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# **A hermeneutics of the ontology of time and technology**

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## *Abstract*

There is a double meaning in the name of this thesis. This duality emerges from how the term ‘hermeneutics’ can be applied. In one sense the hermeneutics of this thesis is a textual interpretation of the philosophical history of ontology. This is an interpretation of ontological theory from its genesis with the Pre-Socratic concern with the ‘question of being’ and onwards through its salient historical developments up until the early twentieth century. The thesis interprets these developments as nevertheless maintaining a foundational understanding of ‘being’ as ‘quiddity’ or ‘what-ness’. While the ontological tradition diverges over disagreements about ‘realism’, ‘idealism’, or ‘nominalism’, for example, these disagreements are interpreted as having an unchanging understanding of ‘being’ in terms of ‘what-ness’ that unites them. Furthermore, this traditional understanding of ‘being’ as ‘what-ness’ is documented as having an implicit connection to a conceptual model of human understanding that divides the knowing subject from the known object. In opposition to a prominent interpretation that identifies this model as a Cartesian development, it is rather presented that it has roots that can be found within the philosophy of Plato. Moreover, this model is interpreted as being contingent on the technological development and adoption of literacy that predicated an emergent and reflexive understanding of the ‘what-ness’ of the self-subject.

However, this textual hermeneutics of the history of ontology also presents the challenge to understanding ‘being’ as ‘what-ness’ that occurred in the early twentieth century. This is found in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, and in particular in his treatise *Being and Time*. This alternative understanding of ‘being’ is interpreted as presenting an ontology of ‘how-ness’. This understanding of ‘being’ as ‘how-ness’, as opposed to ‘what-ness’, is presented through Heidegger’s introduction of the concept of the ‘ontological difference’. This concept, it is shown, enables Heidegger’s understanding of human existentiality as self-interpretation. In addition, the inheritance of this ontological thesis of self-interpretative existence is traced from its phenomenological, hermeneutic, and existentialist roots. This includes the analysis of the ideas of such scholars as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, and Edmund Husserl. Through documenting this provenance, the duality of this thesis’ title is demonstrated. It is not only a textual hermeneutics that is presented in this treatise, but also an example of hermeneutic phenomenology. Hermeneutic phenomenology, as Heidegger argued, is presented as the methodology for an ontology that understands human existentiality as self-interpretative. This methodology is analysed, and differing interpretations of its processes are critiqued. Furthermore, by interpreting human

existentiality as hermeneutic, Heidegger's understanding of 'being' as temporal is elucidated. The thesis of the temporality of human existentiality is then explained in terms of its structure as 'being-in-the-world'. The equiprimordial characteristics of 'being-in-the-world' are analysed, such as 'who-ness', 'there-ness', and 'world-ness', and these are shown to together constitute human existentiality. The thesis then concludes by demonstrating how this hermeneutic phenomenology of ontological 'how-ness' also enables the explication of the temporality of technological existentiality.

## *Preface*

Writing this thesis has proved to be a truly frustrating exercise. Aside from my own quirks as a writer, which have a tendency to slow progress generally, this has been down to the exasperatingly opaque subject material that the thesis draws upon. The traditions of phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics, and others, often blithely sandwiched into an undifferentiated label of ‘continental philosophy’, have, in their various ways, provided some of the most important philosophical insights into the questions of human existence that can be found. A key strength that they have is the very willingness to tackle these questions in the first place. However, these strengths are all too easily overlooked when compared to the anarchy of neologisms and idiosyncratic uses and abuses of language that they also produce. This problem is only worsened when some other authors adopt, or appropriate, the styles and manners of these traditions to produce material that while superficially resembling their hosts, lacks the underlying structural understanding of the concepts involved to produce meaningful content. As well as contributing little value of their own, such work also manages to damage the reputations of the various philosophical traditions that it apes. Consequently, casual readers coming across such dross can be forgiven for wrongly concluding that little of value will be found in studying these subjects in greater depth.

Because of this situation it is very tempting to blame these traditions for their clumsy use of language and deployment of concepts. It seems straightforward to argue that the chicanery that belittles them would not be so easy to perpetrate if they developed a superior stability and ordering of their ideas and used a more established vernacular. However, the situation is sadly more complicated than this, and for more than one reason. Firstly, the idiosyncratic language that many phenomenologists, existentialists, and hermeneutically inclined theorists utilise is not developed on an arbitrary whim. Their motivation is frequently the desire to critique the metaphysical heritage that permeates our conventional understanding of the world and ourselves. In the attempt to break away from this heritage they deploy neologisms and other linguistic techniques that do not imply the traditional dichotomies and systems of thought with which more conventional language is saddled.

Given then that these philosophers require their unusual turns of phrase, the opacity of their prose could still be reduced if they systematised their arguments in order to produce greater coherency in the general discourse of their interrelated traditions. It would seem acceptable that even if a group of philosophers disagreed on the specifics of their critiques, they could still develop a general structure or system for presenting a unified account of how and why they deal with questions of human existence in the way that they do. In many ways

the success of the Enlightenment was based on providing such general structures that enabled bodies of knowledge to be easily related to each other, and it seems a shame that such a model has not been replicated here. However, this too is stymied by the content of the actual philosophy. Many of the philosophers involved in the traditions I have been discussing were notably antithetical about the possibility of systematising an account of human existence, and those who were not so at first often changed their view on this later in their life. Personally I am more optimistic than this. While I doubt that a general structure that will provide a better clarity of the interrelated ideas of traditions such as phenomenology, existentialism, and hermeneutics will be arrived at easily, I nevertheless believe, perhaps unfashionably, that the possibility remains and can be worked towards.

One philosopher that fits the category of an early systematiser who later moved away from such a project was Martin Heidegger. Heidegger's *magnum opus*, however, was *Being and Time*, a text he produced in his earlier systematising period, and which is the key text for my thesis. However, while attempting to provide a systematic account of the scope of human existence, he also engaged, for his own theoretical reasons, in the development of the idiosyncratic language that I've been detailing. The consequence of this is my aforementioned frustration in writing this thesis, of how to communicate important ideas on the ontology of human existence while drawing upon Heidegger as well as from many other important philosophers in the area who each used their own idiosyncratic terminology. To this end I have attempted to utilise a systematic structure to avoid replicating the often gnomic qualities of my sources while preserving the meaning of their ideas. Whether or not the reader agrees with the analyses contained in this thesis, I hope at least to have communicated them in a manner that does not frustrate the attempt to understand them.

I would like to make several acknowledgements. I would not have been able to write this thesis without the support of the whole community of scholarship that thrives at Humanities Advanced Technology Information Institute (HATII). The many helpful comments I have received over the last three years from staff and fellow PhD students has been of an immense help to me in formulating my understanding and interpretation of the central concerns of ontology, hermeneutics, and phenomenology. I would like to thank all my colleagues who took an interest in studying Heidegger and attended the reading seminars on *Being and Time*, and all those who attend the seminars of the Centre for Technology and Phenomenological Research. The funding I received from Glasgow University enabled me to take the time to study for a PhD, the value of which cannot be overlooked. A special mention needs to be made about the assistance I have received from Elaine Wilson over the years,



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## *Prologue*

This thesis analyses the hermeneutic phenomenology of the ontology of the ‘how-ness’ of ‘being’, and in particular the ‘how-ness’ of time and technology. This hermeneutic phenomenology is carried out through a close exegesis of the twentieth century philosopher Martin Heidegger’s philosophical texts, and in particular his *Being and Time*. This is structured over three chapters, which are predicated on a recursive investigation of the question of ‘being’ and human existentiality. The thesis can also be characterised as being constituted by eight aspects, which will be outlined in this prologue to the thesis. However, these eight aspects are not described in terms of a linear order in which they occur in the thesis, and are only being outlined here as an interpretative aid to reading the thesis.

The fulcrum of this investigation is one particular concept. This concept, introduced by Heidegger, is the ‘ontological difference’. The ontological difference is one of the most important concepts in the history of philosophy. It enables a shift from considering the ontology of entities in terms of their ‘ontical what-ness’, or ‘quiddity’, to the ontology of the ‘being’ of entities. Implicit in Heidegger’s text *Being and Time* and explicit in the lecture course that followed it, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, the ontological difference is a distinction between ‘being’ and ‘entities’. The ‘being’ of an entity is not its ‘what-ness’ but rather a complex, yet unified, phenomenological architecture including structures such as the ‘there-ness’, ‘who-ness’, ‘they-ness’, and ‘world-ness’ of an entity. These are characterised in this thesis as constituting the ‘how-ness’ of one particular entity, the ‘human being’, as a unified ‘being-in-the-world’. For example, a teapot as an entity has many investigable ‘ontical’ qualities that make up its ‘what-ness’ – form, material, colour, decoration and so forth. But the ‘being’ of the teapot, its ‘how-ness’, is none of these qualities, and only begins to become intelligible as part of the contextual totality of ‘how’ it is encountered in the human ontological structure of being-in-the-world. It is through this ‘ontological difference’ distinction that the criticism of the history of Western ontology as a ‘metaphysics of presence’ has been derived, built upon the fundamental ‘what-ness’ characterisation of a knower-subject entity that thinks about known-object entities. This is the cognitive subject-object model of understanding. By critiquing this model, we can phenomenologically follow Heidegger in being able to characterise all previous philosophy and ontology as having misunderstood the ‘question of being’ in terms of the ‘what is’. The tradition of ontology is revealed as having served the analysis of ‘ontical’ characteristics of entities, while usage of the term ‘ontological’ is now appropriated, as by Heidegger, for the study of what pertains to ‘being’.

There is a twofold difficulty regarding the ontological difference. The first is clarifying the meaning and the importance of the distinction, and the analysis drawn from it. To convincingly demonstrate the claim, a detailed and thorough analysis of the history of ontology is required. However, this is not as simple as comparing one old sense of a term and its tradition with a new one, for the history of ontological thought does not possess the degree of homogeneity that such a straightforward approach would require. Rather, the multifarious interpretations of 'being' that existed before the concept of the 'ontological difference' was introduced have to be carefully separated and evaluated. Only then can the new understanding of ontology be elucidated, and potentially accepted. This task represents the first aspect of the thesis. We will later be able to characterise this critical analytic of the history of the ontological tradition as an aspect of the phenomenological method that is called the 'phenomenological destruction'. Yet this characterisation will be recursively reinterpreted as such only after the introduction of the concept of phenomenology.

The second difficulty pertaining to the 'how-ness' understanding of ontology, which proceeds from a positive result regarding the validity of the ontological difference, is how to implement it methodologically for the analysis of 'being'. The method that was initially submitted by Heidegger for this task was the emerging discipline of phenomenology. However, phenomenological inquiry was not a technique that Heidegger first introduced. While it had existed as a term for many years, it was not until Edmund Husserl appropriated the word for his brilliant new methodology that it gained formal structure. Husserl was Heidegger's main philosophical mentor, and in such a context it might seem surprising that such a degree of originality be attributed to Heidegger. Yet Heidegger's usage of phenomenology is conventionally understood to be dramatically different from Husserl's, even antagonistic. Nevertheless, some scholars have raised doubts about the traditionally held polemic existing between Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology, which includes reappraising whether Husserl had an orientation to ontology in Heidegger's sense of the term. This claim is difficult to substantiate given that Husserl's use of the word 'ontology' was unambiguously in the ontical sense as criticised by Heidegger. However, a deeper analysis of Husserl's phenomenology in relation to Heidegger's may reveal some grounds for this counterintuitive claim. This comparative analysis represents the second aspect of the thesis, which is distributed throughout the thesis as are all the aspects, and ranges from comparisons of methodological concepts such as Husserl's 'epoché' and Heidegger's 'formal indication', to comparisons of phenomenological observations such as Husserl's 'life-world' and Heidegger's 'with-world'.

The goal of this descriptive analysis is not only to establish whether Husserl's phenomenology can provide techniques alongside Heidegger's for inquiring into 'being', it also starts the phenomenological investigation. This process occurs through a central theme of the thesis, its recursive structure. Initially this recursion is a small feature, such as involving going back into Husserl's and Heidegger's phenomenology throughout the thesis in order to enable a systematic usage of the concept of phenomenology. In particular the area of phenomenological interest in this third aspect of the thesis relates to the phenomena of time, temporality, and historicity, and to their relationship with 'being'.

The phenomenological ontology of historicity splits, as the fourth aspect of the thesis, into two separate regions. One region is the analysis of hermeneutics, while the other is existentialism. The relevance of these dual regions results from the Heideggerian conception of the temporalised self-interpreting 'existence' of the human entity. The development of an understanding of the history of hermeneutics is the fifth aspect of the thesis, and traces the salient features in the development of hermeneutical concepts and methods of interpretation in Friedrich Schleiermacher's textual hermeneutics and Wilhelm Dilthey's hermeneutics of the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*), to Heidegger's characterisation of human 'being' as hermeneutical. This characterisation of human existentiality as hermeneutical unites this exegesis with the existentialist tradition of thought, where human 'being' is regarded as anti-essentialist and 'self-making'.

The phenomenological analysis of the temporality and historicity of human 'potentiality-for-being' unites and utilises the dual traditions of hermeneutics and existentialism to further the investigation of 'being'. One specific concern, however, is with the hermeneutic phenomenology of the ontological tradition itself, that is, that is the phenomenological uncovering of the historical contingency of human 'being' in its understanding about the 'being' of the world. This process, it will be shown, also closely mirrors Heidegger's proposed technique for the dismantling of the history of ontology from *Being and Time*, which as we have previously mentioned is called the phenomenological destruction. This represents a double hermeneutic of the phenomenology of 'being'. Within the hermeneutic phenomenological description of the development of human 'being' there is the spiral between the historical development of 'being' and the historical understanding of 'being'.

It is in this context of the hermeneutical contingency of human 'being' within the understanding of 'being', that the sixth aspect of the thesis proceeds to reinterpret ontology as representing not only the general study of the 'how-ness' of 'being', to also representing

the study of the equiprimordially constitutive parts of this ‘how-ness’. One such ‘part’ is the ready-to-hand ‘technological’ disclosure of being-in-the-world. The argument here is that if the study and comprehension of ‘being’ is an aspect of the ‘making’ of ‘being’, then that study and comprehension of ‘being’ cannot be thought of as a passive process, but is rather intrinsically bound as a utility in the ‘referential totality’ of ‘being’ – though it is necessary at this stage of our description to be careful not to accidentally appear to be reifying ‘being’ as if it were the onticality of an entity. To aid in avoiding this entanglement, disclosure of the ‘being’ of world through its ‘modal’ constitution as ‘technology’ will be formally indicated, in the Heideggerian sense of indication, in the later part of the thesis by the term ‘techné’.

The seventh aspect of the thesis turns to the phenomenological investigation of technology, or techné. Through this, technology will be characterised as an ‘existentialia’ of human ‘being’, that is, part of its existential constitution. The technologies of the arrangement, inscription, depiction, and dissemination of meaning will be our primary focus in the early part of the thesis. These technologies, which are sometimes collectively known as information and communication technologies, are primarily represented by the systems of orality and language, literacy, print culture, and the emergent digital culture of computers. These technologies will be analysed in terms of their disclosive capacities through the established horizon of temporality and historicity, and their techné modality will be established as part of the totality of being-in-the-world.

The eighth aspect of the thesis involves a final recursive move back into the history of ontology. The concern now is to reinterpret the hermeneutic spiral between the formation of ‘being’ and the comprehension of ‘being’ through the additional discrimination of the historical development of technology or techné. This process will be analysed through the particular lens of the transition from a primarily oral culture to a primarily literate culture of Plato’s Greece as found in the thesis of Eric Havelock’s *Preface to Plato*, and will involve a textual hermeneutical analysis of Plato’s concern about the impact of writing on human memory from the *Phaedrus*.

## Chapter 1

### The History of Ontology and the Question of ‘Being’

#### §1 – *Guide to chapter one*

In this chapter the history of the ontological tradition of ‘quiddity’ or ‘what-ness’ is presented. This tradition begins with the Pre-Socratic introduction of the ‘question of being’ and the formative contributions of Plato and Aristotle to this question. The chapter continues with the history of this ontological tradition by presenting and analysing the subsequent philosophers and scholars who made the most salient and influential contributions since this inception. The analysis of the history of this ontological tradition continues with its development until the period when it is critiqued by the philosopher Martin Heidegger. The chapter also documents the relationship of ‘what-ness’ ontology with the foundations of the subject-object model of human understanding, and with the historical development of information technologies such as literacy.

#### §1.1 – *Summary of the ontological tradition of quiddity*

The term that has arisen for the study of ‘being’ is ‘ontology’. However, under the dominion of competing academic traditions the meaning of this term has become as ambiguous as the concept of ‘being’ that it is supposed to study. This ambiguity has a certain irony considering that ontology has represented the ‘proto-question’ for establishing the basic concepts – or ‘first principles’ – upon which all other concepts could be grounded upon. In this sense ontology is the attempt to determine the anterior categories of existence. However, this is not the only sense in which the name ‘ontology’ has been applied. The ambiguity that the term provokes does not merely stem from idiomatic inconsistencies, though this is common, but also from fundamental incompatibilities about the idea of ‘being’. There are at least three major senses in which the word ontology can be used, and these different senses represent notably distinct fields of inquiry. The first sense is a general concern with understanding what entities can be said to exist. The second sense is a particular concern with what the existence of an entity ‘is’, with the ‘what-ness’ of entities. These two interrelated senses are the traditional interpretations of the word ‘ontology’. The third sense of ontology was developed principally in the twentieth century as a criticism of the conceptual limitations of this tradition, and attempts to analyse the ‘how-ness’ of entities. However, a grasp of the two traditional senses of ontology are required before this newer sense of ontology can be explained.

The first major sense of ‘ontology’ is as the foundational understanding of existence of a group or person, hereafter referred to as the subject. In this sense, ontology is the subject’s understanding of the totality of what ‘is’. It is the subject’s view of what exists, and potentially also why it exists. Because of this, ontology, used in this sense, is similar to the concept of a ‘worldview’, in so far as a particular conception of the world may also necessitate an understanding of how to act in that world that usually accompanies a ‘worldview’. This sense of ontology can be differentiated from the concept of the worldview, however, in terms of the ontology representing the underlying categorial structure of ‘what is’ that provides the subject’s framework for understanding existence and upon which the worldview is based.

The idea of the ‘categorial structure’ is central in this sense of ontology. To illustrate with an example, an abridged categorial structure could be one where the subject held that there was three types of a certain ‘thing’<sup>1</sup>: a gold type, a silver type, and a bronze type. Each type would have certain attributes associated with it that differentiated it from the other types of that ‘thing’. This would then lead to a view, implicit or explicit, of the essence of each type, a ‘gold-ness’, a ‘silver-ness’, or a ‘bronze-ness’. This categorial structure, however, would be challenged if a type were encountered, an iron type for example, that did not conform to the existing understanding of how the ‘thing’ was composed. Many reactions could then follow this encounter such as a process of restructuring their categorial structure to include the new type, a widening of the account of the essence of one of the existing types so that the new type would be included as subtype of one of the originals, or an attempt to eliminate or discount the new type in order to preserve the existing categorial structure. The act of categorial adjustment could belong to a process of logical assessment of the available evidence, to an *ad hoc* arbitrary decision, or to a variety of intermediary acts between these broad generalisations.

This sense of ontology, the subject’s categorial structure of their understanding of existence, can be divided into whether the ontology is ‘classical’ or ‘noetic’. The ‘classical’ understanding of existence correlates to what is sometimes called ‘metaphysical realism’, and sometimes also ‘pragmatic realism’. Its characteristic is that the subject regards the actualities of existence as being independent of their own existence. In this ‘classical’ conception the subject’s ontology may either correctly or incorrectly correspond to these actualities of existence. The ‘noetic’ variant, however, differs from this ‘classical’ conception through what might be called its ‘egocentric’ or self oriented attitude, and this can be further divided on

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Thing’ is here used in the widest and most general sense possible, and could refer not only to objects but also to people, ideas, opinions, processes and any other actual, possible, or even impossible existents.

whether it is a weak attitude or a strong attitude. The weak 'noetic' attitude holds that the experience of existence is predicated on the operations of the human mind, and consequently that a mind independent understanding of existence is impossible. This version of 'noetic' ontology can also be called the epistemological variant. The strong 'noetic' attitude, however, holds that there is no difference between existence and the experience of existence, and therefore that existence is predicated on the operations of the human mind. This version of 'noetic' ontology can be correlated with what is sometimes called 'dogmatic idealism'.

The second major sense of ontology is arguably the more abstract version, however it is nevertheless closely related to the first. In the example used above for describing the idea of a subject's 'categorical structure' it was mentioned that this structure could require adjustment if it became challenged by a previously unknown existent. The second usage of ontology can describe the process of analysis that ascertains the categorical understanding of existence. The distinction is that whereas the first sense of ontology referred to the subject's understanding of what 'is', the second sense refers to study of what 'is-ness' 'is'. This is the question of the *quiddity*, or *quidditas*, of an existent – its 'what-ness'. While the first sense of ontology was concerned with understanding what has existence, the second concerns understanding what an existent is. This is expressed as questioning 'being' *qua* 'being' – 'being' in its capacity as 'being'.

The most common examples of ontology in the sense of the study of 'being' *qua* 'being' are known as 'substance ontologies' and 'process ontologies', and there are many variations within these two types. A non-pluralist substance ontology typically holds that there is a fundamental component of existence, the 'being' of 'things', and that it is a bearer of properties that has no properties of its own. This is because if this substance had properties then something even more fundamental would arguably have to exist to bear them, which logically leads to infinite regression of ever more fundamental substances. Pluralist versions of substance ontologies hold that an indefinite number of 'things' exist in a unique way and that these 'things' cannot consequently be understood as having a fundamental characteristic in common. Furthermore, substance ontologies also commonly give rise to a view that 'things' have an 'essence', typically viewed as the fundamental 'being' of the 'thing' once all of its accidental properties are removed or discounted, and which cannot undergo any form of change without the 'thing' itself being destroyed. Change, however, is a central concept in process ontologies. A process ontologist generally holds either that the 'being' of 'things' are dynamic processes, or that processes give rise to their 'being'. In such process ontologies concepts relating 'time' and 'being' predominate as matters of concern. It is also possible for



an ontological pluralist to hold some form of hybridised ontology, in which both ‘substance’ and ‘process’ share a role as basic categories of existence.

The type of ontology in the sense of studying ‘being’ *qua* ‘being’ can also be subdivided into another two parts, as ‘general’ or ‘formal’ ontology, and ‘regional’ or ‘material’ ontology. A ‘formal ontology’ seeks to determine either or both the general and universal structures of existence, as the ontologist may hold ‘general’ and ‘universal’ to be potentially different categories. Examples of formal categories in a pluralist substance ontology could include ‘substance’, ‘quantity’, and ‘quality’. While the permutations of formal ontology are many, they are usually developed in order so that they can be employed in the analysis of regions of existence. These are the ‘regional ontologies’, which are the analyses of the structures of particular categories of existence such as ‘life-forms’ or ‘literature genres’. Potentially, the ontologist may determine intermediate categories, such as ‘natural’ for ‘life-forms’ and ‘cultural’ for ‘literature genres’, which would form a hierarchical structure for the regional categories of existence. One modern and ubiquitous application of the word ‘ontology’ is for the regional ontology of informational architectures. In some epistemic communities this has become the sole meaning of ontology.

There are also many other important variations in the relationship between formal ontology and regional ontologies. For example, if the ontologist maintains a ‘classical’ attitude of existence then structures such as ‘the mind’, ‘consciousness’, and ‘perception’ would be regarded as regional ontologies. An ontologist with a ‘noetic’ attitude would potentially regard the analysis of these structures as part of their formal ontology. Alternatively, if the ontologist concluded that there are no universal structures in existence, that existence can only be analysed in terms of its particulars, then one consequence of this ‘nominalistic’ conclusion is that a division between the ‘formal’ and the ‘regional’ collapses. This nominalism would still result in an ontology that could be either ‘classical’ or ‘noetic’, and a ‘noetic’ nominalism, for example, could be correlated with many of the attributes typically associated with the theories of postmodernism. This is because these theories frequently argue that there is no single ‘meta-truth’, rather only particular subjective ‘truths’, and consequently that there is no possible formal classification for existence.

When correlating ‘noetic’ nominalism with postmodernism a degree of caution is required due to the extensive range of concepts to which the postmodern label has been applied. However, postmodernism is certainly not the first grouping of ideas or theories to be resistant to conventional classification. Such relational categorisation in and of itself is an example of regional ontology, in this case the region of theories, and as such is subject to the

same disputes and criticisms that govern the second sense of ontology generally. These disputes revolve around problems of the discreteness and determinacy of categories, a problem called ‘categorial indefiniteness’. Brian Cantwell Smith analysed this phenomenon in his text on ontology, *On the Origin of Objects*, to describe how boundaries between some entities, but not necessarily all entities, while not “wholly chaotic” are neither “wholly regularizable” (Smith 1998: 330). Smith provides a good list of six areas that illustrate examples of the potentiality for categorial indefiniteness:

1. Indefiniteness *at the edges of given objects*, such as the boundaries of the region on the wall where I ask you to write your name...;
2. Indefiniteness *between and among objects of the same type*, such as whether you are standing on this sand dune or the neighboring one; or whether the massif above our campsite consists of three or four mountains;
3. Indefiniteness *among different types*, such as among chutzpah, bravado, ego, self-confidence, and brashness;
4. Indefiniteness *among the notions ‘concept,’ ‘type,’ and ‘property’* – as for example in debates between philosophers and psychologists on the nature of concepts: about whether they are mental or abstract, and about what is that people can and cannot share (do we share a concept of red? do we each have private concepts that represent the same abstract property? or do we all have different concepts?);
5. Indefiniteness *between objects and the types they exemplify*, implying that the “instance-of” relation is itself approximate, contested, and potentially unstable – as for example whether the headache you have this morning is the same one you had last night, or a different one of same type; and similarly for patches of color, fog, and “the rain”; and
6. Indefiniteness *between and among different realms of human endeavour*, such as the political, the social, the technical, the religious, the esthetic, the psychological, etc. (*ibid*: 324-325, emphasis as in original)

Nevertheless, when there is a case for categorial indefiniteness to be recognised in an ontological schematisation, certain categories are going to possess greater degrees of indefiniteness than others. It is also important to recognise that an ontologist might deny the validity of categorial indefiniteness, and could argue instead that the phenomenon stems from an inadequately developed formal ontology to support fully the discrete and effable regional ontologies that would not have indefiniteness as a characteristic. However, in the absence of a

formal ontology that sufficiently provides for a discrete understanding of all conceivable regions of existence, the concept of categorial indefiniteness can be retained as a valuable explanatory device.

As previously mentioned postmodernism is a category that exemplifies indefiniteness. Another grouping of ideas that is prone to a similar degree of categorial indefiniteness is the set of thought that makes up the third and most recent major sense of ontology. Because of this shared resilience to strict classification this third sense of ontology can also be mistaken as an example of postmodern theory. This is partially excusable because of the high degree to which postmodernism is an indefinite category, a consequence of the near absurdity of trying to provide a generalised account of a set theories that frequently, though not universally, argue in different ways against making generalised accounts. It is because of this fluidity of meaning that it is easy to arbitrarily decide what is a postmodern theory, and because the third sense of ontology shares enough of its canon of literature with what is normally considered within postmodernism it is consequently open to this amorphous classification. This is arguably anachronistic however, in as far as the development of the third sense of ontology predates the emergence of postmodernism as a reference to a group of ideas, with postmodernism largely a late twentieth century development and the new sense of ontology nearer to the beginning of that century. The third sense of ontology arose out of a challenge to the traditional understanding of ontology as the study of ‘being’, as the study of the ‘what-ness’ of entities. This challenge can be found in the works of the phenomenological philosopher Heidegger. Heidegger argued that the understanding of the ontology of an existent as its ‘what-ness’ was the single greatest mistake of Western philosophy, “perhaps the most consequential, influential, and disastrous philosophical definition in Western thinking” (Heidegger 1994: 58). Heidegger’s alternative modal ontology, or ontology of ‘how-ness’, represents a decisive break from this ontological tradition when that tradition is understood as the study of ‘what-ness’. However, as a significant component of Heidegger’s philosophy is predicated on maintaining a critical historical awareness of the formation of the ontological

tradition<sup>2</sup>, a detailed presentation of the history of ontology is required in order to analyse his radical departure from its discourse.

### §1.2 – *The history of ‘classical’ ontology and the realist concept of ‘being’*

The word ‘ontology’ was first introduced into philosophy at the beginning of the 17th century. Until recent scholarship on the subject it was believed that Rudolf Göckel coined the term in his 1613 *Lexicon philosophicum* (Mora 1963). It is now believed that the first recorded use of the term is in Jacob Lorhard’s 1606 *Ogdoas scholastica* (Øhrstrøm et al. 2005). Peter Øhrstrøm, Sara Uckelman, and Henrik Schärfe argue that while Lorhard used the word ‘ontology’ as a synonym for ‘metaphysics’, it is probable that his use of a new word was to emphasise its reinvention or renewal as a discipline that conformed with the rise of a scientific worldview at the beginning of the 17th century (Øhrstrøm, et al. 2007 & 2008). ‘Ontology’ literally translates the Greek for the study of ‘being’, which closely resembles one of Aristotle’s four conceptions for metaphysics as the science of ‘being *qua* being’, which can be found in Book Gamma of his *Metaphysics* (Aristotle 1984e: 1003b19-23). One of several points that can be drawn from this is that ontology has existed long before Lorhard named it, what transformations occurred by this naming is another matter.

It is apparent from this provenance that to understand the historical development of ontology we should begin with the formation of the philosophical subject of ‘metaphysics’. To this day it is not uncommon for the terms ‘ontology’ and ‘metaphysics’ to be used interchangeably. When a differentiation of the two terms is pursued one common, but not universal, distinction is that ‘ontology’ consists of a categorial list of the basic items of reality and an account of the relationship amongst them (see Graham 1987: 20-21 for an example of this usage), while ‘metaphysics’ is the theoretical viewpoint that generates this account. However, this definition will not be adopted in this thesis, as metaphysics is sometimes also used as a synonym with theology. Instead ontology is used as the primary term for the same

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<sup>2</sup> This critical historical awareness of the development of the ontological tradition, it will be shown in sections 2.6 and 2.7, is not an afterthought in Heidegger’s methodology. Rather, it constitutes what he calls the ‘phenomenological destruction’ of the history of ontology. It will be argued in sections 2.6 and 2.7, that the phenomenological destruction is not a historical survey of past interpretations of ‘being’ that is separate from an overall phenomenological analysis of ‘being’. It will be shown that, as Heidegger argues, ‘being’ is temporal-historical, and that consequently a phenomenology of ‘being’ must necessarily include a historical awareness of ‘being’. As a temporally unified structure, ‘being’, along with ‘being-not-yet’ and ‘being-no-longer’, must not be understood as the traditionally privileged atemporal presence of ‘what-ness’. Furthermore, this understanding of ‘being’ as atemporal presence will be shown in section 3.5 to be a derivative modality of how an entity’s ‘being’ can be encountered as present-at-hand. This derivative understanding, is not incorrect in itself, rather it is incorrect if it is the only, or the privileged, understanding of ‘being’. Consequently, a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology also provides insight into how to understand ‘what-ness’, when, in limited contexts, it is the ‘what-ness’ of entity that matters for an investigation. It will be shown in section 2.7 how these possible contexts can arise, when it is only the ‘what-ness’ of an entity that matters within the strict limits of that context.

reason as Lorhard potentially intended – to emphasise the subject as the systematic study of the ‘being’ of intra-worldly entities. Metaphysics, in our usage, refers to the study, speculation, our contemplation of possible or potential extra-worldly<sup>3</sup> entities.

As stated, the metaphysical characterisation of ontology has an exceptionally long history. The origin of the term lies in a series of fourteen texts by Aristotle that bear the name *Metaphysics*. The name was a philological referent assigned to these texts by later scholars and not by Aristotle himself, originally as a technical term designating those treatises that were sequenced after Aristotle’s *Physics*. The name in this philological context simply meant [the texts] after the *Physics*. However, scholars such as Heidegger have argued that this nomenclature was not harmless in that the name “later became a philosophically interpreted characteristic of what is contained in these rearranged treatises” (Heidegger 1997: 4). In this context it is apparent why later scholars, such as Lorhard in the 17th century, could have wanted to emphasise a name that did not suggest the study of entities in some way after or beyond the world in order to distinguish it from the theological connotations in the idea of metaphysics. However, the Western philosophical tradition of studying the ‘what-ness’ of entities did not originate with Aristotle’s metaphysical inquiries.

The genesis of ontology occurred when the question of ‘being’ began to be posed. Within the Western philosophical tradition, the explicit engagement with this question began with the group called the Pre-Socratics. Dating from between 600 and 400 B.C.E. their work

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<sup>3</sup> In section 3.4 the multiple senses of the word ‘world’ as identified by Heidegger are analysed. The use of the word ‘world’ that we adopt is what is called the ontological-existential sense of ‘world’. In this sense a speculated metaphysical entity whose ‘what-ness’ would normally be considered ‘extra-worldly’, could rather be understood as ‘intra-worldly’. This means that the character or ‘how-ness’ of its ‘being’ as circumspectively known would be from ‘inside’ someone’s ‘world’. See the next two chapters for further elaboration of these concepts from the perspective of an ontology of ‘how-ness’. The present point is that our forthcoming concern with the ‘how-ness’ of intra-worldly entities has sufficient flexibility to address the ‘being’ of entities that are not in ‘physical existence’. Nevertheless, while the potential for this discourse is available, an ontology of the ‘how-ness’ of metaphysical or theological entities is not within the scope of this thesis. An argument about the existence of extra-worldly entities is not the objective of this thesis. Despite this, the process of analysing the history of ontology must not overlook the substantial contemporaneous development of ontology as a field of metaphysics.

represents some of the earliest surviving textual fragments of Western culture<sup>4</sup>, and also marks the beginning of Western philosophy. They attempted to explain the structure of existence through reason and argument, a movement that marked “a shift away from earlier mythical ways of understanding the world” (Janaway 1995: 339). A significant proportion of this work can be described as an attempt to answer the question of ‘being’. The question of ‘being’ is what it means when something is said ‘to be’.

Parmenides of Elea, who flourished in the 5th century B.C.E., is arguably the most influential of the Pre-Socratics in the development of a philosophical attempt to answer this question. Christopher Janaway, for example, makes the argument that Parmenides “was the instigator of a new chapter in the history of philosophy, and of all the Pre-Socratics he is the single most important figure” (*ibid*: 347). His poem *On Nature* survives in large fragments, within it he argues that there are only two ways of thinking about the world: “It is” and “It is not” (*ibid*: 347-349). Øhrstrøm *et al.* argue that this forms an ontology of two categories: “being” and “non-being” (Øhrstrøm, *et al.* 2005: 426). Furthermore, in this ontology, the world has to be described as being unchanging. This is because ‘what is’ must be, and ‘what is not’ cannot be, allowing no exchange between the two. Parmenides states:

It must be that what is there for speaking and thinking of *is*; for [it] is there  
to be,

Whereas nothing is not; that is what I bid you consider,  
(Parmenides 1984: B6.1-2, emphasis as in original)

And furthermore, as his poem goes on to describe, being and not-being must be critically distinguished because those who do not:

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<sup>4</sup> The existence of ‘culture’ is open to ontological debate. ‘Culture’ is not a physical entity that is available to empirical observation, yet there is a conventionally uncritical understanding of the concept of societies or civilizations having a ‘culture’ or ‘cultures’. However, this conventional understanding of ‘culture’ is often inchoate, and the explicit ontological question of ‘what is’ ‘culture’ is very difficult to answer. The root of the difficulty is that any definition that can be articulated would be predicated upon an established ontological framework of what constitutes ‘what-ness’ or ‘is-ness’. For the purpose of this thesis the term ‘culture’, unless otherwise stated, will be used in the ‘anthropological’ rather than ‘humanistic’ sense. The latter refers to ‘culture’ as a quality that can be acquired, by becoming ‘cultured’, while the former refers to the idea of plural, collective categories used to differentiate groups of people. The use of the anthropological sense does not, however, endorse a view of cultures as “discrete, bounded systems” (see Barnard and Spencer 1996: 136-142). Reifying the concept of ‘Western culture’, for example, is problematic when the diffusion and acculturation of ideas and practices throughout history is considered, not only in the relatively recent context of rapid globalisation. Use of the term ‘Western’ therefore, such as in ‘Western philosophic tradition’, will be as a rough characterisation of a clustering of cultural particulars with a narrative, rather than normative, structure. However, this trouble of defining the ‘what-ness’ of ‘culture’, or whether ‘culture’ can be said to exist, can also be understood as indicative of the general problems of the ontology of the ‘what-ness’ of entities. In section 3.3, as part of the analysis of Heidegger’s understanding of ontology as the study of the ‘how-ness’ of entities, the concept of ‘*das Man*’ is introduced. *Das Man* can be translated variously as ‘the They’ or ‘the Anyone’, and is part of Heidegger’s phenomenological architecture of ‘how’ a person ‘exists’ as part of a shared ‘world’. Terms such as ‘exists’ and ‘world’ are important technical devices in Heidegger’s vocabulary, and so an analysis of how ‘*das Man*’ offers an alternative understanding of ‘culture’ in terms of the ‘how-ness’ of ‘human being’ will have to wait until section 3.3. In this section a full critical analysis of Heidegger’s phenomenological observations on this subject is provided.

Wander, two-headed; for helplessness in their  
Breasts guides their distracted mind; and they are carried  
Deaf and blind alike, dazed, uncritical tribes,  
By whom being and not-being have been thought both the same  
And not the same; and the path of all is backward-turning.  
(*ibid*: B6.5-9)

The consequence of this ontology of the category of ‘being’ is that only eternal truths are possible, as the structure of what exists is fixed. ‘Being’, ‘what is’, is changeless, neither coming into existence or perishing, and never exists incompletely (*ibid*: B8.26-33).

The ontological tradition of Western philosophy has been very much dominated by the category of ‘being’. However, a contemporary of Parmenides is another Pre-Socratic philosopher called Heraclitus of Ephesus. Contrary to Parmenides’ ontology of the unchanging reality of ‘being’, Heraclitus asserted the exact opposite, that reality is always in a state of constant change or flux (Seibt 1991: 725). A consequence of this belief leads to an argument for which Heraclitus is most famous<sup>5</sup>, discussed by Plato in the *Cratylus* (Plato 1997a: 402a), that someone “cannot step twice into the same river” (Heraclitus 1979: LI). Because the waters of a river are always flowing, always being replaced, and, therefore, because the river is never composed of what it used to be composed of, it is impossible for the river at two temporally separate moments to be considered the same entity. As the river is never the same entity twice, it is impossible to step into it twice. This perspective on the ‘what’ of the river extends to encompass all types of existents, an argument that all entities are always developing, are always in ‘flux’<sup>6</sup>.

Heraclitus’s emphasis on flux expresses an ontological schema predicated on a temporal understanding of ‘being’, as opposed to Parmenides’s timeless or atemporal version.

<sup>5</sup> No direct fragment by Heraclitus of this statement survives, rather it is referenced by other writers such as Plato and Plutarch.

<sup>6</sup> It would also be logical to derive from Heraclitus’s philosophy that the same person never exists at two different points in time. This is not an easy issue to resolve, and has been a source of much philosophical anxiety over history. In the attempt to settle the dilemma it has given rise to concepts such as ‘numeric identity’ and ‘specific identity’ in ‘analytic philosophy’. An equivalent set of concepts from ‘continental philosophy’ can be found in the work of the philosopher Paul Ricoeur in his text *Oneself as Another*. In this text Ricoeur separates the concept of the identity of the self into *idem*-identity, the *sameness* of an individual’s identity that constitutes its permanence in time, and *ipse*-identity, the *selfhood* of an individual’s identity that develops through time and which also involves a “dialectic of *self* and *other than self*” (Ricoeur 1994: 3). It is by this introduction of time and otherness into the question of personal identity that Ricoeur raises his notion of narrative identity, which allows the “taking into full account the temporal dimension (the temporality) of a being who, by existing with others in the horizon of a common world, is led to transform him (her) self in the course of a life history” (Villela-Petit 2007: 3). This theory of narrative identity helps act as a “mediator between the pole of character, where *idem* and *ipse* tend to coincide, and the pole of self-maintenance, where selfhood frees itself from sameness” (Ricoeur 1994: 119), where character is understood as those lasting dispositions by which an individual can be known. However, these attempts to resolve how an entity can be said to remain the same entity over time, and yet also to be changing over time, all revolve around the traditional ontological understanding of ‘being’ in terms of the ‘what-ness’ of an entity. An alternative approach develops when the ontology of ‘being’ is reinterpreted as a question of the ‘how-ness’ of an entity. This approach is described when Heidegger’s philosophy from *Being and Time* is analysed later in this thesis.

This divergent path of ‘ontology’, however, still analyses ‘being’ in terms of ‘what-ness’. From this perspective, Heraclitus’s philosophy can be understood as a variation of the ontological tradition’s concern with ‘what-ness’, rather than an absolute break from it. It differs in that it understands ‘what-ness’ not as a ‘thing’, but as a ‘process’. Therefore, Heraclitus’s alternative understanding of ‘being’ marks the beginning of what is termed ‘process ontology’. While ‘process ontology’ has generally remained on the periphery of mainstream ontological discourse, it has enjoyed periodic revivals in the work of such philosophers as Alfred North Whitehead<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, the role of process ontology within the ontological tradition is paramount. This is because the work of Plato and Aristotle, and in the metaphysical realist tradition that followed them, developed as a reaction against an apparent consequence of Heraclitus’s doctrine. The problem they found was that if reality is in flux and is not fixed, if perceptions of ‘what is’ are incomplete at any point in time and are therefore ‘illusory’, then there can be no complete and accurate account of existence.

In the thirteenth book of his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle suggested that the “supporters of the ideal theory were led to it because they were persuaded of the truth of Heraclitean doctrine that all sensible things are ever passing away, so that if knowledge or thought is to have an object, there must be some other and permanent entities, apart from those which are sensible; for there can be no knowledge of things which are in a state of flux” (Aristotle 1984e: 1078b12-17). This reference to “supporters of the ideal theory” is an allusion to Plato and his theory of Forms or Types. The difference in terms is because the ancient Greek word ‘eidos’, has been variously translated as ‘Forms’, ‘Ideas’, and ‘Types’. When not directly quoting an alternative interpretation, the term ‘Types’, rather than ‘Ideas’ or ‘Forms’, will be employed from this point on, and will be capitalised to distinguish Plato’s metaphysical usage of the word. Plato, like Heraclitus, believed that change characterized the world. Unlike Heraclitus, he believed that this changing world was merely the world of appearances. In addition to the

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<sup>7</sup> Whitehead’s process ontology is immensely sophisticated. In summary, Whitehead develops a categorial scheme consisting of four groups: the general ‘category of the ultimate’, eight ‘categories of existence’, twenty seven ‘categories of explanation’, and nine ‘categoreal [sic] obligations’ (Whitehead 1978: 20-28). Included in the categories of explanation are the statements:

(i) That the actual world is a process, and that the process is the becoming of actual entities.  
... [and]

(ix) That *how* an actual entity *becomes* constitutes *what* that actual entity *is*; so that the two descriptions of an actual entity are not independent. Its ‘being’ is constituted by its ‘becoming.’ This is the ‘principle of process.’

(*ibid*: 22-23, emphasis as in original)

Whitehead’s process ontology, emphasising ‘becoming’ over ‘being’, constitutes the basis for his wider philosophy found in his *Process and Reality*. As the example of cited above shows, Whitehead’s philosophy is not an outright example of the ontological tradition’s concern with ‘being’ as a question of ‘what-ness’. Rather, he understood ‘what-ness’ and ‘how-ness’ as not being independent structures of existence. A full critical analysis of Whitehead’s philosophy is not within the scope of this thesis, but as this example demonstrates, Heidegger was not the only philosopher to challenge the traditional ontological understanding of ‘being’.



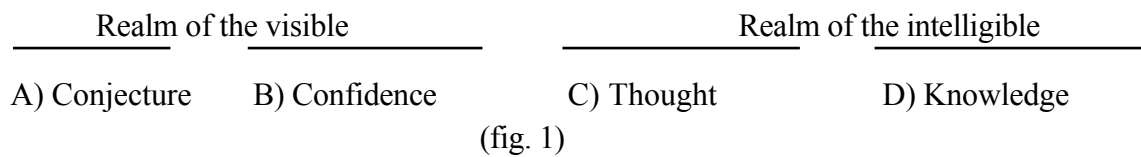
world of appearances coexisted an intelligible world of unchanging Types. The world of appearances was to be regarded as an imperfect reflection of the world of Types. The existence and relationship between the two worlds or realms forms the core of Plato's ontology. Furthermore, as indicated by the above quote from Aristotle, Plato believed that his bifurcated philosophy of the Types solved the epistemological problem raised by Heraclitus's flux philosophy. Change, flux, process, progress, regress, and any other cognate phenomena of temporality were not a dimension of the 'being' of Plato's Types. Because Plato emphasised this atemporality of the objects of his philosophical reflection it is more accurate to say that he adopted – and propagated – the ontological tradition of Parmenides rather than that of Heraclitus.

In order to convey the structure of his ontological conception Plato presented three successive images in his *Republic*, and appraising these images will serve to demonstrate the operation of his philosophy. His first image is the simile of the sun, second is the image of the divided line, and third is the allegory of the cave. The simile of the sun is an analogy presenting 'goodness' as that which makes truth and knowledge of the intelligible realm possible in a similar way as the light of the sun makes sight of things possible in the realm of appearances.

'Well, what I'm saying is that it's goodness which gives the things we know their truth and makes it possible for people to have knowledge. It is responsible for knowledge and truth, and you should think of it as being in the intelligible realm, but you shouldn't identify it with knowledge and truth, otherwise you'll be wrong: for all their value, it is even more valuable. In the other realm, it is right to regard light and sight as resembling the sun, but not to identify either of them with the sun; so in this realm it is right to regard knowledge and truth as resembling goodness, but not to identify either of them with goodness, which should be rated even more highly.' (Plato 1993: 508e-509a)

By proposing two realms of existence, the visible realm of appearance and the intelligible realm of truth, Plato allowed for the 'lesser' reality of appearances to be subject to "generation and decay" (*ibid*: 508d) and still allow knowledge of an unchanging 'greater' reality of the intelligible.

However, as Plato states (*ibid*: 509c), this explanation and differentiation of intelligible and visible things is incomplete. To further elucidate his idea he draws upon an image of a line. The line is divided into two unequal sections, corresponding to the visible and the intelligible, and each section is then divided again by the same ratio. Each subsection is ordered to the degree to which its object possesses truth. Thus:



(*ibid*: 509d-511e and Plato 1997c: 509d-511e)

As a consequence of the ratio of the line's divisions, parts 'B' and 'C' are of a equal length. Parts 'A' and 'B' total the realm of appearance, part 'A' being likenesses and images such as reflections and shadows, and part 'B' being the "originals of these images" (Plato 1997c: 510a) that form the material world, such as animals and artefacts. The way the mind approaches part 'A' is by imagination and conjecture, and part 'B' is approached by confidence and belief. Parts 'C' and 'D' both refer to the Types of the realm of the intelligible, but are differentiated by the methodology employed in their reasoning (Plato 1993). Part 'C' is when the intelligible is approached by 'thought', an "intermediate state between believing and knowing" (*ibid*: 511d). Part 'C' is when the intelligible Types are dealt with by "the mind [exploring] them only by taking things for granted, [when] its goal is not a starting-point" (*ibid*: 511a). Part 'D' represents knowledge or understanding, and differs from 'C' by working out first principles.

When it takes things for granted, it doesn't treat them as starting-points, but as basic in the strict sense — as platforms and rungs, for example. These serve it until it reaches a point where nothing needs to be taken for granted, and which is the starting-point for everything. Once it has grasped this starting-point, it turns around and by a process of depending on the things which depend from the starting-point, it descends to an end-point. It makes absolutely no use of anything perceptible by the senses: it aims for types by means of types alone, in and of themselves, and it ends its journey with types. (*ibid*: 511b-c)

The methodology of part 'D' begins by taking a concept or body of existing knowledge as its base, as part 'C' does, but then reasons by dialectic back from that starting-point to determine the true starting-point for knowledge. This process of determining the first principles of knowledge represents a persistent definition for ontology. Furthermore, for Plato, the first principles of knowledge are the Types. Because Plato believed in an absolute reality, and furthermore because he believed that this reality can be accurately known, in his case knowledge of the reality of the Types through the application of reason, he is argued to be a metaphysical realist.

Plato draws upon one more image in the *Republic* to differentiate knowledge of the illusory world of the senses and knowledge of intelligible word of the Types: the allegory of

the cave. A short but deep parable, it describes a group of prisoners tied up at the bottom of a cave in a manner so that they can only look one way towards the end of the cave wall and not back in the direction of the cave mouth. Further up in the direction of that cave mouth lies a large fire, and between the fire and the prisoners a partition or wall is set up in a style similar to a puppet show. At that partition puppeteers manipulate crude likenesses of the outside world in such a manner that the fire behind them casts the shadows of the marionettes out in front of prisoners on the cave wall facing them. Plato suggests that people are like the prisoners in the cave (*ibid*: 515a) – who in this case are seeing likenesses of likenesses, the shadows of constructs – and proceeds to describe the various stages of encountering the world one of those prisoners would meet if freed from the cave<sup>8</sup>. These stages of encountering reality roughly equate to the partitions of the divided line, and the fire in the cave can be seen as representing the sun from the simile of the sun, the sun itself in the allegory of the cave equating to ‘goodness’ from that previous image. The Types are represented by the true items found outside the cave, illuminated by the sun, and are what the constructs and shadows inside the cave mimic.

Plato developed his theory of Types in other dialogues including the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Parmenides* along with the *Republic* in his middle period, and again in many of his texts in his late period such as the *Sophist*. In the dialogue *Parmenides*, Plato has a young Socrates elucidate the theory of Types. This is done so that Parmenides, as a member of Socrates’s audience, can provide a critique of the theory to enable its further development. The Types expressed include “likeness and unlikeness, multitude and oneness, rest and motion” (Plato 1997d: 129d-e), which could be called ‘relations’ (Janaway 1995: 378), as well as ‘properties’ such as, for example, being beautiful. The Types are ‘universals’<sup>9</sup>, existing in the unchanging realm of the intelligible, and are copied in the ‘particulars’ of the mundane realm. As the text of *Parmenides* makes plain, Plato recognises that this theory required refinement. However, the overall structure that has been described remained Plato’s philosophy of existence: a bifurcated reality consisting of a sensible and temporal realm, study of which reveals no true knowledge, and an intelligible and atemporal realm of Types, study of which reveals the first principles upon which true knowledge can be based. These first principles are universals, such as ‘redness’, which are then represented in particulars, such as a red flower, a red book, or any object with the colour red.

To aid his argument that studying the Types revealed the first principles for

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<sup>8</sup> Including a stage describing the harsh treatment that this prisoner would receive if he or she returned to the cave to tell the other prisoners about the greater reality outside the cave.

<sup>9</sup> Though Plato never expressed the idea in terms of universals or particulars.

establishing the basis for knowledge, Plato needed to demonstrate how this study could be accomplished. In the *Sophist* Plato develops the technique of dialectic, which serves for this demonstration. Philosophical knowledge, he argued, results from properly dividing things by kinds (Plato 1997g: 253d). By engaging in such activity, Plato writes, someone will:

be capable of adequately discriminating a single form spread out all through a lot of other things, each of which stands separate from the others. In addition he can discriminate forms that are different from each other but are included within a single form that's outside them, or a single form that's connected as a unit throughout many wholes, or many forms that are completely separate from others. (*ibid*: 253d-e)

Earlier in the *Sophist* Plato gives an example of how this technique works by showing the hierarchical structure involved in identifying the act of angling. He begins by considering the Type 'expertise', which, he argues can be divided into expertise in acquisition and expertise in production. Expertise in acquisition can then itself be divided by whether the acquisition is obtained by willing exchange or by taking possession. Taking possession again divides into combat and hunting, combat being when the act is done openly and hunting when it is secret. Again, Plato argues, hunting divides into whether it is the hunting of living things or of lifeless things. The hunting of living things, animal hunting, is then divided into land hunting and aquatic hunting. The hunting of things on land divides into many kinds, while the hunting of things that swim separates into bird catching and fishing. Fishing divides into the use of nets and the use of striking. Striking divides on account of whether it acted at night or day, and during the day is called hooking. Hooking is achieved by either spearing or by use of a rod which is called angling (*ibid*: 218e-221c).

Plato's dialectical method demonstrates the hierarchical taxonomy of Types through the process of differentiation, which shows the relationship between a certain Type with the Types within it. This dialectical method of differentiation produces a 'tree' of categories, a manner of representation that has persisted throughout the history of ontology. However, the practice of producing a descending taxonomy from general categories towards particular categories has been contested by an opposing process of creating an ascending taxonomy. While the taxonomic structures these two processes map may superficially resemble each other, they are based on a fundamental ontological dispute that can be traced to Aristotle's rejection of Plato's philosophy of the Types.

Aristotle was sympathetic but critical to Plato's dialectical approach of differentiating from a genus. The difficulty, he believed, was that the verb 'to be', and the noun 'being', were being used to mean a variety of fundamentally different concepts (Lawson-Tancred 1995: 400-403), and consequently the method was subject to confusion. However, as he argues in

Book Gamma of the *Metaphysics*, these homonymous meanings of ‘being’ are all drawn from a central meaning of what ‘to be’ is, and therefore that the ambiguity of what ‘being’ is can be removed by explicating this central meaning.

There are many senses in which a thing may be said to ‘be’, but they are related to one central point, one definite kind of thing, and are not homonymous. Everything which is healthy is related to health, one thing in the sense that it preserves health, another in the sense that it produces it, another in the sense that it is a symptom of health, another because it is capable of it.... So, too, there are many senses in which a thing is said to be, but all refer to one starting-point; some things are said to be because they are substances, others because they are affections of substance, others because they are a process towards substance, or destructions or privations or qualities of substance, or productive or generative of substance, or of things which are relative to substance, or negations of some of these things or of substance itself. It is for this reason that we say even of non-being that it is non-being. (Aristotle 1984e: 1003a33-1003b11, emphasis as in original)

As stated Aristotle rejected Plato’s bifurcated approach to reality upon which the Platonic theory of Types is based. Nevertheless, Aristotle also wanted to reject Parmenides’s conclusion that no change occurred in the world, whilst also rejecting the Heraclitean attitude that persisting knowledge of things that changed was impossible – a task which Plato’s bifurcation theory resolved. Therefore, if Aristotle wanted to challenge the Platonic philosophy of Types he needed to advance a new understanding of ‘being’.

In his physical-metaphysical texts Aristotle stresses the importance of trying to determine ‘first principles’. He states in the opening of the *Physics*, when “the objects of an inquiry, in any department, have principles, causes, or elements, it is through acquaintance with these that knowledge and understanding is attained” (Aristotle 1984d: 184a10-12). Furthermore, as he went on to argue in the *Metaphysics*, “the principles and the causes we are seeking are those of substances” (Aristotle 1984e: 1069a18-19). Because of this, Aristotle offers a new definition for his metaphysical philosophy: the study of ‘being *qua* being’, from which ‘ontology’ meaning the study of ‘being’ has since been derived.

Obviously then it is the work of one science to examine being *qua* being, and the attributes which belong to it *qua* being, and the same science will examine not only substances but also their attributes, both those above named and what is prior and posterior, genus and species, whole and part, and the others of this sort. (*ibid*: 1005a14-17)

‘Being’ in its capacity as ‘being’, ‘being *qua* being’, for Aristotle is substance. Because Aristotle’s takes substance and the attributes of substance as its subject of study, it is described as his ‘substance ontology’. As he states near the opening of Book Zeta of the *Metaphysics*, the question of ‘being’ is the same question as asking what is substance (*ibid*:

1028b4-5).

However, it should not necessarily be assumed that Aristotle's 'substance ontology' can be described as a monolithic, unitary system. Rather, following Daniel Graham's 'two systems theory', it can be divided into two systems: one being atomic substantialism where "basic entities are indivisible substance which fall under natural kinds and which enter into complex relationships of essence and accident", and the other being hylomorphic substantialism where "substances are complexes of form and matter which participate in developmental processes" (Graham 1987: 84).

Aristotle's atomic first system, Graham argues, consists of the texts collectively referred to as the *Organon* and also the *Rhetoric*, while the remaining physical-metaphysical treatises comprise the hylomorphic second system (*ibid*: 20). The ontology of the first system is laid out in the *Categories*, in which Aristotle begins by addressing the various meanings attributed to the idea of 'being'. He provides a list of ten categories, hence the name of the treatise, that he argues can be used to classify the nature of 'being': substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, posture, possession, action, and being acted upon (Aristotle 1984a: 1b25-2a4). As has already been intimated, the category of substance stands in a privileged position in relation to the other categories for Aristotle. Before putting forth the ten categories he introduces two divisions that form a fourfold schema of what there is: 'being said-of and being present-in'; 'being said-of and not being present-in'; 'not being said-of and being present-in'; and 'not being said-of and not being present-in' (*ibid*: 1a20-1b9). Things that are 'said-of' can be correlated to universals, while things that are 'not said-of' to particulars. Thus universals are 'said-of' the particulars.

Substance is held as the privileged category because all the other categories are 'present-in' substance, while substance itself is that which is 'not present-in' anything. The other categories inhere in substance, while substance does not inhere in anything, and primary substance is that which cannot be 'said-of' a subject either. Therefore primary substance is the substantial particular. The things that are 'said-of' stand in a relation of increasing generalities of the particulars of the 'not said-of'. These generalities are the species and genera, which are the secondary substances and are that which are also 'not present-in' the subject but which are said-of the subject (the primary substance).

The species, Aristotle states, "is more substance than the genus, since it is nearer to the primary substance" (*ibid*: 2b9-8). This is because, in the 'said-of' relation, when "one thing is predicated of another as of a subject, all things said of what is predicated will be said of the subject also. For example, man is predicated of the individual man, and animal of man;

so animal will be predicated of the individual man also—for the individual man is both a man and an animal” (*ibid*: 1b10-15). This chaining together of the ‘said-of’ relation is a transitive relationship. By asserting that the indivisible particular is the more substantial existent, and that the universal is what can be ‘said-of’ it as the subject, Aristotle refutes Plato’s privileging of the universal Types. Altogether, this is Aristotle’s ‘atomic substantialism’. The ontological perspective that this generated is the basis for forms of ascending taxonomic structures of ‘being’, which move from indivisible particulars towards the more general categories of existence. However, while Aristotle’s atomic substantialism provides a systematic alternative to the Types, without being able to rely on the bifurcated reality aspect of Plato’s philosophy this incarnation of ‘substance ontology’ is unable to account for change. As a consequence of this descriptive shortcoming Aristotle developed a hylomorphic understanding of ‘being’ as an alternative to his first philosophical system of atomic substantialism.

In the *Physics* Aristotle attempts to refute Parmenides’s Eleatic school that insisted that change was illusory. He summarises their position as: “they say that none of the things that are either comes to be or passes out of existence, because what comes to be must do so either from what is or from what is not, both of which are impossible. For what is cannot come to be (because it *is* already), and from what is not nothing could have come to be (because something must be underlying)” (Aristotle 1984d: 191a27-31, emphasis as in original). Aristotle wanted to refute this because he believed that this attitude had become a hindrance to the development of the natural sciences (Lawson-Tancred 1995: 409). Towards this he distinguished two types of change: one where the attributes that inhere in a substance change, where something alters to become something else; and one where new substances are brought into existence, where something comes to be without qualification (Aristotle 1984d: 190a31-190b10). Of the two, only the second type of change is a challenge for Aristotle’s existing atomic substantialism. To account for the generation of new substances he introduces the twin concepts of matter (hyle) and form (morphe). Substance, which in the *Categories* was fundamentally indivisible, in the *Physics* now becomes a composite of both matter and form. So, for example, a bronze statue is a composite of bronze as its matter and ‘statue shape’ as its form.

In the *Physics*, however, Aristotle was ambivalent about whether matter or form was the primary concept. He states, on the one hand, that his definition of matter is “the primary substratum of each thing, from which it comes to be, and which persists in the result, not accidentally” (*ibid*: 192a31-33), but then later that “form indeed is nature rather than the

matter; for a thing is more properly said to be what it is when it exists in actuality than when it exists potentially” (*ibid.* 193b7-8). In Book Theta of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle again stresses that actuality is the higher concept over potentiality, as it is prior to both potentiality and to “every principle of change” (Aristotle 1984e: 1051a3). While any single instantiation of actuality is “later in generation” (*ibid.* 1051a32) to its potentiality, actuality in general must always precede in time potentiality. This is because there is always a “first mover” which “already exists actually” to instigate the production of the actual from the potential (*ibid.* 1049b24-29).

It is because of the difficulty that the *Physics* opened upon the concept of substance, which had seemed settled in the *Categories*, that Aristotle returned to clarifying it as the central task of the *Metaphysics*. As substance is what ‘being’ is, it is the first principle from which all other ontological questions can be understood. Aristotle became certain that formless matter could not be considered substance (*ibid.* 1029a12-29), and, while the particulars of his argument remain a matter of scholarly dispute, argues that form as species is the essence of substance. He states that only species, and not genus, has essence (*ibid.* 1030a11-12), that essence is substance without matter (*ibid.* 1032b14-15), and that form “is the essence of each thing and its primary substance” (*ibid.* 1032b1-2). He also ties matter to potentiality and form to actuality: “matter exists in a potential state, just because it may attain to its form; and when it exists *actually*, then it is in its form” (*ibid.* 1050a15-16, emphasis as in original). This hylomorphism depicts the form of a ‘being’ as its essence, realised in the movement from states of potentiality towards actualisation.

As a structure, the ‘hylomorphic substance ontology’ succeeds in temporalising Aristotle’s account of ‘being’. However, it does this by introducing a teleological essentialism to the concept of ‘being’. As opposed to existing in states of unruly change, entities for Aristotle are moving to become their actual form and realise their essence-telos. This type of ontological essentialism is a central point of critique in existentialist, phenomenological, and hermeneutic philosophical discourses, which frequently argue that ‘being’ – and in particular ‘human being’ – have no inherent essence. Nevertheless, the historical value of the ‘substance ontology’ of Aristotle cannot be understated. It provided a coherent structure for understanding existence and enabled the progress of scientific knowledge.

A primary concern for Aristotle in advancing his ‘substance ontology’ was to allow the development of the natural sciences. He emphasised substantial particulars related in terms of species and genus, with an account of actuality and potentiality to explain change. By providing this account of existence based on the particulars of the world in space and time



he developed the first principles and the intellectual structure through which multiple investigations into the world could be brought together as a unified body of knowledge. However, over time the advancement of scientific knowledge has moved the understanding of the natural world beyond Aristotle. Nonetheless, the legacy of Aristotle's philosophy exists throughout the structure of our knowledge of the world. For example, the science of biology owes much of its progress to being able to divide the world into hierarchical taxonomies of discrete entities. This can be seen in the eighteenth century naturalist Carolus Linnaeus's contribution to scientific theory, who developed the beginning of the modern system of classifying living organisms based on giving them a name with two parts – the binomial nomenclature of genus and species – derived from their structural similarities and differences. This has developed into the now familiar taxonomy of life<sup>10</sup>, of seven hierarchically layered groups that descend from the largest set towards the smallest set: kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species.

We have been careful to outline how Aristotle's ontology provided a basis for the scientific understanding of entities. This account should, however, be rebalanced in case the impression was mistakenly given that this was an entirely Aristotelian concern that did not feature in Plato's own ontology. Plato, like Aristotle, insisted that the object of knowledge was to study that which 'is'. To quote from the *Republic*: "Now, since the natural field of knowledge is reality – its function is to know reality as reality" (Plato 1993: 477b11-12). Consequently, while there are significant differences between Plato's and Aristotle's ontologies, they nevertheless share many similar features and objectives. Significantly, the underlying philosophical understanding of 'being' of their respective ontological structures is a metaphysical realism about existence.

To summarise the chronicle of ontology up to this point it can be said that, galvanised by the thoughts of the Pre-Socratics on the question of 'being', Plato and Aristotle together initiated the stance that is sometimes called metaphysical realism. This stance, and its approach to dealing with the entities in the world, is the basis for the standard understanding of ontology. While clearly differentiated, the two philosophers ideas on 'being' share many features. A credible interpretation of Aristotle's 'hylomorphic substance ontology' is that it represents a compromise between his early emphasis on concrete particulars from the *Categories* with a partial reconciliation with Plato's interest in Types. While their approach to the idea of universals are significantly different, they both incorporate it into their metaphysical realism. Furthermore, they both argue for the existence of reality independent of

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<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that the details of this taxonomy are frequently debated with the sciences, motivated by the progress of scientific knowledge, such as genetics and the discovery of DNA.

the perceiver. To quote Aristotle:

And, in general, if only the sensible exists, there would be nothing if animate things were not; for there would be no faculty of sense. The view that neither the objects of sensation nor the sensations would exist is doubtless true (for they are affections of the perceiver), but that the substrata which cause the sensation should not exist even apart from sensation is impossible. For sensation is surely not the sensation of itself, but there is something beyond the sensation, which must be prior to the sensation; for that which moves is prior in nature to that which is moved, and if they are correlative terms, this is no less the case. (Aristotle 1984e: 1010b30-1011a2)

Whether a Platonic concern with stepping away from the immediate experience of the sensible world in order to dialectically reason from high level abstract concepts down to lower level concepts to form a stratified taxonomy of reality, or an Aristotelian insistence on empirical investigation governed by basic categorial structures in order to individuate the entities existing in the experienced world, ‘classical’ ontology accepts that there is an independent structure of reality and that the entities within it, and the relationships between them, can be determined. The essence of an entity is what that entity ‘is’ (*quiddity*). However, within the ontological tradition of understanding ‘being’ as the ‘what’ of existence there is a prominent challenge to both the belief in universals and the belief that the ‘what-ness’ of entities exist as a structure that is external to human experience.

### §1.3 – *The history of ‘noetic’ ontology and the idealist concept of ‘being’*

Within the ontological tradition the principle alternative to understanding ‘what-ness’ as the independent ‘being’ of entities is the ‘noetic’ understanding of existence. As with our depiction of ‘classical’ ontology, the idea of ‘noetic’ ontology does not represent a unified school of philosophy. Rather, it represents a group of loosely related arguments and views that share similar concerns about the understanding of ‘being’. ‘Noetic’ ontology is characterized by a discourse on the relationship between ‘being’ and the human mind. A history of this branch of the ontological tradition reveals the rise of ‘noetic’ ontology through the development of two challenges to the metaphysical realism of ‘classical’ ontology. The first is the denial of the existence of universals, the second is scepticism about the possibility of having a direct knowledge of existence. The philosophical debates within the ontological tradition of the ‘what-ness’ of existence can be called the ‘aporias’ of the tradition.

The word ‘aporia’ comes from the Greek for an impassible path. However, the modern usage of the term has divided in two: one philosophical, the other rhetorical. The philosophical usage of ‘aporia’ is to designate an irresolvable conflict of ideas. The rhetorical

usage of ‘aporia’ is as a description of the device of feigning doubt over an apparent impasse for dramatic effect. When we speak of the ‘aporia’ of ontology we refer to the insoluble puzzles that it developed. This embarrassment is what Immanuel Kant famously described in the Preface to the first edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*. He referred to how metaphysics<sup>11</sup> was once regarded as “the Queen of all the sciences” but was now only scorned and forsaken for its failure to reach a satisfactory conclusion (Kant 2003: Aviii-Ax). The first aporia of traditional ontological discourse is whether existence can be understood in terms of particulars or in terms of universals. The denial of universal structures of existence is called nominalism. This aporia has its roots in the debate between Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. While Aristotle is here interpreted as not being a nominalist, this is not a universal interpretation of his philosophical stance, and there are Aristotelian influenced philosophers who arrive at nominalistic conclusions. Furthermore, the nominalistic contention also lead many philosophers into the second major aporia of the ontological tradition, which is whether ‘being’ is a relational structure to the human mind.

It has been established that Plato and Aristotle, influenced by the Pre-Socratic interest in the question of ‘being’, developed ontological systems with a realist perspective. Their realism differs in that for Plato the Types are the truth of being, while for Aristotle, in his second system, being is hylomorphic substance. Over the course of philosophy the premises of this ontological realism were persistently challenged. The core challenge came from ontological idealism, which challenges the possibility of identifying a mind independent existence. Arguably the first Western philosopher to maintain a variant of this ‘noetic’ thesis was the Pre-Socratic Anaxagoras. Anaxagoras believed that ‘mind’ (*nous*) was the motive force that was responsible for the arrangement of everything that exists (Janaway 1995: 354-355). The consequence of this view is that existence can not be understood independently of the ‘mind’, as the ‘mind’ “directs and is the cause of everything” (Plato 1997b: 97c). However, ‘noetic’ theses of this sort did not reach maturity until much later in the history of philosophy. Socrates in Plato’s *Phaedo*, for example, states he had initially hoped that Anaxagoras’ philosophy would explain the causal structure of existence. But Socrates is forced to critique Anaxagoras’ general philosophy for not being consistent with his specific proposition that ‘mind’ is at the heart of existence. “This wonderful hope was dashed as I went on reading and saw that the man [Anaxagoras] made no use of Mind, nor gave it any responsibility for the management of things, but mentioned as causes air and ether and water and many other strange things” (*ibid*: 98b-c).

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<sup>11</sup> The distinction, such as it is, between ‘ontology’ and ‘metaphysics’ was only recent in Kant’s time. As such the terms were still used interchangeably.

However, before the ‘noetic’ thesis reached maturity as an established challenge to realist ontology a different challenge arose. This challenge to traditional ontological realism is found in the nominalist assertion that universals do not exist. The nominalistic attitude stands as a modification of the realist ontological inquiry into the structure of existence, but it also represents a bridge into ‘noetic’ ontological theses such as idealism. While realism, in its various forms, asserts that a term such as ‘redness’ is a universal that is instantiated in any object that is red, such as a red book or red flower, a nominalistic reply would be that the universal ‘redness’ does not exist but, rather, that the book and the flower each have their own particular ‘redness’. Nominalism, as such, is a denial of general predicates. The existence of nominalistic attitudes was not unknown to the classical philosophers. In the *Sophistical Refutations* Aristotle, for example, reasserts principles from the *Categories* to argue that “one must not grant that what is a common predicate applying to a class universally is an individual, but must say that it signifies either a quality, or a relation, or a quantity, or something of that kind” (Aristotle 1984c: 179a7-10). While it is clear that Aristotle, unlike Plato, emphasised the importance of the particular over the universal, this emphasis does not equate to a rejection of the existence of universals. With the provenance of the great philosophers both endorsing a structural concept of the nature of reality, it might seem unusual that nominalism has gained the degree of prominence that it has in philosophy. However, it is not the weight of who argued a theory that is important, but the strength of the argument and the validity of its propositions that matter. Nominalism developed as a substantial proposition during the Middle Ages, and the basic tenets of the argument have not altered significantly since then. Therefore to get an understanding of nominalism, a topology of its features from this period is particularly useful.

Arguably, the greatest proponent of nominalism in the Middle Ages was the scholar William of Ockham. Ockham is most famous for the principle of ontological parsimony that bears his name. Ockham’s Razor, as it has come to be known, argues that “beings are not to be multiplied beyond necessity” (Spade 1999: 101). This expression is not a direct quotation of Ockham, rather it is a paraphrase of a variety of equivalent statements that he made, such as “plurality is not to be posited without necessity” and “what can happen through fewer [principles] happens in vain through more” (*ibid*: 101). The sentiments behind the Razor have been frequently expressed by nominalists<sup>12</sup> over the course of history, such as W. V. Quine who viewed that an “overpopulated universe” to be “in many way unlovely”, offending “the

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<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that Quine took nominalism to refer to the rejection of the existence of abstract entities (Quine 1980: 15) and not universals. Consequently, referring to him as a nominalist is in keeping with our usage and not his.

aesthetic sense of us who have a taste for desert landscapes” (Quine 1980: 4).

However, Ockham’s nominalism is not directly based on the Razor. Rather than not positing a type of entity such as universals until there is a necessity to do so, he argued that the idea of universals is flawed in itself. In Ockham’s ontology seven of Aristotle’s ten categories are not needed, he only keeps substance, quality, and relation. Furthermore, the category of relation was kept only because of certain theological commitments (Spade 1999: 104-105). His assertion for the reduced ontology is provided by arguing that what the other categories seemed to provide, can in fact be accomplished without them (*ibid.*: 102-103). His rejection of universals followed a similar argument. He states: “No thing outside the soul is universal, either through itself or through anything real or rational added on, no matter how it is considered or understood” (Spade 1994: 204). The qualification ‘outside the soul’ is an important feature in Ockham’s ontology. In the first part of his *Summa of Logic* he divides language into three types: written, spoken, and mental. Written language is dependent on the spoken, which in turn is itself dependent on mental language. Mental language is therefore the most basic level of language (Spade 2008). While his nominalism took the form that he rejected that the same entity, such as redness for example, could be present in multiple and distinct particulars, he did however allow universals of a sort to be present in mental language – universal concepts.

Ockham held two different theories about the nature of the universal concepts. His early theory is referred to as *fictum*-theory, which treated universals as objects in the mind. This is how Ockham explained it:

The intellect, seeing some thing outside the soul, fashions a similar thing in the mind in such a way that, if it had a productive power as it has a fictive power, it would produce such a thing externally, numerically distinct from the former thing.... The *fictum* can be called a universal, because it is an exemplar and indifferently related to all external singulars. On account of this likeness in objective being, it is able to supposit for external things that have a similar being outside the intellect. In this way, the universal is not the result of generation but of abstraction—which is nothing but a kind of picturing. (Spade 1994: 218)

Ockham, however, was not content with this explanation of universals as mental objects. His *intellectio*-theory explains universal concepts not as objects in the mind but as an *act* of the mind thinking about multiple objects simultaneously (Spade 2008). To quote Ockham: “Now this theory can be held in various forms. In one form, this quality existing subjectively in the soul would be the very act of intellection” (Spade 1994: 230).

Nevertheless, the general structure of Ockham’s nominalism does not alter with either

the fictum-theory or the intellectio-theory. He provides this summation of his overall stance on universals:

But I do hold this: No universal—unless perhaps it is a universal through voluntary institution—is anything existing in any way outside the soul. Rather everything that is a universal predicable from its nature of several is in the mind, either subjectively or objectively. No universal belongs to the essence or quiddity of any substance. (*ibid*: 230-231)

Universals have no real existence in the external world of substances. Rather they exist only as concepts in the mind, and in the forms of language that are developed from these mental entities. His qualification that universals potentially also exist as voluntary conventions foreshadows social constructivist variations of these principles. This proposition is consistent with his predication of spoken and written language on mental language. Furthermore, his approach to considering mental concepts strikingly mirrors Husserl's later treatment of intentional objects and acts of consciousness (see section 3.5), a comparison that posits Ockham as a proto-phenomenologist.

However, the weight of Ockham's ontological thesis can be felt in particular when the later philosophical controversy considering 'the veil of perception' (a phrase coined by Jonathan Bennett in *Locke, Berkeley, Hume*, see Bennett 1971: 68-70) is brought to mind, and the related philosophical stance of idealism. While metaphysical realism takes the existence of a knowable external reality as certain, and nominalism challenges the existence of universals, relegating them if they exist in any sense to being in the mind, the ontology of idealism goes a step further and places *all* of existence into the mind. The consequence of this is a denial of the possibility of an accurate account of a mind-independent reality.

To understand the controversy over the phrase 'the veil of perception' and the idealist attack on realism, we can look at the ideas of the empiricist philosophers John Locke and George Berkeley. For Locke, in whose *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* a great variety of important ideas were raised, knowledge must conform to objects. This is because objects have certain qualities in them that produce in those that perceive them a certain kind of knowledge of them.

Whatsoever the Mind perceives in it self, or is the immediate object of Perception, Thought, or Understanding, that I call *Idea*; and the Power to produce any *Idea* in our mind, I call *Quality* of the Subject wherein that power to produce is. Thus a Snow-ball having the power to produce in us the *Ideas* of *White*, *Cold*, and *Round*, the Powers to produce those *Ideas* in us, as they are in the Snow-ball, I call *Qualities*; and as they are Sensations, or Perceptions, in our Understandings, I call them *Ideas*: which *Ideas*, if I speak of sometimes, as in the things themselves, I would be understood to mean

those Qualities in the Objects which produce them in us. (Locke 1975: ii. viii. 8, emphasis as in original)

Furthermore, Locke thought that qualities came in two types: primary and secondary. The five primary qualities are extension, shape, motion or rest, number, and solidity, and the five secondary qualities are colour, sound, taste, smell, and texture (Grayling 1995: 494). The primary qualities inhere in objects and are “utterly inseparable from the Body, in what estate soever it be”, while the secondary qualities are lesser as they do not inhere in objects but rather are “Powers to produce various Sensations in us by their *primary qualities*” (Locke 1975: ii. viii. 9-10, emphasis as in original).

Berkeley, however, thought that Locke’s distinction between primary and secondary qualities was incoherent. He thought that the primary and secondary qualities were alike because they were both objects of perception, and such were both mind-dependent (Grayling 1995: 497). According to Berkeley it is therefore impossible to go beyond ‘the veil of perception’, as objects are always mind dependent. In his *Principles of Human Knowledge* he argues to the contrary of Locke that:

That neither our thoughts, nor passions, nor ideas formed by the imagination, exist without the mind, is what every body will allow. And it seems no less evident that the various sensations or ideas imprinted on the sense, however blended or combined together (that is, whatever objects they compose) cannot exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving them. I think an intuitive knowledge may be obtained of this, by any one that shall attend to what is meant by the term *exist* when applied to sensible things.... Their *esse* is *percipi*, nor is it possible they should have any existence, out of the minds or thinking things which perceive them. (Berkeley 1949: 42 [Principle 3], emphasis as in original)

For Berkeley the essence of a thing, its ‘being’, *is* its perception. It is because he held this view that Berkeley can be referred to as a dogmatic idealist. The Aristotelian realist stance, that exhorted that “sensation is surely not the sensation of itself” (Aristotle 1984e: 1010b30-1011a2), is side stepped, how successfully is a matter that has rarely escaped debate. We could go further and say that the aporia of traditional ontology is formed by this irresolvable conflict of theories. Nevertheless, from this type of idealist perspective, ‘being’ is no longer to be regarded as substance, ‘to be’ is now ‘to be perceived’. The consequence of this is that the nature of the existence of the external world can only be met with doubt.

A slightly earlier philosopher than Locke (1632-1704) and Berkeley (1685-1753) made this form of doubt methodological. In his six *Meditations on First Philosophy*, René Descartes (1596-1650) proposed a process of methodological doubt that would seek to find necessarily true statements about reality that could then be used as foundational concepts for

understanding the world. Only with such a foundational, non-arbitrary, and undoubtedly certain starting point to build from could progress be made towards understanding the world. His doubt was methodological because it systematically considered every possible source for falsehood to enter his beliefs about the world, famously for example concluding that his senses are an unreliable source for knowledge because every experience in his life could be a dream (Descartes 1988: 77). His doubt goes even further than this, to the extent that he supposes not only that such innocent sources of falsehood are conceivable but also that he could be undergoing outright deception because it was possible that:

some malicious demon of the utmost power and cunning has employed all his energies in order to deceive me. I shall think that the sky, the air, the earth, colours, shapes, sounds and all external things are merely the delusions of dreams which he has devised to ensnare my judgement. I shall consider myself as not having hands or eyes, or flesh, or blood or senses, but as falsely believing that I have all these things. (*ibid*: 79)

He even considers the contents of his mind and memory as a possible source of deception (*ibid*: 80). Ultimately he determines that if there is an ‘I’ thinking, even if those thoughts are spurious, then this ‘I’ must certainly exist to think. This is the argument of his second meditation.

But I have convinced myself [through methodological doubt] that there is absolutely nothing in the world, no sky, no earth, no minds, no bodies. Does it now follow that I too do not exist? No: if I convinced myself of something then I certainly existed. But there is a deceiver of supreme power and cunning who is deliberately and constantly deceiving me. In that case I too undoubtedly constantly exist, if he is deceiving me; and let him deceive me as much as he can, he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I think that I am something. So after considering everything very thoroughly, I must conclude that this proposition, *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind. (*ibid*: 80, emphasis as in original)

Regardless of the true nature of all other aspects of reality, the process of methodological doubt concludes that the statement ‘I think therefore I am’ – *cogito ergo sum* – is undoubtedly true. However, as Descartes quickly qualifies, “a sufficient understanding of what this ‘I’ is”, the ‘I’ that necessarily exists, is required in order to utilise this reflection (*ibid*: 81).

Having established that the ‘I’ necessarily exists, Descartes continues in his *Meditations* to the argument that the ‘I’ is a thing that thinks, *sum res cogitans*. He elaborates that a thinking thing is a “thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, is willing, is unwilling, and also imagines and has sensory perceptions” (*ibid*: 83). All these activities are



acts of thinking, and consequently they are all aspects of the 'I', the *res cogitans* (*ibid*: 83). By developing the concept of 'thought' to cover all these criteria, as the philosopher Richard Rorty argues in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Descartes established the outlook that later enabled Locke to develop a new meaning for 'idea':

meaning "whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks"  
or "every immediate object of the mind in thinking." (Rorty 2009: 48)

The 'I' for Descartes became the thinking 'being', and consequently all acts of the 'self-being' were necessarily mental. However, he did not regard the thinking thing as the only type of substance. Rather, the *res cogitans* was regarded as one of two fundamental substances. The other substance is the *res extensa*. As he describes it in his sixth meditation from *Meditations on First Philosophy*:

[On] the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am simply a thinking, non-extended thing; and on the other hand I have a distinct idea of body, in so far as this is simply an extended, non-thinking thing. And accordingly, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it. (Descartes 1988: 114-115)

*Res cogitans* is the thinking, non-extended substance and *res extensa* is the extended, non-thinking substance. Furthermore, *res cogitans* is the internal 'I' of the self while *res extensa* remains as the external world, including the agent's body. Mental substance is explicitly an entirely different kind of entity from physical substance, directly breaking from Aristotle's view of substance as the unique substratum of existence. As he states, in *Objections and Replies*, substance is that which "can exist by itself, that is without the aid of any other substance", and "the mind can be understood as a subsisting thing despite the fact that nothing belonging to the body is attributed to it, and that, conversely, the body can be understood as a subsisting thing despite the fact that nothing belonging to the mind is attributed to it" (*ibid*: 146). It should be noted that Descartes does not eliminate physical substance as an object of contemplation, rather he relegated it in terms of ontological priority. This relegation has been argued to have established the 'modern' epistemological concern about mental representations of external existents, with whether we can "know that anything which is mental represents anything which is not mental" (Rorty 2009: 45-46). Nevertheless, while Descartes was sceptical about the actuality of external existence, it retained the attribute of potentiality in his ontological framework. In this regard he was not as staunch an idealist as, for example, Berkeley for who only perceived 'being' existed. This aside, by regarding the mind as a unique substance, *sui generis*, Descartes constructed the modern understanding of 'being' in terms of a thinking self apprehending the external world. This mental understanding and prioritisation of 'being' is what we have termed 'noetic' ontology.

As we have been arguing, the development of ‘noetic’ ontology rests not only in privileging the mind as having a unique type of ‘being’, but also in the formalisation of the subject-object divide<sup>13</sup>. This ontological orientation for the understanding of ‘being’, was the genesis of the ‘modern’ concern with epistemology. This is Rorty’s ‘Glassy Essence’ argument:

In Descartes’s conception—the one which became the basis for “modern” epistemology—it is *representations* which are in the “mind”. The Inner Eye surveys these representations hoping to find some mark which will testify to their fidelity. (Rorty 2009: 45, emphasis as in original)

The Cartesian dualism between mind-subject and world-object enables the sceptical question of whether the mirror-like representations of world-objects in the mind are true to the reality of those objects. It is this question that leads to the sentiments of various ‘veil of perception’ theses, but whose heritage can be traced back to Descartes’ profession that it is “certain that I can have no knowledge of what is outside me except by means of the ideas I have within me” (Taylor 1992: 144).

For Descartes we are a thinking thing, *res cogitans*, a conscious subject that is capable of considering the existence of material things, *res extensa*, or objects by the faculties the mind has available to it. The subject – the experiencing agent – has to make a cognitive leap in order to grasp the existence of other things. The Cartesian ontology makes the experience of reflecting on an ‘external’ existent a “professional philosophical question” (Rorty 2009: 46). Here is an example of how Descartes describes this cognitive engagement with a particular object:

Indeed, I think I have often discovered a great disparity <between an object and its idea> in many cases. For example, there are two different ideas of the sun which I find within me. One of them, which is acquired as it were from the senses and which is a prime example of an idea which I reckon to come from an external source, makes the sun appear very small. The other idea is based on astronomical reasoning, that is, it is derived from certain notions which are innate in me (or else it is constructed by me in some other way), and this idea shows the sun to be several times larger than the earth. Obviously both these ideas cannot resemble the sun which exists outside me; and reason persuades me that the idea which seems to have emanated most directly from the sun itself has in fact no resemblance to it at all. (Descartes 1988: 90)

The subject in this example approaches the sun as an object in order to address what it is, and

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<sup>13</sup> However, this is only a formalisation. As we will continue to argue in next section (1.4), the subject-object model of understanding was established in traditional Greek philosophy. This establishment occurred through the shift from a Homeric understanding of acting in the world to a the new Platonic model of a knowing subject and known world. This shift, it will be shown, was predicated by the Greek movement from an oral culture to a literate culture.

determines its scientific and mathematical reality and dismisses perceptual illusions<sup>14</sup>. Generally speaking, this reflective being has a variety of faculties at their disposal for these operations: the senses, memory, reason, imagination, and so forth. The idea of this Cartesian subject and the way in which it relates to objects, the relation between knower and known, has been very successfully integrated into the fabric of the modern engagement with the world, to the extent that some philosophers admit, sometimes reluctantly, that we are all Cartesians at heart (for an example of such a sentiment see Polt 1999: 60). Even if this point were to be disputed, it would be hard to also dispute the prevalence of the subject and object distinction and its Cartesian heritage. In ontological terms what has occurred is not only the affirmation of the existence of mental entities and the attestation of these entities as basic constituents of reality, more than this these mental entities have been given a structurally privileged position as the primary lens for understanding ‘being’ up to and including theses, such as Berkeley’s, that the ‘being’ of the things of the world is the mind’s perception of them. And Descartes, who is often cited as the starting point for modern thought, formalised this noetic approach of understanding ‘being’.

Though Descartes may have laid out the framework for a ‘noetic’ ontology, its development to maturity can be placed at the feet of future thinkers. The transcendental philosophy of Kant is, as was earlier stated, one of the most significant of these later developments. Transcendental philosophy is the attempt to establish the necessary conditions that make experiencing the world possible, attempting to avoid the traditional polemic between empirical deduction and sceptical epistemology. The transcendental philosophical approach does not attempt to determine the ‘being’ of a thing in the world, but rather attempts to determine what necessary structures must exist for that thing to be experienced. The sophistication of Kant’s philosophy makes labelling him either a realist or an idealist difficult without significant qualification and argument. However, he does provide this refutation of non-transcendental idealism in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: “*The mere, but empirically determined, consciousness of my own existence proves the existence of objects in space outside me*” (Kant 2003: B275, emphasis as in original). This closely mirrors Aristotle’s argument that sensations are not the sensations of themselves but of the things that have been sensed. Consequently, it can be stated that for Kant, unlike Berkeley, entities have a ‘being’ beyond how they are perceived.

Despite this interest in entities, it is important to note that Kant did not consider his philosophy an activity in the emerging discipline of ‘ontology’. By Kant’s time this

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<sup>14</sup> Though he only engages with the how the sun is visually encountered by the subject in this instance, and not with wider sensory illustrations such as feeling the warmth of the sun.

nomenclature had been established, after its introduction by Lorhard and popularisation by others such as Christian Wolff. Wolff, for example, saw it as the deductive method to “investigate the most general predicates of all *entes* [entities]” (Mora 1963: 36, emphasis as in original). José Ferrater Mora suggests that the “whole *Critique of Pure Reason* is, in a way, the work of a man who was obsessed, and deeply distressed, by ontology” (*ibid.*: 36, emphasis as in original). As Kant himself states when describing his own project: ‘the proud name of an Ontology that presumptuously claims to supply, in systematic doctrinal form, synthetic *a priori* knowledge of things in general (for instance, the principle of causality) must, therefore, give place to the modest title of a mere Analytic of pure understanding’ (Kant 2003: A247/B303).

If the description of ontology is the attempt to establish principles, concepts and categories that conform to the world of entities, then Kant’s transcendental analytic of pure understanding turns ontology upside down. This is Kant’s Copernican revolution.

Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them *a priori*, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption, ended in failure. ... If intuition [sensory experience] must conform to the constitution of the objects, I do not see how we could know anything of the latter *a priori*; but if the object (as object of the senses) must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, I have no difficulty in conceiving such a possibility. Since I cannot rest in these intuitions if they are to become known, but must relate them as representations to something as their object, and determine this latter through them, either I must assume the *concepts*, by means of which I obtain this determination, conform to the object, or else I assume that the objects, or what is the same thing, that the *experience* in which alone, as given objects, they can be known conform to the concepts. (*ibid.*: Bxvi-Bxvii, emphasis as in original)

Succinctly put, rather than have concepts conform to entities<sup>15</sup>, entities must conform to concepts. The *a priori* concepts that entities conform to, in particular, are a group of twelve<sup>16</sup> that Kant termed “the categories”, citing Aristotle as the source for his terminology (*ibid.*: A80)<sup>17</sup>. These make up part of the structure of the human mind and are synthesised with what is experienced in order to make entities intelligible. Therefore the experience of entities conforms to the categories. In more general terms this is the argument that the experience of external entities is predicated upon the structure of the mind, and that consequently the

<sup>15</sup> As we have seen that they did for Locke.

<sup>16</sup> Slightly more than Aristotle’s ten.

<sup>17</sup> His categories fall into four groups: of quantity, of quality, of relation, and of modality. The categories of quantity are unity, plurality, and totality; those of quality are reality, negation; and limitation; those of relation are of inherence and subsistence, of causality and dependence, and of community; finally those of modality are possibility and impossibility, existence and non-existence, and necessity and contingency (Kant 2003: B106).

understanding of external entities is predicated on the understanding of the mind. This statement can be correlated to an argument that general ontology is predicated on an ontology of the mind, that the structures of ‘classical ontology’ must conform to the new study of ‘noetic ontology’.

Given that Kant was critical of the emergent discipline of ontology, it is arguable that his philosophical system should not be regarded as itself being an ontological exercise. This argument is undeniable in terms of the established nomenclature of ontology in Kant’s time. Nevertheless, there is an inherent ontological concern in his philosophy. In the Kantian model, entities in and of themselves are not shaped and structured by the categories. Entities in and of themselves cannot be known, as all knowing is structured by the system of the categories that makes them intelligible. In his terminology, entities in and of themselves are noumena, and entities as they are experienced are phenomena (*ibid*: B295-B315, A236-A260). Noumenal ‘being’ is beyond understanding, but phenomenal ‘being’ can be studied and understood. Consequently, while Kant criticised ontology, it is argued that his analytic of understanding is a different form of ontology from what he was dismissing. It is a form of, and development of, ‘noetic ontology’ as opposed to its traditional variant, the ‘classical ontology’ that sought to describe the world of things in and of themselves. While that sought to determine a structure for understanding entities as they are in the world, ‘noetic’ ontology seeks to transcendently determine how the framework of the mind structures the experience of phenomenal entities.

After Kant there is another development in philosophy that is significant in the history of ‘noetic’ ontology. We are referring to the work of Husserl and his introduction of phenomenology as methodological tool for studying ‘being’. However, a preliminary note of caution is required. This is because, much like Kant, Husserl was also wary of the concept of ontology. To be more specific, he was wary of the name ontology, as opposed to what that name might represent. The following quotation, found in a footnote from the first book of his *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy*, explains his early unease.

On the division of logical categories into signification-categories and formal-ontological categories, cf. *Logische Untersuchungen*, Vol. I, §67 [*Logical Investigations*, pp. 263f.] The entire “Third Investigation” specifically concerns the categories of whole and part. At the time I did not venture to take over the expression “ontology” which was objectionable on historical grounds; rather I designated this investigation (p. 222 of the first edition) as part of an “*apriorische Theorie der Gegenstände als solcher*” [“apriori theory of objects as objects”], a phrase contracted by Alexius von Meinong to make

the word “*Gegenstandstheorie*” [“object-theory”]. Now that times have changed, however, I consider it more correct to rehabilitate the old expression, “ontology”. (Husserl 1983: 22, emphasis as in original)

Husserl’s switch between his early use of ‘object-theory’ to ‘ontology’ was not a switch of subject matter. His use of ‘object’ was for many concepts, which he argued belonged together under the name ‘object’ and included: ‘physical thing’, ‘property’, ‘relationship’, ‘predicate formed affair complex’, ‘aggregate’, and ‘ordered set’ (*ibid*: 20). His early two volume text, the *Logical Investigations*, can thus be read as a sustained account of ontology.

Husserl’s ontological interest was to complete the scientific understanding of the world. In the German edition the first volume of the *Logical Investigations* Husserl provides a description of ‘psychologism’, a view that held that the human psyche determines the principles of logic, and then critiques it as a descent into ‘relativism’ that prevents a scientific and objective knowledge of the world (Husserl 2001). Psychologism was effectively<sup>18</sup> a nineteenth century scepticism about epistemology derived from the consequences of metaphysical idealism. Following this critique the second volume, in the German edition, launches a series of six investigations with the intention to give ‘clarity to notions and laws on which the objective meaning and theoretical unity of knowledge is dependent’ (*ibid*: 166). Essentially the task of the six investigations is to establish an ontological framework upon which a non-relativistic epistemology could then be based.

The structure of Husserl’s ontological framework distinguishes between ‘formal ontology’ and ‘material ontology’. ‘Formal’, however, was not used in the conventional sense. Rather, in Husserl’s usage it was equivalent to ‘categorical’ (Albertazzi 1996: 199), in the sense of the general or universal ‘categories’ of existence. However, as his ‘material ontology’ also has a categorial structure the term ‘categorial ontology’ will not be employed. ‘Material’ can also be misleading in a manner similar to how Husserl’s use of ‘object’ was not solely as a referent to physical things. ‘Material ontology’, in this context, refers to the structure of particular types of things. It is consequently easier to understand Husserl’s schema as a distinction between ‘formal ontology’ and ‘regional ontologies’. The following paragraph is how Husserl explains the ambiguity.

Let us begin with a not unimportant remark. At first formal ontology seems to be coordinate with material ontologies provided that the formal essence of any object whatever and the regional essences seem to play like roles <in formal ontology and in the regional ontologies respectively>. One is therefore inclined to speak not simply of regions, as we have up to now, but instead of material regions and now, in addition, of the “*formal region*.” If we accept

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<sup>18</sup> The qualification ‘effectively’ is necessary because the tenets of psychologism varied through many modifications, and consequently a degree of generalisation is being employed.

this manner of speaking, we must be rather cautious. On the one side stand *material* essences; and in a certain sense they are the “*essences proper*.” But on the other side there stands something that is indeed eidetic but which, nevertheless, differs in its fundamental essence: a mere *essence-form*, which is indeed an essence but completely “*empty*”, an essence that, *in the manner pertaining to an empty form, fits all possible essences*; it is an essence which, with its formal universality, has all material universalities, even the highest of them, under it and prescribes *laws* for them by virtue of the formal truths pertaining to its formal universality. Therefore the so called “*formal region*” is, after all, not something co-ordinate with the material regions (the regions simpliciter); *properly it is not a region but the empty form of any region whatever*; all the regions, with all their materially filled eidetic particularizations stand, not alongside it, but *under* it — though only formally. This subordination of the material to the formal is shown by the circumstance that *formal ontology contains the forms of all ontologies* (*scl.* all ontologies “proper,” all “material” ontologies) and *prescribes* for material ontologies *a formal structure common to them all...* (Husserl 1983: 20-21, emphasis as in original)

This text shows how Husserl redeveloped the idea of ontology. The Aristotelian hylomorphic heritage is still apparent in his use of ‘formal’ and ‘material’ as terms, and in emphasis on finding the ‘essence’ of things. However, his use of ‘material’ in particular differs considerably from Aristotelian ‘matter’ (hyle). Following in the tradition of Descartes, the mind is understood as a ‘material’ in the same way as physical objects, or any other type of ‘object’. Each of these ‘material’, or ‘regional’, ontologies are understood to have a shared structure, such as a differentiation of higher order genera to lower order particulars, and this structure is understood as the categories or forms of ‘formal ontology’. Husserl’s ontology does not only represent a highly developed variation of the ‘noetic’ tradition, it also represents a culmination of that tradition up to the point when it became challenged by the third major sense of ontology. This sense of ontology was given its first mature exposition by Husserl’s pupil, Martin Heidegger.

#### §1.4 – *The history of subject and object ontology and the development of technology*<sup>19</sup>

However, before Heidegger’s ontology of ‘how-ness’ is analysed as an alternative to the traditional ontological understanding of ‘being’ as the ‘what-ness’ of an entity, the categorial indefiniteness of the ‘classical’ realist and ‘noetic’ idealist distinction must be addressed. Underneath its explicit ‘classical’ realist ontological statements it can be argued that an underlying ‘noetic’ idealist understanding of ‘being’ has been inherent in the Western

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<sup>19</sup> An abridged version of this section appears in the author’s paper *(Re)Conceptualising mnemonic technology in light of hermeneutic ontology* (Girdwood 2009).

philosophical tradition since the time of the Homeric works. This post-Homeric understanding of existence is a phenomenon that occurred through the conceptual separation of the knower from the known. This is the argument that the classicist Eric Havelock developed in his history of the Greek mind, the *Preface to Plato*.

At some time towards the end of the fifth century before Christ, it became possible for a few Greeks to talk about their 'souls' as though they had selves or personalities which were autonomous and not fragments of the atmosphere nor of a cosmic life force, but what we might call entities or real substances... Scholarship has tended to connect this discovery with the life and teachings of Socrates and to identify it with a radical change which he introduced into the meaning of the Greek word *psyche*. In brief, instead of signifying a man's ghost or wraith, or a man's breath or life blood, a thing devoid of sense and sense consciousness, it came to mean 'the ghost that thinks', that is capable both of moral decision and of scientific cognition, and is the seat of moral responsibility, something infinitely precious, an essence unique in the whole realm of nature. (Havelock 1963: 197, emphasis as in original)

Havelock continues to argue that the development of a concept of an inner self was not Socrates' responsibility alone, citing for example the role of Heraclitus in this process (*ibid*: 198), and also that the development was not just tied to the meaning of the word 'psyche'. As he further documents, the "Greek pronouns, both personal and reflexive, also began to find themselves in new syntactical contexts, used for example as objects of verbs of cognition, or placed in antithesis to the 'body' or 'corpse' in which the 'ego' was thought of residing" (*ibid*: 198). As we also earlier documented, the Pre-Socratic Anaxagoras developed a concept of the 'mind' (*nous*) as central for the understanding of existence.

Part of Havelock's agenda in the *Preface to Plato* is to explain why Plato was antagonistic to poetry. His thesis is that the oral Homeric tradition of poetry was a cultural repertoire that perpetuated the earlier non-reflexive state of mind, or in the Heideggerian terminology which we will later adopt in sections 2.3 and 2.4, that it socialised people to a different understanding of their 'being-in-the-world', to a different understanding of their 'existentiality'. According to Havelock, Plato had to attack this tradition in order to advance his new reflexive understanding of human existence which had two main postulates: "that of the personality which thinks and knows, and that of a body of knowledge which is thought about and known" (*ibid*: 201). Plato's philosophy, when its structure is appreciated in terms of a separation between the knower and the known, significantly predated what we called the Cartesian subject-object divide. Consequently, Rorty's 'Glassy Essence' thesis that the subject-object model of understanding began with Descartes is not accepted. Furthermore, Havelock's thesis, which disputes the Cartesian origin of the subject-object model of



understanding, is predicated on explaining the emergence of the Platonic frame of mind (subject understanding object) in terms of the development of the classical Greek informational technological architecture. Consequently, the development and the refinement of the subject-object model of understanding can be shown to be co-emergent with the development of new information technologies<sup>20</sup>, beginning with Greece's transition from an oral culture to a literate culture. The beginning of this historical analysis of the co-development of subject-object ontology with information technology is in keeping with a famous remark that the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead made in his text *Process and Reality* on the constitution of the Western philosophical tradition. "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. I do not mean the systematic scheme of thought which scholars have doubtfully extracted from his writings. I allude to the wealth of general ideas scattered through them" (Whitehead 1978: 39). The origin of the subject-object ontology, and its relationship with information technology, can be found in the texts of Plato.

It was in the *Phaedrus* that Plato presented the case, through an engaging narrative of a fictionalised Socrates talking with his friend, that the knowledge of writing altered the capacity for recollection, that in fact learning the art of writing actually diminished the learners memory. His case for this is offered by recounting a parable – likely a pedagogic creation of Plato's (see translators' note on page 551 in: Plato 1997e) – in which the ancient Egyptian god Theuth has just invented writing and is demonstrating its usefulness to the king of the gods Thamus, who would praise and criticise Theuth's inventions as appropriate. To quote:

The story goes that Thamus said much to Theuth, both for and against each art, which it would take too long to repeat. But when they came to writing, Theuth said: "O King, here is something that, once learned, will make the Egyptians wiser and will improve their memory; I have discovered a potion for memory and for wisdom." Thamus, however, replied: "O most expert Theuth, one man can give birth to the elements of an art, but only another can judge how they can benefit or harm those who will use them. And now, since you are the father of writing, your affection for it has made you describe its effects as the opposite of what they really are. In fact, it will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: they will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing, which is external and depends on signs that belong to others, instead of trying to remember

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<sup>20</sup> It will be shown in section 3.5 how in the unified constitution of human existentiality as 'being-in-the-world', it is necessitated that both the human's world discloses how technology is 'understood', and that technology discloses how these worlds are 'understood'. The human 'being', it will be shown, is its disclosedness, and worlds and technology are both constituted in the unified structure of the referential totality of disclosedness.

from the inside, completely on their own. You have not discovered a potion for remembering, but for reminding; you provide your students with the appearance of wisdom, not with its reality. Your invention will enable them to hear many things without being properly taught, and they will imagine that they have come to know much while for the most part they will know nothing. And they will be difficult to get along with, since they will merely appear to be wise instead of really being so.” (Plato 1997e: 274e-275b)

There is a wealth of concepts, of general ideas, in this short parable, however our enquiry can only consider a few. Essentially the argument is first put forward that writing is a wonderful new technique, or technology, which supplements and enhances one’s memory and in so doing brings understanding. This view is then countered by the argument that this is in fact the opposite of what this new technology risks to the facility of memory. Rather than enhancing the user’s memory, a trust in writing reduces the individual’s reliance on their skill for remembering from the inside – a skill which requires practice to be kept honed. Writing requires a reliance on the signs of others, sharply drawing the distinction between the subject’s internal mental world and the external objects that it encounters. The parable thus ends with the warning that whilst this new technology will indeed allow its students increased access to information from the external world, from across different times and different places, the knowledge developed from this information will be a phantom as it will not be properly understood. It is transparently odd that what appears as Plato’s polemic against placing a trust in writing in order to learn and remember, where memory and truth are inseparably linked, is being communicated to us by the very medium of text, and it is this ambiguity that fuelled Jacques Derrida’s deconstruction of the *Phaedrus* in his extensive essay *Plato’s Pharmacy*. He begins first by pointing out how for centuries Platonic scholarship of the *Phaedrus* has dismissed it as a poor dialogue, either the creation of a Plato who was either too young or too old, and all because it critiques writing (Derrida 1981: 72). Whatever else can be learned from studying the *Phaedrus*, it is evident from its historical context and Plato’s thoughts that it was written during a liminal phase in the adoption of writing and literacy. Plato was anxiously writing about writing in the time period that was only beginning to widely adopt this new technology for the inscription and dissemination of information.

Havelock studied this transition in ancient Greece from a predominantly oral culture to a predominantly literate culture from the end of the Greek Dark Age, through the Archaic period and into the Classical period and advanced the thesis that the changes in language and learning predicated upon this transition changed not just the culture but how thought itself was conducted and with that a change in self-understanding. Continuing a quotation from

*Preface to Plato* that was introduced earlier, Havelock makes the following argument:

The Greek pronouns, both personal and reflexive, also began to find themselves in new syntactical contexts, used for example as objects of verbs of cognition, or placed in antithesis to the 'body' or 'corpse' in which the 'ego' was thought of as residing. We confront here a change in the Greek language and in the syntax of linguistic usage and in the overtones of certain key words which is part of a larger intellectual revolution, which affected the whole range of the Greek cultural experience... [a] crisis in Greek culture which saw the replacement of an orally memorised tradition by a quite different system of instruction and education, and which therefore saw the Homeric state of mind give way to the Platonic. (Havelock 1963: 198)

Havelock argued that this shift from a Homeric state of mind to a Platonic state of mind occurred because of the change effected by how information was stored. As he put in the Foreword to the text: all 'human civilisations rely on a sort of cultural "book", that is, on the capacity to put information in storage in order to reuse it. Before Homer's day, the Greek cultural "book" had been stored in the oral memory... Between Homer and Plato, the method of storage began to alter, as the information became alphabetised, and correspondingly the eye supplanted the ear as the chief organ employed for this purpose' (*ibid*: v). While Havelock's thesis is not uncontested, it certainly is compelling and if nothing else provides a highly valuable window into understanding the inherent ambivalence contained within the *Phaedrus*. Through this window it can be discerned how Plato's archetypically liminal point of cultural transition, from having been taught by the oral Socrates to now himself using the technology of literacy, would have affected his understanding of how the world could be known.

Since Plato and the adoption of literacy as an information technology of inscription and dissemination the development of print technology has occurred. This has further increased the dissemination of knowledge and ideas to individuals through increased access to recorded information. Some commentators have argued that with the development of the digital technology of computing, and in particular the information networks it enables in the form of the Internet, a similar shift in the dissemination of information is occurring. For example, Walter Ong wrote in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* about the social-historical development of orality, literacy, print, and the 'secondary orality' of electronic culture, contrasting these technological forms of communication as significant stages in cultural development. Ong argues that the "electronic transformation of verbal expression has both deepened the commitment of the word to space initiated by writing and intensified by print and has brought consciousness to a new age of secondary orality" (Ong 2002: 133). This "secondary orality", Ong argues, is "essentially a more deliberate and self-conscious orality, based permanently on the use of writing and print, which are essential for the

manufacture and operation of the equipment and for its use as well” (*ibid*: 134). However, rather than change the base ontological frame of a knowing subject and known world, self-thing and world-thing, these further technological developments have rather served to reinforce this cognitive model of understanding by further distancing the distinction between a knower and a body of knowledge.

The philosopher of computer-mediated communication Charles Ess draws attention to two competing models that can arise in this kind of philosophy of technology. First there is ‘technological instrumentalism’, a view that characterises all technologies as morally neutral and which do not “embed or foster any given set of ethical or cultural values” (Ess 2002: 232). In this viewpoint it is only the end to which a technology is used towards, whether positive or negative, which is of concern. In opposition to this belief there lies ‘technological determinism’, in which the cultural values and opinions of a society are formed and reinforced by their technologies, a conviction underlying the optimistic belief that computer-mediated communication will foster “preferences for free speech and individualism”, even democracy, through such mediums as the Internet (*ibid*: 233). In his paper *Cultures in Collision: Philosophical lessons from computer-mediated communication*, Ess disputes both models by analysing ‘documented encounters between Western CMC [computer-mediated communication] technologies and diverse cultural groups’ (*ibid*: 233). In one example Ess discusses how Japanese engineers redesigned a Western computer supported collaborative work system to increase the level of visual information transmitted in the system in order to make the system more comfortable to use in their particular cultural context and its communicative practices. Ess concludes from this encounter, and from others, that computer-mediated communication technologies “both embed specific cultural values and communicative preferences (contra technological *instrumentalism*), and (contra technological *determinism*) that these technologies do *not* simply reshape their users to conform with those embedded values and preferences” (*ibid*: 234, emphasis as in original). This perspective is termed as ‘soft determinism’, where the stress is shifted from cause and effect to influence and affect.

In keeping with this soft determinism, it could be argued that with the development of each of these technologies of recording and communication – orality, literacy, print, and the digital or ‘secondary orality’ – the development of a strong internal memory as a cognitive tool becomes less necessary as access to external memory becomes increasingly available. This argument would be in keeping with Plato’s observations on writing from the *Phaedrus*, simply expanding it to encompass the more recent technologies. As a brief excursus it should

be pointed out now that it is not being suggested that these technologies are the only methods of communicating information, techniques as various as architecture through to dance all do so if the recipient possesses the necessary ‘symbolic literacy’ to translate them. The focus on these technologies stems from a combination of the social-historical significance given to them because of their linguistic application. Nevertheless, the expansion of the substrates for high content external memory has inevitably resulted in the need to question how we understand the informational landscape. However, determining whether this expansion is in the same league as Havelock’s shift from a Homeric to a Platonic ontological landscape is beyond the scope of this thesis.

One example of conceptual shifting coinciding with technological change lies in how the concept of the archive can be understood. Derrida precociously observed in *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* that nothing “is less reliable, nothing... less clear today than the word ‘archive’” (Derrida 1998: 90). The reason that Derrida develops for this lies in what he termed the “unlimited upheaval under way in archival technology” (*ibid*: 18), stating that all communicative technological changes “can only consist in a transformation of the techniques of archivization, of printing, of inscription, of reproduction, of formalization, of ciphering, and of translating marks” (*ibid*: 15). The acute consequences of this shifting technological structure of the archive is that it is this which “determines the structure of the *archivable* content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future” (*ibid*: 17, emphasis in original), in short it determines what can be articulated. From this perspective it is not surprising to find that Foucault, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, makes a similar statement when describing the archive as “the general system of the formation and transformation of statements” (Foucault 2002b: 146). The emphasis in Derrida’s description, however, brings to attention, whether we talk in terms of Foucault’s archive or Havelock’s cultural book, that such underlying structures are inseparably linked to their technologies of inscription, storage, and communication.

Nevertheless, the Platonic parable would, on face value, indicate that the technological structure of these external supplements to knowledge do not enhance what is truly known to the individual but rather the opposite. This demonstrates the existence of the subject and object ontology that began with the Homeric shift to the Platonic model of a knowing self and known world. The thinking since Plato, in the European or Western humanistic tradition, has customary focused on the delineation between the internal self and the external body, the external objects, and the external world. The origins of this ontological distinction coincide with Havelock’s thesis that the transition from a predominantly oral culture to a

predominantly literate one predicated a self reflexive awareness due to the shift in linguistic syntax. It is this self reflexive awareness of the mind that has continued throughout the history of the Western philosophical tradition. Augustine, for example, wrote in book ten of his *Confessions* that ‘the mind is one thing and the body another’ (Augustine 1955: 213). This book was a meditation on the nature of memory, where he describes it as a spacious storehouse (*ibid*: 208) of the mind, where among his various musings on the subject he indicates to us how we have come to possess and understand the word ‘cogito’ and its cognates.

This is where we get the word *cogitate* [*cogitare*]. For *cogo* [collect] and *cogito* [to go on collecting] have the same relation to each other as *ago* [do] and *agito* [do frequently], and *facio* [make] and *facito* [make frequently]. But the mind has properly laid claim to this word so that not everything that is gathered together anywhere, but only what is collected and gathered together in the mind, is properly said to be “cogitated.” (*ibid*: 212, emphasis in the original.)

Where as Plato had described the faculty of memory in the *Theaetetus*, another of his dialogues, as being like a slab of wax in the mind or soul that received impressions and which retained its memories as long as those impressions remained secured in the wax (Plato 1997f: 191c-d), Augustine presents it dynamically as being like the mind’s storehouse where its contents are collected, gathered and ordered – in short cogitated. The point, however, is not that the ontological divide of the internal subject and external object is simply continued, but that the divide is expanded so that the internal structure of organising and preserving thoughts is expressed in terms of the latest techniques and technologies of organising and preserving information externally.

Another example of this tendency can be found in the work of Sigmund Freud who, in his short essay *Note on the ‘Magic Notepad’*, marked out that while the devices used to reinforce our sensory functions operate via similar procedures as the sensory organs they mimicked the same was not true, he thought, of our mnemonic devices (Freud 2006: 102). He argued that while the mental apparatus is able to be indefinitely receptive to new impressions it is also able to indefinitely preserve these impressions. Our external apparatuses on the other hand, such as the simple piece of paper, have to compromise between how many new traces they can receive with how much space there is available before old traces have to be destroyed to make room for new impressions. However, Freud noticed an inconspicuous piece of equipment available in the shops advertised as the ‘magic notepad’, which he saw as being better able to perform an analogy of the functioning of the perception and memory systems of the human mind. The magic or mystic notepad was a fairly simple device,

consisting as he described it as a board “of dark-brown resin or wax within a paper frame, with a thin, translucent sheet laid over it, firmly attached to the wax board at the top and lying flat at the bottom” (*ibid*: 102-103). He would go on to argue that “the pad not only provides a reusable receptive surface like a blackboard, but also lasting traces of writing like a normal paper notepad; it solves the problem of combining both functions by *distributing them between two separate but connected components – systems*” (*ibid*: 104, emphasis as in original).

As with Plato and Augustine, Freud used the technological development of a new external apparatus of inscribing, storing, organising, retrieving, and disseminating information to elaborate on his theoretical model of the functions of the human mind. It is not surprising that this tradition has continued with theoretical analogies of the mind as a computer. However, as Derrida argued in his essay *Freud and the Scene of Writing*, Freud remained with the Western philosophical tradition of ‘what-ness’ ontology (Derrida 1978: 246-291), as had Augustine and Plato before him. While they use these technological devices as powerful tools of analogy for considering the human mind, they retain in the final analysis a clear distinction between mind and body, mind and world, between the internal knower and the external known, and, furthermore, all these concepts are understood in terms of their ‘what-ness’. This internal and external division of the subject-knower-thing and object-known-thing is symptomatic of the ontological tradition, and its privileging of cognition in the formal ontology of existents and their relations.

The new account of the emergence of self-understanding in Classical Greece makes a reassessment of the definite differentiation of ‘classical’ realist ontology and ‘noetic’ idealist ontology necessary. Rather than a clear history of the emergence of the ‘classical’ understanding of ‘being’ which was later opposed or complemented by the emergence of the ‘noetic’ understanding, there is now a degree of categorial indefiniteness apparent<sup>21</sup>. While we have noted the correlation of the development and maturation of idealist, nominalist, and sceptical philosophies in the ‘modern’ period with the rise of ‘noetic’ ontology, we have nevertheless tried to maintain a distinction between these two concepts. ‘Noetic’ ontology, we maintained, was predicated on an understanding of ‘being’ that privileged the ‘mind’ as the

<sup>21</sup> It could also be added that there is a greater degree of categorial indefiniteness apparent in the case of Plato as opposed to Aristotle. Ultimately, this kind of indefiniteness stems from exactly how someone chooses their definitions of the different types of the ontology of the ‘what-ness’ of existence. However, if an underlying structural analysis of these philosophical beliefs is conducted, a basic subject to object model of understanding existence can be found throughout all the possible permutations of this philosophical tradition. If the definition of the branches of ontology is chosen to be placed above this structural level, then clearer categorial distinctions can be made – one where there is the realist understanding that the ‘what-ness’ of entities is independent of how the ‘what-ness’ is known, and one where there is the idealist understanding that the ‘what-ness’ of entities is relational to how the ‘what-ness’ is known. However, if the model of ‘knowing’ or ‘cognition’ itself is included in the analysis of these ontological structures, then these distinctions develop a continuum of indefiniteness.

primary entity for knowing existence. Idealism and its related philosophies, however, are predicated on various antirealist positions that question the epistemological possibility of knowing the ‘truth’ about entities and their ‘being’. It is now apparent that the underlying fundamental structure for understanding ‘being’ may not have had a radical overhaul in the time between Plato and Descartes and the other ‘moderns’. The Platonic – or Socratic – model has a ‘noetic’ component to its thesis, where the possibility of knowing the ‘what-ness’ of the ‘world’ is predicated upon the knowing of the ‘what-ness’ of the ‘self’. This is a proposition emphasised by the Delphic maxim of “know thyself” (see, for example, Plato 1997e: 230a) as the first stage of acquiring wisdom.

Previously we differentiated the ‘classical’ branch from the ‘noetic’ branch of the ontological tradition with the argument that ‘classical’ ontology was an exercise in analysing the structural relationships of entities in and of themselves, while stating that ‘noetic’ ontology introduced a turn towards understanding these entities as they are presented to the mind or to consciousness. This ‘noetic’ formulation, it was argued, was based on the subject-object divide of understanding ‘being’. However, it is now apparent that the ‘classical’ branch of the ontological tradition had an inherent ‘noetic’ basis that arose with the development a reflexive sense of the ‘what-ness’ of the self. However, rather than be interpreted as a fundamental ontological principle of the understanding of ‘being’, this structural premise became an implicit feature of the ontological discourse. This implicitness enabled the premise to become overlooked and then ‘rediscovered’ as the Cartesian method: the process of “self-examination with respect to thoughts in correspondence to reality” (Foucault 1988: 46).

Nevertheless, this awareness of the categorial indefiniteness of the ontological tradition should not be dismissive of the philosophical changes instigated by the ‘modern’ period’s explicit engagement with the ‘noetic’ base of ‘what-ness’ ontology. While it did not constitute a radical revaluation of the underlying principles for the understanding of ‘being’, it did advance and adapt these principles. The rise in the ‘modern’ period of the explicit ‘noetic’ branch of the ontological tradition is not characterized by a fundamental shift in the understanding of the ‘what-ness’ of the ‘world’ in relation to the ‘what-ness’ of the ‘self’. This underlying object and subject ontology remained uncontested in the disputes between realist, nominalist, and idealist philosophy. These disputes over what can be said to exist were enabled by this structure and consequently do not characterize a radical divergence from the fundamental understanding of ‘being’. Instead they characterize a renewed focus on the nature of the relationship between ‘self-being’ and ‘world-being’, on the epistemological concerns that result from this relationship, and on clarifying the understanding of concepts



that emerged due to it. This is the subject-object model of understanding that underlies the question of the ‘what-ness’ of existence. The ‘modern’ period, from Descartes onwards, saw radical new methodologies developed to enable the systematic investigation of the ‘what-ness’ of existence, but they all remained within the terms of the subject-object model that was established in the ancient Greek ontology. This was one of Heidegger’s central arguments in *Being and Time*, that the tradition of “Greek ontology and its history”, while having undergone “numerous filiations and distortions”, nevertheless determines “the conceptual character of philosophy even today” (Heidegger 1962: 43 [21-22]<sup>22</sup>). The importance that Heidegger attributes to critically analysing the ontological tradition to reveal such underlying structures as the subject-object model of understanding is addressed in sections 2.6 and 2.7. This analysis is what Heidegger calls the phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology. Heidegger’s critique of the subject-object model of understanding or cognition is presented in section 3.5, and this is where his alternative model of the referential totality of ‘being-in-the-world’ is developed. However, before these arguments can be judged, a thorough understanding of Heidegger’s general critique of the ontology of ‘what-ness’ is required.

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<sup>22</sup> This Macquarrie and Robinson translation of Heidegger’s *Being and Time* is a central text for this thesis. The dual pagination reference is for the English page number first and then the German page number in the square brackets.

## Chapter 2

### Heidegger's Phenomenological Method for Ontology

#### §2 – *Guide to chapter two*

In chapter two the outline of Heidegger's alternative approach to ontology is presented. Rather than understand 'being' as 'what-ness', his alternative is described as seeing 'being' as 'how-ness'. This distinction is what Heidegger called the 'ontological difference'. The chapter documents the heritage of this idea in the phenomenological and existentialist traditions of thought, and progresses to analyse Heidegger's preliminary view of the 'being' of the human entity as self-interpretation. Moreover, an interpretation of Heidegger's methodology for researching this idea of 'being' is presented, along with a critique of differing interpretations.

#### §2.1 – *Naming 'how-ness' ontology*

The third sense of ontology does not have a standardised name but it could be called 'phenomenological' ontology or 'existentialist' ontology. However, these are as tricky a set of terms to apply as the earlier documented concept of postmodernism, as they share a similarly high level of categorial indefiniteness. In the case of 'existentialism', this indefiniteness is largely because the existentialist nomenclature was apparently first developed as a pejorative classification by Gabriel Marcel in the 1940's to describe Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy, who then adopted and popularised it, resulting in a retrospective classification of certain other philosophers who shared similar concerns to Sartre (Polt 1999: 165). These philosophers typically include, though this list is not to be thought of as exhaustive, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Jaspers, and Martin Heidegger, though each listed entry is open to debate depending on how wide a definition of existentialist is being utilised. While perhaps a more controversial suggestion than the others, a strong case could also be made for the inclusion of Blaise Pascal as an early existentialist or proto-existentialist (on this see Dreyfus 2009: 140).

On the other hand, some philosophers who are normally considered existentialists argued themselves that they were not. Heidegger is an example of such a philosopher, who in his *Letter on Humanism* regarded the name existentialism as an appropriate title for Sartre's philosophy but believed that its basic tenets had "nothing at all in common" with his own philosophy (Heidegger 1993: 232). Nonetheless, the standard principle to define Sartre's existentialism is his maxim that "*existence comes before essence*" (Sartre 1973: 26, emphasis as in original), which strikingly mirrors Heidegger's earlier statement from *Being and Time*

that the “*essence of Dasein* [his term for human beings, which will be analysed later] *lies in its existence*” (Heidegger 1962: 67 [42], emphasis as in original). However, focusing on maxims to define existentialism is a shallow vein to mine, especially due to the hostility that many canonical existentialists had to systemisation<sup>23</sup>. Walter Kaufmann, in his story on the development of existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre, opens with the description that existentialism “is not a philosophy but a label for several widely different revolts against traditional philosophy” (Kaufmann 1975: 11). This, more than any potential maxim, is closest to adequately providing a description of existentialism. Beyond this, tractability of the term can only be gained by examining its particular manifestations.

Heidegger’s philosophy, if understood as existentialist, is one such manifestation, and is of particular interest for our thesis as his unusually systematic treatment of the ontology of human existence in *Being and Time* is the beginning of the existentialist sense of ontology (for examples see Heidegger 1962: 32-33 [12], and Heidegger 1999: 1-3). However, it is important to remember that he did not describe his philosophy in terms of an ‘existential ontology’. Heidegger instead described his interest as ‘fundamental ontology’ (‘Fundamentalontologie’) (Heidegger 1962). Regardless, this version of ontology has become important due to the broad influence of Heidegger’s ideas on many currents of thought in the twentieth century, such as Sartre’s, and *Being and Time* arguably remains the single best example of this new sense of ontology in application.

As noted, Heidegger did not call his philosophy ‘existential ontology’. Furthermore, he was not content with his work being referred to as any form of existentialism, which is what Sartre had labelled it (see Sartre 1973: 26, and Polt 1999: 165). Richard Polt analysed some of the possible reasons for Heidegger’s refutation of associating his work with Sartre’s and suggested one reason was due to a misunderstanding. Apparently Heidegger’s view of Sartre having a ‘traditional’ understanding of ‘human being’ came from reading only an essay of Sartre’s meant for popular consumption, *Existentialism and Humanism*, and not his full account from *Being and Nothingness* that Heidegger is said to have given up on reading after only the first few pages (*ibid*: 167). Had he kept reading, Polt argues, Heidegger would have realised that both philosophers were keen to argue that ‘human beings’ could not be understood in any essentialist terms. Whether or not it is correct that Heidegger would have been less hostile to the title of existentialism had he read more of Sartre’s work is an interesting concept for contemplation, though it is also one that is now beyond verification with both authors having passed away. It is also important not to overlook the many differences in their philosophies that remain regardless of other similarities. As Polt notes,

<sup>23</sup> With the notable exception of Heidegger in his early period.

Sartre argued that ‘human beings’ – though he wrote in terms of consciousness, which Heidegger was keen to avoid – are free to create the meaning for their own existence, while Heidegger argued that because of our relationship to the past ‘human beings’ are constrained in their possible interpretations of existing in the world (*ibid.*: 167). Another popular way of expressing the difference between Sartre and Heidegger is in terms of a separation between ‘French existence-philosophy’ and ‘German existence-philosophy’ (see Tietz 2009: 162), the latter of which Heidegger was influenced through the 1919 publication of Karl Jaspers’ *Psychology of Worldviews* (Polt 1999: 166). This binary classification, however, is problematic.

Referring to Heidegger as an existentialist would be disingenuous if it was taken to mean that what is normally considered existentialist discourse was the only thread in his thought. Rather his early philosophy drew on a variety of disciplines which he wove together in *Being and Time* into a systematic theory of human existence. As well the existentialist aspect of his work, he combined ideas from phenomenology, hermeneutics, as well as from the traditional areas of ontology. Because of this it would be fair to call Heidegger’s radicalised development of ontology not only ‘existential ontology’ or ‘fundamental ontology’, but also ‘hermeneutic ontology’ and ‘phenomenological ontology’. An example of the use of the latter term is Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*, which bears the subtitle *An essay on phenomenological ontology*. However, as with existentialist philosophy in general, these categorial variations share a high degree of indefiniteness, and so a fixed or agreed upon meaning does exist in order to conclusively disambiguate them from each other.

The formation of the categorial indefiniteness between phenomenology and existentialism stems from the aforementioned separation of ‘French existence-philosophy’ and ‘German existence-philosophy’. The problem is that the French and German distinction is misleading as they suggest a straight comparison is possible between two schools of thought. In his chronicle of *The Phenomenological Movement*, Herbert Spiegelberg observes how the emergence of existentialism in France coincides with that of phenomenology, in such a manner that the meaning of the two terms frequently overlapped (Spiegelberg 1976b: 408-413). This is in contrast to their development in Germany where they became segregated as antagonistic philosophies (*ibid.*). This segregation is particularly evident between the idea of phenomenology as a methodology with scientific rigour, as developed and espoused by Edmund Husserl, and the Kierkegaardian ‘Existenzphilosophie’ of Karl Jaspers who argued that existence could not be grasped rationally (Tietz 2009: 163). This division may also have had a personal element, as Spiegelberg points out that “Jaspers resented Husserl’s early

opposition to German speculative philosophy, especially to Schelling, as came out in a momentous conversation at Husserl's request in 1913, when Husserl may well have sought Jaspers' support for his new yearbook" (Spiegelberg 1976b: 409).

The connection between existentialism and phenomenology derives largely from the work of Heidegger, who was a student of Husserl and his phenomenology. Heidegger regarded his philosophy of the analysis of existence in *Being and Time* as a phenomenological ontology with hermeneutical modifications that produced transcendental knowledge (Heidegger 1962: 62 [38]). However, because Heidegger in his later work dropped the use of these terms, and just referred to his philosophy as "thinking" (Polt 1999: 38), and because Husserl later denounced Heidegger's philosophy as a form of phenomenology as he had intended it (see Spiegelberg 1976a: 154, and Spiegelberg 1976b: 410), this link between existentialism and phenomenology ended in Germany. The French use of phenomenology and existentialism as complimentary concepts came from the adoption of the stance used in *Being and Time* before the extent of this break in the German tradition became fully understood in France (Spiegelberg 1976b: 410). This nevertheless led to advancement of what is sometime called 'existential phenomenology', such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (see Wrathall 2009: 31). However, just as Heidegger never called himself an existentialist, Merleau-Ponty never called himself an existential phenomenologist (*ibid*: 31). Moreover, it is important not to overlook the hermeneutical and ontological tendencies that are significant in many of the aforementioned philosophers. The consequence of this collective indefiniteness is that while many twentieth century philosophers' have had an interest in the new sense of ontology it has nevertheless had no stable referent. However, it can be understood and named within the frameworks of these philosophers individually. Consequently, the philosophy of Heidegger has been selected in order to critical demonstrate an alternative to characterising ontology as the study of 'being' as the 'what-ness' of entities. This is not an arbitrary selection, as Heidegger's systematic critique of the tradition of characterising 'being' as 'what-ness' is the pre-eminent philosophical investigation of 'being' of the twentieth century. For Heidegger 'being' is not the 'what-ness' of an object or of 'reality'. He states this in the epilogue of his essay *The Thing*.

"Being" is in no way identical with reality or with a precisely determined actuality. Nor is Being in any way opposed to being-no-longer and being-not-yet; these two belong themselves to the essential nature of Being. Even metaphysics already had, to a certain extent, an intimation of this fact in its doctrine of the modalities – which, to be sure, has hardly been understood – according to which possibility belongs to Being just as much as do actuality and necessity. (Heidegger 1971b: 181)

Nor for Heidegger is ‘being’ the representation of existence found in the mental activity of a subject (*ibid*: 181). Instead, to characterise his understanding of ‘being’, Heidegger develops his own systematic alternative to the Western tradition of ontology. This alternative begins with the concept of the ontological difference.

## §2.2 – Heidegger and the ontological difference

A more detailed explication of the new sense of ontology is now required. One way of expressing its meaning is that rather than maintaining the ontological tradition’s view that ‘being’ is the ‘what-ness’ or ‘quiddity’<sup>24</sup> of an entity, it is interested in characterising ‘being’ as the ‘how-ness’ of an entity. For Heidegger, ‘being’ does not name the ‘what’ of the entity “like a chair in contrast to a house” (Heidegger 1992a: 153), ‘being’ is not the “class or genus of entities; yet it pertains to every entity” (Heidegger 1962: 62 [38]). This should not be interpreted as a statement that the ‘things’ in existence do not have a ‘what-ness’, what Heidegger called the ‘ontical’ characteristic of entities. The ‘brute facts’ of an individual’s existence is the totality of their ontical characteristics. For example, an individual’s genetic structure is such an ontical characteristic, just as being made of wood is an ‘ontical’ characteristic of a wooden chair. In this sense Heidegger can be described as a realist, in as far as he agreed that scientific knowledge was possible in a way that dogmatic idealism can not. The ‘ontical’ (*ontisch*) aspect of the world represented for Heidegger the matters of fact about existence, and these matters of fact are studied by science. His preliminary description of science is that it “in general may be defined as the totality established through an interconnection of true propositions” (*ibid*: 32 [11])<sup>25</sup>.

In general terms Heidegger’s modal ontology of ‘how-ness’ could be understood as a type of ‘meta-ontology’. It seeks the ways of ‘being’ that give rise to, from human disclosure,

<sup>24</sup> And the associated concept of the ‘this-ness’ (*haecceity*) of entities.

<sup>25</sup> Heidegger is largely silent on the scientific structure of investigating ontical ‘truths’ (see section 69b of *Being and Time* as an example of what he does say). This is because his main concern is addressing the ontological question of the ‘being’ of entities, which he feels has normally been ignored in favour of analysing the problems of determining the ‘what-ness’ of entities. My interpretation of Heidegger’s distinction between the ontical and the ontological is that in both cases we can only strictly state that we are discussing the phenomenal in the Kantian sense. Heidegger’s interest in ‘being’ is phenomenological, that is, in how ‘being’ is disclosed to ‘human beings’. The noumenal of existence remains that which exists independently of any structure of disclosure, and consequently cannot be identified through any methodology. This interpretation accepts the Kantian transcendental argument, that the noumenal must exist necessarily, even though we can say nothing about it. This does not mean that the noumenal is to be regarded as the sole ‘truth’ of existence, the phenomenal world is the ‘true’ disclosure of the ‘being’ of intra-worldly entities. Within this interpretation, a scientific explication of the ‘what-ness’ of existence is consequently characterised as the ontical investigation of the phenomenal realm. An ontological investigation is, on the other hand, an investigation into the structure of the ‘how-ness’ of existence as disclosed to ‘human being’. This ‘how-ness’ of ‘being’ is the existential structure of how the world matters in term of the referential totality of involvement and significance. This is to say, as Heidegger argued, that the ‘how-ness’ structure of ‘human being’ is ‘care’ (Heidegger 1962: 227 [182]), and ‘care’, as will be shown, is made possible by temporality. The phenomenological uncovering of this structure is Heidegger’s fundamental ontology of the ‘how-ness’ of ‘being’.

the structures that govern the context of understanding the ‘what-ness’ and ‘this-ness’ of entities. This also means that this ontology can be confused with what was earlier termed ‘noetic’ ontology, and there is a degree of indefinite overlap. However, the two forms of ontology can be distinguished because the ‘how-ness’ version typically rejects that the sole structure of ‘how-ness’ is in the mind or these structures are necessarily personal structures. As stated there is a degree of indefiniteness between these categories, such as in Sartre’s philosophy which maintained a ‘noetic’ character from its Husserlian influence. This is despite its other Heideggerian influences, which makes a synthesis that commentators such as Hubert Dreyfus consider as Sartre’s major mistake, regarding *Being and Nothingness* as a “brilliant but misguided reformulation of *Being and Time* into a theory of consciousness” (Dreyfus 1991: 13). However, the relationship between the philosophy of Husserl and Heidegger is complicated.

Husserl and Heidegger are two of the most significant philosophers of the twentieth century, and their respective philosophies share both powerful similarities as well as quite extraordinary differences. For a period of time Husserl was Heidegger’s mentor in the development of a new philosophical movement referred to as ‘phenomenology’, and a knowledge of their contributions to phenomenology remains a vital source for a rich understanding of the emergence and later development of this movement. The divergence of their thought became apparent after the publication of Heidegger’s *Being and Time* in 1927, and this rupture in their thinking has since remained an active topic for scholarly analysis. One analysis of their diverging understanding of phenomenology suggests that whereas Husserl had an epistemological goal for his philosophy, Heidegger’s goal was ontological; he wanted to develop the phenomenological techniques to address the ‘question of being’. This is the interpretation that can, for example, be found in Hubert Dreyfus’ excellent commentary *Being-in-the-World* (*ibid*: 3). However, an alternative interpretation exists in the analyses of other scholars, who argue that there are more similarities between their thinking than are conventionally agreed. Søren Overgaard is an example of such a scholar, who argues in his comparative text *Husserl and Heidegger on Being in the World* that “what appears as a clear-cut example of an epistemological problematic in fact turns out to be essentially *ontological*: what Husserl’s phenomenology eventually wants is to understand the being of the world, or not just that, but rather *being as such*” (Overgaard 2004: 68, emphasis as in original).

To determine to what extent Husserl’s phenomenology is an ontological exercise in a manner similar to Heidegger’s, it is necessary to understand the ontological pursuit of the ‘question of being’ found in *Being and Time*. The ‘question of being’ can either appear

obvious, self-evident, and unnecessary, or inexplicable and mysterious, but according to Heidegger an analysis of these presuppositions only reveals the necessity of explicitly asking the ‘question of being’ (Heidegger 1962: 21-24 [2-4]). He argues that an adequate answer for the question has never been reached, that the presuppositions about it have precluded any attempt to answer them, and even that there has never been a proper way of formulating the question (*ibid*: 21-24 [2-4]). Part of this problem is evident within the grammar of the word ‘being’, which operates as a gerund – a verb used as a noun. As a noun ‘being’ refers to the infinitive verb ‘to be’, and so a statement that something ‘is’ becomes a statement that something that has the characteristic of existence does so through ‘doing’. An analysis of this reveals a circularity about a basic statement of existence – something has existence if it is existing. This lack of clarity of the meaning of this fundamental word, however, is greater than a grammatical problem. But as a grammatical problem it makes addressing the meaning of ‘being’ frequently appear inelegant and cumbersome. So that this trouble is not overlooked, this text will retain the use of ‘being’, when used as a noun, in single quotation marks.

Heidegger gave a substantial two part introduction to *Being and Time*, which in the first half covers the case for prioritising the ‘question of being’ as a matter of inquiry. He develops this case and then argues that the task of interpreting the meaning of ‘being’ should begin by analysing the particular ‘being’ that can understand ‘being’ (*ibid*: 19-35 [1-15]). This is what he called an “existential analytic of Dasein” (*ibid*: 34 [13]). Both ‘existential’ and ‘Dasein’ are technical terms that Heidegger presents in his introduction along with several others in order to facilitate his inquiry into ‘being’. An analysis of these terms will have to be postponed until later in this text, but the thrust of his argument is that an inquiry into “the question of Being requires that the right way of access to entities shall have been obtained” (*ibid*: 26 [6]). For Heidegger, an ‘entity’ (*Ein Seiendes*) is different from ‘being’ (*Sein*). An entity has its ontical facts that can be studied by science such as mass, atoms, DNA, and so forth. But ‘being’ is not such an ontical characteristic, rather ‘being’ for Heidegger, is a feature that is different, *sui generis*, from any such ontical facts. It is from this distinction that the more general description of an ontology of ‘how-ness’, rather than ‘what-ness’, is derived. In Heidegger’s terminology, the word ‘ontology’ is reserved exclusively in relation to characterising this idea of ‘how-ness’ and its modal structures.

The separation of ‘being’ and ‘entity’, ‘being’ and ‘a being’, ‘being’ and ‘beings’, where the first is ‘ontological’ and the second ‘ontical’, is what Heidegger later called the ontological difference in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, a lecture course that he gave in 1927 which expanded on some of the topics from *Being and Time*. In it he outlines the



significance of the ontological difference as such:

The possibility of ontology, of philosophy as a science, stands and falls with the possibility of a sufficiently clear accomplishment of this differentiation between being and beings and accordingly with the possibility of negotiating the passage from the ontical consideration of beings to the ontological thematization of being.... Being and its distinction from beings can be fixed only if we get a proper hold on the understanding of being as such. But to comprehend the understanding of being means first and foremost to understand *that* being to whose ontological constitution the understanding of being belongs, the Dasein. (Heidegger 1982: 227, emphasis as in original)

‘Dasein’ is Heidegger’s chosen designation for the entity that is conventionally called the ‘human being’, though it has a special emphasis that will need further elaboration in section 3.2. His argument is that to understand ‘being’ in general, the particular ‘being’ of Dasein should first be examined as a preparatory analytic. This is because, Heidegger argues, it is the structure of Dasein’s way of ‘being’ that makes ‘being’ in general intelligible. And the way of ‘being’ that Dasein possesses is ‘existence’ (*Existenz*) (Heidegger 1962: 32 [12]).

### §2.3 – *Existence as self-interpretation*

‘Existence’ is Dasein’s self-interpreting way of ‘being’, its ‘how-ness’. For Dasein “its ownmost being is such that it has an understanding of that being, and already maintains itself in each case in a certain interpretedness of its being” (*ibid*: 36 [15], alternate translation from Dreyfus 1991: 15). ‘Existence’ is the way of ‘being’ of Dasein, which is how Dasein, in its ‘being’, comports itself to its ‘being’ (*ibid*: 67 [41-42]). “Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence – in terms of a possibility of itself” (*ibid*: 33 [12]). This also means, as Dreyfus points out, that ‘existence’ is not used by Heidegger to indicate ‘existing’ in the conventional sense, rather it means that only “self-interpreting beings exist” (Dreyfus 1991: 15). This is not to be understood as a statement that entities that do not self-interpret are not ‘here’ in the world. Such entities can have many ontical attributes, just not the ontological way of ‘being’ that Heidegger reserved the term ‘existence’ to designate. It is from the use of the term ‘existence’ to designate the way of ‘being’ of Dasein that Heidegger then derives his use of the terms ‘existentiell’, ‘existential’, ‘existentiality’, and ‘existentiale’. This extract from *Being and Time* explains the first three of these terms:

Only the particular Dasein decides its existence.... The question of existence never gets straightened out except through existing itself. The understanding

of oneself which leads *along this way* we call “*existentiell*”. The question of existence is one of Dasein’s ontical ‘affairs’. This does not require that the ontological structure of existence should be theoretically transparent. The question about that structure aims at the analysis of what constitutes existence. The context of such structures we call “*existentiality*”. Its analytic has the character of an understanding which is not *existentiell*, but rather *existential*. (Heidegger 1962: 33 [12], emphasis as in original)

Finally, ‘*existentiale*’, plural ‘*existentialia*’, is reserved as a term whose equivalent is ‘category’ for entities other than Dasein:

All *explicata* to which the analytic of Dasein gives rise are obtained by considering Dasein’s existence-structure. Because Dasein’s characters of Being are defined in terms of existentiality, we call them “*existentialia*”. These are to be sharply distinguished from what we call “*categories*” – characteristics of Being for entities whose character is not that of Dasein. (*ibid*: 70 [44], emphasis as in original)

The *existentialia* are the structures of the possible ways, the ‘how-ness’, of entities whose ‘being’ is a ‘who’, and not a ‘what’. This does not mean that an entity that is a ‘who’, Dasein, does not have ‘what-ness’.

The human entity has many ‘what-ness’ categories, just as any entity can be studied and accounted for in terms of ‘what’ it ‘is’. Yet these are categories of its ontical properties, not its ontological ways and structures of ‘being’. Consequently, the human entity, Dasein, cannot be characterised as only a ‘what’. Furthermore, Heidegger argued that as the traditional ontology of Western philosophy had interpreted all ‘being’ in terms of ‘what-ness’, the manners of ‘being’ which are not ‘what-ness’ had to be investigated before an attempt to analyse their interrelation could be made.

*Existentialia* and categories are the two basic possibilities for characters of Being. The entities which correspond to them require different kinds of primary interrogation respectively: any entity is either a “*who*” (existence) or a “*what*” (presence-at-hand in the broadest sense). The connection between these two modes of the characters of Being cannot be handled until the horizon for the question of Being has been clarified. (*ibid*: 71 [45], emphasis as in original)

For example, there are spacial categories which can describe a Dasein’s location. However, this would only be an ontical characterisation of where that Dasein’s body was located. The ontology of distance is different to this ontical understanding. “That which is presumably ‘closest’ is by no means that which is at the smallest distance ‘from us’” (*ibid*: 141 [106-

107]). Someone speaking in Britain on the phone to their brother in Australia is ontologically distanced in a different way than they are ontically distanced. The ontical distance between the brothers would be great, and could be measured mathematically. But ontologically the two brothers could be very close – though this would depend on a further analysis of the context of their situation, their ‘world’. Heidegger described this ontology of spatiality in terms of the existentials of ‘de-severance’ (*Entfernung*) (*ibid*: 138-144 [104-110]). “‘De-severing’ amounts to making the farness vanish – that is, making the remoteness of something disappear, bringing it close” (*ibid*: 139 [105]). Being able to talk on the phone to his brother is not the only way their distance could be ‘de-severed’, what matters is that by ‘dealing with’ (*Umgang*)<sup>26</sup> his brother as something that ‘matters’ he was brought ‘close’ to him. “With the ‘radio’, for example, Dasein has so expanded its everyday environment that it has accomplished a de-severance of the ‘world’ – a de-severance which, in its meaning for Dasein, cannot yet be visualized” (*ibid*: 140 [105]). *Being and Time* was published in 1927, when the modern telecommunications industry was only in its infancy. Yet Heidegger here showed considerable foresight on how the ontology of information technology would prove an important subject for future phenomenological research. For example, Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Spinoza analyse the phenomenology of the Internet in their essay *Heidegger and Borgmann on How to Affirm Technology* (Dreyfus and Spinoza 2003: 315-326)<sup>27</sup>.

However, it remains to be demonstrated just how having the character, or way of

<sup>26</sup> See section 3.5 for the phenomenology of ‘dealing with’ (*Umgang*) the world.

<sup>27</sup> Heidegger also returned to the issues of technology and ‘nearness’ in his later period. This period, post *Being and Time*, is characterised by a less systematic and more poetic style of discourse. An example of his thought from this period is his essay *The Thing*. In *The Thing*, Heidegger analyses the ontology of a ‘thing’ *qua* ‘thing’. The question he asks is “What in the thing is thingly? What is the thing in itself?” (Heidegger 1971b: 165). Heidegger is in this essay differentiating ‘thing’ from ‘object’ in a manner similar to how he differentiates between a ready-to-hand entity and a present-at-hand entity in *Being and Time*. In *The Thing*, Heidegger coins the description of a ‘thing’ ‘thinging’, by which he means the way in which a ‘thing’ brings forth or discloses the world as something that is ‘near’. “Thinging is the nearing of the world” (*ibid*: 179). This ontological ‘nearness’ is different from physical or perceptual distance. This is a clarification of his phenomenology of ‘de-severance’ from *Being and Time*, as it emphasises that using modern information communication technology does not necessarily make other entities ‘near’.

All distances in time and space are shrinking. Man now reaches overnight, by plane, places which formerly took weeks and months of travel. He now receives instant information, by radio, of events which he formerly learned about only years later, if at all. The germination and growth of plants, which remained hidden throughout the seasons, is now exhibited publicly in a minute, on film. Distant sites of the most ancient cultures are shown on film as if they stood this very moment amidst today’s street traffic. Moreover, the film attests to what it shows by presenting also the camera and its operators at work. The peak of this abolition of every possibility of remoteness is reached by television, which will soon pervade and dominate the whole machinery of communication. (*ibid*: 163)

Modern telecommunication technology de-severs distance by abolishing remoteness, but it does not also necessarily bring what it shows ‘near’. Rather, ‘nearness’ is the ‘mattering’ of entities in someone’s world. This is the world of their concern. In section 3.5 this phenomenology of intra-worldly entities is analysed in greater depth, though the terminology from Heidegger’s earlier, systematic period of *Being and Time* is retained. Consequently rather than ‘thing’ and ‘object’, the discourse will be in terms of the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand.

‘being’, of ‘existence’ makes the ‘existential analytic of Dasein’ the method for addressing the ‘question of being’. If Dasein has the way of ‘being’ of ‘existence’, Heidegger argued, the analysis of Dasein has three priorities for the development of a ‘fundamental ontology’. The first is an ontical priority, which is that it is a fact that Dasein has “the determinate character of existence” (Heidegger 1962: 34 [13]). The second is an ontological priority, which is because, as ‘existence’ is determinative for it, Dasein is in itself ‘ontological’ (*ibid*: 34 [13]). “But with equal primordially Dasein also possesses – as constitutive for its understanding of existence – an understanding of the Being of all entities of a character other than its own. Dasein has therefore a third priority as providing the ontico-ontological condition for the possibility of any ontologies” (*ibid*: 34 [13]). It is because of these priorities that Heidegger’s fundamental ontology requires the aforementioned ‘existential analytic of Dasein’. It is such an “analytic of Dasein in general [that] makes up fundamental ontology, so that Dasein functions as that entity which in principle is to be *interrogated* beforehand as to its Being” (*ibid*: 35 [14], emphasis as in original).

However, if an analysis of what pertains to the ‘being’ of Dasein is to function as a means of access to the ‘question of being’, what remains to be explained is how such an analysis can be undertaken. To address this question Heidegger develops in the second part of the introduction to *Being and Time* several interrelated methodological techniques: hermeneutics, phenomenology, and the ‘destruction’ (*Destruktion*) of the history of ontology. Before these techniques can be unpacked we must clarify the recursive nature of Heidegger’s analysis of ‘being’. Understanding this recursive structure that is used in *Being and Time* helps develop an understanding of Heidegger’s concern with methodology.

A recursive characteristic does not simply represent the process of repetition. More specifically it is the repeated application of parts of a procedure in relation to successive results from the whole of the procedure, so that the final interpretation of the procedure is dependent on an indefinite, though not necessary infinite, number of successive cycles. This form of recursion is evident in Heidegger’s development and characterisation of hermeneutics in *Being and Time*. This recursive quality of hermeneutics has been called the ‘hermeneutic circle’ and the ‘hermeneutic spiral’. Aside from recursion, hermeneutics in general represents the process of interpretation, and has developed from a number of historical contexts, most notably as a method the interpretation of texts. Heidegger’s development of hermeneutics, however, is twofold. Firstly he uses hermeneutic recursive interpretation as a technique for the analytic of the ‘being’ of Dasein, and secondly he reveals hermeneutic recursion to be a structure of the “existential constitution of Dasein” (*ibid*: 195 [153]). This second point is

partly already evident in Heidegger's initial characterisation of the way of 'being' of Dasein as 'existence', that is, self-interpretation, which he later elaborates in terms of a circular structure of understanding and interpretation (*ibid*: 195 [153]). Heidegger discussed interpretative circularity in the context of comments on virtuous circles and vicious circles (*ibid*: 194-195 [152-153]), but as the goal set out in *Being and Time* was to eventually reach an understanding of 'being' in general, the structural technique he deployed is better represented as an unfinished process of recursion rather than formal circularity.

Furthermore, Heidegger argued that the existence of Dasein is itself hermeneutic. This means that how Dasein gives meaning to its 'being' is through a recursive or circular process of understanding and interpretation, and this is a temporal structure. Heidegger asks "*how is the totality of that structural whole which we have pointed out to be defined in an existential-ontological manner?*" (*ibid*: 225 [181], emphasis as in original). His reply, via an extended definition of Dasein, is that "*Being-in-the-world which is falling and disclosed, thrown and projecting, and for which its ownmost potentiality-for-Being is an issue, both in its Being alongside the 'world' and in its Being-with Others*" (*ibid*: 225 [181], emphasis as in original). This is to say that Dasein is 'care' (*Sorge*) (see section 3.3) – existentiality is an *issue* for it – which discloses its world through a hermeneutic recursion that is structured by the temporality of Dasein. Heidegger was critical of those who accused this process of being 'mere' circularity.

When one talks of the 'circle' in understanding, one expresses a failure to recognize two things: (1) that understanding as such makes up a basic kind of Dasein's Being, and (2) that this Being is constituted as care [*Sorge*]. To deny the circle, to make a secret of it, or even to want to overcome it, means finally to reinforce this failure. We must rather endeavour to leap into the 'circle', primordially and wholly, so that even at the start of the analysis of Dasein we make sure that we have a full view of Dasein's circular Being. (*ibid*: 363 [315])

Heidegger's analysis of Dasein is recursive because he interprets the constitution of Dasein's 'being' as having this very structure.

## §2.4 – Preliminary analysis of Heidegger's methodological techniques

Nevertheless, it is Heidegger's hermeneutic recursion as a methodological technique that currently matters for explicating his existential analytic of Dasein. Throughout *Being and Time* Heidegger develops the analytic of the 'being' of Dasein, only to later reinterpret that analytic as part of his recursive technique. 'Existence' is Heidegger's opening characterisation of the self-interpreting way of 'being' of Dasein, but the explanation of this way of 'being' is

periodically reinterpreted as Heidegger progresses in his analytic. This process begins when Heidegger observes the relationship the ‘world’ has with Dasein’s self-interpretation.

The kind of Being which belongs to Dasein is rather such that, in understanding its own Being, it has a tendency to do so in terms of that entity towards which it comports itself proximally and in such a way which is essentially constant – in terms of the ‘world’. In Dasein itself, and therefore in its own understanding of Being, the way the world is understood is, as we shall show, reflected back ontologically upon the way in which Dasein itself gets interpreted. (*ibid*: 36-37 [15-16])

From this observation, Heidegger will develop an interpretation of the ‘being’ of Dasein as ‘being-in-the-world’. The basis for this interpretation – which he stresses is only a provisional horizon for understanding the meaning of the ‘being’ of Dasein, so that the “preparatory analytic of Dasein will have to be repeated on a higher and authentically ontological basis” (*ibid*: 38 [17]) – is derived from a phenomenology of Dasein’s ‘everydayness’ (*Alltäglichkeit*). This is because everydayness possesses structures that are “determinative for the character” of Dasein’s ‘being’, and which, in outlining will “bring out the Being of this entity in a preparatory fashion” (*ibid*: 38 [17]).

The phenomenology of Dasein’s everydayness towards an interpretation of its ‘being’ as ‘being-in-the-world’ will be examined later in section 3.3. Presently the task is explicate Heidegger’s phenomenological technique in general. As previously stated his phenomenology is highly interrelated with his hermeneutics, to such an extent that his methodology has been called hermeneutic phenomenology (for example in Dreyfus 1991: 30-39). But his phenomenology is also interrelated with his conception of ontology, as well as with the existential analytic of Dasein, and so an initial description of Heideggerian phenomenology should begin with Heidegger’s own preliminary conception. To what extent this preliminary conception of phenomenology is a radical appropriation or rejection of Husserl’s phenomenological designs, or a more nuanced shift in alignment, will as an analysis have to be postponed until a systematic comparison between Husserl’s and Heidegger’s ideas can be given proper attention. This systematic comparison will also include the aforementioned analysis of Heidegger’s interpretation of Dasein’s ‘being’ as ‘being-in-the-world’.

Heidegger’s phenomenology is not an attempt to validate or prove statements about Dasein and the world, rather, it is a descriptive exercise (Heidegger 1962: 59 [35]). In this outward sense his phenomenology is the same as Husserl’s, even copying his motto for the method: “To the things themselves” (*ibid*: 58 [34]). The task of Heidegger’s phenomenology

is to let what is normally concealed or hidden, the ‘being’ of entities, be revealed. “This Being can be covered up so extensively that it becomes forgotten and no question arises about it or its meaning” (*ibid*: 59 [35]). Furthermore, this ‘covering-up’ of ‘being’ can occur, either because the phenomena has never been discovered, or because it was once discovered but has since deteriorated and become ‘buried over’ (*ibid*: 60 [36]). While the latter raises the problem that phenomena may be deliberately ‘disguised’, the task of phenomenology remains to make the phenomena show themselves, so that by the phenomenology of phenomena “what one has in mind as that which shows itself is the Being of entities, its meanings, its modifications and derivatives” (*ibid*: 60 [35]). Consequently, “phenomenology is the science of the Being of entities – ontology” (*ibid*: 61 [37]). For Heidegger, ontology and phenomenology are not two distinct disciplines. Rather these “terms characterize philosophy itself with regard to its object and its way of treating that object. Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology, and takes its departure from the hermeneutic of Dasein” (*ibid*: 62 [38]).

Heidegger’s identification of phenomenology with ontology requires further clarification. While Heidegger does introduce the formal concept of the ‘phenomenon’ as “that which shows itself in itself” (*ibid*: 51-55 [28-31]), the meaning of this statement can be misleading. In Heidegger’s usage phenomenology is not to be thought of as an exercise in the description of entities as they appear to the perceiver. As he points out, there is a valid rejoinder to the maxim “to the things themselves” when it is interpreted in the first sense, that it is “abundantly self-evident, and it expresses, moreover, the underlying principle of any scientific knowledge whatsoever” (*ibid*: 50 [28]). The question that arises in Heidegger’s usage of phenomenology is how he correlates the investigation of something that is normally ‘hidden’ with what has been preliminarily explained as that which ‘shows itself in itself’. One way of interpreting this is that Heidegger was not interested in describing the self-evident qualities of an entity, but instead in what structured the self-evidence of that entity – the ‘being’ of that entity. Thus he writes:

What is it that phenomenology is to ‘let us see’? What is it that must be called a ‘phenomenon’ in a distinctive sense?... [I]t is something that lies *hidden*, in contrast to that which proximally and for the most part does show itself; but at the same time it is something that belongs to what thus shows itself, and it belongs to it so essentially as to constitute its meaning and its ground.

Yet that which remains *hidden* in an egregious sense, or that which relapses and gets *covered up* again, or which shows itself only ‘*in disguise*’, is not just

this entity or that, but rather the *Being* of entities... (*ibid*: 59 [35], emphasis as in original)

Consequently, the methodological descriptive phenomenology that Heidegger outlined was a “way of access to what is to be the theme of ontology” (*ibid*: 60 [35]). This is not to be mistaken as a way of access to the entirety of ontology, that is, to an understanding of ‘being’ in general. Rather, it is the methodological access to the specific or ‘fundamental’ ontology of Dasein in terms of its everydayness. Part of why ‘being’ is ‘hidden’, as revealed by the phenomenology of everydayness is because of Dasein’s character of ‘falling’ into the world (see section 3.3 for the full analysis of ‘everydayness’ and ‘falling’). This is where we interpret our ‘being’ as having the same ‘being’ as the other entities of the world, which are interpreted as ‘presence’ in terms of ‘the Present’ (*ibid*: 42 [21], 47 [25]). The phenomenological access to the everydayness of the interpretation of ‘being’ enables the hermeneutic analytic of Dasein as self-interpreting, its ‘existential’ way of ‘being’, which is then reinterpreted first as ‘being-in-the-world’, then as ‘care’ or ‘concern’ (*Sorge*), and then again as ‘time’. This ultimately leads to Heidegger re-expressing his ontology as an ‘existential-temporal analytic of Dasein’ (*ibid*: 486 [436]).

It should not be overlooked that the goal that Heidegger introduced was not solely to understand the ‘being’ of Dasein, but to enable an understanding of ‘being’ in general by means of understanding the ‘being’ of Dasein. This step was necessary because, he argued, it is the ontological constitution of Dasein that makes understanding ‘being’ possible. As he states at the end of *Being and Time*, the “distinction between the Being of existing [self-interpreting] Dasein and the Being of entities, such as Reality, which do not have the character of Dasein, may appear very illuminating; but it is still only the *point of departure* for the ontological problematic; it is nothing with which philosophy may tranquillize itself” (*ibid*: 487 [437], emphasis as in original). This caution against a fixation on his point of departure for the analysis of ‘being’ should not be surprising if the representation of Heidegger’s philosophy as a recursive exercise is accepted. Nonetheless, it would also be a mistake to interpret Heidegger’s hermeneutic recursive technique as a process of dismissing superseded analyses, and methods of analysis, of ‘being’. So while Heidegger argued that the analysis of the ‘being’ of Dasein was first a way of access to addressing the question of ‘being’ in general, he also maintained that ‘being’ was relational to Dasein’s ‘being’. “But Being ‘is’ only in the understanding of those entities to whose Being something like an understanding of Being belongs” (*ibid*: 228 [183]). However, there is a problematic region within the recursive characterisation, which is in relation to the unfinished attribute of *Being*



*and Time*. The text could be regarded as characterising a case of circular reinterpretation, as it lacks the ‘true end’ that should ultimately characterise recursiveness. Nevertheless, an analysis into the context of this incompleteness will both support a description of *Being and Time* as representing an unfinished process of recursion, and provide a tool for describing Heidegger’s other major methodological technique in the text: the ‘destruction’ of the history of ontology.

## §2.5 – Heidegger’s concern with temporality

As stated, *Being and Time* is an unfinished work. A reason for this is Heidegger’s later ‘turn’ (*Kehre*) in his philosophy, which can be characterised in several ways. One includes his disenchantment with the possibility of providing a systematic account of ‘being’ in general and human existence in particular, and the use of a technical vocabulary similar to Husserl’s project for phenomenology as a scientific discipline. Instead he moved to a more poetic style of discourse from around 1930 onwards. Consequently he did not return to finish *Being and Time*, which had been written in his systematic phase, and which was only one third complete. Heidegger did, however, outline the structure and design of how the complete work was to be realised, with a corresponding description of why this structure was to be employed in the second part of his substantial introduction. This in particular included the aforementioned ‘destruction’ of the history of ontology. Before this technique is analysed it is helpful first to introduce Heidegger’s description of the design of his treatise.

We shall proceed towards the concept of Being by way of an Interpretation of a certain special entity, Dasein, in which we shall arrive at the horizon for the understanding of Being and for the possibility of interpreting it; the universality of the concept of Being is not belied by the relatively ‘special’ character of our investigation. But this very entity, Dasein, is in itself ‘historical’, so that its ownmost ontological elucidation necessarily becomes an ‘historiological’ Interpretation.

Accordingly our treatment of the question of Being branches out into two distinct tasks, and our treatise will thus have two distinct parts:

*Part One*: the Interpretation of Dasein in terms of temporality, and the explication of time as the transcendental horizon for the question of Being.

*Part Two*: basic features of a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology, with the problematic of temporality as our clue. (*ibid*: 63 [39], emphasis as in original)

Furthermore, these two parts were both composed of three divisions, of which the first two divisions of part one represent the only material of *Being and Time* to appear. The three divisions of part one are, in order: “the preparatory fundamental analysis of Dasein”, “Dasein and temporality”, and “time and Being”; and the three of division two: “Kant’s doctrine of schematism and time, as a preliminary stage in a problematic of Temporality”, “the ontological foundation of Descartes’ ‘*cogito sum*’, and how the medieval ontology has been taken over into the problematic of the ‘*res cogitans*’”, and finally “Aristotle’s essay on time, as providing a way of discriminating the phenomenal basis and limits of ancient ontology” (*ibid*: 64 [39-40]).

There is a wide range of points that arise from the preceding quotations, but perhaps the first that should be addressed relates to the trouble of translating Heidegger and providing a textual exegesis. For example, in the preceding quotations on Heidegger’s planned design for the structure of *Being and Time*, the word ‘temporality’ was sometimes written as ‘Temporality’, and in a manner that demonstrates no apparent grammatical coherency with the project as outlined in these quotations. However, this is not a case of a syntactical slip and is an accurate replication of the translators’ English rendering of Heidegger’s German. Whereas ‘temporal’ and ‘temporality’ are the translations for Heidegger’s *zeitlich* and *Zeitlichkeit*, he also used the Latinate equivalent words *temporal* and *Temporalität* which the convention for translating has become to capitalise the ‘T’, rendering the words as ‘Temporal’ and ‘Temporality’. Heidegger used the Latinate equivalents of the standard German when he was referring to the role of ‘temporality’ as the condition of possibility, or ‘horizon’, for understanding ‘being’.

The problem for English translation is that the English language already uses the Latinate ‘temporal’ for its conventional usage. Albert Hofstadter, as translator of the English version of *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, analyses this problem in his lexicon to that book (Heidegger 1982: 384-385). This analysis shows how the typographic difficulty of rendering two different concepts through only capitalisation of the first letter as a “recollective index” (*ibid*: 385) has conventionally been found preferable to other ways of translating *Temporalität*. Such alternatives might include using Greek, so to express ‘Temporality’ as ‘chronality’, or write ‘Temporality’ as c-temporality to indicate that this is temporality functioning as the aforementioned ‘condition of possibility’ for understanding ‘being’. Nevertheless, Hofstadter argues that ‘chronality’ is too distant from the normal usage of ‘temporal’ in English and has connotations of ‘chronic problems’ like chronic disease and so on, and ‘c-temporal’ is found to be too awkward for comfortable reading (*ibid*: 385).

There are a further two possible alternative renderings of ‘Temporality’. One would be to call it transcendental temporality, as the usage reflects the Kantian inheritance of discussing ‘conditions’ and ‘possibilities’ for understanding. But aside from the questionable legitimacy of using a two word translation of a single word, there is also the fact that Heidegger develops his own use of the word ‘transcendental’ which makes this option untenable. The final alternative to ‘Temporality’, that occurs to this commentator, would be to render *Temporalität* as meta-temporality. This would avoid the semantic confusion that occurs when a sentence needs to begin with either ‘temporality’ or ‘Temporality’, and does not seem to have any major drawback – other than contributing to the extensive and idiosyncratic corpus of words that already use the ‘meta’ prefix. ‘Meta-temporality’ could be considered an appropriate term because the prefix permits a grasp of temporality as the condition of possibility. Similarly, ‘metadata’ is used to indicate extra data about the original data, and ‘metanarrative’ is used to indicate an overarching narrative of narratives. In this context translating *Temporalität* as ‘meta-temporality’ is appropriate as Heidegger states in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* that the “most original temporalizing of temporality as such is Temporality [*Temporalität*]” (*ibid*: 302).

Another example, perhaps more minor, of problems inherent in translating Heidegger involve his use of ‘being’ [*Sein*]. In the standard Macquarrie and Robinson translation ‘being’ is rendered as ‘Being’, but this is challenged by scholars such as Dreyfus who find that the capitalisation of the ‘b’ adds inappropriate connotations of an ultimate entity or Supreme Being (Dreyfus 1991: 11). A possible objection to this criticism is that dose not matter how *Sein* is translated as long as the rule for the translation has been made clear, is implemented consistently, and the meaning of the interpretation is transparent. It is beyond the scope of the present text to analyse all the problems of translating Heidegger and to offer a comprehensive alternative choice of vocabulary. Unless specifically necessary the original translation of a particular text will be maintained, and any required comments on the language noted at the time. Nevertheless, the analysis of the problem of translating *Temporalität* was not just a case, to paraphrase Husserl, of “empty word analysis” (quoted in Overgaard 2004: 1). Aside from helpfully introducing Heidegger’s concepts of ‘temporality’ and ‘meta-temporality’, it also provides a useful template for discussing Heidegger’s methodological ‘destruction’ of the history of ontology, and a related methodology called ‘formal indication’.

## §2.6 – *The phenomenological destruction*

As stated, the ‘destruction’ of the history of ontology is part of Heidegger’s

phenomenological method, where ‘ontology’ is the object of Heidegger’s philosophy and phenomenology is the way of treating that object (Heidegger 1962: 62 [38]). But the question remains about what kind of ‘treating’ a ‘destruction’ of ontology might be. Heidegger’s *Destruktion* is normally translated as this ‘destruction’, but this has an overly negative sense that he explicitly rejected (*ibid*: 44 [22]). Because of this, in an alternative version of *Being and Time* to the Macquarrie and Robinson translation, Joan Stambaugh translates *Destruktion* as ‘deconstructing’ (Heidegger 1996: 17 [19]). Another option arises from the fact that Heidegger sometimes used the word *Abbau* instead of *Destruktion*. *Abbau* translates as ‘dismantling’ or ‘de-construction’, some forty years before Jacques Derrida popularised his version of ‘deconstruction’. However, the best way of understanding the most suitable word for the rendering of *Destruktion* or *Abbau* is to understand the argument of why Heidegger believed *Destruktion* was needed.

As has already been introduced, Heidegger believed that phenomenology was required to reveal ‘being’ as it is normally ‘hidden’, and could be ‘hidden’ for a variety of reasons. Furthermore, an essential part of Heidegger’s representation of ‘being’, both in relation to the ‘being’ of Dasein and to the question of ‘being’ in general, was that it is fundamentally related to ‘time’. Because of this “historicality is a determining characteristic for Dasein in the very basis of its Being” (Heidegger 1962: 42 [20]). But ‘historicality’ is not the phenomenon of a Dasein having a history. Rather, it describes how Dasein “‘is’ its past in the way of *its* own Being, which, to put it roughly, ‘historizes’ out of its future on each occasion” (*ibid*: 41 [20], emphasis as in original). Consequently:

Whatever the way of being it may have at the time, and thus with whatever understanding of Being it may possess, Dasein has grown up both into and in a traditional way of interpreting itself: in terms of this it understands itself proximally and, within a certain range, constantly. By this understanding, the possibilities of its Being are disclosed and regulated. Its own past – and this always means the past of its ‘generation’ – is not something which *follows along after* Dasein, but something which already goes ahead of it. (*ibid*: 41 [20], emphasis as in original)

Dasein’s existence, its self-interpretation, has a historical structure for the disclosure of its possibilities for that interpretation. This structure provides Dasein with a “stock of prior self-interpretations”, as Polt describes, so that, for example, “we have learned to interpret ourselves as rational animals, as sinful creatures, as egos in conflict with the id and the superego, or as evolving bearers of DNA” (Polt 1999: 36). Yet, as will be analysed in greater

detail in section 3.3, this historical structure is part of the temporality, and meta-temporality, of 'being' and cannot be thought of in terms of the normal, ontical, understanding of 'past' and 'history'.

As Dasein's 'being' has this 'historical' constitution, Heidegger argues that the study of 'being' in general is "itself characterised by historicity" (Heidegger 1962: 42 [20]). He maintains that

The ownmost meaning of Being which belongs to the inquiry into Being as an historical inquiry, gives us the assignment of inquiring into the history of that inquiry itself... The question of the meaning of Being must be carried through by explicating Dasein beforehand in its temporality and historicity... (*ibid*: 42 [20-21])

However, this explication of the historicity of Dasein – via the phenomenology of Dasein's everydayness – shows that while historicity discloses the possibilities for understanding 'being', it also contributes the sources for the misinterpretation of 'being'. This occurs because of Dasein's tendency to 'fall' (see section 3.3) into "the tradition of which it has more or less explicitly taken hold", which hides itself as the source of our understanding of 'being' and "blocks our access" to developing ontological understanding (*ibid*: 42-43 [21]). "When tradition becomes master, it does so in such a way that what it 'transmits' is made so inaccessible, proximally and for the most part, that it rather becomes concealed" (*ibid*: 43 [21]). It is because of this, Heidegger alleges, that the question of 'being' has fallen from being an active matter of inquiry, despite not having been adequately formulated in its history (*ibid*: 43 [21]).

The original source of our understanding of 'being', and by 'our' Heidegger was always referring to the Western tradition, was ancient Greek ontology. This ontology, despite becoming distorted over the course of history, has determined that the understanding of 'being' has been the traditional self-evidence of the ontical characteristics of entities, or, put another way, entities "are grasped in their Being as 'presence'; this means that they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time – the '*Present*'" (*ibid*: 47 [25], emphasis as in original). This interpretation of 'presence' as the root of Western understanding has since proven particularly influential in 'Continental' philosophy, as characterised by subsequent criticisms of the 'metaphysics of presence'. For example, Derrida wrote, in *Writing and Difference*, that the matrix of the history of Western metaphysics and ontology "is the determination of Being as *presence* in all senses of this word... [that it has always] designated an invariable presence – *eidōs*, *archē*, *telos*, *energeia*, *ousia* (essence, existence, substance,

subject) *aletheia*, transcendental, consciousness, God, man, and so forth” (Derrida 1978: 353, emphasis as in original). However, to understand how *Heidegger* used and understood his interpretation of ‘presence’ as the origin of Western ontological understanding, it is essential not to strip his ideas from the context of his phenomenological description of everydayness and the ontological analysis of the temporality, and meta-temporality, of ‘being’. The former reveals the structure of understanding ‘presence-at-hand’ (*Vorhandenheit*) and the ‘present-at-hand’ (*Vorhanden*), as opposed to ‘readiness-to-hand’ (*Zuhandenheit*) and ‘ready-to-hand’ (*Zuhanden*)<sup>28</sup>, while the latter is central to Heidegger’s concern throughout *Being and Time*. What is important is not to mistakenly conclude that Heidegger was proposing some sort of ontology of ‘absence’, set-up in opposition to ‘presence’, as this would be a misleadingly oversimplification.

Heidegger traces the original ontological understanding of ‘being’ from ancient Greece, through what he considers the decisive historical stages of philosophical engagement with ontology (Heidegger 1962: 44 [23]). His argument is that:

In the course of history certain distinctive domains of Being have come into view and have served as the primary guides for subsequent problematics: the *ego cogito* of Descartes, the subject, the “I”, reason, spirit, person. But these all remain uninterrogated as to their Being and its structure, in accordance with the thoroughgoing way in which the question of Being has been neglected. It is rather the case that the categorial content of traditional [ancient Greek] ontology has been carried over to these entities with corresponding formalizations and purely negative restrictions... (*ibid*: 44 [22], emphasis as in original)

This means that the history of understanding ‘being’, which from its outset failed to identify the ontological difference between entities and ‘being’, has had a decisive impact on subsequent ontology and on Dasein’s capacity for self-interpretation. Consequently, a careful analysis of the history of ontology is central both for the existential-temporal analytic of the ‘being’ of Dasein and for the inquiry into question of ‘being’ in general. This is consistent with his argument, which we noted earlier, that while the analysis of Dasein’s ‘being’ was only a starting point for Heidegger’s planned inquiry into the meaning of ‘being’ in general, he nevertheless maintained that ‘being’ is relational to the disclosure of ‘being’ (*ibid*: 228 [183]).

It is important to remember that the possibilities for Dasein’s self-interpretation, its existence, is disclosed to it by its historical-temporal structure. The reason this is important

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<sup>28</sup> See section 3.5 for a detailed discussion of these terms, their use, their meaning, and for their role in the phenomenological architecture that Heidegger constructs.

relates to why practising a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology should be understood as part of the methodological core of Heidegger's project in *Being and Time*. As we argued earlier, either *Destruktion* or *Abbau* should be translated in the context of the phenomena which it describes. This structure is what, borrowing a term from Husserl's later historical interest, can be called the 'sedimentation' of meaning over time. This 'sedimentation', what Heidegger calls 'tradition', is two-sided in terms of its influence on Dasein's capacity for 'authentic' or 'inauthentic' existence. This question of 'authenticity' is the important question for Division Two of *Being and Time*, and which we will also leave for detailed analysis until section 3.3. In summary, 'tradition' represents a mode of 'inauthentic' historical-temporal existence, while 'heritage' is the 'authentic' equivalent. The problem is how tradition's disclosing of an inherited understanding of 'being' becomes hidden in Dasein's 'falling' (see section 3.3). This leads to an unquestioning continuation of the ontological understanding of 'being' as 'presence-at-hand'. Nevertheless, because the disclosure of 'being' to Dasein has a relational quality to 'being' in general, an inquiry into 'being' requires that the phenomenological method take into account the developing 'variable' that is presented by the historical-temporal structure of the disclosure of 'being'. Dasein is only Dasein because of its tradition/heritage, and an existential-temporal analytic of Dasein has to understand this tradition if it is to progress. This is also why calling this part of the analytic 'destruction' can be misleading because it seems to imply a negative function.

Heidegger was at pains to dispel the idea of his 'destruction' as a negative criticism of the past, which is why we shall refer to it hereafter always as 'phenomenological destruction' in order to emphasise its methodological goal<sup>29</sup>. This goal of phenomenological destruction was to make transparent the concealment of the understanding of 'being' that occurs in the sedimentation of tradition "until we arrive at those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being" (*ibid*: 44 [22]).

But this destruction is just as far from having the *negative* sense of shaking off the ontological tradition. We must, on the contrary, stake out the positive possibilities of that tradition, and this always means keeping it within its *limits*; these in turn are given factually in the way the question [of 'being'] is formulated at the time, and in the way the possible field for investigation is thus bounded off. (*ibid*: 44 [22], emphasis as in original)

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<sup>29</sup> This, admittedly, uses a two word reference to Heidegger's single word, which was a practice we previously questioned in terms of how to render *Temporalität*. However, as the unpublished second half of *Being and Time* was given the title "basic features of a *phenomenological destruction* of the history of ontology, with the problematic of Temporality [meta-temporality] as our clue" (Heidegger 1962: 63 [39], my emphasis), it is appropriate to reiterate the 'destruction' in the phenomenological terms Heidegger intended.

This additional point about the historical possibilities of the field of inquiry means not only that Heidegger accepts that the field of ontology and its phenomenological investigation is limited, but it also means that he accepts that his own perception of the question of 'being' is *contingent*. As he repeats in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, even "the ontological investigation which we are now conducting is determined by its historical situation and, therewith, by certain possibilities of approaching beings and by the philosophical tradition" (Heidegger 1982: 22). Heidegger even accepts that his argument that 'being' be understood temporally and meta-temporally is contingent in this way.

Faulty interpretations, misunderstandings, put much more stubborn obstacles in the way of authentic cognition than a total ignorance. However, these faulty interpretations of transcendence, of the basic relationship of the Dasein to beings and to itself, are no more defects of thought or acumen. They have their reason and their necessity in the Dasein's own historical existence. In the end, these faulty interpretations *must* be made, so that the Dasein may reach the path to the true phenomena by correcting them. Without our knowing where the faulty interpretation lies, we can be quietly persuaded that there is also a faulty interpretation concealed within the Temporal [meta-temporal] interpretation of being as such, and again no arbitrary one. (*ibid*: 322, emphasis as in original)

Yet this historical contingency of interpretations of 'being' is the very reason why the phenomenological destruction is necessary, as a "process in which the traditional concepts, which at first must necessarily be employed, are de-constructed down to the sources from which they are drawn. Only by means of this destruction can ontology fully assure itself in a phenomenological way of the genuine character of its concepts" (*ibid*: 23). The phenomenological destruction carefully analyses how the understanding of 'being' has been sedimented in traditional concepts to reveal their contingency and so enables the progressively recursive development of the question of 'being'. "Construction in philosophy is necessarily destruction, that is to say, a de-constructing of traditional concepts carried out in a historical recursion to the tradition" (*ibid*: 23).

It is because the phenomenological destruction's recursive or hermeneutic characteristic is overlooked that it has sometimes been considered as peripheral, even inessential for Heidegger's phenomenological method in *Being and Time*. In a carefully nuanced piece, Overgaard presents this argument that the destruction does not belong to the "thematic core" of Heidegger's basic phenomenology (Overgaard 2004: 100). The argument



can be summarised in the claim that the destruction is a task that occurs after the ‘phenomenology’, that “it is only *when we have already learned to ‘see’ something like modes of being that we can begin the destructive appropriation of the tradition*” (*ibid*: 98, emphasis as in original). He argues that one “cannot begin a destruction of the handed-down stock of classical ontology without first recognizing the handed-down *as* handed-down... [and thus] the only sensible task left for that destruction becomes that of discovering what ‘truth’, after all, there is in the handed down interpretation” (*ibid*: 99). Overgaard continues this argument to conclude that “the problem of ‘destruction’ is not of crucial importance in a discussion of an explicit posing of the question of being, *however crucial it might eventually become in Heidegger’s actual ontological investigation*” (*ibid*: 99, my emphasis).

While I will argue against Overgaard’s interpretation of the phenomenological destruction as a subsequent investigation of the question of ‘being’ that occurs after what might be called the initial ‘phenomenological phase’, it is important to understand that Overgaard was not advocating that the phenomenological destruction had no role in Heidegger’s project for *Being and Time*. He elaborates his ‘middle position’ regarding orientations to Heidegger’s phenomenological destruction in an extensive footnote.

Against my interpretation that the destruction has some positive task within the framework of [*Being and Time*], one could argue that in fact it has *no* task left to perform within that framework... [that it is] perfectly possible to practice phenomenological ontology *without having set the destruction in motion*, and therefore the destruction is no longer needed within the project defined by the analytic of Dasein [this is an argument that Overgaard attributes to Thomas Schwarz Wentzer]. Certainly, the task left for it to perform is no longer *crucial* to the Heideggerian undertaking – indeed, the conclusion of the present section is that the destruction does not belong to the methodological “core” of Heidegger’s phenomenological project. I am not convinced, however, that there is absolutely *no* task for it to perform within the framework of that project.... I shall be happy to grant that the destruction has more functions within the program of fundamental ontology [but not, note, within phenomenology] than explicitly acknowledged in this section. However, I still believe that the main argument is essentially correct: a destruction *am Leitfaden der Seinsfrage* only makes sense if a lot of work is already done. Obviously, we must already be able to formulate the question of being – we must already see that being is *questionable* – if this question is

to function as our “guide” or “clue” in our destruction confrontation with the tradition. (*ibid*: 100, emphasis as in original)

Overgaard’s position is correct in rejecting the interpretation that the phenomenological destruction has no role in Heidegger’s project. He also grants the possibility that it has a positive function in the wider ontological framework, that it might be the destructive “confrontation with tradition that makes Heidegger so attentive to the possible implicit ontological commitments in our philosophical concepts” (*ibid*: 100).

### §2.7 – *The recursive unity of the phenomenological destruction*

My criticism of Overgaard’s analysis, while it is very clearly thought through and is careful not to reject the destruction out of hand, is that nevertheless he does regard the destruction as part of Heidegger’s phenomenological methodology. I disagree with this conclusion, and regard the ‘destruction’ as the being the ‘phenomenological destruction’. As Overgaard sees it, Heidegger’s phenomenology precedes the role of destruction in addressing ‘being’, and that accordingly “it is perfectly reasonable that in the context of the planned work on [*Being and Time*], Heidegger places the problem of the destruction in the (never published) second part... rather than in the beginning of the work” (*ibid*: 99-100). This is partly correct, as it was part two of *Being and Time* that was entitled “basic features of a *phenomenological destruction* of the history of ontology, with problematic of Temporality [what we have been calling meta-temporality] as our clue” (Heidegger 1962: 63 [39], my emphasis). Yet, as that title should indicate, Overgaard is mistaken in interpreting the phenomenological destruction as not being part of Heidegger’s ‘core’ phenomenological methodology. First, though this is a relatively minor issue compared to the next, there are elements of the phenomenological destruction within division one of the first part of *Being and Time*, and so the analysis that it does not occur in the published material is not entirely convincing. Chapter three of the first division, on “The Worldhood of the World”, contains much in the character of the phenomenological destruction in sections comparing Heidegger’s analysis of ‘world’, ‘worldhood’ or ‘worldliness’ [*Weltlichkeit*], and ‘being-in-the-world’, against the tradition of the Cartesian understanding of these phenomena. This can be seen, for example, in these sections from the third chapter: “[18]B. A Contrast between our Analysis of Worldhood and Descartes’ Interpretation of the World”; “19. The Definition of the ‘World’ as *res extensa*”; “20. Foundations of the Ontological Definition of the ‘World’”; and “21. Hermeneutical Discussion of the Cartesian Ontology of the ‘World’”. These sections should not be dismissed, as they, as part of chapter three as a whole, are amongst Heidegger’s most

insightful analyses. We will analyse Heidegger's view of the 'world' in section 3.4, but what is needed to be understood is that these sections contribute to a phenomenological destruction of the ontological tradition's conceptual inheritance of the 'worldless-I'. This is required, as Heidegger later objects in division two, as if "in the ontology of Dasein, we 'take our departure' from a worldless "I" in order to provide this "I" with an Object and an ontologically baseless relation to that Object, then we have 'presupposed' not too much, but *too little*" (*ibid*: 363 [315-316], emphasis as in original).

However, while these sections show that elements of the phenomenological destruction are present fairly early on in *Being and Time*, this by itself does not disprove Overgaard's interpretation of the destruction as being after the 'phenomenological phase' of Heidegger's methodology. Overgaard's analysis of Heidegger's methodology in *Being and Time* results in this interpretation because he overlooks the overall recursive structure of the methodology, and this is because he excludes historicity and temporality from his analysis. This occurs not through ignorance, as Overgaard explicitly states that historicity and temporality are not part of his analysis in his comparative text *Husserl and Heidegger on Being in the World*.

Furthermore, a number of important issues are not dealt with in any detail in this study, including the problems of *temporality* and *historicity*. In both Husserl and Heidegger, temporality is absolutely central to an understanding of subjectivity and of being.... Fully recognizing the importance of the problems of temporality and historicity for any exhaustive account of the Husserl-Heidegger relation, the present study leaves these issues for other studies to address.... Temporality and historicity, crucially important as these topics are, thus fall outside its scope. (Overgaard 2004: 8, emphasis as in original)

Overgaard's text does not overlook temporality and historicity because he believes these phenomena to be unimportant, or that Heidegger's and Husserl's treatment of these topics is trivial, rather, he recognises the opposite, that because they are so important to these authors that a separate study was required to analyse them. However, while this is a robust rational, bracketing Heidegger's concern with temporal phenomena in *Being and Time*, and instead concentrating on division one, distorts the overall analysis of the book. In the case of Overgaard's work, a misinterpretation of the phenomenological destruction has resulted.

As has been observed, the structure of *Being and Time* is recursive. Heidegger begins investigating the question of 'being' through an interpretation of the 'being' of the entity that

understands ‘being’, this he calls Dasein. Heidegger then provides a phenomenological analysis of the modal structures of Dasein’s way of existence, first in terms of its everydayness. He then progressively reinterprets his initial formulations of Dasein’s ‘being’ on the basis of the preceding insights. Heidegger discusses this in terms of circularity, but as he differentiates between vicious and virtuous circles (Heidegger 1962: 194 [152-153]), and has a final if unrealised objective in understanding ‘being’ in general, this circularity can be better understood in terms of the recursiveness of understanding and interpretation. Moreover, this recursiveness is not just a feature of the design of his treatise for the analytic of Dasein and ‘being’, but an existential structure of Dasein’s ‘being’. “The ‘circle’ in understanding belongs to the structure of meaning, and the latter phenomenon is rooted in the existential constitution of Dasein – that is, in the understanding that interprets. An entity for which, as Being-in-the-world, its Being is itself an issue, has, ontologically, a circular structure” (*ibid.*: 195 [153]). In Overgaard’s interpretation of Heidegger’s methodology his phenomenology is viewed as the way of initially posing the question of ‘being’, and the destruction will only later follow to see where the ontological tradition has stood in relation to this question, to provide what might be called a genealogy of the insights and mistakes of the tradition. This subsequent linear locating of the destruction as something after phenomenology overlooks the necessarily recursive nature of the analysis of Dasein’s ‘being’, a necessity that stems from the temporality of Dasein. Rather than a tool for investigating a different area of ontology, Heidegger’s destruction has to be understood as part of the phenomenological recursive process. While Overgaard acknowledges that the destruction may eventually become important “in Heidegger’s actual ontological investigation” (Overgaard 2004: 99), regarding it as non-phenomenological overlooks in fact that the Heidegger of *Being and Time* maintained that phenomenology is the “way of treating” ontology (Heidegger 1962: 62 [38]).

Overgaard’s linear interpretation of Heidegger’s methodology results in the mistaken view that the destruction is an activity that is separate from phenomenology. Rather, the phenomenological destruction is an indispensable stage in the recursive analysis of ‘being’. Regarding the destruction as non-phenomenological only makes sense when the ‘being’ of Dasein is regarded in the ontological tradition’s atemporal understanding of ‘being’, as that which is present-at-hand. This is what Heidegger means when he notes that if Dasein is understood as a kind of ‘being’ which is present-at-hand, then the recursive structure of interpretation and understanding is a phenomenon that must be altogether avoided when characterising “anything like Dasein ontologically” (*ibid.*: 195 [153]). Yet presence-at-hand

and being present-at-hand are characteristics that can be attributed to Dasein only within the limited circumstances where Dasein's 'contextuality', the hermeneutic structure of 'being-in', is completely disregarded (*ibid*: 82 [55]). Heidegger does acknowledge that such circumstances do occur, when only some ontical characteristic is the matter of inquiry.

Determining the structure of the human anatomy provides a good example of the legitimacy of taking Dasein as present-at-hand. Such occasions represent what Heidegger meant when the positive possibilities of the ontological tradition are considered through the phenomenological destruction, to show how to analyse entities when it is appropriate to consider only their ontical characteristics. But part of the phenomenological destruction is to keep this tradition's approach within its limits (*ibid*: 44 [22]), to show how, when, and why it is inappropriate to treat an entity, and Dasein in particular, as something present-at-hand in this manner. If all treatment of Dasein is conducted in a similar manner as the determining of the structure of the human anatomy, to continue the previous example, then it becomes 'medicalised' in the manner that Michel Foucault later critiqued in his history of medical science *The Birth of the Clinic*. In this text Foucault notes that it "is understandable, then, that medicine should have had such importance in the constitution of the sciences of man – an importance that is not only methodological, but ontological, in that concerns *man's being as object of positive knowledge*" (Foucault 2003: 244, my emphasis). Foucault's argument was that not only is the human objectified in a manner similar to that as Heidegger's argument about the present-at-hand, but that the medicalised understanding of 'being' was in terms of health and normality. This understanding, when speaking of people, does not "think first of the internal structure of *the organised being*, but of the *medical bipolarity of the normal and*

*the pathological*” (*ibid*: 41, emphasis as in original)<sup>30</sup>.

The phenomenological destruction is essential in the analytic of Dasein because Dasein’s ‘being’ is, out with a limited modality, not present-at-hand. Following the phenomenological destruction through is what transforms an initial existential analytic into the existential-temporal analytic. As Heidegger maintains in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, all parts of the phenomenological method “belong together in their content and must receive grounding in their mutual pertinence” (Heidegger 1982: 23). This unitary structure of phenomenology has three components: reduction, construction, and destruction.

Apprehension of being, ontological investigation, always turns, at first and necessarily, to some being; but then, *in a precise way, it is led away* from that being *and led back to its being*. We call this basic component of phenomenological method – the leading back or re-duction of investigative vision from a naively apprehended being to being – *phenomenological reduction.... For us* [To interject, Heidegger is here distinguishing his version of the reduction from Husserl’s] phenomenological reduction means leading phenomenological vision back from the apprehension of a being, whatever may be the character of that apprehension, to the understanding of the being of this being...

[But this pure] aversion from beings is a merely negative methodological measure which not only needs to be supplemented by a positive one but expressly requires us to be led toward being; it thus requires guidance. Being does not become accessible like a being... it must always be brought to view in a free projection. This projecting of the antecedently given being upon its being and the structures of its being we call *phenomenological construction*.

But the method of phenomenology is likewise not exhausted by phenomenological construction. We have heard that every projection of being

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<sup>30</sup> It should not be surprising that there is a relationship to Heidegger’s thoughts in Foucault’s. As Foucault stated in an interview when asked about his intellectual influences:

I was surprised when two of my friends in Berkeley wrote something about me and said Heidegger was influential [Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1982)]. Of course it was quite true. When I was a student in the 1950’s, I read Husserl, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty. When you feel an overwhelming influence, you try to open a window. Paradoxically enough, Heidegger is not very difficult for a Frenchman to understand: When every word is an enigma, you are in a not-too-bad position to understand Heidegger. *Being and Time* is difficult, but the more recent works are clearer. (Martin 1988: 12)

It might be objected that Foucault never wrote anything about Heidegger, and consequently that if Heidegger had indeed influenced his thought then it was not a determinative influence. However, in another interview where Foucault addresses his Heideggerian influence this interpretation is dismissed. The following extracts of this interview are quoted from the introduction of *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*.

“Heidegger has always been for me the essential philosopher... I still have the notes I took while reading Heidegger – I have tons of them! – and they are far more important than the ones I took on Hegel or Marx. My whole philosophical development was determined by my reading of Heidegger.”... “But I’ve never written anything on Heidegger... I think it’s important to have a small number of authors with whom one thinks, with whom one works, but on whom one doesn’t write.” (Dreyfus and Hall 1992: 1)

Bearing in mind Heidegger’s influence on Foucault it is, therefore, very valuable when interpreting Foucault’s work.

occurs in a reductive recursion from beings.... This commencement is obviously always determined by the factual experiences of beings and the range of possibilities of experience that at any time are peculiar to a factual Dasein, and hence to the historical situation of a philosophical investigation.... Because the Dasein is historical in its own existence, possibilities of access and modes of interpretation of beings are themselves diverse, varying in different historical circumstances.... It is for this reason that there necessarily belongs to the conceptual interpretation of beings and its structures, that is, to the reductive construction of being, a *destruction*... (*ibid*: 21-23, emphasis as in original)

While it is one function of the phenomenological destruction to reveal the influence of tradition's conceptual structure on the understanding of 'being', it also functions to carry forward the phenomenological investigation. This investigation starts with a reductive recursion from an entity, Dasein, to its 'being'. The analysis of 'being' is then constructed through careful attention to how the 'being' of Dasein, its existence, is constituted. This existence, in its disclosure, is found to be historical-temporal, and so continued analysis requires a progressive dismantling of how Dasein's 'being' has been constituted and sedimented over time. It is all these stages that form Heidegger's phenomenology, not one alone. Furthermore, calling them 'stages' is misleadingly because, following Heidegger's hermeneutic principles, his phenomenology 'circles' through them towards a progressively less inchoate understanding of the question of 'being'. This 'circling' is a recursive process, with the ultimate aim to establish the ontology of 'being' in general.

It is a point of speculation, but it may be that reservations about regarding the destruction as phenomenological belong to concerns about access. In the standard interpretation, and this is the interpretation that Heidegger understood (*ibid*: 21), Husserlian phenomenology is the descriptive clarification of the essential or *eidetic* features of consciousness's experience of entities (see, for example, Crowell 2009: 10-11). In this approach access to the understanding of experience is through reflecting on transcendental, *a priori* structures. This would mean the destruction has no place within the phenomenological method, serving only as an ancillary investigation into what tradition has got right and wrong in light of what the phenomenology has uncovered. However, if the structures of experience have a historical-temporal constitution, as described by Heidegger, then a phenomenological destruction is required because these structures will have been developing over time. A historical-temporal constitution of experience means that the entity which is experiencing, be it understood as a Husserlian consciousness or a Heideggerian Dasein, cannot be fully analysed in its temporal present. This does not necessarily indicate that all of Dasein's existential structures have been changing, only that some of them have. For example, that

Dasein has a historical-temporal constitution has not changed, nor has its existential way of self-interpretation changed, because if the human entity lacked this structure it would cease to be Dasein. It could be argued though, that there was a period when a pre-Dasein entity developed into Dasein. To what extent the evolution of a Dasein entity was determined by either an ontical or an ontological emergence in its history, or by a subtler co-emergence, would be a matter of careful philosophical and archaeological investigation. Unfortunately, this is an investigation that cannot be pursued in this current study. However, some of Heidegger's retrospective criticisms of *Being and Time* included concerns about the problem of the history of 'being' (see Dreyfus 1992: 173, 184), and these concerns may have contributed to Heidegger's failure to complete *Being and Time*.

## §2.8 – Formal indication and Heidegger's concern with language

There is one more element of Heidegger's method that has not yet been analysed, though it has an important function within his phenomenology. This is his use of 'formal indication'. This relates to how to use language in an existential-temporal analytic of Dasein and when formulating the question of 'being' in general. It also shows the unitary structure of Heidegger's phenomenology, as it aims to both point towards phenomena as a referent and to make critically evident tradition's conceptual prejudices. Accordingly, it works for both the reduction-construction of phenomena, and for the destruction of phenomena. However, analysing the formal indication also provides insight into the manner in which Heideggerian methodology, while on the surface appearing alien, has structural similarities with Husserl's original conceptions for phenomenology. This was noted by Daniel O. Dahlstrom in his paper *Heidegger's Method: Philosophical Concepts as Formal Indication* when he points out that formal indication was "Heidegger's way of appropriating the Husserlian epoché" (Dahlstrom 1994: 783n), and subsequently analysed as part of Overgaard's comparative text on Husserl and Heidegger (Overgaard 2004: 82-90).

Both the Husserlian epoché<sup>31</sup> and the Heideggerian formal indication attempt to prevent a *metabasis eis allo genos*, a slipping from discussing one entity into that of the terms of another entity, rather than getting at the actual ontology of the original entity (*ibid*: 38, 85). This can be restated in Heideggerian terminology as the criticism that an entity's 'being' cannot be ontologically analysed by reducing that entity to its ontical components. This reduction to ontical parts assumes that eventually there is an ontical foundation for an entity's 'being', that there is, eventually, something present-at-hand that can be uncovered.

This is the example that Heidegger uses to make this critique in relation to looking for the

<sup>31</sup> See section 3.5 for a description of the epoché and its relation to Husserl's phenomenological reduction.



‘being’ of Dasein.

But if the Self is conceived ‘only’ as a way of Being of this entity, this seems tantamount to volatilizing the real ‘core’ of Dasein. Any apprehensiveness however which one may have about this gets its nourishment from the perverse assumption that the entity in question has at bottom the kind of Being which belongs to something present-at-hand, even if one is far from attributing to it the solidity of an occurrent corporeal Thing. Yet man’s ‘*substance*’ is not spirit as a synthesis of soul and body; it is rather *existence*.

(Heidegger 1962: 153 [117], emphasis as in original)

‘Existence’, to reiterate Heidegger’s anti-essentialist thesis inherent in his critique of traditional ‘what-ness’ ontology, is self-interpretation. Furthermore, existence as self-interpretation is never worldless and is historically-temporally structured. Therefore, there is no ultimate ontical foundation that can be called ‘the self’. This is despite the ontological tradition’s linguistic-conceptual inheritance that prejudices an understanding of just such a reified self as a present-at-hand thing. Rather, the ‘being’ of Dasein must be analysed by phenomenology, a methodology which uses formal indication to signify ‘natural’ language’s inherited conceptual bias.

The problem for Heidegger that necessitated his use of formal indication originates in the criticism that the ontological tradition inculcates the tendency to understand ‘being’ in terms of it being present and consequently accessible only in terms of its presence. Consequently, Heidegger’s formal indication is an attempt to use language in a manner that will avoid reification in his own ontology. This is not an easy task because our normal or ‘natural’ language has been set up in the ontological tradition’s ontical framework. As Overgaard describes it, the ‘natural’ language “is the language with which we refer to mundane entities, processes, relations, and so forth. In Heideggerian terminology this means that our language is basically ‘ontic’: we have many words for entities, for relations between them, but it seems concepts (and especially the grammar) are lacking for the enterprise of describing the *being* of entities” (Overgaard 2004: 86, emphasis as in original). However, formal indication cannot escape this problem directly, rather it attempts to subvert it. It introduces a way of talking about an entity, which is ontical, in such a way as to lead towards considering the ontology of that entity. The word ‘Dasein’ is perhaps the best example of this process, as Overgaard also notes (*ibid*: 89). On the one hand, it is simply a substitute ontical word for the same entity as ‘human being’, but by slightly distorting the ‘natural’ language for discussing humans it attempts to provoke reflection on the way of ‘being’ of these entities.

This use of language is one reason why Heidegger’s work is, notoriously, difficult to read, as it deliberately wants to emphasise that access to understanding ‘being’ is not normal

in the vernacular. He defends this difficulty as necessary, stating in *History of the Concept of Time* that if “we are forced here to introduce ponderous and perhaps inelegant expressions, it is not a matter of personal whim or a special fancy for my own terminology, but the compulsion of the phenomena themselves” (Heidegger 1992a: 151). And he reiterates this in *Being and Time*:

With regard to the awkwardness and ‘inelegance’ of expression in the analyses to come, we may remark that it is one thing to give a report in which we tell about *entities*, but another to grasp entities in their *Being*. For the latter task we lack not only most of the words but, above all, the ‘grammar’.

(Heidegger 1962: 63 [38-39], emphasis as in original)

Heidegger’s use of language is not to be unnecessarily obscure, rather, in the context of tradition’s conceptual legacy, it is an attempt to express what is normally obscured by language. Heidegger’s formal indications serve as a “warning that authentic access to what they point to is not common” (Dahlstrom 1994: 785). Furthermore, they are nothing other than indications; they are signifiers for considering the ontology of ‘how-ness’, rather than the ‘what-ness’ or the ‘this-ness’. As Heidegger states about an early definition of ‘Dasein’ in terms of a state of its ‘who-ness’, “[t]his definition *indicates* an *ontologically* constitutive state, but it does no more than indicate it” (Heidegger 1962: 150 [114], emphasis as in original). However, while Heidegger’s use of language, and his methods for inquiring into ‘being’, are original, they do nevertheless have a complex provenance from the heritage of hermeneutics. Consequently, an introduction to the history of hermeneutics begins the next chapter, which furthers the analysis of Heidegger’s understanding of ‘being’.

## Chapter 3

### Heidegger's Hermeneutic Phenomenology of Time and Technology

#### §3 – *Guide to chapter three*

This chapter begins by considering the influence on Heidegger's understanding of 'being' from the hermeneutics of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey. This documents the movement of the idea of hermeneutics as a discipline for the interpretation of texts to Heidegger's view that human existentiality, or Dasein, is inherently hermeneutic. This hermeneutic nature of Dasein, it is shown, is structured by the temporal architecture of 'being'. An interpretation of Dasein's temporality is then presented, with attention to its structure as 'being-in-the-world'. This covers the analysis of Heidegger's concepts of the 'who-ness', the 'there-ness', and the 'world-ness' of Dasein. The chapter then concludes by demonstrating how this interpretation of the phenomenological architecture that Heidegger has presented enables the explication of the temporality of Dasein's technological existentiality.

#### §3.1 – *Heidegger's hermeneutic heritage*

The main principle of the hermeneutic circle is that the universal can only be known through knowledge of the particular and that the particular can only be understood through knowledge of the universal. This idea of the hermeneutic circle correlates to what the philosopher Ian Hacking has characterized in another context as the process of 'historical ontology'. He described this as the study of "how our practices of naming interact with the things we name", and as the study of the "interactions between what there is (and what comes into being) and our conceptions of it" (Hacking 2004: 2). As with Heidegger's philosophy in general, this indicates that we should not only be concerned with 'what' is named, but also with 'how' it is named. This dynamic between the historically developing understanding of existence and the naming of concepts raises the challenge of how to finalise a body of knowledge on a subject. However, as we have seen, Heidegger's argument about this is that "[w]hat is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it in the right way" (Heidegger 1962: 195 [153]). The point is that the hermeneutic circle is not to be perceived as a vicious spiral in which nothing is resolved, but rather as a virtuous process of recursion in which greater degrees of understanding are achieved. However, the challenge remains regarding the right way to enter it. For example, what degree of understanding is required to begin interpreting a text?

Various degrees of pre-understanding may be distinguished: first of all a reader of a text must be familiar at least to some extent with the linguistic *code*, that is the actual language in which the text is composed, and be able to decipher the linguistic *signs*, that means the words. But a mere knowledge of signs does not yet disclose the world of a text. The process of such disclosure can only start once the reader has some kind of existential connection with what the text speaks about. (Jeanrond 1991: 6, emphasis as in original)

It should be asked how the idea of hermeneutics that leads to Heidegger's usage in *Being and Time* can be brought into the hermeneutic circle for interpretation and explication in the right way so as to provide a virtuous cycle for understanding Heidegger's thought. The answer is to treat the history of hermeneutics no differently than its own theories of historically attentive interpretation demands of other bodies of knowledge. This means that an understanding of Heidegger's hermeneutics of Dasein can be developed through chronicling the emergence and divergence of hermeneutic theory.

As stated, Heidegger's phenomenology has a hermeneutic dimension. However, his phenomenology and his hermeneutics are not merely two separate but related methodologies, rather they are unified extensions of his analytic of 'being'. Heidegger argued that the "phenomenology of Dasein is a *hermeneutic* in the primordial signification of this word, where it designates this business of interpreting" (Heidegger 1962: 62 [37], emphasis as in original). It is because of this that his technique is sometimes termed hermeneutic phenomenology. Dreyfus, for example, calls it this, characterising it as the "interpretation of human beings as essentially self-interpreting" (Dreyfus 1991: 34). Consequently, Heidegger's hermeneutics is not only a way of interpreting 'being', but it is an analysis of Dasein as an interpreting 'being'. The meaning of the term 'hermeneutics' has diverged over the history of its use, though all of these uses have been related to the idea of interpretation. Richard Palmer identifies six of these meanings, presenting them in the rough chronological order in which they emerged. "(1) the theory of biblical exegesis; (2) general philological methodology; (3) the science of all linguistic understanding; (4) the methodological foundation of *Geisteswissenschaften*; (5) phenomenology of existence and of existential understanding; and (6) the systems of interpretation, both recollective and iconoclastic, used by man to reach the meaning behind myths and symbols" (Palmer 1969: 33, emphasis as in original). These six meanings can be generalised further into three. Hermeneutics began as an exegetical theory for interpreting the meaning of texts, develops into a set of methodological principles for the interpretation of human existence across the humanities, and diverges with Heidegger to become a phenomenological description about the structure of human existentiality. These are the three general senses of hermeneutics.

- 1) A set of principles for the interpretation of texts and symbols.
- 2) A methodology for acquiring social-cultural knowledge about humanity.
- 3) An ontological thesis about human existentiality.

The emergence of these senses can be chronicled by considering the works of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, and then Heidegger who brought about the third sense. Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, it can be seen, has its heritage in the works of Schleiermacher and Dilthey. However, chronicling the development of hermeneutics through its senses not only reveals how and why these changes of meaning have occurred, it also shows what aspects of the idea of 'hermeneutics' have remained unchanged. This is its attentiveness to the historical contingency of human understanding, which, as will be shown in section 3.3, leads to Heidegger's concern with temporality as the framework for Dasein's existentiality, and ultimately as the horizon for the understanding of 'being' in general.

Arguably, the first systematic inroad towards developing a coherent structure for a non-traditional understanding 'being' can be found in the work of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century scholar Friedrich Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher was a biblical and classical scholar, theologian, and philosopher, and who was trained in a specific hermeneutic tradition; in how to appropriately translate religious texts by analysing historical and linguistic difficulties that arise in interpreting their meaning across cultural shifts in understanding. Alongside this special hermeneutic of theological understanding there were other special hermeneutic fields for classical philology and for legal interpretation. In his prize-essay on Schleiermacher's hermeneutics, Wilhelm Dilthey describes the history and origins of hermeneutics in depth. In it he acknowledges that textual exegesis and reflection had existed long before a science of hermeneutics. For example, there are:

hermeneutical passages in Origen and in the writings of the Antioch School, as well as the seven rules of Tyconius. Even more extensive discussions can be found in the third book of Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine* and in the second book of Junilius's well-known work, *Instituta regularia divinae legis* (Rules for the Divine Law). (Dilthey 1996: 33)

However, Dilthey argued that these scattered examples lacked any disciplinary coherence and that the form of hermeneutics, as it is now generally understood, did not arise until the clash between how to interpret biblical Scripture occurred between Catholicism and Protestantism, beginning with the Council of Trent (*ibid*: 33-35). From the mid sixteenth century hermeneutic theory developed onwards from this event, so that a systematisation occurred for various specialised hermeneutics such as for the philological, the theological, and the legal; into theories of interpretation for different types of text.

Schleiermacher, however, believed that hermeneutics should be more than a group of distinct theories of interpretation. He believed that in order to understand any particular text, regardless of its field, required that the general act of understanding had to be studied as well. He wanted to form a general hermeneutics, the study of understanding itself, rather than maintain the fragmented status quo of hermeneutics. He lamented in his manuscripts that at “present there is no general hermeneutics as the art of understanding but only a variety of specialised hermeneutics” (Schleiermacher 1977: 95). It is argued that Schleiermacher’s intent to create a general hermeneutics characterizes the beginning of a systematic concern with the acts of interpretation and understanding (see Palmer 1969: 94 for example).

Of his theory in general, there are two important contributions that Schleiermacher makes to hermeneutics. First, he distinguished two different structures of interpretation that a general hermeneutics must take into account: the grammatical and the technical. As he wrote in his 1809-10 manuscript on *General Hermeneutics*, these two structures of interpretation are not self-sufficient, both structures must be fully analysed to achieve a complete interpretation (Schleiermacher 1998: 229).

The grammatical side puts the utterer in the background and regards him just as an organ of the language, but regards language as what really generates the utterance. The technical side, on the other hand, regards the utterer as the real-ground of the utterance and language merely as the negative limiting principle.  
(*ibid*: 230)

On why the second form of interpretation is termed ‘technical’ Paul Ricoeur suggested that it was because it held the project of a *Kunstlehre*, a ‘technology’ (Ricoeur 1977: 186). While the grammatical structure holds the negative characteristic of limiting how an utterance could have been made, the technical structure holds the positive characteristic of creativity, the individual’s artifice in an utterance. Because of this Schleiermacher suggested that in “the same way as the grammatical sides of hermeneutics relate to the theory of language, so the technical sides relate to the theory of art” (Schleiermacher 1998: 268). As Ricoeur notes, one consequence of this structure of hermeneutics is that an overemphasis on grammatical interpretation produces a pedantic analysis, while an overemphasis on technical interpretation produces a nebulous analysis (Ricoeur 1977: 186).

Schleiermacher’s second major contribution to the idea of a general hermeneutics was his thoughts on the circularity of the hermeneutic act. This is what is now famously termed the hermeneutic circle. It is this idea of the hermeneutic circle that we documented Heidegger as having drawn upon in the previous section. Examples of Schleiermacher’s engagement with the idea of the hermeneutic circle include these two principles from his *Hermeneutics and*

*Criticism* manuscript that state:

20. *The vocabulary and the history of the era of an author relate as the whole from which his writings must be understood as the part, and the whole must, in turn, be understood from the part.*

1. Complete knowledge is always in this apparent circle, that each particular can only be understood via the general, of which it is a part, and vice versa. (Schleiermacher 1998: 24, emphasis as in original)

and

23. *Even within a single text the particular can only be understood from out of the whole, and a cursory reading to get an overview of the whole must therefore precede the more precise explication. (ibid: 27, emphasis as in original)*

In his earlier *General Hermeneutics* manuscript he also makes this circularity point about understanding, but includes a few more comments on the structure of the process of understanding the whole and understanding the particular.

28. The whole is provisionally to be understood as an individual of a genus, and the intuition of the genus, i.e. the formal understanding of the whole, must precede the material understanding of the particular.

One can admittedly also come in the first place to the knowledge of a genus via knowledge of an individual case which belongs under it; but then [one] also [comes] historically [to that knowledge] via knowledge of the earliest genera, and in these one also sees the genus arise as a new genus from a familiar older sphere. (*ibid*: 232)

The open question that this argument leaves regards what the first genus of understanding might be considered. We might, with reference to our earlier arguments about the formation of personal ontologies, regard the original genera of understanding as the foundational, or fundamental, ontological structure that a human being generates. This assertion would not, I believe, be alien to Schleiermacher, as he himself suggests that much “is therefore to be learned for hermeneutics from the procedures of childhood” (*ibid*: 235).

Schleiermacher developed hermeneutics – or at least presented the foundations for its development – from a series of specialised theories to a general theory for the interpretation and understanding of texts. This, however, was not the end of the development of the idea of hermeneutics. Dilthey, who we previously mentioned, is arguably the next most important theorist in the history of hermeneutics. Dilthey had high ambitions for his hermeneutics, and conceived it as his life project. Yet it was a project he never finished, one consequence of which was that his students referred to him as “the man of first volumes” (Makkreel and Rodi 1989: 3). The motivation for his unfinished project was to find an epistemological foundation for the study of the ‘*Geisteswissenschaften*’.

The German term ‘*Geisteswissenschaften*’ is usually translated as the human sciences

and encompasses such fields as history, sociology, and anthropology. It represents a body of knowledge that is comprehensive and systematically obtained in areas related to the humanistic tradition of scholarship. The history of the name '*Geisteswissenschaften*' itself presents a revealing irony in this translation though, one which did not escape the attention of the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer.

The word *Geisteswissenschaften* was made possible chiefly by the translator of John Stuart Mill's *Logic*. In the supplement to his work Mill seeks to outline the possibilities of applying inductive logic to the "moral sciences". The translator calls these *Geisteswissenschaften*. Even in the context of Mill's *Logic* it is apparent that there is no question of acknowledging that the human sciences have their own logic but, on the contrary, of showing that the inductive method, basic to all experimental science, is the only method valid in this field too. (Gadamer 2006: 3)

The term '*Geisteswissenschaften*', however, developed quite considerably from this origin. Dilthey was well aware of the provenance of the word from Mill's *System of Logic*, but chose to use it because it seemed "the least inappropriate among the various from which we can choose" (Dilthey 1989: 57-58).

To Dilthey the *Geisteswissenschaften* could not be thought of using the scientific method of the '*Naturwissenschaften*' – the natural sciences – but, rather, required an epistemologically sound method of their own. To quote:

In my own work I was troubled by questions which face every thoughtful historian, student of law, or political theorist. Thus there arose in me both a need and a plan for the foundation of the human sciences. What is the system of principles which provide a basis for the judgements of the historian, the conclusions of the political economist, and the concepts of the jurist, and which at the same time assures their certainty? Must such a system be rooted in metaphysics? Is a system of natural law or a philosophy of history supported by metaphysical concepts possible? But if it can be shown that they are not possible, then where is the firm support for a system of principles that connects the particular sciences and provides them with certainty?

The answers given to these questions by Comte and the positivists and by J. S. Mill and the empiricists seemed to me to truncate and mutilate historical reality in order to assimilate it to the concepts and methods of the natural sciences. (*ibid*: 49)

While this statement clearly shows Dilthey's distrust of applying the methods of the natural sciences to the human sciences, it also shows his adoption of the Kantian critique of the traditional conception of metaphysics/ontology (see section 1.3). His dual interest was in laying a foundational theory for the *Geisteswissenschaften* that not only opposed the use of the methodology of the natural sciences, but that would also circumvent any reliance on



metaphysical speculation. The unfulfilled ambition he held throughout his academic career for his systematic hermeneutic theory for the human sciences was exemplified by his unrealised desire to produce a ‘Critique of Historical Reason’ as a supplement to Immanuel Kant’s three critiques.

Dilthey could be best described as a historian and philosopher of culture. He took Schleiermacher’s general theory of textual hermeneutics and applied it one step further. He did not only want a systematic theory for the interpretation and understanding of texts, he wanted one for the interpretation and understanding of human social reality. This systematic study of human social reality, the *Geisteswissenschaften*, was needed as he argued that the human sciences formed “an independent whole alongside the natural sciences” (Dilthey 1989: 56). He compared the need to develop the basis of a systematic approach to the human sciences to the impact that Francis Bacon’s *Novum Organum* (1620) had on generating work on method in the natural sciences (*ibid*: 55). In relation to this influence of Bacon’s work he states in the opening chapter of his *Introduction to the Human Sciences*: “For those concerned with history, political theory, jurisprudence and economics, theology, literature and art, there is also a need for someone to perform a similar service” (*ibid*: 55). However, while he was a prolific writer, producing many valuable books and essays, he never completed his desire to systematise his various ideas. In a sense Dilthey’s philosophy stands as the non-actualised possibility for a hermeneutic theory of human existence.

If one central argument of Dilthey’s was taken above any of his others, in order to demonstrate both his originality and the subsequent influence of his ideas on later hermeneutical, phenomenological, and existential theorists, such as Heidegger, the following would be paramount. It was his critique of abstracting human existence<sup>32</sup>.

Apart from a few beginnings, such as those of Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt, which were not scientifically developed, previous epistemology—Kant’s as well as that of the empiricists—has explained experience and cognition in terms of facts that are merely representational. *No real blood flows in the veins of the knowing subject constructed by Locke, Hume, and Kant, but rather the diluted extract of reason as a mere activity of thought.* ... [Consequently] I will relate every component of contemporary abstract scientific thought to the whole of human nature as it is revealed in experience, in the study of language, and in the study of history, and thus seek the connection of these components. The result is that the most important components of our picture and knowledge of reality—our own personality as a life-unit, the external world, other individuals, their *temporal* life and their interactions—can be explained in terms of this totality of human nature. In the real *life-process*, willing, feeling, and thinking are only different aspects.

<sup>32</sup> ‘Existence’ is here used outside of Heidegger’s technical meaning for term.

The questions which we all must address to philosophy cannot be answered by the assumption of a rigid epistemological a priori, but rather only by a *developmental history proceeding from the totality of our being*. (*ibid*: 50-51, my emphasis)

This statement of Dilthey's philosophy contains many of the concepts that Heidegger would bring to maturity in his ontology of Dasein. Particularly important is Dilthey's criticism of the philosophical constructs of Locke, Hume, Kant and so on, regarding their abstraction of humanity to the point where 'no real blood flows in the veins' of human existence. It is by bearing this criticism in mind that the central reason for Heidegger's use of the word 'Dasein' becomes evident, to emphasis that human 'being' [*sein*] is 'here/there' [*Da*].

### §3.2 – *Hermeneutics and Dasein*

In his *History of the Concept of Time* lecture course that preceded *Being and Time*, Heidegger documented Dilthey's work as an influence on his own work. As he put it, Dilthey sought to "regard 'life' itself in its structures, as the basic reality of history" (Heidegger 1992a: 17). While Schleiermacher developed hermeneutics into a general discipline of the interpretation of texts, and Dilthey took it further forward into the method for the interpretation of human existence, Heidegger, leading from this, made hermeneutics an inherent characteristic of human existence in-and-of itself. This is because, as we have seen, Heidegger regarded 'existence' as Dasein's interpretation of itself, and this is because "Dasein is an entity for which, in its Being, that Being is an issue" (Heidegger 1962: 236 [191]). This self-interpretation occurs as a wider hermeneutic structure of world disclosure. This is Dasein's 'worldhood'<sup>33</sup>. Dasein can never be understood in terms of a 'worldless-self', rather, it has the state of 'being' called 'being-in-the-world'. Heidegger also makes this argument in the *History of the Concept of Time*:

It is a deception, which is connected with ignorance of the genuine structure of Dasein, to think that there is a separate understanding of a bare world or of an alien Dasein. This structure of understanding, which is grounded in Dasein itself and which defines understanding as the enactment of the being of discoveredness, provides crucial orientation points for all problems of *hermeneutics*. Such a hermeneutics is possible only on the basis of the explication of Dasein itself, the kind of being to which understanding belongs. (Heidegger 1992a: 258, emphasis as in original)

"The compound expression 'Being-in-the-world' indicates in the very way we have coined it, that it stands for a *unitary* phenomenon" (Heidegger 1962: 78 [53], emphasis as in original). It is a unitary phenomenon because "subject and Object [*sic*] do not coincide with Dasein and the world" (*ibid*: 87 [60]). This also means it is important not to interpret being-in-the-world

<sup>33</sup> A full analysis of 'worldhood' (*Weltlichkeit*) is undertaken in section 3.4.

in terms of ontic spatiality. The 'being-in' component of being-in-the-world does not signify that Dasein is inside a world. This would be an ontic category of 'insideness', understood as the relationship of a present-at-hand entity with another present-at-hand entity (*ibid*: 82 [56]). 'Being-in', on the other hand, is Dasein's structural 'contextuality', its hermeneutic 'there-ness'. It emphasises that Dasein's 'being' is always disclosed in its worldliness, and, importantly, 'Dasein is its disclosedness' (*ibid*: 171 [133]).

However, Heidegger had already formally indicated this thesis of the '(t)here-ness' of 'being' by his adoption and appropriation of the word 'Dasein'. The 'Da' of Dasein means either 'here' or 'there', which is an emphasis that continues Dilthey's critique of abstraction in the *Geisteswissenschaften*. "By its very nature, Dasein brings its 'there' along with it. If it lacks its 'there', it is not factically the entity which is essentially Dasein; indeed, it is not this entity at all" (*ibid*: 171 [133]). As a formal indication this use of the word 'Dasein' is not to be thought of as an explanation. It is a phenomenological device for signifying the question of the 'being' of the entity 'Dasein'. As Heidegger states in text from 1938–9 called *Mindfulness*, Dasein "is incomparable *in every respect*; it is *not an object of a 'doctrine'* (in [*Being and Time*] 'investigation' means fundamental *questioning*, not 'explaining' the extant)" (Heidegger 2006: 123, emphasis as in original). The use of term 'Dasein' is at once to critique, as with Dilthey, the tradition of abstracting the human entity in order to explain it, and to pose the question of the meaning of 'being' of this entity. This means that the term 'Dasein' is not to be mistaken as an answer to the question of the 'being' of human entity, instead it opens up this 'being' to phenomenological description. "In no respect is Da-sein a determination of a being, neither of an object nor of a subject, nor of a being as such that is somehow thought... 'Da-sein' is to be thought 'hermeneutically'" (*ibid*: 289). The term 'Dasein', as a formal indication, opens up the 'being' of this entity to interpretation.

Because Dasein names an entity that is neither a subject nor an object, it is possible to interpret Dasein as a collective people, rather than as an individual. However, as Heidegger states in *Mindfulness*, this is mistaken. "Because the question of being and along with it Da-sein is not yet grasped, because one still takes Dasein as the 'subject', one arrives at the ridiculous demand that now the individual subject (in [*Being and Time*]) would have to be replaced by people as subject" (*ibid*: 123). Dasein has existence, it self-interprets. "Dasein is an entity which, in its very Being, comports itself understandingly towards that Being. In saying this, we are calling attention to the formal concept of existence. Dasein exists." (Heidegger 1962: 78 [53]). However, if this was Dasein's only trait then it might be arguable that Dasein could be considered a collective entity, rather than an individual. But existence is

not Dasein's only trait. It also has 'mine-ness' [*Jemeinigkeit*]. "Dasein is an entity which in each case I myself am. Mineness belongs to any existent Dasein, and belongs to it as the condition which makes authenticity and inauthenticity possible" (*ibid*: 78 [53]). Furthermore, because "Dasein has *in each case mineness*, one must always use a *personal* pronoun when one addresses it: 'I am', 'you are'" (*ibid*: 68 [42], emphasis as in original). Dasein is the human entity; it "is *the* entity which we ourselves are" (Heidegger 1992a: 148, emphasis as in original).

However, existence and mine-ness are "both ways in which Dasein's Being takes on a definite character", but it is necessary that they "be seen and understood *a priori* as grounded upon that state of Being which we have called '*Being-in-the-world*'" (Heidegger 1962: 78 [53], emphasis as in original). Being-in-the-world signifies the unitary structure of Dasein's existentiality. It is derived as a critique of the ubiquitous subject-object ontological divide that abstracts 'being'. Instead the term emphasises the lived totality of human existence. The traditional 'what-ness' ontologies, for Heidegger, have been an obstacle for understanding 'being-in-the-world' because our "vague average understanding of Being may be so infiltrated with traditional theories and opinions about Being that these remain hidden as sources of the way in which it ['being'] is prevalently understood" (*ibid*: 25 [6]). This is the critique of tradition analysed by the phenomenological destruction. To reiterate our previous analysis, Heidegger argues throughout the *Being and Time* that 'human being' cannot be thought of as a worldless bearer of properties, which is the traditional ontological understanding. Conventional language, he found, is unable to express this fact as it draws its terminology from the traditions of ontology that have characterized 'being' as a thing, a substance, or some other similar type of entity. This is the attempt to make our 'being' present-at-hand, the kind of 'being' which it is inappropriate to characterize Dasein as having for the most part (*ibid*: 67 [42]). It is only in a very limited set of circumstances when the 'what-ness' of Dasein is the matter of concern, which we previously addressed in section 2.6, that taking Dasein as present-at-hand is applicable. Only entities other than Dasein can be understood in terms of the way of 'being' of presence-at-hand, and the alternative called readiness-to-hand<sup>34</sup>.

These modes of 'being' can only be understood by first understanding the state of 'being' that humans have, which Heidegger called being-in-the-world. The being-in-the-world of Dasein has a hermeneutic structure. Dasein understands and interprets the world from amidst it. Furthermore, the ontological structure of the world, "that to which Dasein assigns itself" (*ibid*: 119 [86]), is the 'worldhood' of the world. The 'worldhood' of the world is, in summary, the unified meaning of the world for Dasein. This meaning is understood in terms

<sup>34</sup> There is also the unready-to-hand manner of 'being' of entities, which we will described in section 3.5.

of a referential totality of involvement and significance<sup>35</sup>. The unitary connection of Dasein, being-in-the-world, the referential totality of equipment, and the occurrentness of objects in the world is described by Heidegger in this passage from *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*.

World exists – that is, it is – only if Dasein exists, only if there is Dasein. Only if world is there, if Dasein exists as being-in-the-world, is there understanding of being, and only if this understanding exists are intra-worldly beings unveiled as extant [present-at-hand] and handy [ready-to-hand]. World-understanding as Dasein-understanding is self-understanding. Self and world belong together in the single entity, the Dasein. Self and world are not two beings, like subject and object, or like I and thou, but self and world are the basic determination of the Dasein itself in the unity of the structure of being-in-the-world. (Heidegger 1982: 297)

The phenomenological exploration of this structure marks the middle three chapters of the first division of *Being and Time*. Chapter three of the text deals with the worldhood of the world, its ‘world-ness’, in terms of the structure of ‘concern’ (*Besorgen*). Chapter four deals with the ‘who-ness’ of Dasein, in terms of the structure of ‘solicitude’ (*Fürsorge*). Chapter five deals with the ‘there-ness’ of Dasein, in terms of structure of its ‘being-in’ or ‘disclosedness’. Chapter six of division one of *Being and Time* then unifies these phenomenological constitutions of Dasein’s being-in-the-world as ‘care’ (*Sorge*), the ‘how-ness’ of Dasein. In division two of *Being and Time* the care structure of being-in-the-world, the ‘how-ness’ of Dasein, is reinterpreted in terms of the temporality of ‘being’. As this thesis is a phenomenological analysis of the temporality of the ‘being’ of technology, Heidegger’s interpretation of the ‘world-ness’ structure of concern (*Besorgen*) is our primary interest. However, as all these structures are interdependent in terms of the unity of the ‘how-ness’ of being-in-the-world, it is necessary to maintain an architectonic understanding of this phenomenology.

### §3.3 – Temporality, ‘das Man’, and the ‘who-ness’ of Dasein

The question of the ‘who’ of Dasein is controversial. It is because Dasein has a unique structure for encountering other entities with the character of Dasein that it is sometimes interpreted as a collective entity. Yet as we previously emphasised Dasein has the characteristic of ‘mine-ness’ [*Jemeinigkeit*], and is always addressed by a personal pronoun. Consequently, it is necessary to have a studied understanding of solicitude in order to avoid confusion over the ‘who-ness’ of Dasein. First, it must be understood that while Dasein has the character of ‘mine-ness’, this character should not be taken as fully constitutive of the

<sup>35</sup> This structure is also analysed in section 3.5.

‘who’ of Dasein.

The answer to the question of who Dasein is, is one that was seemingly given in Section 9, where we indicated formally the basic characteristics of Dasein. Dasein is an entity which is in each case I myself; its Being is in each case mine. This definition *indicates* an *ontologically* constitutive state, but it does no more than indicate it. At the same time this tells us *ontically* (though in a rough and ready fashion) that in each case an “I” – not Others – is this entity. The question of the “who” answers itself in terms of the “I” itself, the ‘subject’, the ‘Self’. (Heidegger 1962: 150 [114], emphasis as in original)

As was analysed in section 2.8, Heidegger’s ‘formal indications’ have to be understood as a way of approaching phenomena that aids perceiving their ontology, and not as strict definitions. Heidegger makes this argument in a lecture course from 1923, titled *Ontology – The Hermeneutics of Facticity*.

A *formal indication* is always misunderstood when it is treated as a fixed universal proposition and used to make deductions from and fantasized with in a constructivistic dialectical fashion. Everything depends upon our understanding being guided from out of the indefinite and vague but still intelligible content of the indication onto the right *path of looking*. (Heidegger 1999: 62, emphasis as in original)

A consequence of the formal indication of Dasein in terms of its ‘mine-ness’ is that the ontical characterisation of the ‘who’ of Dasein is given by such terms as ‘I’ or ‘the self’. However, these are ontical characterisations, not ontological ones, and as Heidegger stated in the earlier quotation they are only rough characterisations even in the ontical sense. Ontologically, Heidegger suggests, it “could be that the ‘who’ of everyday Dasein just is *not* the ‘I myself’” (Heidegger 1962: 150 [115], emphasis as in original).

Heidegger uses the word ‘I’ “only in the sense of a non-committal *formal indicator*” (*ibid*: 152 [116] emphasis as in original), one which references a rough ontical characterisation that can be used to phenomenologically address the ontology of the ‘who-ness’ of Dasein. Heidegger’s use of the term ‘others’ is to be understood in this manner too. “By ‘Others’ we do not mean everyone else but me – those over against whom the ‘I’ stands out. They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself – those among

whom one is too” (*ibid*: 154 [118], emphasis as in original). ‘Being-with’ (*Mitsein*) others<sup>36</sup> is not an ontical categorial statement, one which could mean being in the presence of others. Rather, ‘being-with’ is an existentiale which constitutes the ‘with-world’ (*Mitwelt*)<sup>37</sup> of entities with the ‘being’ ‘Dasein-with’ (*Mitdasein*).

By reason of this *with-like* Being-in-the-world, the world is always the one that I share with Others. The world of Dasein is a *with-world*. Being-in is *Being-with* Others. Their Being-in-themselves within-the-world is *Dasein-with*. (*ibid*: 155 [118], emphasis as in original)

This is not an ‘intersubjective’ understanding of Dasein. An intersubjective understanding would only be modification of the traditional subject-object model of ‘what-ness’ ontology. ‘Being-with’ “cannot be conceived as a summative result of the occurrence of several ‘subjects’” (*ibid*: 163 [125]). Dreyfus argues Heidegger’s account of ‘Being-with’ should be interpreted as the shared social activity (Dreyfus 1991: 144) that constitutes the ‘with-world’ of ‘Dasein-with’ entities. It is this ‘with-world’ that makes Dasein’s everyday activities intelligible, and which makes ‘others’ matter. This ‘mattering’ of ‘others’ is the way in which Dasein, with the structure of ‘being-with’, directs itself towards other entities with the character of Dasein and is called ‘solicitude’ (*Fürsorge*) (*ibid*: 157 [121])<sup>38</sup>.

An enhanced understanding of Heidegger’s phenomenology of ‘being-with’ can be obtained by comparing it with the more traditional model of intersubjectivity. A phenomenology of intersubjectivity can be found in the work of Husserl. As Husserl’s phenomenology is characterised by the intentional relation of the (transcendental) subject to objects (see section 3.5 for a more detailed description), Husserl found it necessary to make a

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<sup>36</sup> The ‘others’ in Heidegger’s sense, represents those ‘others’ with which a Dasein is familiar. The text *Being and Time* Heidegger is not concerned with phenomenologically analysing how ‘alien others’ are encountered. By ‘alien’ I mean encountering ‘others’ who Dasein has no familiarity with at all. Heidegger was sceptical about the possibility about Dasein being able to understand the world of an alien Dasein, but he did venture in later works to examine the possibility. In *A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer* Heidegger critically examines the attempt to “consider the nature of Japanese art with the help of European aesthetics” (Heidegger 1971a: 2). Heidegger was concerned that this exercise was unsatisfactory for revealing the ‘being’ of Japanese art because “the way in which” (*ibid*: 4, emphasis as in original) it did so precluded the possibility of an authentic account. *A Dialogue on Language* was not a long treatise, and was not in the systematic model of *Being and Time*, but while it raises Heidegger’s concern about understanding one ‘world’ in the language and concepts of another, it also demonstrates the questionable nature of a truly ‘alien’ other. An ‘alien’ other would lose its ‘alien-ness’ by being encountered. By the very engagement in a dialogue, a degree of ‘being-with’ is demonstrated between the two agents of the discussion, one which suggests the ‘being’ of a ‘with-world’. These concerns relate to modern questions about ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘globalisation’, and indicates a way of addressing these questions not in terms of the traditional ontology’s concern with ‘what’ a culture might ‘be’, but rather in terms of ‘how’ a ‘with-world’ is constituted. However, while this direction of phenomenological research promises to yield important results, a sustained analysis on this subject is not within the scope of this thesis.

<sup>37</sup> See section 3.4 for an explanation of the different senses of ‘world’. The ‘with-world’ is used in the ontological-existential sense of the ‘being’ of the world.

<sup>38</sup> ‘Solicitude’ does not represent any particular emotional state or type of ‘mattering’ of ‘others’, it is used solely as technical term that describes the non-cognitive directionality of Dasein’s involvement with other Dasein.

rejoinder to the accusation that his phenomenology entailed a solipsistic<sup>39</sup> attitude. This rejoinder can be found in the fifth meditation of his *Cartesian Meditations*, which he describes as the “uncovering of the sphere of transcendental being as monadological intersubjectivity” (Husserl 1970a: 89). In this account Husserl provides a phenomenology of others that is similar in some respects to Heidegger’s interpretation of ‘being-with’. It is unlike Heidegger’s though, as it is thought through in terms of the subject-object model of understanding that Heidegger critiques in *Being and Time*. However, Husserl’s account of the phenomenology of intersubjectivity does include an analysis of the individual’s embodiment in this intersubjective structure, which is one noteworthy aspect that is missing in Heidegger’s interpretation in *Being and Time*<sup>40</sup>. Husserl argues that the ‘ego’ and the ‘alter ego’, the ‘I’ and the ‘other’, know each other through a passive synthesis that he called ‘pairing’ (*Paarung*).

*Pairing*, occurrence in a configuration as a pair and then as a group, a plurality, is a *universal* phenomenon of the transcendental sphere (and of the parallel sphere of intentional psychology)...[P]airing first comes about when the Other enters my field of perception. I, as the primordial psychophysical Ego, am always prominent in my primordial field of perception, regardless of whether I pay attention to myself and turn towards myself with some activity or other. In particular, my live body is always there and sensuously prominent; but, in addition to that and likewise with primordial originariness, it is equipped with the specific sense of an animate organism. Now in case there presents itself, as outstanding in my primordial sphere, a body “similar” to mine – that is to say, a body with determinations such that it must enter into a phenomenal *pairing* with mine – it *seems* clear without more ado that,

<sup>39</sup> Solipsism is the philosophical belief that only one’s self can be said to exist. It is a common trouble with the epistemology that is based on a subject-object ontology, such as Cartesianism. If one’s understanding of existence begins with the *cogito* of the self and the necessary certainty that the *ego* must exist if it is thinking, then there is no equal certainty that anything other than the *ego cogito* exists. In the absolute truth of ‘I think, therefore I am’, the existence of all other entities is only attested to in terms of probability. It is this inability to confirm the existence of other subjects that can lead subject-object ontology into epistemological solipsism. Consequently, those who wish to deny solipsism while also defending a Cartesian subjectivism frequently develop models of intersubjectivity. Sartre’s existentialism, for example, develops such an intersubjective understanding in order to avoid solipsism.

Contrary to the philosophy of Descartes, contrary to that of Kant, when we say “I think” we are attaining to ourselves in the presence of the other, and we are just as certain of the other as we are of ourselves. Thus the man who discovers himself directly in the *cogito* also discovers all the others, and discovers them as the condition of his own existence. He recognises that cannot be anything (in the sense that one is spiritual, or that one is wicked or jealous) unless others recognise him as such. I cannot obtain any truth whatsoever about myself, except through meditation of another. The other is indispensable to my existence, and equally so to any knowledge I can have of myself.... Thus, at once, we find ourselves in a world which is, let us say, that of “inter-subjectivity.” (Sartre 1973: 45, emphasis as in original)

Husserl’s phenomenology of intersubjectivity has a similar motivation to Sartre’s existential variation, in that both attempt to defend a subjective account of consciousness against the accusation of solipsism. Both Husserl and Sartre extend a subjectivist account of cognition into the terms of intersubjectivity.

<sup>40</sup> The only concession to this absence in *Being and Time* is a note in parentheses where Heidegger writes “(This ‘bodily nature’ hides a whole problematic of its own, though we shall not treat it here.)” (Heidegger 1962: 143 [108]).



with the transfer of sense, this body must forthwith appropriate from mine the sense: animate organism. (*ibid*: 112-113, emphasis as in original)

Husserl then uses this phenomenological account of how two ‘psychophysical’ individuals, or what he calls monads in an explicit and direct reference to Leibniz’s metaphysics (*ibid*: 150), apperceive and pair with each other and thus constitute themselves as a “unity of similarity” (*ibid*: 112), to explain how communities of intersubjective monads are produced (*ibid*: 120). For Husserl, the constitution of an intermonadic community is something that exists in an “*intentional communion with something else that exists*. It is an essentially *unique connectedness*, an actual community and precisely the one that makes transcendently possible the being of a world, a world of men and things” (*ibid*: 129, emphasis as in original). The most universal intermonadic community is what Husserl calls the ‘life-world’ (*Lebenswelt*), which is the intersubjective transcendental sense of the world in its “full concreteness” (*ibid*: 136). Husserl’s conception of the ‘life-world’ has been very influential, and has been described as one of Husserl’s most significant legacies (Jay 2009: 95)<sup>41</sup>. Husserl greatly expanded his conception of the life-world in his last work *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. In it he describes how the fundamental ego constitutes the “horizon of transcendental others as cosubjects within the transcendental intersubjectivity which constitutes the world” (Husserl 1970b: 184). In this text Husserl also further clarifies his phenomenology of the body, distinguishing in terms of perception between the physical body (*Körper*) and the living body (*Leib*) (*ibid*: 107), a distinction similar to Heidegger’s differentiation between the onticality and ontology of an entity. These concerns with the ‘life-world’ and the body, the latter of which is a distinct lacuna in

<sup>41</sup> An example of a theorist who takes up and deploys the concept of the life-world is the scholar Walter Ong, who uses it in his studies of how the development of technology has been involved in the development of consciousness. Ong’s theory about the development of the technologies of orality, literacy, print, and the ‘secondary orality’ of electronic age on the formation of culture and consciousness was introduced in section 1.4. Further to this is that Ong described these structures in terms of how they are related to the ‘human lifeworld’.

In the absence of elaborate analytic categories that depend on writing to structure knowledge at a distance from lived experience, oral cultures must conceptualize and verbalize all their knowledge with more or less close reference to the human lifeworld, assimilating the alien, objective world to the more immediate, familiar interaction of human beings. A chirographic (writing) culture and even more a typographic (print) culture can distance and in a way denature even the human, itemizing such things as the names of leaders and political divisions in an abstract, neutral list entirely devoid of a human action context. An oral culture has no vehicle so neutral as a list.... By keeping knowledge embedded in the human lifeworld, orality situates knowledge within a context of struggle. (Ong 2002: 42-44)

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse the phenomenological validity of these descriptions, but what can be seen is that while Husserl’s concept of the life-world has been taken up by scholars such as Ong, Husserl’s intended meaning in description of the life-world has not been as closely followed. Ong uses the idea of the life-world to describe the realm of immediate and subjective interaction of human beings, as opposed to a realm of alleged neutral and objective information. However, Husserl’s concept of the life-world is not as a subjective realm of immediate knowledge. Rather, Husserl’s life-world is the transcendental intermonadic community that structures the intentional content of consciousness in terms of intersubjectivity. It is how the intentionality of cosubjects is directed to their shared noematic content.

Heidegger's *Being and Time*, were later taken up by other phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty in particular made these phenomena central to his *Phenomenology of Perception* (see, for example, Merleau-Ponty 2002: 403-425).

However, Heidegger's phenomenology of 'being-with', despite its omission of a phenomenological analysis of the body, provides a better account of collective 'being' than Husserl's intersubjective understanding. As Heidegger does not use a subject-object model of intentionality, he is not required to defend his phenomenology against the charge of solipsism. Consequently, rather than have to argue that multiple people constitute a transcendental intermonadic community that culminates in the 'life-world', Heidegger only has to show how a group of people collectively socialise each other into a normative disclosure of the world. Thus Heidegger talks of a 'with-world' rather than a 'life-world'. It is the everyday intelligibility of solicitous Dasein, developed by Dasein's shared social 'with-world', that structures the 'who-ness' of Dasein as '*das Man*'. '*Das Man*' is one of the hardest of Heidegger's technical terms to translate. Macquarrie and Robinson translate it as 'the they' (Heidegger 1962: 164 [126]), Dreyfus as 'the One' (Dreyfus 1991: 152), Blattner as 'the Anyone' (Blattner 2006: 69). However, it may be best to leave it untranslated in the manner that the term 'Dasein' has normally been left untranslated. What is important is to attend to the phenomenon that it names. "The 'who' is not this one, not that one, not oneself, not some people, and not the sum of them all. The 'who' is the neuter, *the 'they'* [*das Man*]" (Heidegger 1962: 164 [126], emphasis as in original). The ontological 'who-ness' of Dasein is not a 'what'. To an extent the concept of '*das Man*', can be used as an alternative to questions such as 'what is culture', as it describes 'how' the 'who' of Dasein exists in the shared social roles and practices it has with 'others'. But this equivalency with traditional concepts of 'culture' should not be overstated. Rather, '*das Man*' is an existentials of Dasein. It is not the 'collective cultural subject', a collective 'what-ness' of people.

Furthermore, the "they" [*das Man*] is not something like a 'universal subject' which a plurality of subjects have hovering above them. One can come to take it this way only if the Being of such 'subjects' is understood as having a character other than that of Dasein, and if these are regarded as cases of a genus of occurrents – cases which are factually present-at-hand. With this approach, the only possibility ontologically is that everything which is not a case of this sort is to be understood in the sense of genus and species. The "they" is not the genus to which the individual Dasein belongs, nor can we come across it in such entities as an abiding characteristic. That even the traditional logic fails us when confronted with these phenomena, is not surprising if we bear in mind that it has its foundation in an ontology of the present-at-hand – an ontology which, moreover, is still a rough one. So no

matter in how many ways this logic may be improved and explained, it cannot in principal be made any more flexible. Such reforms of logic, oriented towards the ‘humane sciences’, only increase the ontological confusion. (*ibid*: 166-167 [129])

However, so far it has only been documented what ‘das Man’ is not, rather than ‘what’<sup>42</sup> it is. Nevertheless, a final negative characterisation is required. ‘*Das Man*’, as an existentials of Dasein, describes how in Dasein’s ‘being-with’ other Dasein a ‘with-world’ is constituted. This ‘with-world’ is not to be understood as a ‘we-world’. ‘Being’ one with ‘the they’ does not constitute an ontological collective, anymore than an ontical collective. Dasein is ‘with’ other Dasein, but it ‘is’ not a plurality of Dasein.

However, what the existentials of ‘*das Man*’ signifies has still to be given a positive clarification. The ‘being-with’ ‘*das Man*’ of Dasein, Dasein’s ‘being-with’ ‘the they’, constitutes the ‘being’ of the ‘with-world’. The ‘with-world’ is disclosed to Dasein by ‘*das Man*’. This means that Dasein’s ‘being-with’ discloses to it an understanding of ‘others’ before a cognitive<sup>43</sup> reflection.

Being-with is such that the disclosedness of the Dasein-with of Others belongs to it; this means that because Dasein’s Being is Being-with, its understanding of Being already implies the understanding of Others. This understanding, like any understanding, is not an acquaintance derived from knowledge<sup>44</sup> about them, but a primordially existential kind of Being, which more than anything else, makes such knowledge and acquaintance possible. Knowing oneself is grounded in Being-with, which understands primordially. It operates proximally in accordance with kind of Being which is closest to us – Being-in-the-world as Being-with... Thus in concerned solicitude the Other is proximally disclosed. (*ibid*: 160-161 [123-124])

However, as the ‘who’ of Dasein’s ‘being-with’ is ‘*das Man*’, it is not only other Dasein that are disclosed in this solicitous structure. In its everyday going about its world, Dasein exists as ‘*das Man*’. ‘How’ we go about our everyday world, which is to say ‘how’ we go about ‘being’, is also ‘how’ ‘*das Man*’ do it.

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<sup>42</sup> A statement about ‘what’ an existential ‘is’ is not in keeping with Heidegger’s critique of reducing statements about existence into terms of ‘what-ness’. However, as we earlier cited Heidegger when discussing formal indication, this is not a simple problem to resolve. As Heidegger argued, not only has the ontological tradition of ‘what-ness’ provided us with our basic words and concepts for discussing entities rather than ‘being’, it has also provided us with a grammar that has a similar bias (Heidegger 1962: 63 [38-39]). The awkwardness of expression that the phenomenological analysis of ‘being’ has to endure is a result of this traditional bias. However, this need not be the final statement on the matter. As familiarity with the phenomenological heritage grows, there is the potential for the ontological ‘syntax’ to also become better conceived.

<sup>43</sup> See section 3.5 for the explanation of how cognition is a derivative mode of understanding of Dasein’s being-in-the-world.

<sup>44</sup> As we describe in section 3.5, ‘knowledge’ is Macquarrie and Robinson’s translation of ‘*Erkennen*’. However, it would be better to read this as ‘cognition’. See in this section the description of disclosure, as what Heidegger is arguing is that before an intentional cognitive understanding of ‘the self’ or ‘others’ is thought out, there is a solicitous disclosure of the ‘being-with’ of the entities.

We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* [*man*] take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the 'great mass' as *they* shrink back; we find 'shocking' what *they* find shocking. The "they", which is nothing definite, and which all are, though not as the sum, prescribes the kind of Being of everydayness. (*ibid*: 164 [126-127], emphasis as in original)

It is terms of '*das Man*' that Dasein's existentiell possibilities are given to it, and in its everyday 'being' this self is the 'they-self'. 'Everydayness' (*Alltäglichkeit*) is, proximally, Dasein's undifferentiated existential way of being-in-the-world, its normal behaviour that is disclosed to it through 'being-with' '*das Man*'. Consequently, '*das Man*' is phenomenon that is closely related to Dasein's temporality, historicity, tradition, heritage, and Dasein's capacity for authentic (*eigentlich*) and inauthentic (*uneigentlich*) existence.

'Authenticity' and 'inauthenticity' are common concerns in existentialist treatises, and so it is important not to conflate Heidegger's specific use of the terms with this general discourse. 'Being' inauthentic does not mean that Dasein is 'being' untrue to 'what' it really is. There is no base or fundamental 'self' to be true or untrue towards. Rather, authenticity and inauthenticity are the manners in which Dasein 'owns' or fails to 'own' its 'being'. They are 'how' Dasein chooses the 'mine-ness' of its 'who-ness'; 'how' it chooses, or fails to choose, its own possibilities of existence.

Furthermore, in each case Dasein is mine to be in one way or another. Dasein has always made some sort of decision as to the way in which it is in each case mine. That entity which in its Being has this very Being as an issue, comports itself towards its Being as its ownmost possibility. In each case Dasein *is* its possibility, and it 'has' this possibility, but not just as a property, as something present-at-hand would. And because Dasein is in each case essentially its own possibility, it *can*, in its very Being, 'choose' itself and win itself; it can also lose itself and never win itself; or only 'seem' to do so. But only in so far as it is essentially something which can be *authentic* – that is, something of its own – can it have lost itself and not yet won itself. As modes of Being, *authenticity* and *inauthenticity* (these expressions have been chosen terminologically in a strict sense) are both grounded in the fact that any Dasein whatsoever is characterized by mineness. But the inauthenticity of Dasein does not signify any 'less' Being or any 'lower' degree of Being. Rather it is the case that even in its fullest concretion Dasein can be characterized by inauthenticity – when busy, when excited, when interested, when ready for enjoyment. (*ibid*: 68 [42-43], emphasis as in original)

The existentiality of authenticity and inauthenticity modally structures the existentiell self-interpretations of Dasein. These modal possibilities of its 'who-ness' are characterised by Dasein's 'being-with' 'the they'. As an existentiell 'they-self', 'the-they' (*das Man*) have

prescribed the “way of interpreting the world and being-in-the-world” (*ibid*: 167 [129]) of the inauthentic Dasein. Furthermore, because the way of interpreting the world of ‘the they’ is the traditional ‘what-ness’ ontology of the subject-object model of understanding, it is responsible for the understanding of the ‘being’ of entities as presence-at-hand (*ibid*: 168 [130]). Yet while ‘being-with’ ‘*das Man*’ is constant, it is an existentials of Dasein, ‘being’ the ‘they-self’ existentiell is not constant. Dasein has the capacity for a mode of ‘being’ that Heidegger calls ‘authentic being-one’s-self’ or the ‘authentic-self’ (*ibid*: 168 [130]), where Dasein’s chooses to ‘own’ its ‘who-ness’. However, the ‘authentic-self’ “does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from the ‘they’; *it is rather an existentiell modification of the ‘they’ – of the ‘they’ as an essential existentielle*” (*ibid*: 168 [130], emphasis as in original). When Dasein chooses to ‘be’ authentic is must still do so from within its ‘being-with’ ‘the they’, its choices of ‘being’ are disclosed to it from its ‘cultural’ existence. But the authentic existence of Dasein has a different way of ‘being-with’ its ‘culture’ and ‘history’ than its way of ‘being’ inauthentically the ‘they-self’. Heidegger calls the inauthentic way of ‘being-with’ ‘the they’ ‘tradition’, and the authentic way of ‘being-with’ ‘the they’ a matter of appropriating one’s ‘heritage’ (*ibid*: 435 [383-384]).

Heidegger argues that it was necessary to analyse historicity in terms of Dasein’s temporal unity, and its modalities of ‘being’ such as authenticity and inauthenticity. This is because historicity, or historicality, is not the character of having a history, though it does enable the capacity to have a historiography (Heidegger 1962: 434 [382]). Rather, historicity names the dynamic interplay of the totality of Dasein’s temporal existence, beginning with its authentic ‘being-towards’ the future. The authentic ‘being-towards’ the future of Dasein is a ‘being-towards-death’. By ‘death’, Heidegger does not mean the ordinary conception of the ending of a life, which is what he calls ‘demise’. Rather, Heidegger’s use of ‘death’ refers not an ontical event but an existential condition (*ibid*: 284 [240]). For Heidegger, ‘death’ is the existential anxiety of running out of possibilities, what Blattner describes as a “limit-situation... that reveals the limits of existence” (Blattner 2006: 149). The awareness or orientation to ‘death’ does not remove illusory existentiell interpretations of Dasein’s ‘being’, to reveal to it who it truly ‘is’. There is no ‘true’ ontological ‘self’, no real ‘what’ of Dasein’s existence that can be revealed. Rather, Dasein’s anxiety about its finality of possibilities, its ontological ‘death’, “*strips away ontological distortions* and gets us in touch with *how we are*” (*ibid*: 160, emphasis as in original).

Dasein’s ‘being-towards-death’ is how it orients itself to its potentialities for ‘being’ (Heidegger 1962: 354 [306]). This orientation towards its own existence can be either

authentic or inauthentic, as enabled by the structure of temporality and historicity. “*Authentic Being-towards-death – that is to say, the finitude of temporality – is the hidden basis of Dasein’s historicity*” (*ibid*: 438 [386]), emphasis as in original). Heidegger elaborates with this description:

*Only an entity which, in its Being, is essentially futural so that it is free for its death and can let itself be thrown back upon its factual “there” by shattering itself against death – that is to say, only an entity which, as futural, is equiprimordially in the process of having-been, can, by handing down to itself the possibility it has inherited, take over its own thrownness and be in the moment of vision for ‘its time’. Only authentic temporality which is at the same time finite, makes possible something like fate – that is to say, authentic historicity.* (*ibid*: 437 [385], emphasis as in original).

There are many technical terms in this passage about the authentic way of existence, including ‘futural’, ‘having-been’, ‘moment of vision’, each of which will require careful analysis and explanation. First the differentiation of inauthentic and authentic historicity must be understood, which can be explained by the concepts of ‘tradition’ and ‘heritage’. These terms, while seemingly relating only to the past, are actually ways of ‘being’ within Dasein’s temporal unity.

‘Tradition’ is the inauthentic way of ‘being-with’ ‘the they’ and its contingent past. “Tradition takes what has come down to us and delivers it over to self-evidence” (*ibid*: 43 [21]). By ‘being’ traditional, by existing within the possibilities set forth by ‘the they’ uncritically, Dasein does not open itself to owning its self-interpretation. It understands itself and the world as being self-evident, as a ‘what’ that it does not need to question. Within the tradition Dasein “has been submitted to a ‘world’, and exists factically with Others” (*ibid*: 435 [383]). The consequence of this is that proximally “and for the most part the Self is lost in the ‘they’. It understands itself in terms of those possibilities of existence which ‘circulate’ in the ‘average’ public way of interpreting Dasein today” (*ibid*: 435 [383]). The alternative to this is to recognise one’s existential contingency and to ‘resolutely’<sup>45</sup> choose one’s own existential possibilities that have been inherited. By doing so, the contingency of one’s contingent, or ‘thrown’, existence becomes ‘heritage’ rather than ‘tradition’.

The resoluteness in which Dasein comes back to itself, discloses current factual possibilities of authentic existing, and discloses them *in terms of the heritage* which that resoluteness, as thrown, *takes over*. In one’s coming back resolutely to one’s thrownness, there is hidden a *handing down* to oneself of

<sup>45</sup> ‘Resoluteness’ is the authentic modality of disclosedness (Heidegger 1962: 343 [297]).

the possibilities that have come down to one, but not necessarily *as* having thus come down. If everything ‘good’ is a heritage, and the character of ‘goodness’ lies in making authentic existence possible, then the handing down of a heritage constitutes itself in resoluteness. The more authentically Dasein resolves – and this means that in anticipating death it understands itself unambiguously in terms of its ownmost distinctive possibility – the more unequivocally does it choose and find the possibility of its existence, and the less so by accident. (*ibid*: 435 [383-384], emphasis as in original)

A resolute relation to one’s contingency is relation to one’s heritage rather than one’s tradition. This not to be interpreted as tradition and heritage naming different ‘whats’ of Dasein’s ‘thrown’ existence, its contingency. Rather, they name different modalities of ‘how’ Dasein chooses to ‘own’, or not to ‘own’, its own existence. This structure is not simply a ‘directional’ relation to one’s past, as is also structured by Dasein’s ‘being-towards-death’. Tradition and heritage are part of Dasein’s non-linear historicity. It is “how we designate Dasein’s primordial historizing, which lies in authentic resoluteness and in which Dasein *hands* itself *down* to itself, free for death, in a possibility which it has inherited and yet has chosen” (*ibid*: 435 [384]).

‘Heritage’ and ‘tradition’ are structures of Dasein’s ‘historicity’ or ‘historicality’. Historicity, for Heidegger, is an existential structure of Dasein that means more than the ontical condition of having a past. Rather, “the Interpretation of Dasein’s historicity will prove to be, at bottom, just a more concrete working out of temporality” (*ibid*: 434 [382]). Furthermore, it is the structure of temporality that enables Dasein’s ways of existence possible, its ways of ‘being’ such as the authentic and the inauthentic. “Temporality has different possibilities and different ways of *temporalizing* itself. The basic possibilities of existence, the authenticity and inauthenticity of Dasein, are grounded ontologically on possible temporalizations of temporality” (*ibid*: 351-352 [304], emphasis as in original). Heidegger emphasised the importance of this phenomenological interpretation of temporality as he believed that the phenomenon of time was the central problematic of all ontology (*ibid*: 40 [18]). He thought that time “must be brought to light – and genuinely conceived – as the horizon for all understanding of Being and for anyway of interpreting it” (*ibid*: 39 [17]), and that “the way in which Being and its modes and characteristics have their meaning determined primordially in terms of time, is what we shall call its “*Temporal*” [interjection, this is temporal in the meta-temporal sense] determinateness. Thus the fundamental ontological task of Interpreting Being as such includes working out the *Temporality of Being*” (*ibid*: 40 [19],

emphasis as in original).

To understand Heidegger's concepts of temporality and historicity it is useful to compare his philosophy with the existential philosophy of Sartre. Their philosophical difference is not that Heidegger analysed temporality while Sartre did not. Sartre grants an entire subsection of *Being and Nothingness* to his 'phenomenological ontology' of temporality (Sartre 2003: 130-193). Both Heidegger and Sartre are keen to argue that time should not be understood only in terms of its linear sequentiality, but also that the lived dimensions of past, present, and future as they are experienced are important to understand. The difference between them is the importance ascribed to the role of historicity in this overall temporal structure of being-in-the-world. While these similar but differing 'existential ontologies' interpret the 'human being' to be a 'world maker', giving meaning to an otherwise meaningless existence, the tension that arises from historicity is the degree to which they are also 'self makers'. The problem of 'historicity' is the contingency of human existence.

Sartre maintained that the absurdity of 'being' human is that we are completely free in choosing the meaning of our own existence and so 'make ourselves' (Sartre 2003: 503). He argued against the belief that the facts of our existence represented a 'network of determinism', a view which holds that:

Much more than he appears "to make himself," man seems "to be made" by climate and the earth, race and class, language, the history of the collectivity of which he is part, heredity, the individual circumstances of his childhood, acquired habits, the great and the small events of his life. (*ibid*: 503)

Examples of specific factual structures of human existence that Sartre analysed in detail are 'my place', 'my past', 'my environment', 'my neighbour', and 'my death' (*ibid*: 511-573). The arguments he employs to argue against the determinacy of these structures use a similar design, and can be generalised to an extent. While he does not deny that we have no freedom to choose whether or not we are born with, as potential examples, two arms or brown hair, we nevertheless have no choice but to choose the meaning of these factual situations. For Sartre, our own existence is as a 'being-for-itself', rather than a 'being-in-itself', and so the ontical facts of our existence only have the meaning that we give them.

However, Heidegger viewed the contingency of human existence to be a vital part of what makes being-in-the-world possible. He argued that a person has "grown up both into and in a traditional way of interpreting itself: in terms of this it understands itself proximally and, within a certain range, constantly. By this understanding, the possibilities of its Being are disclosed and regulated" (Heidegger 1962: 41 [20]). This contingency of human existence is



part of 'being-with' 'the they' (*das Man*). But Heidegger argues that our 'who-ness' as a 'they-ness' is constituted by our temporal 'how-ness'. Another philosopher with a similar concern with this understanding of historical-existentiality was Pascal who wrote this simple fragment in his *Pensées*: "Custom is our nature" (Pascal 1995: 125). This is a very useful statement, as it combines two different temporal meanings about human existence. In one sense 'custom' is a synonym for 'culture' and so the statement could be interpreted as indicating the importance of tradition and heritage for interpretations of humanity. But 'custom', in this statement, can also be interpreted as 'habit', reflecting a more personal statement about individual 'human beings'. Other philosophers that mirror Pascal's sentiment include Dilthey's assertion that "what man is, only his history tells" (Dilthey 1959: 43), and José Ortega y Gasset's statement that "Man, in a word, has no nature; what he has is ... history" (Ortega 1959: 61). The common attribute of these statements is that they present a non-essentialist understanding of 'human being' combined with a concern with historical existence. This is similar but different to what is sometimes called 'historicism', which typically argues that the 'truth' of reality, or the 'essence' of humanity, is determined by history. However, it is in the work of Heidegger that the problematic of the essentialist understanding of human 'nature' is phenomenological revealed to be an inheritance of the ontological tradition of 'what-ness'. The 'is-ness' of humans can be understood by the scientific inquiry into the ontical properties of 'Homo sapiens', but it is the hermeneutic phenomenology of the 'how-ness' of Dasein which reveals its existentiality. And the 'how-ness' of Dasein is its temporality.

Temporality for Heidegger is time in an ontological rather than ontical sense. Time in this ontological sense, as temporality, does not reference either the conception of time as the passing of events or the mental structure of experiencing change, it is neither ontical world-time nor the 'noetic' structure of internal time-consciousness. Heidegger's conception of ontological time is as an existential structure. The temporality of inauthentic Dasein, in Heidegger's terminology, is *thrownness*, *falling*, and *projection* (*ibid*: 264 [221-222]). Thrownness describes how Dasein is always already in the world, that the structure of its existence is contingent. In this sense thrownness relates to the past. Falling describes how Dasein acts in the world in the manner that it has been socialised too, when it is not choosing its own manner of 'being'. This relates to the present. Alternatively, when Dasein is authentically choosing its own manner of 'being' it is projecting, choosing its own potentiality for 'being'. This mode of temporality relates towards the future. This is Heidegger's synthesis of a form of historicism, recognising that human existence is contingent

on the past, with an existentialist thesis on self ownership. Time, viewed as temporality, is the basic constitution for Dasein's 'being' as 'care' (*Sorge*). Furthermore, time, when viewed as meta-temporality, is the foundational ontological structure that makes understanding 'being' possible. Heidegger summarises this at the end of his *History of the Concept of Time* lecture course.

*Not "time is" but "Dasein qua time temporalizes its being."* Time is not something which is found outside somewhere as a framework for world events. Time is even less something which whirs away inside in consciousness. It is rather that which makes possible the being-ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-involved-in, that is, which makes possible the being of care. (Heidegger 1992a: 319-320, emphasis as in original)

It should not be surprising that Heidegger regarded time as a central concern for understanding human existence considering that the name of his text is *Being and Time*. The temporality of Dasein is the basis of its 'being' as 'care', and meta-temporality is what makes possible our understanding of 'being' in general. It "is as care that Dasein's totality of Being has been defined" (Heidegger 1962: 370 [323]), and the "*primordial unity of the structure of care lies in temporality*" (*ibid*: 375 [327], emphasis as in original). For Heidegger, Dasein can only be understood "by reference to *time*" (Heidegger 1992a: 197, emphasis as in original).

'Care' (*Sorge*) is how Heidegger defines the structural whole of the 'being' of Dasein in its 'everydayness' (*Alltäglichkeit*), which is to say before he elaborates his interpretation of 'being' in terms of temporal authenticity. Dasein is analysed in terms of everydayness in Division One of *Being and Time* because the initial analysis of its 'being' "should not be Interpreted with the differentiated character of some definite way of existing, but that it should be uncovered in the undifferentiated character which it has proximally and for the most part" (Heidegger 1962: 69 [43]). Heidegger argues that the "everyday way in which things have been interpreted is one into which Dasein has grown in the first instance, with never a possibility of extraction. In it, out of it, and against it, all genuine understanding, interpreting, and communicating, all re-discovering and appropriating anew, are performed" (*ibid*: 213 [169]). However, when Heidegger progressively and recursively reinterprets his phenomenology of the modes of Dasein's 'being', his description of the phenomenon of everydayness becomes ambiguous. Some commentators, such as Dreyfus, interpret everydayness as an undifferentiated modality of 'being' that is neither authentic nor inauthentic (Dreyfus 1991: 26-27). There is textual support that this is how Heidegger conceived the idea of everydayness.

This undifferentiated character of Dasein's everydayness is *not nothing*, but a positive phenomenal characteristic of this entity. Out of this kind of Being –

and back into it again – is all existing, such as it is. We call this everyday undifferentiated character of Dasein “averageness” [*Durchschnittlichkeit*]. (Heidegger 1962: 69 [43], emphasis as in original)

‘Averageness’ is Dasein’s everyday familiarity with the world, as structured by ‘the they’ (*das Man*). “When entities are encountered, Dasein’s world frees them for a totality of involvements with which the ‘they’ is familiar, and within the limits which have been established with the ‘they’s’ averageness” (*ibid*: 167 [129]). However, Heidegger also frequently writes about Dasein’s average everydayness as if it were equivalent to existing inauthentically. This is an inconsistency that many scholars of *Being and Time* have noted, such as Polt who suggests that these inconsistencies “may reflect the fact that the text we know as *Being and Time* was finished in a rush, under the pressure of ‘publish or perish’” (Polt 1999: 45).

In his analysis of *Being and Time* Blattner suggests an understanding of everydayness that follows Dreyfus’ interpretation. Blattner suggests, while noting that the text is ambivalent, that the everyday undifferentiated character of Dasein be interpreted as its ‘unowned’ modality of ‘being’, as opposed to the authentically ‘owned’ and inauthentically ‘disowned’.

If Dasein has an “undifferentiated” character that is neither owned nor disowned, that would indicate a third, and more plausible, description of Dasein’s average everydayness. Fortunately, the English words “owned” and “disowned” also suggest a nice third option: “unowned.” That is, we may characterise Dasein’s average everydayness as unowned, and then reserve “owned” and “disowned” for existentiell modifications of average everydayness. (Blattner 2006: 130)

The interpretation of Heidegger’s understanding of everydayness is important. This is because he characterised the phenomenology of Dasein’s ‘being’ in Division One of *Being and Time* as an interpretation of it in its average everydayness. Heidegger does in sections appear to criticise everydayness and averageness, such as in his analysis of how the average everydayness of ‘the they’ (*das Man*) can strip Dasein of its capacity for authentic existence by appropriating the understanding of the world and depriving Dasein of the need to do this itself.

Thus the “they” maintains itself factically in the averageness of that which belongs to it, of that which it grants success as valid and that which it does not, and of that to which it grants success and that to which it denies it. In this averageness with which it prescribes what can and may be ventured, it keeps watch over everything exceptional that thrusts itself to the fore. Every kind of priority gets noiselessly suppressed. Overnight, everything that is primordial gets glossed over as something that has long been well known.

Everything gained by a struggle becomes just something to be manipulated. Every secret loses its force. This care of averageness reveals in turn an essential tendency of Dasein which we call the “levelling down” of all possibilities of Being....

Thus the particular Dasein in its everydayness is *disburdened* by the “they” . Not only that; by thus disburdening it of its Being, the “they” accommodates Dasein if Dasein has any tendency to take things easily and make them easy. And because the “they” constantly accommodates the particular Dasein by disburdening it of its Being, the “they” retains and enhances its stubborn dominion. (Heidegger 1962: 165 [127-128], emphasis as in original)

However, these excursions in *Being and Time* that critique ‘the they’ (*das Man*) and everydayness as ‘disburdening’ Dasein of its possibilities to own itself, are not consistent with his general characterisation of everydayness as being neither the authentic or inauthentic modalities of existence. Consequently, the argument by Blattner that everydayness be interpreted as an ‘unowned’ existence rather than a ‘disowned’ one, seems the most plausible understanding of the underlying phenomenological architecture that Heidegger was analysing. As Heidegger chooses to emphasize, his interpretation of everydayness should not be read as a moral critique of how Dasein finds itself in the world of ‘the they’. “In relation to these phenomena; it may not be superfluous to remark that our own Interpretation is purely ontological in its aims, and is far removed from any moralizing critique of everyday Dasein, and from the aspirations of a ‘philosophy of culture’” (*ibid*: 210-211 [167]).

Interpreting Dasein’s average everydayness as its ‘unowned’ or undifferentiated manner of ‘being’ enables Heidegger’s characterisation of Dasein’s unified structure of being-in-the-world as ‘care’ (*Sorge*) to be understood. ‘Care’ does not name any individual structure of Dasein’s existentiality. “Care does not characterize just existentiality, let us say, as detached from facticity and falling; on the contrary, it embraces the unity of these ways in which Being may be characterized” (*ibid*: 237 [193]). The ‘care’ structure of being-in-the-world is summarised by Heidegger as the totality of the way it temporally exists.

Dasein exists as an entity for which, in its Being, that Being is itself an *issue*. Essentially ahead of it itself, it has projected itself upon its potentiality-for-Being *before* going on to any mere consideration of itself. In its projection it reveals itself as something which has been thrown. It has been thrownly abandoned to the ‘world’, and falls into it concernfully. As care – that is, as existing in the unity of the projection which has been fallingly thrown – this entity has been disclosed as a “there”. As being with Others, it maintains itself in an average way of interpreting... (*ibid*: 458 [406], emphasis as in original)

As with all Heidegger's technical terms for characterising the ontology of Dasein, it is important not to interpret 'care' in its normal ontical sense. It does not designate any particular psychological or emotional state, and within the phenomenological architecture it is removed by several degrees from any act of cognition. 'Care' does not signify any tendency "which one might have in mind ontically, such as worry or carefreeness" (*ibid.*: 237 [192]). Within the 'care' (*Sorge*) structure of 'being', the way of Dasein's 'being-with' other Dasein is solicitude (*Fürsorge*), which we have already analysed. But also deriving from the 'care' structure is Dasein's way of encountering non-Dasein entities, a 'dealing-with' (*Umgang*) entities in terms of 'concern' (*Besorgen*). The concerned dealing with the world will be analysed in section 3.5. Solicitude and concern, both of which are not to be mistaken with their conventional ontical signification, derive from 'care' because 'care' is the structure of 'how' Dasein makes itself an issue (Dreyfus 1991: 238). Thus the 'how-ness' of Dasein is 'care'. However, it is only the 'how' of our existence in our 'unowned' everyday manner of 'being'. Consequently, in order to 'flesh out' the phenomenology of Dasein's 'being' it is necessary to understand how the authentic 'owning' and inauthentic 'disowning' of Dasein's existence is structured by temporality. This is to say, 'how' does Dasein make an issue out of itself through its temporal unity.

As Dasein, in the caring state of being-in-the-world, we exist temporally because "*Dasein itself... is time*" (Heidegger 1992a: 197, emphasis as in original). To explain our existence as temporality Heidegger is less interested in *what* time is, and more interested in describing *how* we exist temporally. In *The Concept of Time*<sup>46</sup> he states that:

Time is the 'how'. If we wish to inquire into what time is, then one may not cling prematurely to an answer (time is such and such), for this always means a 'what'. (Heidegger 1992b: 22E)

To reiterate, our 'being' is time, which is the 'how' of our existence. The basic 'categories' of Dasein's temporal existence, what Heidegger calls its 'ecstases'<sup>47</sup> (Heidegger 1962: 377 [329]), are *thrownness*, *falling*, and *projection* (*ibid.*: 264 [221-222]). We are 'thrown' out of the past, 'fall' into the present, and 'project' into the future. These ecstases, the way our temporality 'stands out' are not to be thought of as a sequential linearity in the manner that time is normally understood, a linearity Heidegger calls "Weltzeit" or "world-time" (*ibid.*: 467 [414]). Rather the ecstases have a structural unity. In this unity our 'projecting' into the

<sup>46</sup> This was Heidegger's lecture *Der Begriff der Zeit*, which he delivered to the theology department at the University of Marburg in July 1924. This lecture has been called the "original form" of *Being and Time*, and is also thought to be the basis for his 1925 course of lectures *History of the Concept of Time* (Heidegger 1992a: xiv).

<sup>47</sup> Heidegger did not use the term 'categories' as he has already reserved that term for the ontical regions of presence-at-hand, and the 'existentialia' are not the same as the 'ecstases'.

future, our ‘futural-ness’ has a certain primacy (*ibid*: 378 [329]), as it is the way in which our ‘being’ is opened to possibility and meaning. Futural-ness gives Dasein its capacity to choose how it will be in the world, it is Dasein’s “potentiality-for-Being” (*ibid*: 373 [325]). But Dasein is also ‘thrown’, it is always already factually a ‘being-in-the-world’. The meaning of this ‘thrownness’ is provided by ‘projecting’ into possibilities, and so Heidegger can state that our character of ‘having been’, our ‘past-ness’, “arises, in a certain way, from the future” (*ibid*: 373 [326]).

However, because the ecstases are not like sequential ‘world-time’ it is precarious to correlate ‘past-ness’ with what is our current past. “The future”, Heidegger argues, “is *not later* than having been, and having been is *not earlier* than the Present” (*ibid*: 401 [350], emphasis as in original). This is also a matter of the modal character of the ecstases, as Dasein exists both authentically and inauthentically. When Dasein is being inauthentic, it makes its world present-at-hand, by ‘falling’ and forgetting its character as a ‘thrown’ ‘being’ and merely ‘awaiting’ what will come next. This “*awaiting which forgets and makes present* is an ecstatical unity in its own right” (*ibid*: 389 [339], emphasis as in original). In this temporally inauthentic way of ‘being’, Dasein is existing by ‘making-present’ the world, where ‘present’ means both ‘present’ in the sense of ‘world-time’ sequentiality, and ‘present’ in the sense of being in attendance, the ‘what’ of the ontological tradition. When Dasein is behaving authentically, however, the ecstatic unity of its temporalizing of existence alters, and it is in this authentic mode of ‘being-in-the-world’ that Dasein’s ways of existing are opened to it and it can ‘own’ itself.

Dasein’s pressing into possibilities is not limitless, it has a finitude because of its mortality, and it is because of anxiety towards this mortal finitude that Dasein can behave authentically. When Dasein behaves in its authentic modality, its ecstases move from ‘awaiting’, ‘forgetting’, and ‘making-present’, to ‘anticipation’, ‘repetition’, and the ‘moment of vision’. In anticipation Dasein stops merely awaiting, but, by recognising its finitude, begins to choose who it wants to be. Anticipation is how Dasein “lets itself come towards itself as its ownmost potentiality-for-Being” (*ibid*: 386 [337]). However, this anticipatory choosing of Dasein’s ‘potentiality-for-being’ can only come from retrieving, or ‘repeating’, the possibilities for ‘being’ that it has inherited from its thrownness. In this sense by “being futural Dasein is its past” (Heidegger 1992b: 19E), and because of this Heidegger can say that the past “is anything but what is past. It is something to which I can return again and again” (*ibid*: 19E). The anticipation and repetition of its potentiality allows Dasein its active existence in the ‘present’, its moment of vision, where it encounters the world as something it

cares about, rather than as something merely ‘present’ before it. This ecstatical temporality of Dasein is also what structures the hermeneutical disclosure of being-in-the-world. Historicity is what Heidegger called the “first principal of all hermeneutics”, that the “*possibility of access to history is grounded in the possibility according to which any specific present understands to be futural*” (Heidegger 1992b: 20E, emphasis as in original). Heidegger provides this summary of ‘how’ Dasein’s everyday, authentic, and inauthentic, making an issue of itself is unified in by its temporally differentiated ‘care’ structure.

We have defined Dasein’s Being as “care”. The ontological meaning of “care” is temporality. We have shown that temporality constitutes the disclosedness of the “there”, and we have shown how it does so. In the disclosedness of the “there” the world is disclosed along with it. The unity of significance – that is, the ontological constitution of the world – must then likewise be grounded in temporality. *The existential-temporal condition for the possibility of the world lies in the fact that temporality, as an ecstatical unity, has something like a horizon.* (Heidegger 1962: 416 [364-365], emphasis as in original)

Furthermore, the ‘horizontal schemata of future, Present, and having been, is grounded in the ecstatical unity of temporality” (*ibid*: 416 [365]), and this unity determines the hermeneutic disclosure of the ‘there-ness’ of the world. However, we have not yet analysed this ‘there-ness’ of Dasein.

### §3.4 – The ‘there’ and the hermeneutic disclosure of the world

The phenomenological structure of solicitude, ‘being-with’, and ‘*das Man*’ is a constitutive part of the ‘care’ structure of Dasein’s temporalised being-in-the-world. In this temporal structure the world is hermeneutically disclosed to Dasein. This is the structure of ‘being-in as such’ (Heidegger 1962: 169 [131]), the constitution of Dasein’s hermeneutic-existential disclosedness. This is the phenomenology of the ‘there’, or the ‘Da’, of Da-sein (‘being-there’). Heidegger argues that it is understanding this structure that paved “the way to grasping the primordial Being of Dasein itself – namely, care” (*ibid*: 169 [131]). By phenomenologically analysing the ‘there-ness’ structure of ‘being’, the constitution ‘world-ness’ is uncovered. ‘World-ness’, also termed ‘worldhood’ or ‘worldliness’ (*Weltlichkeit*), is structured by Dasein’s concern (*Besorgen*) for intra-worldly entities, in a manner similar to how ‘who-ness’ is structured by Dasein’s solicitude. The ‘being’ of intra-worldly entities, which can be variously called ‘equipment’, ‘paraphernalia’, or ‘technology’, are constituted by the ‘world-ness’ of Dasein.

However, before intra-worldly entities can be analysed it is required that both the structural constitution of ‘there-ness’ and the temporal-existential structure of care be phenomenologically uncovered. The hermeneutic structural composition of the ‘being’ of the Dasein is its ‘being-in’, its ‘there-ness’. This ‘there-ness’ or ‘disclosedness’, Dasein’s ‘contextuality’, is constituted by the existentialia of ‘disposedness’ (*Befindlichkeit*), ‘understanding, interpretation, and assertion’ (*Verständnis, Auslegung, and Aussage*), and ‘discourse’ (*Rede*). These existentialia constitute “the primordial disclosedness of Being-in-the-world” (*ibid*: 188 [148]). However, before these existentialia can be analysed a general understanding of the disclosedness of the ‘there’ is required.

Disclosedness is Heidegger’s equivalent to concepts such as consciousness<sup>48</sup> or the mind that can be found in the ‘what-ness’ ontological tradition. But to say that it is the equivalent risks simply replacing one term with another if the underlying phenomenon is not then clarified. The concept of disclosedness is required because of Heidegger’s rejection of the subject-object model of understanding that underlies ‘what-ness’ ontology<sup>49</sup>. Heidegger argues that Dasein’s ‘being-in’, its disclosedness of the ‘there’, “is not a characteristic that is effected, or even just elicited, in a present-at-hand subject by the ‘world’s’ Being-present-at-hand” (*ibid*: 170 [132]). Nor is ‘there-ness’ a ‘between-ness’ of a “subject present-at-hand and an Object present-at-hand”, as this concept of ‘between-ness’ “*splits* the phenomenon asunder, and there is no prospect of putting it back together again from the fragments” (*ibid*: 170 [132], emphasis as in original).

What is decisive for ontology is to prevent the splitting of the phenomenon – in other words, to hold its positive phenomenal content secure. To say that for this we need far-reaching and detailed study, is simply to express the fact that something which was ontically self-evident in the traditional way of treating the ‘problem of knowledge’ has often been ontologically disguised to the point where it has been lost sight of altogether. (*ibid*: 170-171 [132])

<sup>48</sup> See section 3.5 for an account of Husserl’s phenomenology of intentional consciousness. In the Heideggerian alternative provided here, it can be seen that ‘cognition’ is a derivative mode or comportment of Dasein’s worldly ‘concern’ (*Besorgen*), and furthermore occurs as a privation of its normal comportment of dealing with (*Umgang*) entities.

<sup>49</sup> Refer to section 1.3 to see how this model underlies the ‘classical’ realist and ‘noetic’ idealist branches of ‘what-ness’ ontology.



Rather than understood as an entity that is either a subject or an object<sup>50</sup>, Dasein “which is essentially constituted by Being-in-the-world”, is to be understood as ‘being’ “itself in every case its ‘there’” (*ibid*: 171 [132]). Furthermore, Dasein’s ‘there-ness’ is its disclosedness. Dasein ‘is’, in the ontological-existential sense, its ‘there’, which is to say that Dasein is its disclosedness (*ibid*: 171 [133]). Every Dasein is its ‘there’, its disclosure of its world. Consequently, if “no Dasein exists, no world is ‘there’ either” (*ibid*: 417 [365]). Furthermore, this disclosedness of the ‘there’, of Dasein’s world, is structured by the ecstatic unity of temporality.

The way in which Dasein’s contingency, its thrownness, is disclosed is its ‘disposedness’ (*Befindlichkeit*). This term is rendered as ‘state-of-mind’ by Macquarrie and Robinson. This translation is not appropriate however. One of the overriding themes of *Being and Time* is Heidegger’s consistent critique of reducing ways of experiencing the world to a mental model. Dreyfus instead translates the term as ‘affectedness’, after briefly considering ‘where-you’re-at-ness’ (Dreyfus 1991: 168). Polt argues that ‘attunement’ is the best approximate of ‘*Befindlichkeit*’ (Polt 1999: 64-65), but it is Blattner’s ‘disposedness’ that I will use in my analysis of the phenomenon. (Blattner 2006: 76). ‘Disposedness’ is how Dasein finds itself amidst a world that has already been disclosed to it. This ‘already-there-ness’ that is disposed to Dasein are its ‘moods’ (*Stimmung*). ‘Moods’ should not, in Heidegger’s usage, be interpreted as psychological states of minds. This conventional understanding of ‘mood’ refers to ontical ‘feelings’, which are derivative of Dasein’s more ‘primordial’ ways of being-in-the-world. A mood is viewed as coming neither from a Cartesian ‘inside’ nor from a deterministic ‘outside’. “Having a mood is not related to the psychical in the first instance, and is not itself an inner condition which reaches forth in an enigmatical way and puts its mark on Things and persons” (Heidegger 1962: 176 [137]). Rather, Heidegger resolves that a mood is that which first of all is what makes it possible to engage with the world as something that already matters. “*The mood has already disclosed, in*

<sup>50</sup> Heidegger was consistently opposed to subject-object model throughout his works, not only in *Being and Time*. For example, in the 1923 lecture course *Ontology – The Hermeneutics of Facticity* Heidegger makes the following declaration.

This *schema* must be avoided: *What exists are subjects and objects*, consciousness and being – being is the object of knowledge – being in the authentic sense is the being of nature – consciousness is an “I think,” thus an ego, ego-pole, centre of acts, person – egos (persons) have standing opposite them: beings, objects, natural things, things of value, goods. The relation between subject and object needs to be explained and is a problem for epistemology. This problem forms the basis of all those possibilities which are tried out over and over again and let loose on each other in endless discussions: the object is dependent on the subject, or the subject on the object, or both on each other in a correlative manner.... No modification of this schema would be able to do away with its inappropriateness. The schema itself has developed historically within the tradition from different constructions of each of its components (subject and object) which proceeded in isolation from one another and were then integrated in various ways. (Heidegger 1999: 62-63, emphasis as in original)

every case, *Being-in-the-world as a whole, and makes it possible first of all to direct oneself towards something*” (*ibid*: 176 [137], emphasis as in original). Consequently, the existentiality of disposedness “*implies a disclosive submission to the world, out of which we can encounter something that matters to us*” (*ibid*: 177 [137-138], emphasis as in original). As ‘disposedness’ is the structure that makes the world matter to us, it discloses to Dasein in its thrownness itself and the world, its being-in-the-world, as ‘already there’. Dasein finds itself disposed to existence, it ‘attunes’ to a way of ‘being’.

An entity of the character of Dasein is its “there” in such a way that, whether explicitly or not, it finds itself in its thrownness. In [disposedness] Dasein is always brought before itself, and has always found itself, not in the sense of coming across itself by perceiving itself, but in the sense of finding itself in the mood that it has. (*ibid*: 174 [135])

For example, if Dasein is disposed in a nostalgic mood, its being-in-the-world is disclosed to it in a manner that structures its understanding of the world in sense of loss. Its ‘there’ matters to it as a no longer ‘there’. Dasein in its thrownness is understanding its world in terms of ‘being’ nostalgic. Everything matters to it in terms of its nostalgia, so a house you are living in might not be disclosed as a home. By ‘being’ disposed to moods, Dasein’s world ‘always already’ matters to it. It is thrown into its ‘there-ness’.

However, as the ecstatic unity of temporality is non-linear, while Dasein is already disposed to the world in its thrownness, it is also understanding its world as it projects into its future possibilities. Understanding (*Verständnis*) is how Dasein gets around in its world. This conception of ‘understanding’ is not to be mistaken as a derivative act of cognising about something.

When we are talking ontically we sometimes use the expression ‘understanding something’ with the signification of ‘being able to manage something’, ‘being a match for it’, ‘being competent to do so something’. In understanding, as an *existentiale*, that which we have such competence over is not a “what”, but Being as existing. The kind of Being which Dasein has, as potentiality-for-Being, lies existentially in understanding. (*ibid*: 183 [143], emphasis as in original)

Understanding is how the world is disclosed in terms of its potentialities for use. An intra-worldly entity is not disclosed as simply a ‘present’ thing, but as something which Dasein may potentially use. In the unity of being-in-the-world the ‘there-ness’ of entities is ‘understood’ by potentiality. Dasein does not ‘understand’ something in and of itself, but as something that is ‘towards’ something. Understanding is of potentialities rather than actualities. “*Understanding is the existential Being of Dasein’s own potentiality-for-Being; and it is so in such a way that this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of*” (*ibid*: 184

[144], emphasis as in original). By projecting our possibilities we are able to understand things in terms of those possibilities. Things ‘matter’ differently to us depending on where our existence is headed. Dasein’s structure of understanding is a projection into possibility. In this way the ‘there’, which is also the ‘already-there’, is a ‘not-there-yet’. ‘Being’ is both a ‘having been’ and a ‘becoming’.

Equiprimordial with understanding is what Heidegger calls ‘interpretation’ (*Auslegung*). Interpretation is the ‘as-structure’ of the ‘there’. This represents that an entity for Dasein which is understood as an entity ‘for’ something, becomes interpreted ‘as’ something. Interpretation is not “the acquiring of information about what is understood; it is rather the working-out of possibilities projected in understanding” (*ibid*: 188-189 [148]). We treat entities ‘as’ something which we have interpreted, though this interpretation is before any thematic cognition of the entity (*ibid*: 190 [149]). Our interpretation of an entity is an act ‘in advance’ of the entity, it has a ‘fore-structure’. Dasein ‘has’, ‘sees’, and ‘grasps’ (*ibid*: 191 [150]) an entity ‘as’ something ‘for’ something within a pre-existing structure of ‘being’ involved in the world. “An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us” (*ibid*: 191-192 [150]). A ‘pure intuition’ of a thing is not possible. It shows up as something ‘for’ something, and thus ‘as’ something, and only then can it be reflected upon as a ‘thing’. A tree, for example, is not disclosed outside of a world. It shows up ‘as’ part of a forest, or something to be cut down for timber, or as a home for insects and birds. But a ‘tree’ in and of itself is not disclosed. We can choose to make an assertion about the tree, in an attempt to explain the onticality of the tree. But this assertion (*Aussage*), a thematic, cognitive, explanation of an entity, is regarded as being derived from interpretations (*ibid*: 203 [160]). “Thus assertion cannot disown its ontological origin from an interpretation which understands” (*ibid*: 201 [158]).

The core principle of this hermeneutic phenomenology of the disclosure of the ‘being-in’ of being-in-the-world regards the temporality of the formation of meaning for Dasein. This is an interpretation of the hermeneutic disclosure of the meaning of the ‘there’.

In so far as understanding and interpretation make up the existential state of Being of the “there”, “meaning” must be conceived as the formal-existential framework of the disclosedness which belongs to understanding. Meaning is an *existentiale* of Dasein, not a property attached to entities, lying ‘behind’ them, or floating somewhere as an ‘intermediate domain’. Dasein only ‘has’ meaning, so far as the disclosedness of Being-in-the-world can be ‘filled in’ by the entities discoverable in that disclosedness. *Hence only Dasein can be meaningful or meaningless. ...*

The meaning of Being can never be contrasted with entities, or with Being as

the ‘ground’ which gives entities support; for a ‘ground’ becomes accessible only as meaning, even if it is itself the abyss of meaninglessness.

(*ibid*: 193-194 [151-152], emphasis as in original)

The ‘there’ has no inherent meaning, no ‘what-ness’ or core essence, only what Dasein discloses. Furthermore, this disclosive process is temporally unified by the structure of the hermeneutic circle. “Any interpretation which is to contribute understanding, must have already understood what is to be interpreted” (*ibid*: 194 [152]). However, as Heidegger points out, what “is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it in the right way” (*ibid*: 195 [153]). That is, to begin an interpretative process in such a way so that it becomes a virtuous circle.

However, there is one more structure in the constitution of how the ‘there’ is disclosed. As well as the ‘disposedness’ which attunes Dasein through moods to the ‘already-there’, and ‘understanding’ which projects Dasein into the possibilities of the ‘there’, there is also the structure of ‘discourse’ (*Rede*). “*Discourse is existentially equiprimordial with [disposedness] and understanding*” (*ibid*: 203 [161], emphasis as in original). By ‘discourse’ Heidegger is indicating more than the phenomena of ‘a’ language. ‘A’ language is an ontical (though not physical) entity, while ‘discourse’ is the ‘being’ of that entity. “*The existential-ontological foundation of language is discourse or talk*” (*ibid*: 203 [160-161], emphasis as in original). By ‘discourse’, Heidegger is indicating the basic structure that allows the world to be articulated. This structure of ‘discourse’ is what leads to language, what it constitutes is the ability to “deal with patterns of meaning” (Polt 1999: 74). Another translation of ‘*Rede*’ is ‘telling’. This is used by Dreyfus to emphasize that this structure also makes sense of statements such as “being able to tell the time” (Dreyfus 1991: 213). ‘Discourse’ is the capacity to put the ‘articles’ of the ‘there’ into an intelligible whole, to structure these ‘articles’ so that they can be ‘articulated’. ‘Discourse’ is the disclosure of the ‘articulated there’, the articulation of intelligibility (Heidegger 1962: 203-204 [161]). The existential structures of the ‘there’ – ‘disposedness’, ‘understanding’, and ‘discourse’ – constitute the ‘being-in’ of ‘being-in-the-world’. But being-in-the-world is a unified phenomenon, and ‘being-in’ cannot be understood separately from what it is ‘in’, that is the ‘world’.

It is in chapter three of *Being and Time*, subtitled *The Worldhood of the World*, that Heidegger advances his analysis of how Dasein encounters intra-worldly entities as either present-at-hand or ready-to-hand. He does so through a phenomenology of ‘worlds’ that incorporates a critique of Cartesianism brought about by an initial phenomenological destruction of this part of the ontological tradition. This critique of Cartesianism has already been adumbrated by previous reference to Heidegger’s dissatisfaction with the ontological

tradition's object and subject conceptual structure for explaining how knowing the world is orientated. The critique of Descartes is that "he takes the Being of 'Dasein' (to whose basic constitution Being-in-the-world belongs) in the very same way as he takes the Being of the *res extensa* – namely, as substance" (Heidegger 1962: 131 [98]). Heidegger's view is that Descartes took the idea of 'being' "as permanent presence-at-hand", identified "entities within-the-world with the world in general", and consequently failed to bring Dasein's ways of existing into view "in a manner which is ontologically appropriate" (*ibid*: 130 [98]). Heidegger further alleges that Descartes's philosophy "inevitably obstructed his view of the phenomenon of the world, and has made it possible for the ontology of the 'world' to be compressed into that of certain entities within-the-world" (*ibid*: 131 [98]). This critique of taking the 'being' of the corporeal, extended 'thing' as the "fundamental stratum upon which all the other strata of actuality within-the-world are built up" (*ibid*: 131 [98]), also dismisses the argument that this view of 'being' can be rounded out by adding qualities to the 'thing', which would be seen as "quantitative modifications of the modes of the *extensio* itself" (*ibid*: 131 [99]).

These qualities, which are themselves reducible, would provide the footing for such specific qualities as "beautiful", "ugly", "in keeping", "not in keeping", "useful", "useless". If one is oriented primarily by Thinghood, these latter qualities must be taken as non-quantifiable value-predicates by which what is in the first instance just a material Thing, gets stamped as something good.... Adding on value-predicates cannot tell us anything at all new about the Being of goods, *but would merely presuppose again that goods have pure presence-at-hand as their kind of Being*. Values would then be determinate characteristics which a Thing possesses, and they would be *present-at-hand*. They would have their sole ultimate ontological source in our previously laying down the actuality of Things as the fundamental stratum. But even pre-phenomenological experience shows that in an entity which is supposedly a Thing, there is something that will not become fully intelligible through Thinghood alone. (*ibid*: 131-132 [99], emphasis as in original)

Heidegger's critique is that "taking refuge in 'value'-characteristics" (*ibid*: 133 [100]) provides no legitimisation for taking fundamental 'being' as present-at-hand substance. Furthermore, Heidegger was critical of both aspects of Descartes binary ontology. Taking Dasein's 'being' as the *res cogitans* is as inadequate as taking the 'being' of other entities as the *res extensa*. This duality remains an ontical characterisation of the 'what-ness' of entities, where "again we are faced with the Being-present-at-hand-together of some spiritual Thing along with a corporeal Thing, while the Being of the entity thus compounded remains more obscure than ever" (*ibid*: 82-83 [56]).

However, a phenomenology of the 'being' of intra-worldly entities is not a reductive

analysis of ontical presence-at-hand, though it does uncover the structure that enables Dasein to understand entities in this manner. Rather, phenomenology reveals the ‘being’ of entities in terms of the referential totality of involvement and significance, which is an *existentiale* of Dasein’s constitution as being-in-the-world. The ‘world’, from the phenomenological perspective, has an ontological ‘how-ness’ that cannot be reduced to its ontical constituents. It is this way of understanding the ‘world’ that Heidegger called ‘worldhood’.

‘Worldhood’ is an ontological concept, and stands for the structure of one of the constitutive items of Being-in-the-world. But we know Being-in-the-world as a way in which Dasein’s character is defined existentially. Thus worldhood itself is an *existentiale*. If we inquire ontologically about the ‘world’, we by no means abandon the analytic of Dasein as a field for thematic study. Ontologically, ‘world’ is not a way of characterizing those entities which Dasein is *not*; it is rather a characteristic of Dasein itself. (*ibid*: 92 [64], emphasis as in original)

Understanding the ‘world’ as an *existentiale* of Dasein, signified by the term ‘worldhood’, can lead to confusion due to the multiple manners in which the word ‘world’ can be utilised. Yet Heidegger carefully separated these meanings into four groups for use in his terminology.

The first sense of ‘world’ described by Heidegger is for the ontical totality of all present-at-hand entities (*ibid*: 93 [64]). This is the meaning of ‘world’ that corresponds to the first sense of ontology that was introduced in section 1.1 of this thesis. ‘World’, in this sense, has been, and continues to be, revised by scientific progress, and so this use of ‘world’ is now equivalent to ‘the universe’. Dreyfus calls this sense of ‘world’ the ‘ontical-categorical’ sense (Dreyfus 1991: 89). Heidegger’s second sense of ‘world’ corresponds to the characterisation of ontology found in section 1.1 of this thesis, where quiddity or ‘what-ness’ is understood as the subject matter. Similarly, Dreyfus calls this sense of ‘world’ the ‘ontological-categorical’ sense (*ibid*: 89), as Heidegger did understand the term as functioning as an ontological term (Heidegger 1962: 93 [64-65]) but ‘ontological’ in its ‘what-ness sense’. In particular, this sense of ‘world’ corresponds to the understanding of regional ontologies that we outlined in section 1.2, and which Heidegger rather terms ‘realms’. “And indeed ‘world’ can become a term for any realm which encompasses a multiplicity of entities: for instance, when one talks of the ‘world’ of a mathematician, ‘world’ signifies the realm of possible objects of mathematics” (*ibid*: 93 [64-65]). It is unfortunate that Heidegger adopted the use of the word ‘ontological’ uncritically in this important passage, as he uses it here in the sense that he has otherwise been careful to reattribute to onticality. This is why Dreyfus calls it the ontological-categorical sense, in order to distinguish from the first ontical-categorical sense of ‘world’. But Heidegger’s first sense of the word ‘world’ does not signify the categories of the

old sense of ontology either. Consequently, the first two senses of the word ‘world’ identified by Heidegger would be better termed first the ‘ontical’ sense, and second the ‘ontical-categorical’ sense.

The third sense of the word ‘world’ that Heidegger identifies is what Dreyfus calls the ‘ontical-existential’ sense (Dreyfus 1991: 89), and this nomenclature is consistent with Heidegger’s description of the phenomena. However, the ‘existential’, while not ontological in Heidegger’s sense, is not an entirely ontical either. It corresponds to what Heidegger calls the ‘pre-ontological’. Ontology, for Heidegger, is the phenomenological investigation of *how* ‘being’ exists, where existing relates to the structures of Dasein’s interpretative being-in-the-world. This is why, as we said in section 2.2, in Heidegger’s usage the ‘existentials’ are the structural equivalent for Dasein as the traditional concept of the ‘categories’ are for non-Dasein entities (Heidegger 1962: 70 [44]). For example, it is vital to grasp the distinction “between Being-in as an *existential* and the category of the ‘insideness’ which things present-at-hand can have with regard to one another” (*ibid*: 82 [56], emphasis as in original). The *existential* is a particular Dasein’s self-interpretation of *who* and *what* they are, but not an *existential* interpretation of the structures of *how* they are, which conforms to Heidegger’s ontological difference distinction between the ontological and the ontical. However, the *existential* is a special kind of ontical ‘what-ness’ as it is Dasein’s own self-interpreted ‘what-ness’. As Heidegger states in section 63 of *Being and Time*, Dasein’s understanding of existentiality is based on its self *existential* understanding, and so unless “we have an *existential* understanding, all analysis of existentiality will remain groundless” (*ibid*: 360 [312]). Consequently, Dasein’s *existential* understanding has a pre-ontological as well as an ontical dimension, where ‘pre-ontological’ “does not signify simply ‘being-ontical’, however, but rather ‘being in such a way that one has an understanding of Being’” (*ibid*: 32 [12]). This is why terming Heidegger’s third sense of the word ‘world’ the ontical-existential designation is partially misleading. The use of ‘ontical’ is accurate with Heidegger’s initial description of the ‘world’ in this sense, but his subsequent clarification demonstrates that it is not entirely adequate.

“World” can be understood in another ontical sense – not, however, as those entities which Dasein essentially is not and which can be encountered within-the-world, but rather as that ‘*wherein*’ a factual Dasein as such can be said to ‘live’. “World” has here a pre-ontological *existential* signification. Here again there are different possibilities: “world” may stand for the ‘public’ we-world, or one’s ‘own’ closest (domestic) environment. (*ibid*: 93 [65])

If the liberty is taken to remove hyphen from ‘pre-ontological’ and render it as ‘preontological’, then the nomenclature ‘the preontological-existential’ better defines the

third sense of the word 'world'. It is not ontological, but it is more than ontical. It does designate a 'what', but it is a 'what' of Dasein's existentiell understanding. 'World' in this sense is not 'the world', but rather 'worlds', so that 'a world', 'these worlds', 'his world', 'her world', and 'their world' are possible formations. Dreyfus provides the following good examples when he states that this "sense of world is reflected in such locutions as 'the child's world,' 'the world of fashion,' or 'the business world'" (Dreyfus 1991: 89-90).

However, while distinguishing between the ontical, ontical-categorical, and preontological-existentiell senses of the word 'world' is a necessity for a full explication of the idea of 'the world', it is the fourth sense of the word 'world' that is most important in terms of Dasein's constitution as being-in-the-world. The fourth sense is what Dreyfus correctly terms the 'ontological-existential' sense of the 'world' (*ibid*: 91). "Finally, "world" designates the ontologico-existential concept of *worldhood*" (Heidegger 1962: 93 [65], emphasis as in original). It is this sense of the 'world' that Heidegger's accuses the ontological tradition of 'what-ness' of Western philosophy as having neglected. "When it comes to the problem of analysing the world's worldhood ontologically, traditional ontology operates in a blind alley, if, indeed, it sees this problem at all" (*ibid*: 94 [65]). In opposition to this, Heidegger's ontological-existential analysis of the worldhood of the 'world', in terms of a referential totality of involvement and significance which is "constitutive for worldhood itself" (*ibid*: 107 [76]), enables an understanding of the 'being' of intra-worldly entities. This understanding is in terms of the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand, as disclosed to Dasein constituted as being-in-the-world.

### §3.5 – *The referential totality of the world and technology*

Having affirmed that worldhood is an existentiale of Dasein's being-in-the-world, the question remains how Heidegger can relate intra-worldly entities to the 'being' of Dasein. Heidegger is aware of the difficulty of this, stating that the "task of 'describing' the world phenomenologically is so far from obvious that even if we do no more than determine adequately what form it shall take, essential ontological clarifications will be needed" (*ibid*: 92 [64]). Such clarifications include the aforementioned four senses of the word 'world'. It also includes describing the modes of 'being' of intra-worldly entities in terms of Dasein's worldhood. As previously mentioned, Heidegger understands worldhood as Dasein's referential totality of involvement and significance. There is a lot of phenomenology compacted into the phrase 'referential totality of involvement and significance', and the interpretation of this description of Heidegger's has to be meticulous in order to avoid



misrepresenting it. Heidegger is cautious to note that “in such formalizations the phenomena get levelled off so much that their real phenomenal content may be lost, especially in the case of such ‘simple’ relationships as those which lurk in significance” (*ibid.*: 121 [88]). The underlying phenomenology of statements such as ‘the referential totality of involvement and significance’ must be meticulously analysed and interpreted in order to avoid an uncritical adoption of the phrase where its actual meaning is not understood. The first stage in this interpretation of the phenomena is to understand Heidegger’s concept of ‘concern’ (*Besorgen*).

Concern derives from Dasein’s ‘being’ as ‘care’ (*Sorge*). Concern is Heidegger’s term for the relation Dasein has with the entities in its world, with the exception of entities that are other Dasein which are related to in terms of solicitude. As a technical term ‘concern’ should not be understood as it is in the ontical vernacular. For Heidegger, ‘concern’ is rather an existentials, one which designates “the Being of a possible way of Being-in-the-world” (*ibid.*: 83 [57]). Concern is our way of ‘being’ amidst intra-worldly entities. Heidegger develops this idea of our concerned relation to the world in terms of the ‘environment’ (*Umwelt*), ‘dealings’ (*Umgang*), ‘the in-order-to’ (*das Um-zu*), and ‘circumspection’ (*Umsicht*). As with the terms *Sorge*, *Besorgen*, and *Fürsorge*, the etymological relationship of these terms is unfortunately lost when translated from German into English. The German prefix ‘*um-*’ can mean either ‘about’ or ‘around’, or something like ‘in order to’. So for example *Umwelt* literally translates as ‘world about’ or ‘world around’, which is best expressed in English as ‘environment’, while *Umsicht* can mean ‘looking around for a way to get something done’, which is normally translated as ‘circumspection’. Macquarrie and Robinson analyse these, and similar, difficulties in their translation of *Being and Time* and make many helpful footnotes about their observations throughout (see, for example, the footnotes in Heidegger 1962: 95-98 [66-69]).

Understanding how Heidegger used his etymological constructions to develop his phenomenological architecture of the ‘being’ of Dasein and the world is an aid to understanding his thesis in general. They help to formally indicate the unified, relational whole of the various structures he describes. This linguistic understanding of the relational whole of the analyses and descriptions in *Being and Time* is lost when it is translated. However, as long as the interpreter remembers this underlying structure of the text, the impoverishment of translation is not a decisive obstacle for making sense of the whole. Furthermore, Heidegger regularly groups his technical terms together when making a statement about the phenomenological architecture of existing, and these statements help

signify the unity of the structures he describes. For example, there is the phenomenological statement that what “is ready-to-hand in the environment is certainly not present-at-hand for an eternal observer exempt from Dasein: but it is encountered in Dasein’s circumspectively concerned everydayness” (*ibid*: 140 [106]).

The everyday world of Dasein, that “which is closest to it, is the *environment*” (*ibid*: 94 [66], emphasis as in original). Furthermore, the worldhood of the environment can be understood through “an ontological Interpretation of those entities within-the-*environment* which we encounter as closest to us” (*ibid*: 94 [66], emphasis as in original). Heidegger’s phenomenological analysis of how Dasein encounters entities in the environment represents his decisive break from his mentor Husserl’s use of phenomenology, and this break is founded upon Heidegger’s critique of the subject-object model of human understanding. Heidegger argues that “no sooner was the ‘phenomenon of the world’ grasped than it got interpreted in a ‘superficial’, formal manner. The evidence for this is the procedure (still customary today) of setting up knowing as a ‘relation between subject and Object’ [sic] – a procedure in which there lurks as much ‘truth’ as vacuity” (*ibid*: 86-87 [60]). This objection can be interpreted as a criticism of Husserl’s method of phenomenology. Husserl had further developed the traditional subject-object model in terms of ‘intentionality’. However, before understanding how Heidegger’s ideas differed from Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology of intentionality, a brief account of the main points of Husserl’s theory is necessary.

It was seen in section 1.3 that Husserl’s ‘what-ness ontology’ can be characterized as the study of the essential types that structure existence<sup>51</sup>, understood in terms of the relationship between formal ontology and the regional ontologies. However, his formal ontology is not an account of the structure of existence in and of itself, rather it is what Husserl calls the universal structures of consciousness:

The realm of transcendental consciousness as the realm of what is, in a determined sense, “absolute” being, has been provided us by phenomenological reduction. It is the primal category of all being (or, in our terminology, the primal region), the one in which all other regions of being are rooted, to which, according to their *essence*, they are relative and on which they are therefore all essentially dependent. The theory of categories must start entirely from this most radical of all ontological distinctions – being *as consciousness* and being as something which becomes “*manifested*” in consciousness, “transcendent” being... (Husserl 1983: 171, emphasis as in original)

Husserl’s understanding of the phenomenological reduction will be analysed momentarily.

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<sup>51</sup> ‘Existence’ is used here in the non-Heideggerian sense. In Heideggerian terminology this sense of ‘existence’ could be called the ontical totality.

First it is needed to be understood that Husserl considered transcendental phenomenology the method for the study of the structure of consciousness. Husserl believed that the ontological possibility of determining ‘what is’ “as a science of being in the absolute and final sense, depends upon the success of this science [of phenomenology]” (Husserl 1999: 25).

Husserl’s phenomenology of consciousness is called ‘transcendental’ because it is a modification of Kant’s transcendental understanding of the necessary *a priori* structures of experience. In this manner Husserl situates himself within the philosophical tradition of Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant. As he states:

The striving toward phenomenology was present already in the wonderfully profound Cartesian fundamental considerations; then, again, in the psychologism of the Lockean school; Hume almost set foot upon its domain, but with blinded eyes. And then the first to correctly see it was Kant... although he was still unable to appropriate it or recognize it as a field of work pertaining to a strict eidetic science proper. (Husserl 1982: 142)

Husserl’s phenomenology operates within the Copernican revolution that Kant enacted, seeking to understand entities in terms of how they are structured and understood by the mind. His phenomenology attempts to describe the eidetic features – the essences – of entities as they are experienced by consciousness. His approach begins with the apodictic Cartesian position that what cannot be doubted about existence or reality is that there is someone who consciously experiences it, that in “every case of determinate doubt it is without doubt certain that I am so doubting” (Husserl 1999: 23). Husserl uses this Cartesian position that the conscious subject is beyond doubt to argue that this means that the subject is also necessarily perceiving entities in order to provide content for its experience of existence. “Descartes asked, as you will recall, after he had established the evidence of the *cogitatio* (or rather, in a phrase we have not adopted, the “*cogito ergo sum*”): *What is it that assures me of this basic givenness?* The answer: clear and distinct perception” (*ibid*: 37, emphasis as in original). Husserl argues that however “I might perceive, imagine, judge, infer – whether these acts are attended by certainty or uncertainty, whether they actually have objects or not – it remains absolutely clear and certain that with respect to perception I am perceiving this or that, that with respect to judgement, I am judging this or that, etc.” (*ibid*: 23-24). Furthermore, Husserl argues that we can bracket questions about the ultimate reality of the entities perceived by a subject’s consciousness, and rather analyse the entities as contents of conscious awareness (Dreyfus and Magee 1988: 254-255). This argument leads to a central tenet in Husserl’s phenomenology, differentiating between consciousness and what appears to consciousness.

Husserl understood the existence of the conscious, transcendental subject as beyond

doubt, and used this Cartesian argument as the foundation for the formation of a science of the necessary structures of cognition<sup>52</sup>. This is his transcendental phenomenology. Important for this science was his idea of the *epoché*, the bracketing, parenthesizing, or indexing of judgements about entities. The *epoché* serves as a methodological device for his transcendental phenomenological reduction. As Overgaard is careful to document, it is important not to confuse or conflate the *epoché* and the Husserlian reduction (Overgaard 2004: 36-55). The *epoché* brackets the existence of the entities to be observed, so that the cognitive constitution of those entities can be phenomenologically described by the reduction without reference to those entities as an existing thing in the world (*ibid*: 43-44). This is not the same as regarding the parenthesized entities as ‘unreal’. “Figuratively speaking, that which is parenthesized is not erased from the phenomenological blackboard but only parenthesized, and thereby provided with an index” (Husserl 1983: 171).

*We put out of action the general positing which belongs to the essence of the natural attitude; we parenthesize everything which that positing encompasses with respect to being; thus the whole natural world which is continually “there for us”, “on hand,” and which will always remain there according to consciousness as an “actuality” even if we choose to parenthesize it.*

*If I do that, as I can with complete freedom, then I am not negating this “world” as though I were a sophist; I am not doubting its factual being as though I were a skeptic; rather I am exercising the “phenomenological” [epoché] which also completely shuts me off from any judgement about spatiotemporal factual being. (ibid: 61, emphasis as in original)*

For Husserl parenthesizing the existence of entities indicates that “the existence of all transcendent entities, whether I believe in them or not, does not concern me... this is not the place to pass judgement on the issue, to do so is entirely beside the point” (Husserl 1999: 30). It is this ‘natural attitude’ about entities that is parenthesized by the *epoché*, the pragmatic belief in the ‘reality’ of entities. The *epoché* puts aside any questions about the existence of the entities.

Following their parenthesizing by the *epoché* entities are then ‘regressed’ or ‘traced

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<sup>52</sup> Husserl’s transcendental subject is interchangeably called the transcendental ego. It is important to understand that while Husserl’s phenomenology was strongly influenced by his reading of Descartes’ philosophy, that his notion of the transcendental ego was not the same as the Cartesian *cogito*. Husserl does not try to prove the existence of the external world, what Descartes called the *res extensa*, on the basis of his understanding of the thinking subject. Rather, Husserl wants to understand the necessary *a priori* structures of the subject’s consciousness that determine how objects as mental entities are perceived, judged, and otherwise mentally processed. Another misunderstanding that should be avoided is confusing what can be called the ‘empirical ego’ with the transcendental ego. This is Robert Sokolowski’s argument that the “empirical and the transcendental egos are not two entities; they are one and the same being, but considered in two ways” (Sokolowski 2000: 133). The empirical ego is the material, organic, substantial entity that is identified as an individual person. However, this idea of the empirical ego is not what Husserl’s phenomenology is primarily concerned with. Rather, Husserl’s intent is to analyse the transcendental ego. The transcendental ego, to reiterate, is the necessary *a priori* structure of the self-subject that determine the cognitive engagement with the world.

back' to how they were constituted by the transcendental subjectivity of the phenomenologist's consciousness. This is Husserl's transcendental phenomenological reduction, a return to the "transcendental ego, who constitutes within himself givenness-beforehand and all modes of subsequent givenness" (Husserl 1970a: 136). The entities being phenomenologically analysed are therefore not the entities in and of themselves. Rather, it is the entities as objects of transcendental subjectivity that are being studied. Husserl called these objects of consciousness the *noema*, describing them as the contents for *noesis*, the transcendental acts of consciousness. It is the structure of *noetic* mental processes "to include in itself something such as a 'sense' and possibly a manifold sense on the basis of this sense-bestowal... Such noetic movements are, e.g., directions of the regard of the pure Ego to the objects 'meant' by it owing to sense-bestowal, to <the object> which is 'inherent in the sense' for the Ego" (Husserl 1983: 213-214). These 'senses' are the *noematic* contents of the *noetic* processes.

Perception, for example, has its noema, most basically its perceptual sense, i.e., the *perceived as perceived*. Similarly, the current case of remembering has its *remembered as remembered*, just as its <remembered> [sic], precisely as it is "meant," "intended to" in the <remembering> [sic]; again, the judging has the *judged as judged*, liking has the liked, and so forth. (*ibid*: 214, emphasis as in original)

By drawing upon and modifying the work of his teacher Franz Brentano (see Mohanty 2009: 69-70), Husserl added the concept of intentionality to this model of how noematic entities are experienced by the consciousness of the transcendental subject. Husserl held that intentionality "names the fact that mental states such as perceiving, believing, desiring, fearing, and intending in the ordinary sense are always about something, that is, directed at some object under some description" (Dreyfus 1991: 48). Intentional content is thus construed as the self-contained meanings within consciousness which gives intelligibility to everything that people encounter (*ibid*: 2). Intentionality, the 'directedness' of consciousness towards an entity, is the link between *noesis* and *noema*. Therefore, intentionality can be understood as the cognitive structure of how the transcendental subject experiences entities.

Heidegger however, disagreed with regarding intentional cognition as the basic way in which Dasein as being-in-the-world encounters entities. This does not mean that Heidegger dismissed intentional cognition as a way in which entities can be encountered, rather he argued

that cognition<sup>53</sup> “is a mode of Dasein founded upon Being-in-the-world” (Heidegger 1962: 90 [62]). Furthermore, when this mode of cognition (*Erkennen*) is “possible as a way of determining the nature of the present-at-hand by observing it”, it is because there is a deficiency “in our having-to-do with the world concernfully” (*ibid*: 88 [61]). Within Heidegger’s phenomenological architecture, the intentional cognition of the world is not the fundamental structure of experiencing the world, it is a deficient mode of our concern (*Besorgen*). It is only when something interferes with Dasein’s normal way of disclosing intra-worldly entities that its concernful dealing with these entities operates as intentionality, disclosing them as present-to-hand. Heidegger calls these modes of concern Dasein’s way of ‘comportment’ (*Verhalten*). One manner of comportment is cognition which discloses entities as present-at-hand. Another type of comportment is the aforementioned ‘dealing with’ (*Umgang*), which discloses entities as ready-to-hand.

Such dealings have already dispersed themselves into manifold ways of concern. The kind of dealing which is closest to us is as we have shown, not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use; and this has its own kind of ‘knowledge’. (*ibid*: 95 [67])

The world of everyday Dasein is its environment, and the concernful way in which entities in the environment are disclosed to Dasein as being-in-the-world is by its dealings. This ‘dealing with’ discloses intra-worldly entities as having the kind of ‘being’ of readiness-to-hand.

The ready-to-hand is encountered within-the-world. The Being of this entity, readiness-to-hand, thus stands in some ontological relationship with the world and towards worldhood. In anything ready-to-hand the world is always ‘there’. Whenever we encounter anything, the world has already been previously discovered, though not thematically. (*ibid*: 114 [83])

Furthermore, this ‘dealing with’ comportment to ready-to-hand entities in the world is Dasein’s habitual comportment. Thematic cognition, on the other hand, has to penetrate beyond this habitual mode. “To lay bare what is just present-at-hand and no more, cognition must penetrate *beyond* what is ready-to-hand in our concern” (*ibid*: 101 [71], emphasis as in original). Normally, to “the extent that any *entity* shows itself to concern – that is, to the extent that it is discovered in its Being – it is already something ready-to-hand

<sup>53</sup> The German word that Heidegger uses is ‘*Erkennen*’, and I am translating this as ‘cognition’. Macquarrie and Robinson, however, normally translate it as ‘knowing’. My choice on this matter follows from Blattner’s argument about the translation, which is presented below.

“*Erkennen*” and “*Erkenntnis*” are often used in philosophy to mean knowledge, as in *Erkenntnistheorie*, which is theory of knowledge. They can also be used to mean cognition, however, which is the way in which Kant uses them most often. Recent translators of Kant’s writings have begun to use “cognition,” where the older and more established translations have used “knowledge.” Because Heidegger’s discussion of *Erkenntnis* in §13 of *Being and Time* does not focus on any of the special epistemological features of knowledge, such as justification or truth, but rather aims squarely at general aspects of intentionality, it is better to render the term as “cognition” here. (Blattner 2006: 46)

environmentally; it just is not ‘proximally’ a ‘world-stuff’ that is merely present-at-hand” (*ibid.*: 118 [85], emphasis as is original).

Humanity has developed an extensive knowledge of the ontical properties of present-at-hand entities. The ongoing accumulation of this knowledge has been highly prioritised by civilization. Our knowledge of cognition has also grown, albeit more slowly than the objects it discloses. However, the ontological tradition that underlies these achievements has resulted in a deficient understanding of ‘being’ when it is not present-at-hand. The paradox of this situation is that the way of ‘being’ of entities that is most familiar to us non-thematically, is thematically alien to our conventional reflections on the world. Consequently, to say that the ‘being’ of entities is primarily disclosed to us as ready-to-hand requires meticulous attention. Heidegger calls the kind of intra-worldly entities that we encounter in concern ‘equipment’ (*das Zeug*) (*ibid.*: 97 [68]). The phenomenology of this term serves to indicate that not only is the habitual mode of ‘being’ of intra-worldly entities something non-thematic, it is also something that is relational to other intra-worldly entities. It also incorporates an understanding of the ‘directionality’ of this ‘being’ that is similar to Husserl’s understanding of intentionality. This ‘directionality’ is structured as the referential totality of involvement and significance of ‘equipment’. However, before this phenomenological structure can be analysed in detail, it is first necessary to consider the ways in which the modes of ‘being’ of intra-worldly entities are encountered.

In the referential totality, which we have not yet analysed, entities are encountered that have several different forms or manners of ‘being’. This does not include encountering another Dasein. Heidegger argued that the phenomenological architecture of how another Dasein is encountered is different from the concernful way Dasein encounters other intra-worldly entities. He called this alternative structure ‘solicitude’ (*Fürsorge*), which we have already analysed. Unlike the encountering other Dasein, the entities encountered in Dasein’s concernful experience of the world include readiness-to-hand, presence-at-hand, and unreadiness-to-hand. A ready-to-hand entity is available for use in that it is already understood. This ‘understanding’ is not the theoretical comportment of cognition; it is not reflected upon. Rather it is the non-thematic comportment of dealing from amidst the referential totality. Heidegger’s now classic example is of a hammer (Heidegger 1962: 98 [69]). The hammer is not merely known as a theoretical thing with a thematic quality and potential value predicates, it is encountered as an entity that is known in the way Dasein has been socialised to know it by ‘the they’ (*das Man*). Beyond this social structure the hammer is, ultimately, known kinaesthetically through hammering.

Equipment can genuinely show itself only in dealings cut to its own measure (hammering with a hammer, for example); but in such dealings an entity of this kind is not *grasped* thematically as an occurring Thing, nor is the equipment-structure known as such even in the using. The hammering does not simply have knowledge about the hammer's character as equipment, but it has appropriated this equipment in a way which could not possibly be more suitable. In dealings such as this, where something is put to use, our concern subordinates itself to the "in-order-to" which is constitutive for the equipment we are employing at the time; the less we stare at the hammer-Thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is – as equipment. The hammering itself uncovers the specific 'manipulability' ["*Handlichkeit*"] of the hammer. The kind of Being which equipment possesses – in which it manifests itself in its own right – we call "*readiness-to-hand*" [*Zuhandenheit*]. (*ibid*: 98 [69], emphasis as in original)

The way in which Dasein is aware of ready-to-hand entities such as the hammer in the above quotation is what Heidegger calls 'circumspection' (*Umsicht*) (*ibid*: 98 [69]). Circumspection is the non-thematic way of 'seeing' the ready-to-hand entity so that it can be used and manipulated. The theoretical awareness of entities, on the other hand, "is just looking, without circumspection" (*ibid*: 99 [69]). Furthermore, in circumspective awareness the ready-to-hand entity 'withdraws' (*zurückzuziehen*) from observation in such a manner that it is the use to which the entity is being used for that is attended to. "That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves. On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work" (*ibid*: 99 [69]). This is the 'towards-which' of the 'being' of the entity.

An entity's alternative mode of 'being' from readiness-to-hand is called presence-at-hand. The present-to-hand is an entity whose 'being' is occurrent. In the hammer example, its 'being' is present-to-hand if the Dasein encountering it does not recognise it in its existing referential totality of entities. This could be because hammers do not occur in that totality, or because the hammer is being theoretically analysed to establish its ontical characteristics. This is the familiar way of regarding 'being' prioritised by the ontological tradition. Heidegger uses this example to show the difference between experiencing 'natural' entities as ready-to-hand and experiencing them as present-at-hand.

The wood is a forest of timber, the mountain a quarry of rock; the river is water-powered, the wind is wind 'in the sails'. As the 'environment' is discovered, the 'Nature' thus discovered is encountered too. If its kind of Being as ready-to-hand is disregarded, this 'Nature' itself can be discovered and defined simply in its pure presence-at-hand. But when this happens, the Nature which 'stirs and strives', which assails as and enthralls us as



landscape, remains hidden. The botanist's plants are not the flowers of the hedgerow; the 'source' which the geographer establishes for a river is not the 'springhead in the dale'. (*ibid*: 100 [70])

Perceiving an entity, without it circumspectively withdrawing to be used and manipulated for work, or otherwise maintaining its role in the referential totality, is the cognitive comportment to an entity that is an intentional relation. In the hammer example, this way of 'being' enables the 'what-ness' of the hammer to be perceived. A present-at-hammer can be measured, weighed, or have its material composition analysed. As an occurrent entity, the hammer is decontextualised, it is made worldless in the ontological-existential sense. However, its context can be returned in the sense that the theoretical reflection on the hammer can lead to formal theories about the hammer being developed. The process of using the hammer can be reflected upon and described; the hammer as a worldless object can be assigned value predicates.

There is also a way of 'being' of intra-worldly entities like hammers that can be called unreadiness-to-hand. An unready-to-hand entity is one whose usability or role in the referential totality has become disturbed and has started to breakdown. The unready-to-hand entity has somehow become no longer ready-to-hand but is still understood within the referential totality of involvement and significance, and consequently its way of 'being' is not that of presence-at-hand either. The unready-to-hand entity is no longer circumspectively experienced, but it has not yet become an object detached from its world to be experienced through theoretical reflection. For example, an unready-to-hand hammer would be, in general, a hammer whose usability is impaired. The process of circumspective breakdown that leads to the unreadiness-to-hand of entities is phenomenologically very important. This is because it helps to reveal the underlying structure of the referential totality of intra-worldly entities. For example, when your pen runs out of ink its becomes unready-to-hand (in this case it would be *conspicuously* unready-to-hand, see below for details). The sudden unusability of the pen reveals the totality of assignments of intra-worldly entities required for writing, and their relational context. A more catastrophic example would be were one's house and home burns down in the night. In this example, the sheer scale of entities suddenly removed from the referential totality may bring the unfortunate Dasein's whole world into breakdown. This experience is captured in the existentiell proto-phenomenological phrase, uttered by someone in such a situation, that 'their world has fallen apart'. What this phrase captures is that there are situations which reveal the phenomenological architecture of Dasein's existence which are normally inconspicuous. Suddenly deprived of their house, many of the everyday activities of that Dasein's life become either impossible, impractical, or irrelevant. 'Rebuilding their

world', as such, becomes the central matter of that Dasein's concern. A similar phrase to 'my world has fallen apart' in this situation would be 'I just fell apart'. The phenomenological unity of being-in-the-world is consequently made apparent in this case of extreme breakdown of someone's referential totality, where the 'being' of Dasein and the 'being' of the world (worldhood) are inseparable.

However, as the broken pen example demonstrates, it does not need to be an extreme case of equipmental breakdown for the phenomenological visibility of being-in-the-world to be made manifest.

When equipment cannot be used, this implies that the constitutive assignment of the "in-order-to" to a "towards-this" has been disturbed. The assignments themselves are not observed; they are rather 'there' when we concernfully submit ourselves to them. But *when an assignment has been disturbed* – when something is unusable for some purpose – then the assignment becomes explicit....

Similarly, when something ready-to-hand is found missing, though its everyday presence [Zugegenheit] has been so obvious that we have never taken any notice of it, this makes a *break* in those referential contexts which circumspection discovers. Our circumspection comes up against emptiness, and now sees for the first time *what* the missing article was ready-to-hand *with*, and *what* it was ready-to-hand *for*. (*ibid*: 105 [74-75], emphasis as in original)

Consequently, by analysing the structure of the circumspective breakdown of entities into the mode of 'being' of unreadiness-to-hand, the underlying structure of the referential totality of involvement and significance becomes accessible for phenomenological inquiry. This inquiry reveals Dasein's concernful being-in-the-world. This is because concernful being-in-the-world "amounts to a non-thematic circumspective absorption in references or assignments constitutive for the readiness-to-hand of a totality of equipment" (*ibid*: 107 [76]). In *Being-in-the-World* Dreyfus provides an excellent analysis of the circumspective breakdown of unreadiness-to-hand, which he translates as 'unavailableness' (Dreyfus 1991: 70-83, 124-125). However, there is an interpretation in Dreyfus' account with which I disagree, and a critique of this disagreement will help with comprehending Heidegger's understanding of the unready-to-hand.

Heidegger identified three ways in which an entity can be unready-to-hand, which he called its modes (Heidegger 1962: 102-104 [72-74]). Heidegger calls the first manner of unreadiness-to-hand the 'conspicuous' mode (*ibid*: 102 [73]). A conspicuously unready-to-hand entity is not usable for its purpose, "not properly adapted for the use we have decided upon" (*ibid*: 102 [73]). Importantly, this unusability is not discovered by "looking at it and

establishing its properties, but rather by the circumspection of the dealings in which we use it” (*ibid*: 102 [73]). Our earlier example of a pen running out of ink is a case of conspicuous unreadiness-to-hand. The example that Dreyfus uses for this conspicuous mode of unreadiness-to-hand is when a hammer is found to be too heavy to be used, and he describes this as a malfunction of equipment (Dreyfus 1991: 71-72, 124). This is an accurate description and an excellent example, and one which Heidegger alludes to when describing an aspect of the structure of disclosedness in chapter five of *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1962: 200 [157]). The ‘being too heavy’ of a hammer, as Dreyfus points out (Dreyfus 1991: 77-78), is a relational understanding of the hammer from within the referential totality of significance and involvement. A hammer that is conspicuously unready-to-hand is not so because of its inherent ontical properties, which is how it would be understood if were experienced as the presence-at-hand of the ontological tradition. ‘Being too heavy’ is a context-dependent understanding of the hammer as not fit for purpose.

After the conspicuous mode, Heidegger identifies the ‘obtrusive’ mode of unreadiness-to-hand, which is where an entity required from within Dasein’s current involvement, is experienced as missing (Heidegger 1962: 103 [73]). A hammer is obtrusively unready-to-hand when you need to hammer a nail, but are unable to locate a hammer for the task. This mode of unreadiness-to-hand reveals to Dasein’s circumspective concern those elements of equipment that are not missing as “present-at-hand and no more, [and] which cannot be budged without the thing that is missing” (*ibid*: 103 [73]). When an entity from within the referential totality is obtrusively missing, the whole relational structure of what was previously ready-to-hand becomes apparent. The absence of a necessary part throws into stark relief the whole system of significance of entities; the deficiency in the system can then induce theoretical reflection which may lead into the understanding of entities in terms of presence-at-hand. Dreyfus calls this the permanent or total breakdown of the equipment (Dreyfus 1991: 79, 124). In our example of a house having burned down, the house would be described, initially, as obtrusively unready-to-hand. Over time, as the owner adapts their world ‘and moves on’, the destroyed house would take on new modes of ‘being’. In this example it is important to remember that ‘being’ is not an entity, and as such “it neither *is* nor *is not*” (Blattner 2006: 116, emphasis as in original). While the house as an entity has been destroyed, its changing mode of ‘being’, its ‘how-ness’, still exists within owner’s referential totality. It is the ‘significance’<sup>54</sup> of having the absent home that remains with Dasein’s concerned dealings with the world.

However, it is with regards to the interpretation of the third mode of unreadiness-to-

<sup>54</sup> ‘Significance’ is a technical term within this phenomenology, and will be described later in this section.

hand that I disagree with Dreyfus' description of Heidegger's phenomenological account. This mode is what Heidegger identified as the 'obstinate' mode of unreadiness-to-hand (Heidegger 1962: 103 [73-74]). This is where an entity is found somewhere that is out of place in a Dasein's referential totality. Dreyfus calls this the temporary breakdown of equipment (Dreyfus 1991: 72-79, 124), seemingly in order to emphasise that this mode of unreadiness-to-hand is in-between the malfunctioning of the conspicuous mode and total breakdown of the obtrusive mode. The example that Dreyfus uses to illustrate this obstinacy is when the head comes off the top of a hammer (*ibid*: 124). I do not agree with this 'in-between' interpretation of obstinate unreadiness-to-hand. For Heidegger, the obstinately unready-to-hand is something "which is *not* missing at all and *not* unusable, but which 'stands in our way' of our concern" (*ibid*: 103 [73], emphasis as in original). This is not a transitory mode between the conspicuous and the obtrusive, it is a unique manner of encountering an unready-to-hand entity. A hammer whose head has fallen off is conspicuously unready-to-hand if it can still be used to get the job done or the head can be put back on 'without too much fuss', or if in the tool box from which the first hammer was picked up there is another ready-to-hand hammer available. Alternatively, this headless hammer is obtrusively unready-to-hand if it means that the job of hammering down the nail can no longer be performed, and reflection on what has similar properties to hammers begins. However, an obstinately unready-to-hand entity is neither missing nor unusable, it is something that is getting in the way. This means that it is not the hammer that is being obstinate, but another entity in relation to the work of hammering.

For example, if you found that there was a venomous snake resting in the tool box you were reaching into for your hammer, then that snake would be obstinately unready-to-hand. "Anything which is un-ready-to-hand in this way is disturbing to us, and enables us to see the *obstinacy* of that which we must concern ourselves in the first instance before we do anything else" (*ibid*: 103 [74], emphasis as in original). An obstinately unready-to-hand entity is an obstacle to the current task, it is something that does not belong to the situation. With the snake example, it is clear how an entity can be neither ready-to-hand nor present-at-hand, but not conspicuously nor obtrusively unready-to-hand either. The snake does not reside within the referential totality of equipment, but neither does it become a present-at-hand object of theoretical properties. It is not conspicuously unready-to-hand because it is not that the snake is unusable, it is that it was never intended to be used in the first place, and it must be dealt with before circumspective coping with the original work can get going again. Nor is it obtrusively unready-to-hand, the snake would have this unreadiness-to-hand if it was missing

for someone. The snake, as an entity encountered by Dasein, is 'being' obstinately unready-to-hand. It is 'there', it should not be 'there', and it has to be dealt with. This unreadiness-to-hand of the snake assumes that the Dasein dealing with it has not incorporated encountering snakes as a matter of their everyday concern. A zoologist studying snakes in a jungle, and who has pitched up a tent in a region abundant in snakes, would encounter a snake resting amongst their tools in a quite different manner than we in our hammer's tool box example. While that zoologist's goal is ultimately to study the snake's ontical properties as something present-at-hand, it is the training and experience they (hopefully) have with dealing with snakes as entities ready-to-hand in their involvement with the world that enables the zoologist to go about this task. Such a zoologist would not deal with a snake amongst their tools as something obstinately unready-to-hand<sup>55</sup>.

In our earlier reference to Heidegger's example of 'Nature' being taken either present-at-hand or ready-to-hand, the structure of how the snake could potentially be ready-to-hand is apparent. The 'towards-which' of the zoologist is to learn the ontical properties of the snake, and in this manner the snake is modally present-at-hand. However, this 'being' of the snake is when the zoologist is cognitively encountering the snake. But the zoologist need not all the time be engaging in theoretical reflection about the snake. Assuming that the zoologist is familiar with snakes so that they are not encountered as obstinately unready-to-hand, then the zoologist's concernful dealing with – rather than concernful cognition about – snakes is as readiness-to-hand. By going about their work, keeping an appropriate distance from the snake, setting up the rest of their equipment for the task at hand, by circumspectively acknowledging the snake and dealing with it appropriately, by letting it 'withdraw', the snake becomes ready-to-hand. If the snake suddenly started behaving erratically, or became aggressive towards the zoologist's presence, then its 'being' would become conspicuously unready-to-hand. It would not no longer be circumspectively withdrawn, but the zoologist would still have to deal with as a matter of concern. This is assuming that the zoologist can deal with a snake behaving erratically. If not, then the zoologist's cognitive concern about why the snake is behaving in this way, and what to do about it, would make the snake's 'being' present-at-hand.

An important clarification is necessary at this point, which the case of considering a snake as a ready-to-hand entity provokes. The term that Heidegger introduced to describe what Dasein concernfully deals with is 'equipment' (*das Zeug*). While Heidegger's examples of the phenomenon of worldhood all involve simple everyday tools in the conventional sense,

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<sup>55</sup> However, if no snakes appeared at all then they would be obtrusively unready-to-hand to the unlucky zoologist.

such as the hammer, he is not claiming that worldhood can be reduced to the utility of making and using these tools. In his text on Heidegger and *Being and Time* Polt counters this misinterpretation:

Soon after the publication of *Being and Time*, he [Heidegger] had to protest, “It never occurred to me... to try and claim or prove... that the essence of man consists in the fact that he knows how to handle knives and forks and use the tram”. There are many human activities that are not the equivalent to using things in order to produce a useful result: for example, making a political decision, having a conversation with one’s spouse, playing the cello, exploring a glacier, or studying calculus. These activities can all *involve* using things, but they cannot be *reduced* to utility. (Polt 1999: 49-50, emphasis as in original)

The term ‘equipment’ is misleading, as it conveys the impression that the ready-to-hand entity has to be a helpful ‘device’. The translation of ‘*Zuhanden*’ as ‘ready-to-hand’ adds to this misinterpretation, in so far as the emphasis on ‘being’ ‘to-hand’ conveys the idea that it is an entity that is necessarily manipulable by actual hands. This is one reason why some translators refer to the ‘*Zuhanden*’ as the ‘available’. Blattner also argues that not all ready-to-hand entities can also be found as ‘being’ present-at-hand within the ontical world.

To see this it is best to move beyond the narrow compass of equipment or tools in the conventional sense. Heidegger focuses on equipment in §15, but in the course of his discussion he progressively broadens his scope to a wider range of entities ready-to-hand, including materials (§15), signs (§17), and what we can call paraphernalia in general (§18). This is a good thing, because for many of us tools in any ordinary sense of the term are not a dominant sort of entity in our lives. (Blattner 2006: 53)

‘Paraphernalia’ is a better term than ‘equipment’, but it still has connotations of general ‘things’ produced and used for production. A mountain can be ready-to-hand in a Dasein’s world<sup>56</sup>, but it is difficult to describe a mountain as either ‘paraphernalia’ or ‘equipment’.

‘Technology’ may be as good a term as any, in as far as it is understood in its Greek root

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<sup>56</sup> It is interesting to analyse the way in which a mountain can be understood as being ready-to-hand, as it helps to demonstrate the phenomenology of entities that are dealt with. One way in which a mountain might be ready-to-hand would be in an animistic religion. If we imagine this prototypical animistic religion, its belief structure might hold that a particular mountain was holy, on account of its spiritual force. Adherents to this religion would be socialised to a way of ‘being’ in which the mountain was not merely an ‘object’ of the landscape, in the sense of ‘being’ present-at-hand, but would rather deal with the mountain as an entity that could aid or hinder going about the task at hand. In their pre-conceptual going about their work, the adherents of this animistic religion would comport themselves to the mountain in such a way that the mountain helped achieve the tasks of the day. This would not be the same manner of comportment as an explicit act of worship of the mountain, though the two would be interrelated. However, this religious example is not the exclusive manner in which a mountain could be ready-to-hand. Another example could be one were a group of people lived on the mountain. In this example, these people would have a precognitive engagement with how to go about living on, and dealing with, the mountain. This engagement could include their kinaesthetic manner of walking about the mountain such as ‘knowing’ how and where to stand without risking injury. In these examples, the mountain is ready-to-hand because as an entity its ‘being’ was part of the referential totality of Dasein’s being-in-the-world.

meaning of 'techné', as a 'bringing forth'<sup>57</sup>. Following this possible translation of '*das Zeug*' as 'techné', these entities are understood as 'bringing forth' Dasein's world. This provides a useful indication that these entities, in their 'being', are not in the first instance related to in terms of a subject cognising objects. Rather, they are part of the referential totality of being-in-the-world.

The term 'intra-worldly' entities, which we have previously used to indicate 'equipmental' or 'technical' entities, is not entirely appropriate. It is not the case that these entities are inside or outside a world. Rather, these entities are part of the referential totality of world disclosure. It is through Dasein's constitution as being-in-the-world that ready-to-hand equipment, or techné, and present-at-hand objects are disclosed to Dasein. However, this should not be interpreted as stating that it is Dasein's world that discloses the 'being' of entities as either ready-to-hand, unready-to-hand, or present-at-hand. This formulation is challenged in Heidegger's later works such as *The Question Concerning Technology*, *Building Dwelling Thinking*, and *The Thing*, when he inverts the directionality of this linear interpretation, to show a view in which it is techné that discloses the world to Dasein. If being-in-the-world is a unified structure, then the 'being' of Dasein, the 'being' of worlds, and the 'being' of techné are co-emergent or equiprimordial, and one cannot be understood as giving rise to the others alone. Furthermore, because of this holistic interpretation of entities, it is not strictly accurate to describe *an* item of techné.

Taken strictly, there 'is' no such thing as *an* equipment [*das Zeug*]. To the Being of any equipment there always belongs a totality of equipment, in which it can be this equipment that it is. Equipment is essentially 'something in-order-to'. A totality of equipment is constituted by various ways of the 'in-order-to', such as serviceability, conduciveness, usability, manipulability. (Heidegger 1962: 97 [68], emphasis as in original)

That techné cannot be described as an individual piece of the technological apparatus is a

<sup>57</sup> The danger of this translation is that the dominant interpretation of 'technology' relates to that which is 'advanced', 'modern', or 'scientific'. There are two related phenomenological observations about this dominance, but it is important to differentiate the two before analysing their relatedness. First, is that the underlying ontological structure, or way of 'being', of technology as the disclosure of worlds does not alter depending on the relative scientific complexity of the item of technology. A modern bridge of corrugated and welded iron is no more 'technological', in this sense, than a felled tree used to cross a river. A word processing computer 'brings forth' the world in the same way as ink from a pen. The bridges and the inscription devices are not technological because they share a type of utility either. Rather, they are technological because they are part of a nexus of entities that are dealt with by Dasein, and in so doing disclose Dasein's world. This way of 'being' of the technological can be called 'techné'. The other observation is that it is nevertheless important that technological entities are commonly perceived in terms of a pre-scientific and scientific duality. That using a computer, for instance, may be understood by someone as using an item of technology, while using a fountain pen is not, demonstrates that the world for that person is disclosed in terms of an industrial-scientific worldview. This worldview privileges the complexity of production and use of modern items over against simpler or older 'tools'. Understanding this particular, dualist disclosure of the world is necessary as part of phenomenological destruction of technology, which is part of the wider phenomenological methodology that uncovers the ontology of technology. The phenomenological uncovering of the ontology of technology is its structure as 'techné', its 'bringing forth' of the world.

demonstration that its ‘being’ is not as the presence of a present-at-hand object. “*And here again, when the equipmental characters of the ready-to-hand are still circumspectively undiscovered, they are not to be Interpreted as bare Thinghood presented for an apprehension of what is just present-at-hand and no more*” (*ibid*: 112 [81], emphasis as in original). Rather, techné has the way of ‘being’ of readiness-to-hand. It is characterised by ‘being’ a holistic part of how Dasein circumspectively deals with the environment that involves it.

Ready-to-hand techné is characterised by the structure of Dasein’s ‘being’ involved with its world. “The ready-to-hand is always understood in terms of a totality of involvements” (*ibid*: 191 [150]). However, this is not the full constitution of readiness-to-hand. As Heidegger also states, it has been “indicated that the state which is constitutive for the ready-to-hand as equipment is one of reference or assignment” (*ibid*: 114 [83]). Ready-to-hand techné are collectively constituted by the referential totality of involvement and significance. This is the structure of how techné discloses the world, and how the world discloses techné. The term ‘referential’ is the translation of the German ‘*Verweisung*’. This can also be translated as assignment.

But what, then, is “reference” or “assignment” to mean? To say that the Being of the ready-to-hand has the structure of assignment or reference means that it has in itself the character of *having been assigned or referred* [*Verwiesenheit*]. An entity is discovered when it has been assigned or referred to something, and referred as that entity which it is. *With* any such entity there is an involvement which it has *in* something. The character of Being which belongs to the ready-to-hand is just such an *involvement*. If something has an involvement, this implies letting it be involved in something. The relationship of the “with... in...” shall be indicated by term “assignment” or “reference”. (*ibid*: 115 [83-84], emphasis as in original)

The referential totality is the web of non-thematic meaning that has been assigned to entities, and which is only meaningful as the totality. A rain hat is ready-to-hand when its circumspectively used by being placed on your head, it has been ‘assigned’ the role of keeping the head dry. But this assignment is only functional in terms of a variety of other assignments such as ‘rain’, ‘rain coat’, and so forth. The rain hat can also be cognitively known in isolation, but this is only as a present-at-hand object. Returning to our consistent example, the hammer can be known as an ontical existent, in terms of its form, material, weight, colour, and can have value predicates such as ‘a good hammer’. But as ready-to-hand techné, the hammer is meaningful only in a web of assignments such as nails, hammering, building, shelves, and houses, for example. The hammer, amidst its referential totality, is involved with the world.

As ready-to-hand techné, the referential totality of entities is constituted by Dasein’s



‘involvement’ (*Bewandtnis*) with the world. The structure of involvement is constituted by the totality of Dasein’s ‘directional’ engagement with its world. This totality includes Dasein’s ‘in-order-to’, its ‘towards-which’, and its ‘for-the-sake-of-which’. This ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ is constituted in the ecstatical temporality of Dasein’s existentiality, by its projecting into its potentiality for ‘being’.

In understanding a context of relations such as we have mentioned, Dasein has assigned itself to an “in-order-to” [Um-zu], and it has done so in terms of a potentiality-for-Being for the sake of which it itself is – one which it may have seized upon either explicitly or tacitly, and which may be either authentic or inauthentic. This “in-order-to” prescribes a “towards-this” as a possible “in-which” for letting something be involved; and the structure of letting it be involved implies that is an involvement which something *has* – an involvement which is *with* something. Dasein always assigns itself from a “for-the-sake-of-which” to the “with-which” of an involvement; that is to say, to the extent that it is, it always lets entities be encountered as ready-to-hand. (*ibid*: 119 [86], emphasis as in original)

Through this structure of the referential totality of involvement, techné’s disclosure of the world and the world’s disclosure of techné, has been shown to be primordially constituted by Dasein existential temporality. The understanding of ready-to-hand techné is disclosed by Dasein’s ecstatical projecting into its future, and, as we have already shown in section 3.3, this projecting into the future is equiprimordial with Dasein’s disposedness to its inherited thrownness. The thrown disclosure of techné is its ‘significance’ (*Bedeutsamkeit*). Significance is the thrown totality of the referential structure of involvement.

These relationships are bound up with one another as a primordial totality; they are what they are as this signifying [Be-deuten] in which Dasein gives itself beforehand its Being-in-the-world as something to be understood. The relational totality of this signifying we call “*significance*”. This is what makes the structure of the world – the structure of that wherein Dasein as such already is. (*ibid*: 120 [87], emphasis as in original)

Consequently, because the ready-to-hand is constituted by the referential totality of involvement and significance, it has been phenomenologically uncovered that the ‘being’ of technology, techné, is constituted by the ecstatical temporal-historical unity of Dasein as being-in-the-world. The ontology of technology, its ‘how-ness’, is temporality. Techné discloses Dasein’s circumspective concern with the world, an ontological-existential world which is ‘there’. This ‘there-ness’ of the world’s disclosure is constituted by Dasein’s disposedness, understanding, and discourse. Dasein is in this world with others, it is constituted in its ‘who-ness’ as ‘being-with’ others in a ‘with-world’. The average Dasein understands its everyday world as ‘they’ understand the world. These structures are unified

in Dasein as being-in-the-world, by how Dasein temporally cares, authentically or inauthentically, about its existence.

## Epilogue

A traditional conclusion is not appropriate for this thesis. It has not been designed as a posing of a hypothesis that is then scrutinised through the available evidence in order to either verify or refute it. Heidegger also makes this point in his epilogue to *The Thing*, a reply to a letter sent to him by a student of this essay. In this epilogue, titled *A Letter to a Young Student*, Heidegger explains why he cannot prove anything which he said about ‘being’.

I can provide no credentials for what I have said – which, indeed, you do not ask of me – that would permit a convenient check in each case whether what I say agrees with “reality.”

Everything here is the path of a responding that examines as it listens. Any path always risks going astray, leading astray. To follow such paths takes practice in going. Practice needs craft. Stay on the path, in genuine need, and learn the craft of thinking, unswerving, yet erring. (Heidegger 1971b: 184)

This ending to Heidegger’s reply is both a note of encouragement to the eponymous young student, and a defence of Heidegger’s own method and subject of investigation. The piece is taken from Heidegger’s later period, and as such is more poetic than his earlier work. However, in this instance the poetic quality found in the second paragraph is appropriate for what Heidegger is describing. Having stated that the subject matter of his investigation, ‘being’, cannot by its character be checked and proved in the manner of the natural sciences, Heidegger then describes how the method for his investigation is also not fixed in ‘reality’. Rather, the investigation is an act of following paths that may hopefully lead to an understanding of ‘being’. Furthermore, following these paths is a craft, something to be worked at and improved over time.

This thesis has not taken the path of attempting to prove what hermeneutical phenomenology describes about ‘being’. Phenomenology is not an art or a science that attempts to prove anything. Rather, its goal is to clarify and explain what belongs to the ‘being’ of the structures, systems, entities, and modalities of the world. This is true of both Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology. For example, before a scientific account of the ontical causality of consciousness is attempted, the phenomenology of consciousness seeks to describe what consciousness ‘is’. It is to be preferred when studying what gives rise to something, to be able to explain what is being studied. It would be difficult to say what gives rise to consciousness, without first being able say ‘what’ consciousness ‘is’. In this sense, phenomenology is a necessary propaedeutic to conventional ontical investigation, a ‘queen of all the sciences’ to allude to Kant’s description of metaphysics. Yet as we have seen Heidegger argue, understanding ‘something’, in its ‘being’, cannot be reduced to its ‘what-ness’. While this ontical quiddity, ‘what-ness’, does constitute an element of the required

description of an entity, this description is fundamentally flawed if this is the only ontological character of ‘being’ uncovered by the phenomenological method. Consequently, one path that has been followed in this thesis is to attempt to show what is constituted in the ‘being’ of an entity other than its ‘what-ness’. This path began by providing a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology, to show how and why ‘being’ became understood as ‘what is’ in the ancient Greek philosophy of the pre-Socratics<sup>58</sup>, Plato, and Aristotle. This understanding of ‘being’ as the present ‘what’ was also shown to have diverged into two different branches. One branch was called the ‘classical realist’ understanding of ‘being’, while the alternative branch was called the ‘noetic idealist’ understanding of ‘being’. However, despite some scholarly interpretations to the contrary, it was found that both these branches of ‘what-ness’ ontology shared a basic foundation upon a subject-object model of understanding. The ontology of knowing, or cognition, was shown to be predicated upon the relationship between the subject-knower ‘what’ and the object-known ‘what’. This ontology of reflexive consciousness was shown to have been contingent upon the introduction and adoption of new information technologies, particularly in the shift from the technology of orality to the technology of literacy. The investigative path then progressed by stepping through the various stages of Heidegger’s thought about the ontology of ‘how-ness’ and proceeded to interpret his phenomenology through a close exegesis of his texts, with the dominant focus being on his *magnum opus*, the text of *Being and Time*. While this path leads through Heidegger’s thought, the arrangement of the interpretation has been my own. Furthermore, I have throughout this exercise supplemented Heidegger’s ontology with my own phenomenological examples, and I have provided additional material for comparing Heidegger’s thought with that of other scholars and philosophers such as Sartre, and in particular Husserl.

This hermeneutical endeavour of the thesis has been characterised by a recursive structure. As I have progressed through considering phenomenology via the exegesis of Heidegger’s work, I have frequently introduced phenomena that relate to ‘being’ in a preliminary fashion. This preliminary understanding of the phenomena has been continuously revised in the light of a progressive understanding of the unified structure of being-in-the-world. An improved understanding of one region that constitutes this totality, has necessarily improved the understanding of other regions in terms of how they relate to the greater whole. This recursive development of the themes of the thesis has mirrored Heidegger’s own system from *Being and Time*. As with Heidegger’s effort, my recursive analysis is also incomplete. While a progressive understanding of ‘being’ has been uncovered, it is not possible to provide

<sup>58</sup> With the arguable exception of Heraclitus.

a final analysis about 'being'. 'Being' is fundamentally temporal-historical, 'being' is unified with the 'being-no-longer' and the 'being-not-yet', and this means that 'being' is constituted by the capacity to change. The contingency of 'being', not only characterises Dasein's existentiality, it also characterises all possible existential analytics of 'being' that are pursued through the hermeneutical phenomenological method.

Nevertheless, while addressing the question of 'being' is an open ended endeavour, this does not excuse not attempting to address it all. Passing over the question of 'being' was the mistake of the philosophical tradition up until Heidegger systematically re-presented it in *Being and Time*. The analysis of this text's strength is not that it succeeds in answering the question of 'being', which is an ongoing process. Rather, its strength is that it succeeds in asking the question of 'being'. It then provides a hermeneutical phenomenological way to proceed with the question of 'being'. Heidegger finishes *Being and Time* with his own reflections on this matter.

One must seek a *way* of casting light on the fundamental question of ontology, and this is the way one must *go*. Whether this is the *only* way or even the right one at all, can be decided only *after one has gone along it*. The conflict of the Interpretation of Being cannot be allayed, *because it has not yet been enkindled*. And in the end this is not the kind of conflict one can 'bluster into'; it is of the kind which cannot get enkindled unless preparations are made for it. Towards this alone the foregoing investigation is *on the way*. (Heidegger 1962: 487-488 [437], emphasis as in original)

I would submit, in the spirit of this statement by Heidegger, that my thesis, which I tentatively entitled *A hermeneutics of the ontology of time and technology*, be regarded as an exercise 'on the way' to furthering the understanding of 'being' in terms of how it is disclosed by structures such as temporality-historicity, technology, 'being-with' others, and worldhood. Consequently, this thesis should be of wide interdisciplinary interest, including those with a concern for ontology, hermeneutics, phenomenology, existentialism, technology, cultural studies, information theory, and theories of personal and collective identity. Moving beyond this thesis is the task of analysing the contributions to ontology and hermeneutic phenomenology from scholars who have written after Heidegger, and a particular research project that needs to be developed is an examination of Heidegger's influence on these contributors.

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