

## "DESIRE AND RELIGION"

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### Introduction

In this paper, I wish to show that there is a blind spot in Heidegger's treatment, in *Being and Time*, concerning the will and the movement of Dasein, and that it blocks the way to an ontology of desire and, hence, to a philosophical openness to religion.

### Being and Time on "modernity"

Heidegger's impressive treatment of falling and fallenness (*Being and Time* §§ 35-38, p.166 sq.<sup>1</sup>) can be read as his first major criticism of modernity. To be sure, the term "modernity" is not to be found in these paragraphs. We have to wait until p.391 (§75) where we read that inauthentic historical existence, burdened as it is with the legacy of a "past" that has become unrecognizable to it, looks for what is modern ("*sucht das Moderne*"). Looking for "the modern" is described as being the opposite of openness to "the 'recurrence' of the possible" from out of the past, while knowing that a possibility recurs only when existence is open for it fatefully, in the Moment, in resolute retrieval or recalling from the past (p.391-2). In this way, a radical retrieval of one's authentic possibility as a heritage from the past (the ancient) is opposed to the modern as an

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1. All references are to the standard German edition of *Sein und Zeit*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen.

inauthentic understanding of the "past" from out of the "present" (p.391). Inauthentic existence (the "They") is lost in the making present of the "today".

What this means can be understood with the help of some indications given on p.339 (§68) on authentic and inauthentic understanding. There it is said that inauthenticity is a constant closing off of oneself from the past (thrownness) and, hence, a forgetting. Only on this basis can the making present, that takes care of and awaits,<sup>2</sup> *retain* things, i.e. those beings encountered in the surrounding world (p.339). "This potentiality lets Dasein come toward itself in its heedful being together with what is to be taken care of" (p.337). Inauthenticity "awaits"; it heedfully awaits the always new, as a craving for the novelty that can be obtained and construed with things in the world. This 'awaiting' is the inauthentic mode of the future-directedness of Dasein. "Inauthentic *understanding* projects itself upon what can be taken care of, what can be done, what is urgent or indispensable in the business of everyday activity. ... The inauthentic future has the character of *awaiting*" (p.337).

This analysis of "looking for the modern" has, first of all, an *existential-ontological* meaning. We are still quite removed from the later ontological analyses of the metaphysics of technology and cybernetics as "Gestell". For the time being, it opposes an authentic historicity and self-being to a forgetting of the authentic past and an absence of self-retrieval as being-possible. Instead of this fallen self-forgetting, it proclaims a return to the solitude, the resoluteness and the anguish of authentic self as being-until-death (cf. p.339). At the same time, although in a way not always easily reconcilable with other utterances in *Being and Time*, it also advocates a taking care *with*

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2. 'das besorgende, gegenwärtigende Gegenwärtigen'.

*circumspection* of the factual things at hand (Zuhandenes) (p.326). This "with circumspection" refers back to §31 about understanding and transparency. The problem with this lies in the fact that, in almost all other utterances of the book, taking care, even when "with circumspection", is said to be inauthentic, as identical with "awaiting" and with inauthentic understanding (cf. p.146, 337-339). Thus, we are brought back to our starting-point about authentic historicity versus "the modern". Heidegger's treatment of falling and "the modern" is meant as a severe warning against the constant uprooting of Dasein's existential self-understanding. The proposed regaining of authentic self-being--authentic historicity--is no less than an undoing of the making present of the today and of the habituation to the conventionalities of the today (p.391). That this is anything but an easy task is strongly felt by the author in the next paragraph, where he admits that the existential interpretation of the historicity of Dasein constantly gets into obscurities. These are all the more difficult to dispel, he continues, because everything here is haunted "by the *enigma of being* and, as has now become clear, of *movement*" (p.392).

For more than one reason, this is a remarkable statement. First of all, it gives evidence to Heidegger's persisting doubts and repeated self-questionings throughout the development of his ontological argument. That the meaning of *being* remains after all a riddle, echoes another far-reaching critical question Heidegger asks himself. For, after having come to a final statement as to the meaning of resoluteness and authenticity, Heidegger concludes with the rather demystifying question whether, after all, his existential interpretations cannot be reduced to a factual ideal of Dasein (p.310). The answer is "yes, indeed": we are forced to grant it, be it as a positive necessity for the kind of investigation we lead. The statement of p.392 is

also surprising because of the unexpected *doubling* it admits in the philosophical problematic of *Being and Time*, for reasons not unrelated to the first. It shows that Heidegger has gone beyond his initial *ontological* task of a retrieval of the question of the meaning of being--of the being of Dasein (§2).

The distinction between the authentic and the inauthentic mode of being-a-Dasein comports, besides an existential-ontological meaning on the level of possibility, an "*existentiell*" meaning as well on the level of actuality. Living Dasein has to choose for itself in one way or the other, and it does so always in one way or the other. In fact, this doubleness is already latent in § 4 : "Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence, in terms of its possibility to be itself or not to be itself. ... Existence is decided only by each Dasein itself..." (p.12).

There is a strong voluntaristic side to the being of Dasein in *Being and Time*. This means that *being* a Dasein cannot be reduced to its own self-understanding (understanding of being). If this is so, then Dasein can *move* in two different directions--which leads us back to Heidegger's analysis of historicity, retrieval, modernity and the movement of Dasein. Of this *movement*, it is now said (p.392) that it remains a riddle. Why this movement remains unexplained, or at least enigmatic, is to be examined next.

### **An ontological reduction of the meaning of movement**

It is well-known that Heidegger undertook his analysis of the being of Dasein as part of his renewal of the question of the meaning of Being. As the asker of the question, Dasein is the privileged being to be interrogated in order to uncover the meaning of Being as temporality (§5). Less known, however, is that Heidegger also explicitly states

that his existential analysis of Dasein is meant to free the living Dasein for its extreme ("äußerste") possibility of existence (cf. §61, p.303). The analysis should lead to the acquisition of a radically new insight into existential truth: this is an insight of which it is presumed that it possesses the liberating force of freeing Dasein to itself. It does so by delivering Dasein from the self-estrangement which is said to be proper to everydayness in the world. Still less known is the implicit conviction which becomes, nevertheless, apparent towards the end of *Being and Time*-- that this new account of the temporal meaning of the being of Dasein must also be seen as a new way to clarify that which, as we saw, is called the "riddle of motion" (§75, p.392). Indeed, towards the end of *Being and Time*, it is explicitly said that it belongs to the purpose of the final paragraphs "to face .. the ontological enigma of the [historical] occurrence ("das Geschehen") in general" (p.389).

Unfortunately, this threefold purpose of *Being and Time* turned out to be a threefold failure. It is not entirely made clear, after all, how the analysis of the being of Dasein could lead us further with respect to the renewal of the question of being in general. Moreover, the projected liberation of Dasein for its ownmost possibility leads us, as we will show, into a blind alley. It runs aground because of the fact that the existential analysis does not formulate a convincing answer to the not-so marginal question as to "by what" the will might be moved to really choose and to will its withdrawal from the rapturous and quietening sphere of fallen everydayness under the lead of the "They" ("*das Man*"). Let us accept that Heidegger assumes the old adage of the gospel of John that truth makes us free<sup>3</sup>. Thus, it is only in the light of truth and of understanding that we can

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3. *John*, 8,32.

discover our most proper ("*eigenste*") possibility. Unfortunately, however, the existential truth which is revealed in *Being and Time* is not meant as the intelligible presentation of any *good* or telos to be striven for in order to be really ourselves, but as the unveiling of something which, if it does not repel us once and for all, at least will never fail to frighten us very profoundly. There is a good reason, therefore, to say, as on p.193, that everyday fallenness is a way for Dasein to comport itself *unwillingly* towards its possibilities. On what grounds, then, can it be said of this repelling and anxiety-giving truth that it has the force of moving the will to withdraw from the certainties and the apparent quietude of common everydayness, in order to prefer instead the rather deterring truth of authenticity?

The consequences of this absence of a truly moving and motivating principle for Dasein in *Being and Time* appears most clearly in what I would call the "cul-de-sac" of Heidegger's explanation of the *motion* of Dasein under the heading of "historicity". To begin with, the meaning of this motion is submitted to an "ontological reduction" which consists in the rejection or suppression of all "real" or "modern" future-directedness in the world, and so also of the kind of hope and expectation which belongs to it. All this is pushed to the side of inauthenticity, business and absorption in the world. In fact, the true meaning of movement is ultimately thought of in terms of "resoluteness" ("*Entschlossenheit*") (§74), that is, as the inner withdrawal ("*Zurücknahme*", p.308)<sup>4</sup> of Dasein from its immediate and everyday-attachment to its factual possibilities in the world, in order to free itself for the anticipation of death (p.308-309). Heidegger does not mean this as a call for the suppression of all action as such, but

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4. The Buddhist ideal of non-attachment is not far away.

rather as a radical acceptance of the finitude and ultimate nothingness of our being-in-the-world. Dasein is not a being that has to "realize" itself in the world as if it were itself a substance bound to the fulfilment of its own nature. The being of Dasein is the being of the ground of a nothingness (§58). In this way, the resolute acceptance of the hopelessness of existence is constitutive for the authenticity of Dasein. It is not action, creativity or modernity, but "Entschlossenheit" (resoluteness) as the inner withdrawal of Dasein which is, therefore, the "true" way of projection of Dasein's being. Our critical question, then, is the following: How can a philosophy of perspectivelessness bring us closer to a better understanding of the *movement* of Dasein? How can Dasein continue to be in motion under the explicit absence of any form of authentic and non-illusionary telos in and for its being? How can motion remain possible at all, when the very possibility or finality ("for the sake of which") of Dasein is the withdrawal as such, i.e., when there is nothing to be striven for, nor something to be hoped for by Dasein, except its own becoming free for death? Let us, therefore, look more closely at Heidegger's explanation of motion in *Being and Time*.

This explanation is presented in terms of the temporal structure of Dasein. The way of being of Dasein is characterized first and foremost by its future-directedness (p.327). Dasein is "ahead of itself" (§41) in its projection of its own possibilities *to be*. This is the very definition of its freedom as being free *for* its own possibility ("Seinkönnen"). It is in the analysis of "care" ("Sorge") (§41) that this being-ahead of oneself is uncovered as the finding-place of the temporal structure of Dasein, and hence of its freedom as "being-possible". This direction towards the future, however, should not be understood as a teleological movement towards a finalizing good, i.e., as a

striving for the good. On the contrary, it is constitutive of the existential thought of *Being and Time* to suspend (in an epochal sense) all ontical explanations of the movement of Dasein, in order to lead us to a truly ontological understanding of the same in terms of a future-oriented repetition or recapitulation ("*Wiederholung*", re-delivery) of the historical past in resolute openness for the situation. The ontological reinterpretation of movement in terms of the temporal structure of Dasein becomes obvious here. In this way, the character of movement proper to Dasein is reduced to that which, at the end of the book, will be called the *historicity* ("*Geschichtlichkeit*") of Dasein. That the being of Dasein is characterized by historicity means that Dasein *occurs*. Put in another philosophical language, one could say that Dasein has act-character; its being is a happening being, an event-like being. Dasein occurs because its being has a constitutive temporal meaning (cf. p.386). It is as an occurring being that Dasein can repeat a past, and thus inscribe itself in a history.

Heidegger's point seems to be the following. Future-directedness is not to be seen as a teleological aim which, in order to have any concreteness, is forced to turn back to the concrete and determinate possibilities of action in the world in which the meaning of this aim or will can be partially recognized in order to be realized. Such a view of historicity will be discarded as inauthentic or "modern". Authentic future-directedness is rather to be seen as the projection of one's own possibility-to-end. It is the consciousness of "the finitude of temporality" (p.386). Finitude (ending) is the ontological meaning which is to be discerned and also to be endorsed in our (enlightened) conversion towards the factual possibilities of existence handed over to us from out of the historical heritage. All truth seems already to be in the heritage that has been disfigured and denied by the "They". It is, nevertheless, by a



retrieval of the past that we, as Dasein, have to find and to choose our own *factical* possibility to exist authentically, i.e., that possibility by which we can give an "existenziell" simplicity (p.384) and coherence (p.387) to the being of our "da". In other words, Dasein has to choose its life-destiny in dialogue with the past. This factical possibility of "coherence", together with the choice for it, is called *fate* ("Schicksal"). "Schicksal" is the way of being of Dasein which is constitutive for its "historicity" and which grounds the possibility of history. This way of being is the authentic "occurring" ("Geschehen") of existence that arises from the future, in such a way that it gives to the *having-been* ("Gewesenheit") its characteristic priority in what is historical ("im Geschichtlichen"; in what is occurring) (p.386).

What we see here is in fact a reinterpretation of motion as "occurrence" (the "Geschichtlichkeit" of Dasein) under the *epoche* or reduction operated by the existential ontology of *Being and Time*. "Thus the interpretation of the historicity of Dasein turns out to be basically just a more concrete development of temporality" (p.382). Indeed, motion has now been reinterpreted in terms of Dasein's transcendental synthesis of (existential) time. The problem, however, is that this can only evidence the transcendental condition and the existential unicity of motion *in Dasein*, but not clarify the *dynamic* of existential motion *as motion*, i.e. the "existenziell" dynamic of choice and decision, and hence the "turn" taken by history. For the dynamic of movement is, even in *Being and Time*, related to the will. It is not by showing that motion in Dasein has the meaning of an "occurring" that the very *fact that* something happens *at all*, is explained, nor how or why it happens. On the contrary, motion seems to be reduced to a transcendental movement of circularity within Dasein as temporality (within Dasein's understanding of its temporality), in such a

way that it may appear as if the whole dynamic of movement were reducible to the "throwing" force of Being in Dasein. This will be examined next.

### The power-dynamic of thrownness

Historicity itself is to be understood from the fact that, for Heidegger at least, Dasein's orientation towards the future is nothing else than its resolute anticipation of death. This death, however, cannot give or show us any factual possibilities to be projected (p.383). Death does not motivate anything at all; for sure, it is not something to be realized at all (p.261). All that death can bring about is to *throw* us back (p.384-385), with the force of thrownness itself, upon our factual possibilities in the world, at least when Dasein understands itself authentically in *resoluteness*. These factual possibilities belong to the social life-world, as possibilities which we inherit together with others from the past. Most of the time, we are dominated by more immediate possibilities, giving way to the power of the "They". Amongst these more immediate and often misleading possibilities--or better, by withdrawing from them--truly enlightened Dasein will have to choose its own factual possibility of accepting and living in finitude. This is one amongst the various inherited possibilities of the "coming-back of the possible" (cf.p.391) thrown out of the past.

In order for this to occur, however, it is necessary for freedom to let death become *powerful* in Dasein (p.384). The *force* of death, then, is to *throw* us back upon ourselves and our finitude (p.384) in the world, so that we may assume the past possibilities as "ours" in the *Situation*, that is, in that free and always individual space of possibility which is opened up and determined by what is called "resoluteness" ("*Entschlossenheit*"; see especially §62). The personal *appropriation* of these factual possibilities is

called by Heidegger "repetition" ("*Wiederholung*"). This repetition involves the character of handing itself down ("*Ueberlieferung*", p.385). In this way, repetition is explained as the personal appropriation of something factual (a tradition) into which we are thrown.

The handing over (of the tradition) is made possible by Dasein's handing down of itself. Expressed in terms of existential temporality, all of this means that repetition or recapitulation is to be understood as a future-orientedness which does not lead to a *forgetting* of the past. Such a denial of the past was, as we saw, proper to that kind of *creativity* with "things" (p.339<sup>5</sup>), or *modernity* (p.391) and *progress* (p.386), which consists in a clearing out of the past through a craving for novelty--Heidegger calls it an ecstatical forgetting of the past (thrownness) as having-been (p.339). Repetition, on the contrary, is not a withdrawal from the past, but from the unreflected and immediate everyday-adherence to our factual possibilities in the world of "today". Elsewhere, this immediacy is characterized as a form of rigidity that can only be overcome through the resolute anticipation of death as Dasein's ultimate possibility (p.307). Repetition (redelivery) is the mark of Dasein's transcendence giving way to a recapitulation of the past by the inner withdrawal from all rigid self-attachment to the possibilities of the present (cf. p.307). Hence, to repeat the past is to reintroduce an authentic futural character into that past which thus becomes our "having-been" ("*Gewesen*").

The profound paradox of this explanation of the meaning of existence can now be made plain. The primordial and essential future-directedness of Dasein, so much emphasized in §§65 and 74, must in no way be seen as a coming *close* to any fulfilment or attainment of the

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5. 'geschöpfte Möglichkeiten'.

good, but as a withdrawal of all such kind of expectation. The meaning of being-towards the future is not one of expectation, but of anticipation of a loss: anticipation of death as the projection of Dasein's ultimate *impossibility*, in the name of which Dasein must withdraw itself from any form of "rigidity" in its situation. This cannot but mean that there is no moving-power operating at the heart of Dasein's direction towards the future, except thrownness. Such a future is not the arrival of something new, but only the springboard for a recapitulating endorsement of that element of factual non-transparency which is inherent to being-thrown.

This leads to a characteristic view on being authentic within one's own historical circumstances. These are seen as an obtrusive and tempting multitude of factual possibilities (cf. p.384) from which Dasein should withdraw, in order for it to choose that in the situation, which really matters to it in the light of its finitude. What matters to it, is that which it is capable of (p.336)--its being free for death (p.384), i.e. resoluteness and resignation. Only freedom for death can give to Dasein its "goal outright" ("*das Ziel schlechthin*"). This freedom is the appropriate criterion for choosing its historical possibility in the situation. In this way, the fate which I am choosing is handed down to me and personally chosen at one and the same time<sup>6</sup>. This is the only authority to which I can be faithful (cf. p.391), because I am the one who is making the choice for my being handed down to me as *my having been* (cf. p.339). Authentic historicity, therefore, consists in

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6. Understood in the usual way, fate is that which assigns to an individual what possibilities can befall him factually, that is, what experiences he can have. In Heidegger's use of the term, however, it is Dasein itself who, by its own choice, is responsible for the existential determination of its proper fate. Fate, therefore, is the possibility to choose and give a personal determination to one's own situation.

choosing one's hero (p.371, 385) of resoluteness and resignation out of the historical heritage<sup>7</sup> of the past.

### The riddle of movement unsolved

"But thus the enigma ultimately only becomes more acute; why is it that precisely the 'past,' or, more appropriately, the having-been *predominantly* determines what is historical when, after all, having-been temporalizes itself equiprimordially with present and future" (p.381, §73)? At the end of a long discourse, future-directedness or anticipating resoluteness seems to be reducible to a going back to the past (p.385; "*die Rückgang in Möglichkeiten des dagewesenen Daseins*")--and this without the intervention of any principle of Novelty in the name of which the past would be called back and could be reconstrued. No matter how much one might reply that these authentic possibilities are essentially future-oriented in themselves, it will always remain that that to which they are thus oriented has no meaning in itself, but has only the force to throw us back upon our past, in a circular movement *ad infinitum*.

This climbing down from future-directedness (or being ahead of oneself) to an authentic endorsement of the fortuities of a thrown past, cannot but make manifest the "cul-de-sac" of the explanation of *movement* in a philosophy of existence in which this being-ahead of oneself is by no means generated by an inner directedness towards a teleological principle by which Dasein would be moved and finalized from within. For Heidegger, Being-ahead of oneself has nothing to do with aiming at any final good attracting our will, nor is it a sign of being impregnated with the moving power of a transcendancy

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7. In fact, a *cultural* heritage, although Heidegger himself avoids the use of this term.

from out of which we are given to ourselves and which affirms itself at the root of all desire. Being-ahead of oneself derives instead from being thrown in the anticipation of one's own possibility of ending, by the force of which we are thrown back in an inexorable manner on the facticities of our past as the only basis of historical concreteness available to Dasein.

One could, of course, reply that there is no grounded reason for speaking of a "cul-de-sac" in a philosophy which claims of itself to be an ontology of the radical thrownness, temporality and finitude of the being of Dasein. My criticism, however, is addressed to the idea defended in §61 (p.303), that this existential interpretation should also be able to *free* a living Dasein for its extreme possibility of existence. To exist is more than understanding, uncovering and conceiving. On top of all this, we should say that, even for Heidegger, to exist is also a *willing*. Authentic existence consists in the preparedness of the will to appropriate that which has been uncovered for oneself in a "transparent" (§31) understanding of the totality of one's own being. (Existence is "*die ausdrückliche Zueignung des Erschlossenen*"--p.307; cf. p.222.) Existential analysis can bring us, as can anxiety, to the threshold of our existential possibilities; it cannot, however, enforce upon us any form of appropriation of them. Therefore, it is possible for Dasein to relate itself "unwillingly" (p.193) to its existential possibilities. We can avoid the possibility of death and shun its company by turning our eyes away from it. We can positively will not to see what we secretly understand. Although in *Being and Time*, understanding is never a distant and purely theoretical kind of understanding, but a practical kind, which projects a possibility by mentally anticipating it, this does not mean that will or choice could themselves be reduced to such an anticipation by the mind.

Understanding and willing (or choosing) do complement each other, but they are not the same.

If this is so, how is it then possible to proceed from a unveiled disclosure of what we are, to that kind of resolute choice for, or willing of, ourselves which is called by Heidegger "anticipatory resoluteness" ("*vorlaufende Entschlossenheit*"--p.325 sq.)? Or even more importantly, why should this uncovering of that which we really are have any specific existential consequences at all? Why would it not be possible for our anticipation of death to remain a sheer hypothetical possibility which we can pass lightly over after glancing rapidly through it, because it is and remains, after all, an aspect of our being which cannot but repel us and frighten us out of any idea of the appropriation of it as a true possibility of our own. How can we positively will to be the ground of a nothingness, as *Being and Time* explains the meaning of the voice of conscience (§58)? Moreover, by what means can our will be moved to defeat or to overturn its own tendency of falling which is characterized as a "*Bewegtheit*" (a movement, a kind of motion) of Dasein (p.178-180), yet without expressing any kind of negative evaluation, as Heidegger puts it on p.175? In other words, how can we be moved or brought back from everyday fallenness to existential authenticity--that is also called "wanting to have a conscience" ("*gewissen-haben-wollen*" (p.288); or "letting itself be called forth" ("*Sichvorrufenlassen*"--p.287)? The absence of a convincing answer to that crucial question is the true reason for the blind alley of *Being and Time*.

One might reply that it is proper to the voice of conscience to call us into the truth of our being. This answer, however, is far from convincing. The problem is that, for Heidegger, the phenomenon of conscience should first of all be seen and analyzed as a phenomenon of ontological understanding of the truth. It is a phenomenon

which, in order to understand it in its original sense, must be abstracted from all its usual ethical connotations (p.269, 282-3). Seen in that manner, the call of conscience is in fact the way in which the uncanniness of our being pursues us in the false quietude of everyday fallenness. It is the way in which Dasein can be reminded by itself of itself. It is the calling in us of the truth of the nothingness of our being<sup>8</sup>. Yet following the voice of conscience is even for Heidegger the result of a form of *hearing* which is formally constituted by a positive willingness *to* be recalled from everyday fallenness. In this way, the will is put again at the centre of the phenomenon of understanding as hearing. "Understanding the appeal" means "wanting to have a conscience" (p.288)<sup>9</sup>. "It reaches him who wants to be brought back" (p.271)<sup>10</sup>. The decisive step towards a positive choice for the appropriation of the truth (the explicit appropriation of what has been disclosed--p.307) is, therefore, not made by a mere unveiling or understanding of the "truth of existence" (p.308), but by the will<sup>11</sup>.

So why could the self not judge at this point that the truth is far too absurd and abominable to be honoured by an act of appropriation by the will? Is my freedom, after all, not too precious to be commanded by the frightening absurdity of freeing myself for death or, as p.310 puts it in an almost pseudo-religious sense: "to follow the call of

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8. It is characteristic that 'Gewißheit' ('being-certain') p.307, as 'die ausdrückliche Zuordnung des Erschlossenen', and hence as 'Entschlossenheit', is said to be a 'Für-wahr-halten' (taking for true) *before* it is also called a 'Sich-frei-halten-für' (p.308).

9. 'Anrufverstehen besagt: Gewissen-haben-wollen'.

10. 'Vom Ruf getroffen wird, wer zurückgeholt sein will.'

11. Understanding cannot be reduced, therefore, to the more active side of Heidegger's 'Verstehen' as 'projection' and 'appropriation' of what is understood. There is also the part of 'Vernehmen' in it. Yet, here again, this 'Vernehmen' cannot be separated from the will, since this 'Vernehmen' is characterized as an *obeying* (hearing) to the truth of the being in which we are thrown. Being "speaks" in our obeying understanding of it.



conscience and to free for death the possibility of acquiring power over Dasein's existence ..."? How can a truth, which I can in no way understand as the unveiling of a positive good to be striven for by the will, have any existential consequences at all? This is the question to which *Being and Time* could not find a convincing answer within the confines of its ontological reduction. This blind alley becomes very obvious when Heidegger, on p.310, has to ask himself the crucial question already mentioned -- is his ontological interpretation of Dasein not dependent, after all, on a *factual ideal*, on a definite ontical way of understanding authentic existence? His answer is "that this is so indeed". This fact, he continues, is not only not to be denied, but also must be conceived in its positive necessity for the object of the investigation. This means, in fact, that the question as to the concrete possibility of an appropriation of the existential truth cannot be solved within the limits of the "ontological reduction" operated by *Being and Time*. The question cannot be taken apart from concretely lived self-consciousness or ideal of the will.

Are there, then, other ideals by which it is possible to live and to understand the reality of existence, its temporality and its finitude? Of course there are. But this is not the right question. The right question is whether the acceptance of finitude and the banishing of all teleological explanation of the *movement* of the human being are necessarily *one and the same*. It seems to me that they are not, and that Heidegger's explanation of the movement of Dasein is itself a failure. Other existential principles will, therefore, have to be invoked at the root of authentic human experience before we will be in a position to think, on an existential level, the whole enigma of the living movement of mortal-Being-in-the-world; that is, before it will be possible to demonstrate the inadmissibility of Heidegger's attempt to push away human desire--and the longing and

expectation which belong to it--into the sphere of the illusions and false certainties of everyday business with the "things of the world" and as "looking for the modern".

### **Desire, joy, and religion**

It will by now be clear that *Being and Time* can by no means give way to an ontology of religion which could be based on the recognition of the *moving* power of a natural desire for the absolute in man. Nor does it accord any ontological validity to a movement towards a wholeness that would be other than the preparedness to give oneself up (p.264). Heidegger's ontology remains neutral with respect to the problem of religion in so far as religion, like desire, is not itself counted as belonging to the existentials of Dasein. In the same way that being-guilty can be said to be the existential condition of possibility of morality (p.286) -- morality itself thereby remaining an "ontical" affair -- so it would probably not be against the spirit of Heidegger's ontological thought to hold the view that "being unto death," lived as readiness to give up oneself, might very well be called the existential condition of possibility of religion (or, at least, of faith<sup>12</sup>). Nevertheless, like desire, religion<sup>13</sup> as a human phenomenon remains a blind spot in Heidegger's thought at this stage. That the human being is something that goes beyond itself is an idea having its roots in Christian dogmatics, Heidegger rather bluntly decrees on p.49. With respect to religion, this seems to be the end of the matter. In any case, death ontologically reinterpreted is not a "going beyond," although in anguish it has a rather ecstatic character (giving power to death over oneself). All religious or mystical interpretation of the "meaning" of death would, therefore, remain an "ontical

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12. Cf. p.249, note on Paul and Calvin.

13. Religion, but not (the Lutheran) faith; cf. p.10.

idea" which has its condition of possibility in "ending," but without being ontologically implied in it.

Yet there remains that curious passage on p.310, otherwise one of the most enigmatic sentences of the whole book, which goes as follows: "Together with the sober anguish that brings us before our singularized possibility-to-be ("*Seinkönnen*"), goes the unshakeable joy in this possibility." Joy goes together with "*Angst*", although not being identical with it. How can the understanding of finitude and radical nothingness give way to an "unshakeable joy"? In this possibility, Heidegger continues, Dasein becomes free of the entertaining accidentalities that busy curiosity provides for itself, primarily in terms of what is given in the world.

Is this joy, then, the joy of freedom, the joy of being freed from absorption in the world? But how can the uncanniness of nothingness inspire us to such an unshakeable joy? (We return to the same kind of question already raised with respect to the riddle of motion.) Or might it rather be that the *going together* of anguish and joy must be interpreted in such a way, that only the lucid acceptance and letting-be of our own nothingness can open our eyes to a source of joy which is itself of a higher order<sup>14</sup>? a source of joy enclosed in Being, in so far that it *transcends* the being of Dasein as such? For Heidegger, however, we have to wait until 1945 before we read that the meaning of the giving up of oneself (*Being and Time*, p.264) must not be limited to a surrendering to nothingness, as "sacrifice is the parting from beings on the way to the guarding of the favour of Being."<sup>15</sup>

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14. 'Higher' in the sense of Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* 6.432: 'How things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher. God does not reveal himself in the world'.

15. Martin Heidegger, Postscript to "What is Metaphysics?", *Wegmarken*, p.106).