two of the main phenomena featured in dialogical philosophy, namely, addressability and speaking with the other (language), in order to make a case against fundamental ontology. The peculiar essential characteristic of the relation to the other is, according to Lévinas:

that my understanding of the being as such a being [i.e. the other as an other ME] is already the expression that I offer him of this understanding. (112/94)

The relation with the other, in which “expression consists in constituting a communality” is supposed to be a “relation that cannot be traced back to understanding”. (113/94) From this Lévinas concludes:

The essence of speech is prayer. What distinguishes thinking that is directed toward an object from the connection with a person is the fact that the latter is expressed as a vocative: The object of the naming is at the same time the one who is called upon [the addressee]. (113/95)

The vocative is indeed the opening of the dimension of the second person which allows world to be shared in speaking with each other. Whether this vocativity should be called prayer is a moot point, but Lévinas does seem to have the distinction between the third and second person in view in the following passage, even though the concepts of particularity and universality are entirely inadequate to capturing this difference:

He [the other] does not emerge completely in the opening-up of being where I am already situated as if on the field of my freedom. He does not encounter me against the foil of being in general. Of course, everything about him that becomes accessible to me from being in general is proffered to my understanding and my possession. I understand him against the background of his history, his milieu, his habits. What it is about him that escapes understanding is he himself, the being. (116/96)

This is the transition from the third to the second person within the folds of being, which should not be confused with a shift from the universality of being to the particularity of the “being as such”. The phenomena themselves should guide thinking. Talking *with* the other is to be distinguished from talking *about* the other. Only the former can have the immediacy of meeting and encounter, although it must be noted that talking with the other is not a guarantee that an encounter takes place. Indeed, for the most part, talking with the other does not amount to an encounter, which is an exceptional occurrence, but is instead the commerce or intercourse between individuals in a meeting-together.¹⁸ For Lévinas, the encounter takes place when the face of the other appears, from which he is quick to derive ethical consequences: “To

¹⁸ Cf. the main body of this essay for details, starting with Section 4. Reciprocity of meeting.

stand face to face with the other, this means not being able to kill.” (117/97), but such over-hasty, far-reaching ethical conclusions should be refrained from, since they smother and obscure the phenomenon of the second person of being that is coming into view. Instead, every effort should be made to clarify the distinction between the third and the second person within the folds of being, which is eminently, albeit implicitly, expressed in the following passage:

The relation to a *being* is invocation of a face and already a word; it is rather the relation to a depth than to an horizon, a hole in the horizon; my neighbour is the being par excellence... (117/97; italics Lévinas)

Whence does this hole in the horizon come? Is such a term justified? Isn't the horizon of being all-encompassing, admitting no exceptions? The horizon of being is the world that envelops the three ecstasies of time into which Dasein stands out temporally in the movement of its existence. Within this three-dimensional ecstatic unity, beings as such appear to Dasein, who is opened up to this horizon. The hole in the horizon of world comes about with other Dasein, since each other Dasein has its *own* horizon and is itself a temporalizing of three-dimensional time out of which it casts its own self freely. The hole is emptiness; it is the nothingness of other Dasein's freedom which lights up flickeringly in the encounter in which you and I inkle each other's nothingness from which each casts its self. Freedom itself, which is the ontological origin of selfhood, is the hole, the casting of oneself out of nothingness in which the bearings of existence are laid in a definite direction that becomes the sense of an individual Dasein's existence. The empty hole of the other's freedom from which its selfhood springs is the source which I come up against in the encounter and experience directly, albeit barely. This hole in the horizon is not consistently experienced in dealings with other Dasein, for it has no perduring presence, but it makes itself felt in the resistance that other Dasein offers as a free being, i.e. through its withdrawal into its self, its ineludible self-encryption, which is not a particular ontic mode of behaviour, but a fundamental ontological characteristic of the other as Dasein: Dasein as self remains encrypted, sheltered in the crypt of its self.

Because Dasein is freely self-casting, it has always already swung over beyond beings, incorporating them into its existential casting. This freedom of Dasein calls forth the resistance of beings, it is in fact the very origin of their resistance. In the case of other Dasein, however, which is itself free, this resistance is compounded and takes on a different form, since now, in the meeting or encounter of first and second person, freedom comes up against freedom. This is what is most impossible for Dasein to overcome, because Dasein is metaphysically impotent to overcome the freedom of the other. When Lévinas refers to the impossibility of murder, he is translating this ontological impotence into an ethical (not a factual)¹⁹ impossibility. In so doing, he employs a line of argument strikingly reminiscent of the Hegelian dialectic of master and slave (116/97). The phrase “most impossible” seems to be a pleonasm. What is meant is that the resistance of beings (in the third person) already refers to Dasein’s metaphysical impotency which cannot be overcome by any technological mastery (cf. Section 6. Addressability and proper-namedness: Dasein’s inviolable freedom). This metaphysical impotency is exponentially compounded in relations with other Dasein which is itself essentially free with its own infinite degrees of freedom of movement.²⁰ Lévinas translates this *ontological* impotence into an (ontic) *ethical* imperative which he himself remarks is akin to the categorical imperative in Kant’s practical philosophy (118/98), but such a translation is misleading and only obfuscates when one considers that Dasein’s freedom has an ontological status, i.e. it is situated already within the truth of being and needs to be thought as a question and a problem of (human) being.

What Lévinas calls the “relation to the face [of the other] as the event of communality, the word” (117/97) is treated in the present study as the possibility of encounter that in turn opens up the possibility of you and

¹⁹ That it is a matter of an ethical impossibility is clearly stated in *Infinity and Totality*, e.g. in the following passage: “The exceptional presence of the other expresses itself in the fact that it is ethically impossible for me to kill him; he thus signifies the end of my abilities.” (S.120/ p.59)

²⁰ Cf. on Dasein’s inviolable freedom Section 6. Addressability and proper-namedness: Dasein’s inviolable freedom.

me sharing our freedom with each other and indeed the necessity of having to do so, one way or the other, since our respective freedom is ontologically inviolable. Although Lévinas claims that this hole in the horizon where the other as such appears is occluded by fundamental ontology by way of the universality of being suffocating the particularity of the other as a being, the discussion in the main body of the present study should have made clear that the phenomenon of *Mitsein* as sketched in *Sein und Zeit* and elaborated on in Heidegger's lecture courses in the late twenties (cf. esp. *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 26 and Bd. 27) leaves a space for this 'hole' to be thought through adequately in turning explicitly to the problem of you-and-me, i.e. of first-and-second person in their existential-ontological intertwining. Heidegger claims in these lectures that the phenomenon of *Duheit* (you-ness) has to be investigated on the basis of the "fundamental neutrality" of *Dasein* in its selfhood. The phenomena of the encounter and the sharing of freedom between you and me can indeed be interpreted on the basis of an adequate understanding of *Dasein*, its world and its freedom, although not in the way Heidegger prescribes.²¹

v) **Ontology flattened**

In stark contrast, Lévinas, in *Totality and Infinity*, takes the appearance of the face of the other to be the point at which the Infinite or the Absolute intervenes with the word that teaches or instructs, like a master instructs his disciple. The point at which the master appears is, he claims, the origin of language. The intervention of the Absolute is strongly reminiscent of the Old Testament motif of God calling on Moses to lay down the Ten Commandments, and this impression is

²¹ Pace Heidegger, selfhood is not ontologically prior to I-ness and you-ness, but rather, the constitution of self is itself always also a mirroring through the others. Cf. my 'Heidegger's Restricted Interpretation of the Greek Conception of the Political' from 2003-2004, the section on interchange, available at <http://www.arte-fact.org/untp1tcl/rstrpltc.html#5.6> and also my 'Dialectic of Self and Other: Wrestling with Plato, Hegel, Heidegger' at <http://www.arte-fact.org/untp1tcl/dlctcs1f.html> and *Social Ontology* op. cit., especially Chapter 3 on whoness.

reinforced by Lévinas' insistence on the ethical impossibility of killing the other: "Thou shalt not kill". The appearance of the Infinite on the scene is in a quite literal sense a *deus ex machina* in Lévinas' hands; in fact he introduces the idea of a "*creatio ex nihilo*" (e.g. TI:149/78) in order to "break" with the system of a (causal) totality and introduces an understanding of human being as a "separate existent" self-centred on its own enjoyment (cf. e.g. 166/91). But this totality is conceived as an ontic-causal system (and precisely not as an ontologically conceived world) into which he introduces the dimension of freedom, much as the metaphysical tradition usually does. Strangely enough, the *deus ex machina* who performs the *creatio ex nihilo* is a causal principle:

The creature is an existent which of course depends on an other, but not like a part which separates itself from the other. Creation out of nothing breaks the system; it posits a being outside the system, i.e. there where its freedom is possible. (149/78)

The dimension of freedom, however, is not something created out of nothing by a God, for that would be to deal with it like some ontic thing caused by an agent. The dimension of freedom is indeed the dimension of Dasein, but Dasein's existence cannot be accounted for ontically-causally by way of creation, but rather only ontologically-transcendentally by uncovering and stepping back into its conditions of possibility, for freedom is the transcendental (not: transcendent) dimension *par excellence*. Lévinas presents the shift to the dimension of freedom as if he were shifting from the ontological dimension (in which the egoistic subject supposedly reigns) into the ethical dimension (in which the subject becomes ashamed of his egoism), but in truth he is shifting from the ontic dimension of causal relations to the ontological dimension of Dasein as freedom. He treats the realm of freedom, however, as the ethical dimension in which the egoistic subject is confronted with moral injunctions and imperatives mediated by the face of the other. This stance is maintained and even radicalized in his last major work, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence*, in which the "unbending, indeclinable ego, protected from every scratch" (171/95) is overwhelmed in its "sensibility" by the "non-phenomenon, a putting-into-question by the otherness of the other" (170/95) that results an-

archically in a “giving”, in which “the giving does not offer the superfluity of what is superfluous but the bread snatched from one’s own mouth” (174/97).

In explicitly renouncing ontology as fundamental and presenting the alternative of the primacy of ethics (cf. the dictum in the table of contents of *Totality and Infinity*: “I.4 Metaphysics precedes ontology”), Lévinas at the same time renounces any possibility of thinking the essence of human being, which can only be achieved through ontological questioning, not through vain moral exhortations. His writing flattens to ontic narration in which repetition substitutes for clarification of essential structures, i.e. the various moments of an ontological dimension that is held together by unifying concepts. Lévinas even explicitly defends this way of proceeding:

All the discussions in the present work [*Totality and Infinity*] aim at getting away from a conception which strives to unify the happenings of existence which have opposite signs in an ambivalent basic relation where only the basic relation has ontological dignity, whereas the happenings themselves which manifest themselves characteristically in one direction or the other maintain an empirical status without articulating anything new ontologically. The method practised here does consist in looking for the conditions for empirical situations, but it ascribes an ontological role to the concretization, i.e. to the so-called empirical manifestations in which the condition of possibility is fulfilled. (252f/148)

Although in other passages Lévinas seeks to get away from ontology altogether to champion the ethical manifestation of the other, here he wants to wilfully and arbitrarily elevate empirical happenings, i.e. ontic event, to an ontological status, but without working out the ontological structures within which this could take place. His “looking for the conditions for empirical situations” is not a search for *ontological* conditions of possibility but a hypostasization of the ontic to lend it ontological dignity. Thus, for example, the reader searches in vain for an explication of the ontological structure of the world in Lévinas’ writings (which amounts to the totality of what the “separate existent” enjoys). It is not enough to baldly claim that an empirical phenomenon, such as “hospitality” or the “face of the other”, has an ontological status. It only makes sense to talk of an ontological status if the ontological difference

is taken seriously, but this is what Lévinas explicitly refuses to do. His rejection of ontology means that his texts shift back and forth between ontic phenomenal analyses and assertions of the primacy of the ethical (e.g. “Transcendence is ... the first ethical gesture.” 253/149) which however remain mere assertions redolent of moral diatribe. The above-quoted passage, for instance, occurs in a discussion of hospitality and egoism in which the ontic possibility of opening the doors of one’s house to the other is supposed to establish transcendence as an “original giving” (252/149) and language as the “first gift” (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, Lévinas’ way of proceeding cannot entirely make us forget that ontological grounding is something entirely different.

Because they are conditions of possibility, ontological structures have the characteristic of unifying a range of empirical phenomena into their essence. This by no means excludes particular concretizations from gaining special attention and even a special status. Lévinas’ method has to be contrasted with Heidegger’s method in *Sein und Zeit*, where Heidegger employs concretizations to bring existential-ontological structures phenomenologically to light, to highlight them. Thus, for example, in order to show the structure of care in its wholeness, he chooses a concrete phenomenon in which Dasein *is* its whole existence, namely, in the resolute disclosedness of self arising out of going forward to death. Heidegger’s procedure does ascribe an important phenomenological role to empirical, i.e. ontic, phenomena, but it does so whilst maintaining, i.e. not confusing, watering down and flattening, the ontological difference.

Lévinas, by contrast, disseminates the seeds of irremediable confusion by not reading the structure of care in *Sein und Zeit* ontologically but as the ontic phenomenon of care in the sense of having cares and worries (cf. e.g. “The world... as a totality of equipment... that depends on the cares of an existence full of Angst about its being...” 190/107). This (in the case of Lévinas, one would have to say: wilful) misunderstanding of the existential-ontological concept of care is as old as *Sein und Zeit* itself and arises from precisely not respecting the fundamental existential-ontological character of care as a structure that unifies ontic phenomena with opposite signs and serves to characterize the ontological structure

of being-in-the-world which ultimately will be taken back into Dasein's temporality, the (provisionally) 'final station' in *Sein und Zeit*. Lévinas' ontic misunderstanding of the ontological structure of care serves him only as a polemical foil to bolster his opposed claim that the "subject" or "human being" is not fundamentally full of cares but fixated on its own egoistic enjoyment (cf. *Totality and Infinity* II A 2 "Living off... (Enjoyment)" and II A 3 "Enjoyment and Independence").

vi) Beyond being

If there is one single, decisive point at which the issue between Heidegger and Lévinas becomes abundantly clear, it is the issue of ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας. This famous phrase from Plato's *Politeia* which announces the beyond of being as the ἰδέα ἀγαθοῦ, i.e. the Idea of the Good, is cited by both thinkers, but whereas Lévinas, to my knowledge, is content to quote the phrase and interpret it immediately as the intrusion of ethics into (the 'ontological totality' of) being without taking the effort to provide even the skerrick of an in-depth interpretation of the relevant passages in Plato, Heidegger is at some pains to provide an *ontological* interpretation of the ἰδέα ἀγαθοῦ,²² which he interprets — via a translation into Aristotelean οὐ ἕνεκα — as the "Umwillen des Daseins" (e.g. GA26:237, cf. the entire section GA26:237-252 "Die Transzendenz des Daseins"). Even in Lévinas' last major work *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence*,²³ whose title plays on the Platonic phrase, there is no serious attempt made to interpret in extenso the phrase ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας in a critical engagement with Plato's texts.

²² In later lectures, Heidegger interprets the idea of the good as "das Ermöglichende" ("the enabling power"; GA36/37:194). "Das Gute ist die Ermächtigung des Seins und der Unverborgenheit zu ihrem in sich zusammengehörigen Wesen." ("The good is the empowerment of being and unconcealment to their essencing in which they inherently belong together." *Sein und Wahrheit* WS 1933/34 GA36/37:200)

²³ Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1978.

The ἐπέκεινα in ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας is interpreted by both Lévinas and Heidegger as the dimension of transcendence, but each thinker thinks the latter very differently. For Lévinas transcendence is the entry into the ethical-religious realm in which responsibility for the other shows its face. For Heidegger, by contrast, transcendence is the transcendence beyond beings to being. If matters come to a head between Heidegger and Lévinas on the issue of transcendence, then the latter has to be focused on. Since, as we have seen, Lévinas is intent on moving ‘beyond Heidegger’ to the dimension of the other, i.e. specifically, to the ethical dimension of responsibility for the other, Heidegger’s reply to Lévinas now has to be turned to. Heidegger’s reply to Lévinas? Since Heidegger never concerned himself with Lévinas’ writings, this turn of phrase is somewhat paradoxical, but it does make sense once it is realized that Lévinas represents a very traditional position with which Heidegger engaged critically in some depth. The ἰδέα ἀγαθοῦ, namely, has usually been interpreted in an ethical way. Heidegger breaks with this tradition and rejects the ethical interpretation as Weltanschauung (cf. GA26:241) and compels thinking to focus on the question of being, i.e. on freedom and transcendence in the context of the question concerning the very meaning of being.

Now, this is supposed to be an excursus on Lévinas, but is quickly becoming an interpretation of Heidegger. The reason is obvious: Lévinas claims to break with a tradition within which he locates Heidegger as the last “honourable” representative, whereas the present study aims to show that it is Heidegger who has radically unearthed the philosophical tradition, whereas Lévinas has fallen far behind the insights signalled in shifting human being to the site of “Dasein” and instead formulates a headstrong, theologically founded ethics of the other. The heading “Freedomsharing, strife and the possibility of intimacy and commitment” in Section 12. of the present study indicates that freedom and its sharing is the crucial, and painful, issue, and indeed, the sharing of freedom between the one and the other in togetherness. It is well known that Heidegger does not provide a philosophy of the other, which has left the field open for Lévinas to occupy it with figures such as “the face of the other”. Heidegger’s treatment of transcendence has to be

amplified and augmented and also criticized in such a way that the vacuum that has apparently been left by his neglect of ‘the other’ is filled with thoughts that are adequate to the thinking of transcendence within the problematic of the question of being. This requires that we turn to the fold in being which I call first-and-second person, you-and-I or simply whoness.²⁴ If Lévinas’ philosophy in very large part can be characterized as a movement of negation against the claim, ‘Ontology is fundamental’, in order to assert the unconditional, i.e. absolute, primacy of ethics (of the other) over ontology, an adequate reply to Lévinas must consist in showing that ontology is indeed fundamental, i.e. that the transcendence of being that is freedom is also the indispensable key to understanding the sharing of freedom with the other, thus shifting the ‘ethics’ of the other (which is a moral philosophy in the sense of modernity) back onto a fundamental ontological level.

Heidegger refers to two crucial litmus tests for the understanding of the issues of ontology (cf. GA26:241f). The first is to break with the deeply ingrained modes of thinking that proceed from conceiving a subject encapsulated in its consciousness and separated from the world.²⁵ The second is to defuse the idea that Dasein, because it exists

²⁴ Cf. my *Social Ontology* op. cit., whose basis is a phenomenology of whoness.

²⁵ Leibniz’s conception of the subject as monad can be taken as exemplary for the casting of human being as subjectivity in the modern, Cartesian age. The ‘first draft’ of the monad is the “body-soul pentagon” of the early Leibniz from around 1663, a conception he adapted from his teacher, Erhard Weigel, a “Pythagorean” with a proclivity for “geometric schemata”. Weigel gave lectures in 1663 on “mechanics, astronomy, gnomonics and fortification”, the pentagon being traditionally regarded as the ideal fortification. Laws of motion, the calculation of time from the motion of stars and sun, and military strategy are thus apparent as the subject matter of these lectures. The modern subject is out to calculate the universe. Leibniz wrote down his schema of the body-soul pentagon in his copy of Jakob Thomasius *Philosophia practica continuis tabellis in usum privatam comprehensa* Leipzig 1661. The schema consists of a series of concentric pentagons and circles inscribed alternately inside each other, starting with the external pentagon, representing the physical body with its sense organs, followed by a circle representing ‘spiritual’ sensory experience animated by ‘spiritus’ streaming through the body, then the inner pentagon of the physical brain, which

“for the sake of itself” (Umwillen seiner selbst) is egoistic. Lévinas is a victim especially of this second misunderstanding because, apart from refusing to shift from the metaphysics of subjectivity to a consideration of human being as Dasein, he adamantly insists on a fundamental casting of human being as egoistic, i.e. as an egoistic subject, into which he then introduces the imperative, absolute, moralistic ethics of the other. On the other hand, it still has to be shown that fundamental ontology à la Heidegger leaves room for, or can be twisted into, the problematic of the other’s freedom. *The freedom of the other, i.e. the (im)possibility of freedomsharing in the world, is the issue and not, as Lévinas claims, ethical responsibility for the other.*

Heidegger and Lévinas agree that the issue is what lies beyond being, but whereas the latter interprets the beyond of being ethically and theologically with an intervention of the Infinite, the Absolute, the former endeavours to show that the transcendental dimension beyond beings in their being is freedom, if not freedomsharing. The freedom of the other is the missing link that separates Heidegger’s thinking from Lévinas’ thinking. The issue is the following: if there lies beyond being the Idea of the Good, and this is translated as the Umwillen des Daseins,

takes in sensory impressions and also encloses the final circle representing the “sphaera intellectus”, which is also the seat of morality, Weigel’s “sphaera moralis”. This innermost sphere is both a sphere and an indivisible, indestructible, metaphysical point. This latter is required to ensure that to the intellect “an invincible liberty remains” (libertas invincibilis remanet p. 8) and also immortality. This ultimate point at the centre is the free will, where internal deliberations and whence external actions proceed, ensconced within the double fortress of two pentagons, the body and the brain (cf. ‘Das Leib-Seele-Pentagon und die moralische Sphäre des Verstandes’ in Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz *Frühe Schriften zum Naturrecht* (ed.) Hubertus Busche, Meiner, Hamburg 2003, see Busche’s notes pp. 381ff). This cast of human being contrasts entirely with Dasein that is always already in the world, out there with beings in three-dimensional, ecstatic time-space, so that the ‘intellect’ is not encapsulated in the brain. Nonetheless, the ecstatic temporal exposure to the world is individuated into individual selves, each of whom takes in the world from its own, singular perspective, giving each being-in-the-world its own, singular twist, despite an ineluctably shared casting of an historical world.

i.e. the for-the-sake-of Dasein's self, how is this for-the-sake-of-self to be reconciled with the freedom of the other, who likewise exists for the sake of self? This is a far more subtle and perplexing question for thinking than Lévinas' demand — via the invocation and injunction of the Infinite that breaks with the (ontic-causal) Totality — that moral-ethical responsibility be assumed for the other and that a certain conception of justice prevail, for it requires that the question of being itself be folded and unfolded richly enough for the other *as* other to appear — albeit scarcely and non-substantially — in the folds in adequate concepts that do not misrecognize it as a being in the third person, which has been its fate hitherto within the long tradition of the metaphysics of whatness.