

Horizons of Identity – A Work in Progress

Introduction

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Each dasein is a ontologically a society constantly changing actors and interpreters. Logos as "gathering what lies before into thought and speech". The 'Invental' is the self-gathering of the different actors and interpreters into an authentic "count as one" capable of acting resolutely and effectively in a given situation.

We reckon time as "moments", rather than counting on hours, minutes or days, because the timespan of the invental is the moment, however short or long that may be in linear time. The invental always involves or utilizes ideology as a structuring mechanism.

Background

Existential Philosophy and Existentialism - Badiou's Theory of the Event - Lacan's Interpretations of Psychoanalysis

Existential Philosophy

"Sartre's existentialism drew its immediate inspiration from the work of the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger. Heidegger's 1927 *Being and Time*, an inquiry into the "being that we ourselves are" (which he termed "Dasein," a German word for existence), introduced most of the motifs that would characterize later existentialist thinking: the tension between the individual and the "public"; an emphasis on the worldly or "situated" character of human thought and reason; a fascination with liminal experiences of anxiety, death, the "nothing" and nihilism; the rejection of science (and above all, causal explanation) as an adequate framework for understanding human being; and the introduction of "authenticity" as the norm of self-identity, tied to the project of self-definition through freedom, choice, and commitment. Though in 1946 Heidegger would repudiate the retrospective labelling of his earlier work as existentialism, it is in that work that the relevant concept of existence finds its first systematic philosophical formulation.

As Sartre and Merleau-Ponty would later do, Heidegger pursued these issues with the somewhat unlikely resources of Edmund Husserl's phenomenological method. And while not all existential philosophers were influenced by phenomenology (for instance Jaspers and Marcel), the philosophical legacy of existentialism is largely tied to the form it took as an existential version of phenomenology. Husserl's efforts in the first decades of the twentieth century had been directed toward establishing a descriptive science of consciousness, by which he understood not the object of the natural science of psychology but the "transcendental" field of intentionality, i.e., that whereby our experience is meaningful, an experience of something as something. The existentialists welcomed Husserl's doctrine of intentionality as a refutation of the Cartesian view according to which consciousness relates immediately only to its own representations, ideas, sensations. According to Husserl, consciousness is our direct openness to the world, one that is governed categorially (normatively) rather than causally; that is, intentionality is not a property of the individual mind but the categorial framework in which mind and world become intelligible. A phenomenology of consciousness, then, explores neither the metaphysical composition nor the causal genesis of things, but the "constitution" of their meaning. Husserl employed this method to

clarify our experience of nature, the socio-cultural world, logic, and mathematics, but Heidegger argued that he had failed to raise the most fundamental question, that of the “meaning of being” as such. In turning phenomenology toward the question of what it means to be, Heidegger insists that the question be raised concretely: it is not at first some academic exercise but a burning concern arising from life itself, the question of what it means for me to be. Existential themes take on salience when one sees that the general question of the meaning of being involves first becoming clear about one's own being as an inquirer. According to Heidegger, the categories bequeathed by the philosophical tradition for understanding a being who can question his or her being are insufficient: traditional concepts of a substance decked out with reason, or of a subject blessed with self-consciousness, misconstrue our fundamental character as “being-in-the-world.” In his phenomenological pursuit of the categories that govern being-in-the-world, Heidegger became the reluctant father of existentialism because he drew inspiration from two seminal, though in academic circles then relatively unknown, nineteenth-century writers, Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche. One can find anticipations of existential thought in many places (for instance, in Socratic irony, Augustine, Pascal, or the late Schelling), but the roots of the problem of existence in its contemporary significance lie in the work of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche.

1.1 Kierkegaard: “The Single Individual”

Kierkegaard developed this problem in the context of his radical approach to Christian faith; Nietzsche did so in light of his thesis of the death of God. Subsequent existential thought reflects this difference: while some writers—such as Sartre and Beauvoir,—were resolutely atheist in outlook, others—such as Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel, and Buber—variously explored the implications of the concept “authentic existence” for religious consciousness. Though neither Nietzsche's nor Kierkegaard's thought can be reduced to a single strand, both took an interest in what Kierkegaard termed “the single individual.” Both were convinced that this singularity, what is most my own, “me,” could be meaningfully reflected upon while yet, precisely because of its singularity, remaining invisible to traditional philosophy, with its emphasis either on what follows unerring objective laws of nature or else conforms to the universal standards of moral reason. A focus on existence thus led, in both, to unique textual strategies quite alien to the philosophy of their time—and ours.

In Kierkegaard, the singularity of existence comes to light at the moment of conflict between ethics and religious faith. Suppose it is my sense of doing God's will that makes my life meaningful. How does philosophy conceive this meaning? Drawing here on Hegel as emblematic of the entire tradition, Kierkegaard, in his book *Fear and Trembling*, argues that for philosophy my life becomes meaningful when I “raise myself to the universal” by bringing my immediate (natural) desires and inclinations under the moral law, which represents my “telos” or what I ought to be. In doing so I lose my individuality (since the law holds for all) but my actions become meaningful in the sense of understandable, governed by a norm. Now a person whose sense of doing God's will is what gives her life meaning will be intelligible just to the extent that her action conforms to the universal dictates of ethics. But what if, as in case of Abraham's sacrifice of his son, the action contradicts what ethics demands? Kierkegaard[3] believes both that Abraham's life is supremely meaningful (it is not simply a matter of some immediate desire or meaningless tic that overcomes Abraham's ethical consciousness; on the contrary, doing the moral thing is itself in this case his tempting inclination) and that philosophy cannot understand it, thus condemning it in the name of ethics. God's command here cannot be seen as a law that would pertain to all; it addresses Abraham in his singularity. If Abraham's life is meaningful, it represents, from a philosophical point of view, the “paradox” that through faith the “single individual is higher than the universal.” Existence as a

philosophical problem appears at this point: if there is a dimension to my being that is both meaningful and yet not governed by the rational standard of morality, by what standard is it governed? For unless there is some standard it is idle to speak of “meaning.”

To solve this problem there must be a norm inherent in singularity itself, and, in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard tries to express such a norm in his claim that “subjectivity is the truth,” an idea that prefigures the existential concept of authenticity. Abraham has no objective reason to think that the command he hears comes from God; indeed, based on the content of the command he has every reason, as Kant pointed out in *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, to think that it cannot come from God. His sole justification is what Kierkegaard calls the passion of faith. Such faith is, rationally speaking, absurd, a “leap,” so if there is to be any talk of truth here it is a standard that measures not the content of Abraham's act, but the way in which he accomplishes it. To perform the movement of faith “subjectively” is to embrace the paradox as normative for me in spite of its absurdity, rather than to seek an escape from it by means of objective textual exegesis, historical criticism, or some other strategy for translating the singularity of my situation into the universal. Because my reason cannot help here, the normative appropriation is a function of my “inwardness” or passion. In this way I “truly” become what I nominally already am. To say that subjectivity is the truth is to highlight a way of being, then, and not a mode of knowing; truth measures the attitude (“passion”) with which I appropriate, or make my own, an “objective uncertainty” (the voice of God) in a “process of highest inwardness.”

In contrast to the singularity of this movement, for Kierkegaard, stands the crowd: “the crowd is untruth.” The crowd is, roughly, public opinion in the widest sense—the ideas that a given age takes for granted; the ordinary and accepted way of doing things; the complacent attitude that comes from the conformity necessary for social life—and what condemns it to “untruth” in Kierkegaard's eyes is the way that it insinuates itself into an individual's own sense of who she is, relieving her of the burden of being herself: if everyone is a Christian there is no need for me to “become” one. Since it is a measure not of knowing but of being, one can see how Kierkegaard answers those who object that his concept of subjectivity as truth is based on an equivocation: the objective truths of science and history, however well-established, are in themselves matters of indifference; they belong to the crowd. It is not insofar as truth can be established objectively that it takes on meaning, but rather insofar as it is appropriated “passionately” in its very uncertainty. To “exist” is always to be confronted with this question of meaning. The truths that matter to who one is cannot, like Descartes' *morale definitif*, be something to be attained only when objective science has completed its task.

1.2 Nietzsche and Nihilism

For Kierkegaard existence emerges as a philosophical problem in the struggle to think the paradoxical presence of God; for Nietzsche it is found in the reverberations of the phrase “God is dead,” in the challenge of nihilism.

Responding in part to the cultural situation in nineteenth-century Europe—historical scholarship continuing to erode fundamentalist readings of the Bible, the growing cultural capital of the natural sciences, and Darwinism in particular—and in part driven by his own investigations into the psychology and history of moral concepts, Nietzsche sought to draw the consequences of the death of God, the collapse of any theistic support for morality. Like his contemporary, Fyodor Dostoevsky, whose character, Ivan, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, famously argues that if God does not exist then everything is permitted, Nietzsche's overriding concern is to find a way to take the measure of human life in the modern world. Unlike Dostoevsky, however, Nietzsche sees a complicity between morality and the Christian God that perpetuates a life-denying, and so

ultimately nihilistic, stance. Nietzsche was not the first to de-couple morality from its divine sanction; psychological theories of the moral sentiments, developed since the eighteenth century, provided a purely human account of moral normativity. But while these earlier theories had been offered as justifications of the normative force of morality, Nietzsche's idea that behind moral prescriptions lies nothing but "will to power" undermined that authority. On the account given in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, the Judeo-Christian moral order arose as an expression of the resentment of the weak against the power exercised over them by the strong. A tool used to thwart that power, it had over time become internalized in the form of conscience, creating a "sick" animal whose will is at war with its own vital instincts. Thus Nietzsche arrived at Kierkegaard's idea that "the crowd is untruth": the so-called autonomous, self-legislating individual is nothing but a herd animal that has trained itself to docility and unfreedom by conforming to the "universal" standards of morality. The normative is nothing but the normal.

Yet this is not the end of the story for Nietzsche, any more than it was for Kierkegaard. If the autonomous individual has so far signified nothing but herd mentality—if moral norms arose precisely to produce such conformists—the individual nevertheless has the potential to become something else, the sick animal is "pregnant with a future." Nietzsche saw that in the nineteenth century the "highest values" had begun to "devalue themselves." For instance, the Christian value of truth-telling, institutionalized in the form of science, had undermined the belief in God, disenchanting the world and excluding from it any pre-given moral meaning. In such a situation the individual is forced back upon himself. On the one hand, if he is weakly constituted he may fall victim to despair in the face of nihilism, the recognition that life has no intrinsic meaning. On the other hand, for a "strong" or creative individual nihilism presents a liberating opportunity to take responsibility for meaning, to exercise creativity by "transvaluing" her values, establishing a new "order of rank." Through his prophet, Zarathustra, Nietzsche imagined such a person as the "overman" (*Übermensch*), the one who teaches "the meaning of the earth" and has no need of otherworldly supports for the values he embodies. The overman represents a form of life, a mode of existence, that is to blossom from the communalized, moralized "last man" of the nineteenth century. He has understood that nihilism is the ultimate meaning of the moral point of view, its life-denying essence, and he reconfigures the moral idea of autonomy so as to release the life-affirming potential within it.

Thus, for Nietzsche, existence emerges as a philosophical problem in his distinction between moral autonomy (as obedience to the moral law) and an autonomy "beyond good and evil." But if one is to speak of autonomy, meaning, and value at all, the mode of being beyond good and evil cannot simply be a lawless state of arbitrary and impulsive behavior. If such existence is to be thinkable there must be a standard by which success or failure can be measured. Nietzsche variously indicates such a standard in his references to "health," "strength," and "the meaning of the earth." Perhaps his most instructive indication, however, comes from aesthetics, since its concept of style, as elaborated in *The Gay Science*, provides a norm appropriate to the singularity of existence. To say that a work of art has style is to invoke a standard for judging it, but one that cannot be specified in the form of a general law of which the work would be a mere instance. Rather, in a curious way, the norm is internal to the work. For Nietzsche, existence falls under such an imperative of style: to create meaning and value in a world from which all transcendent supports have fallen away is to give unique shape to one's immediate inclinations, drives, and passions; to interpret, prune, and enhance according to a unifying sensibility, a ruling instinct, that brings everything into a whole that satisfies the non-conceptual, aesthetic norm of what fits, what belongs, what is appropriate.

As did Kierkegaard, then, Nietzsche uncovers an aspect of my being that can be understood neither in terms of immediate drives and inclinations nor in terms of a universal law of behavior, an aspect that is measured not in terms of an objective inventory of what I am but in terms of my way of

being it. Neither Kierkegaard nor Nietzsche, however, developed this insight in a fully systematic way. That would be left to their twentieth-century heirs.

2. “Existence Precedes Essence”

Sartre's slogan—“existence precedes essence”—may serve to introduce what is most distinctive of existentialism, namely, the idea that no general, non-formal account of what it means to be human can be given, since that meaning is decided in and through existing itself. Existence is “self-making-in-a-situation” (Fackenheim 1961:37). In contrast to other entities, whose essential properties are fixed by the kind of entities they are, what is essential to a human being—what makes her who she is—is not fixed by her type but by what she makes of herself, who she becomes.[4] The fundamental contribution of existential thought lies in the idea that one's identity is constituted neither by nature nor by culture, since to “exist” is precisely to constitute such an identity. It is in light of this idea that key existential notions such as facticity, transcendence (project), alienation, and authenticity must be understood.

At first, it seems hard to understand how one can say much about existence as such. Traditionally, philosophers have connected the concept of existence with that of essence in such a way that the former signifies merely the instantiation of the latter. If “essence” designates what a thing is and “existence” that it is, it follows that what is intelligible about any given thing, what can be thought about it, will belong to its essence. It is from essence in this sense—say, human being as rational animal or *imago Dei*—that ancient philosophy drew its prescriptions for an individual's way of life, its estimation of the meaning and value of existence. Having an essence meant that human beings could be placed within a larger whole, a *kosmos*, that provided the standard for human flourishing. Modern philosophy retained this framework even as it abandoned the idea of a “natural place” for man in the face of the scientific picture of an infinite, labyrinthine universe. In what looks like a proto-existential move, Descartes rejected the traditional essential definitions of man in favor of a radical, first-person reflection on his own existence, the “I am.” Nevertheless, he quickly reinstated the old model by characterizing his existence as that of a substance determined by an essential property, “thinking.” In contrast, Heidegger proposes that “I” am “an entity whose what [essence] is precisely to be and nothing but to be” (Heidegger 1985:110; 1962:67). Such an entity's existing cannot, therefore, be thought as the instantiation of an essence, and consequently what it means to be such an entity cannot be determined by appeal to pre-given frameworks or systems—whether scientific, historical, or philosophical

2.1 Facticity and Transcendence

Of course, there is a sense in which human beings do instantiate essences, as Heidegger's phrase already admits.[5] But what matters for existential thought is the manner of such instantiation, the way of existing. What this means can be seen by contrasting human existence with the modes of being Heidegger terms the “available” (or “ready-to-hand,” *zuhanden*) and the “occurrent” (or “present-at-hand,” *vorhanden*). Entities of the first sort, exemplified by tools as they present themselves in use, are defined by the social practices in which they are employed, and their properties are established in relation to the norms of those practices. A saw is sharp, for instance, in relation to what counts as successful cutting. Entities of the second sort, exemplified by objects of perceptual contemplation or scientific investigation, are defined by the norms governing perceptual givenness or scientific theory-construction. An available or occurrent entity instantiates some property if that property is truly predicated of it. Human beings can be considered in this way as well. However, in contrast to the previous cases, the fact that natural and social properties can truly be predicated of human beings is not sufficient to determine what it is for me to be a human being.

This, the existentialists argue, is because such properties are never merely brute determinations of who I am but are always in question. Who I am depends on what I make of my “properties”; they matter to me in a way that is impossible for merely available and occurrent entities. As Heidegger puts it, existence is “care” (Sorge): to exist is not simply to be, but to be an issue for oneself. In Sartre's terms, while other entities exist “in themselves” (en soi) and “are what they are,” human reality is also “for itself” (pour soi) and thus is not exhausted by any of its determinations. It is what it is not and is not what it is (Sartre 1992:112).

Human existence, then, cannot be thought through categories appropriate to things: substance, event, process. There is something of an internal distinction in existence that undermines such attempts, a distinction that existential philosophers try to capture in the categories of “facticity” and “transcendence.” To be is to co-ordinate these opposed moments in some way, and who I am, my essence, is nothing but my manner of co-ordinating them. In this sense human beings make themselves in situation: what I am cannot be separated from what I take myself to be. In Charles Taylor's phrase, human beings are “self-interpreting animals” (Taylor 1985:45), where the interpretation is constitutive of the interpreter. If such a view is not to collapse into contradiction the notions of facticity and transcendence must be elucidated. Risking some oversimplification, they can be approached as the correlates of the two attitudes I can take toward myself: the attitude of third-person theoretical observer and the attitude of first-person practical agent.

Facticity includes all those properties that third-person investigation can establish about me: natural properties such as weight, height, and skin color; social facts such as race, class, and nationality; psychological properties such as my web of belief, desires, and character traits; historical facts such as my past actions, my family background, and my broader historical milieu; and so on.[6] I am not originally aware of my facticity in this third-person way; rather, it is manifest in my moods as a kind of burden, the weight of “having to be.” However, I can adopt a third-person or objectifying stance toward my own being, and then these aspects of my facticity may appear precisely as that which defines or determines who I am. From an existential point of view, however, this would be an error—not because these aspects of my being are not real or factual, but because the kind of being that I am cannot be defined in factual, or third-person, terms. These elements of facticity cannot be said to belong to me in the way that the color of an apple belongs to the apple, for as belonging to me, as “determining” me, they have always already been interpreted by me. Though third-person observation can identify skin color, class, or ethnicity, the minute it seeks to identify them as mine it must contend with the distinctive character of the existence I possess. There is no sense in which facticity is both mine and merely a matter of fact, since my existence—the kind of being I am—is also defined by the stance I take toward my facticity. This is what existential philosophers call “transcendence.”

Transcendence refers to that attitude toward myself characteristic of my practical engagement in the world, the agent's perspective. An agent is oriented by the task at hand as something to be brought about through its own will or agency. Such orientation does not take itself as a theme but loses itself in what is to be done. Thereby, things present themselves not as indifferent givens, facts, but as meaningful: salient, expedient, obstructive, and so on. To speak of “transcendence” here is to indicate that the agent “goes beyond” what simply is toward what can be: the factual—including the agent's own properties—always emerges in light of the possible, where the possible is not a function of anonymous forces (third-person or logical possibility) but a function of the agent's choice and decision. Just as this suddenly empty pen is either a nettlesome impediment to my finishing this article, or a welcome occasion for doing something else, depending on how I determine my behavior in relation to it, so too my own factic properties—such as irascibility, laziness, or bourgeois workaholicism—take on meaning (become functioning reasons) on the basis of how I endorse or disavow them in the present action.

Existentialists tend to describe the perspective of engaged agency in terms of “choice,” and they are sometimes criticized for this. It may be—the argument runs—that I can be said to choose a course of action at the conclusion of a process of deliberation, but there seems to be no choice involved when, in the heat of the moment, I toss the useless pen aside in frustration. Can its being useless be traced back to my “choice” to be frustrated? But the point in using such language is simply to insist that in the first-person perspective of agency I cannot conceive myself as determined by anything that is available to me only in third-person terms. Behind the existentialist's insistence that facticity and transcendence remain irreducible aspects of one and the same being is the insight that, for a being who can say “I,” the third-person perspective on who one is has no more authority than the first-person (agent's) perspective.

Because existence is co-constituted by facticity and transcendence, the self cannot be conceived as a Cartesian ego but is embodied being-in-the-world, a self-making in situation. It is through transcendence—or what the existentialists also refer to as my “projects”—that the world is revealed, takes on meaning; but such projects are themselves factic or “situated”—not the product of some antecedently constituted “person” or intelligible character but embedded in a world that is decidedly not my representation. Because my projects are who I am in the mode of engaged agency (and not like plans that I merely represent to myself in reflective deliberation), the world in a certain sense reveals to me who I am. For reasons to be explored in the next section, the meaning of my choice is not always transparent to me. Nevertheless, because it necessarily reveals the world in a certain way, that meaning, my own “identity,” can be discovered by what Sartre calls “existential psychoanalysis.” By understanding an individual's patterns of behavior—that is, by reconstructing the meaningful world that such behavior reveals—one can uncover the “fundamental project” or basic choice of oneself that gives distinctive shape to an individual life. Sartre's view represents a kind of compromise between the first- and third-person perspectives: like the latter, it objectifies the person and treats its open-ended practical horizons as in a certain sense closed; like the former, however, it seeks to understand the choices from the inside, to grasp the identity of the individual as a matter of the first-person meaning that haunts him, rather than as a function of inert psychic mechanisms with which the individual has no acquaintance.

2.2 Alienation

The anti-Cartesian view of the self as in situation yields the familiar existential theme of the “alienated” self, the estrangement of the self both from the world and from itself. In the first place, though it is through my projects that world takes on meaning, the world itself is not brought into being through my projects; it retains its otherness and thus can come forth as utterly alien, as *unheimlich*. Sometimes translated as “uncanny,” this Heideggerian word's stem (*Heim*, “home”) points, instead, to the strangeness of a world in which I precisely do not feel “at home.” (see the section on The Ideality of Values below). This experience, basic to existential thought, contrasts most sharply with the ancient notion of a *kosmos* in which human beings have a well-ordered place, and it connects existential thought tightly to the modern experience of a meaningless universe. In the second place, the world includes other people, and as a consequence I am not merely the revealer of the world but something revealed in the projects of those others. Thus who I am is not merely a function of my own projects, but is also a matter of my “being-for-others.” Sartre (1992:340-58) brings out this form of alienation in his famous analysis of “the Look.” So long as I am engaged unreflectively in a certain practice I am nothing but that first-person perspective which constitutes things as having a distinctive salience in light of what I am doing. I am absorbed in the world and do not experience myself as having an “outside”; that is, I do not understand my action through some third-person description, as an instance of some general behavior. However, when I

become aware of being looked at (that is, when my subjectivity is invaded by the subjectivity of another for whom I am merely part of the world, an item for her projects), I become aware of having a “nature,” a “character,” of being or doing something. I am not merely looking through a keyhole; I am a voyeur. I cannot originally experience myself as something—a voyeur, for instance; it is the other who gives rise to this mode of my being, a mode that I acknowledge as mine (and not merely the other's opinion of me) in the shame in which I register it. It is because there are others in the world that I can take a third-person perspective on myself; but this reveals the extent to which I am alienated from a dimension of my being: who I am in an objective sense can be originally revealed only by the Other. This has implications for existential social theory (see the section on Sartre: Existentialism and Marxism below).

Finally, the self-understanding, or project, thanks to which the world is there for me in a meaningful way, already belongs to that world, derives from it, from the tradition or society in which I find myself. Though it is “me,” it is not me “as my own.” My very engagement in the world alienates me from my authentic possibility. This theme is brought out most clearly by Heidegger: the anti-Cartesian idea that the self is defined first of all by its practical engagement entails that this self is not properly individual but rather indistinguishable from anyone else (*das Man*) who engages in such practices: such a “they-self” does what “one” does. The idea is something like this: Practices can allow things to show up as meaningful—as hammers, dollar bills, or artworks—because practices involve aims that carry with them norms, satisfaction conditions, for what shows up in them. But norms and rules, as Wittgenstein has shown, are essentially public, and that means that when I engage in practices I must be essentially interchangeable with anyone else who does: I eat as one eats; I drive as one drives; I even protest as one protests. To the extent that my activity is to be an instance of such a practice, I must do it in the normal way. Deviations can be recognized as deviations only against this norm, and if they deviate too far they can't be recognized at all. Thus, if who I am is defined through existing, this “who” is normally pre-defined by what is average, by the roles available to me in my culture, and so on. The “I” that gets defined is thereby “anonymous,” or “anyone”; self-making is largely a function of not distinguishing myself from others.

If there is nevertheless good sense in talking of the singularity of my existence, it will not be something with which one starts but something that gets achieved in recovering oneself from alienation or lostness in the “crowd.” If the normative is first of all the normal, however, it might seem that talk about a norm for the singularity of existence, a standard for thinking about what is my ownmost just as I myself, would be incoherent. It is here that the idea of “authenticity” must come into focus.

2.3 Authenticity

By what standard are we to think our efforts “to be,” our manner of being a self? If such standards traditionally derive from the essence that a particular thing instantiates—this hammer is a good one if it instantiates what a hammer is supposed to be—and if there is nothing that a human being is, by its essence, supposed to be, can the meaning of existence at all be thought? Existentialism arises with the collapse of the idea that philosophy can provide substantive norms for existing, ones that specify particular ways of life. Nevertheless, there remains the distinction between what I do “as” myself and as “anyone,” so in this sense existing is something at which I can succeed or fail. Authenticity—in German, *Eigentlichkeit*—names that attitude in which I engage in my projects as my own (*eigen*).

What this means can perhaps be brought out by considering moral evaluations. In keeping my promise I act in accord with duty; and if I keep it because it is my duty, I also act morally (according to Kant) because I am acting for the sake of duty. But existentially there is still a further

evaluation to be made. My moral act is inauthentic if, in keeping my promise for the sake of duty, I do so because that is what “one” does (what “moral people” do). But I can do the same thing authentically if, in keeping my promise for the sake of duty, acting this way is something I choose as my own, something to which, apart from its social sanction, I commit myself. Similarly, doing the right thing from a fixed and stable character—which virtue ethics considers a condition of the good—is not beyond the reach of existential evaluation: such character may simply be a product of my tendency to “do what one does,” including feeling “the right way” about things and betaking myself in appropriate ways as one is expected to do. But such character might also be a reflection of my choice of myself, a commitment I make to be a person of this sort. In both cases I have succeeded in being good; only in the latter case, however, have I succeeded in being myself. Thus the norm of authenticity refers to a kind of “transparency” with regard to my situation, a recognition that I am a being who can be responsible for who I am. In choosing in light of this norm I can be said to recover myself from alienation, from my absorption in the anonymous “one-self” that characterizes me in my everyday engagement in the world. Authenticity thus indicates a certain kind of integrity—not that of a pre-given whole, an identity waiting to be discovered, but that of a project to which I can either commit myself (and thus “become” what it entails) or else simply occupy for a time, inauthentically drifting in and out of various affairs. Some writers have taken this notion a step further, arguing that the measure of an authentic life lies in the integrity of a narrative, that to be a self is to constitute a story in which a kind of wholeness prevails, to be the author of oneself as a unique individual (Nehamas 1998; Ricoeur 1992). In contrast, the inauthentic life would be one without such integrity, one in which I allow my life-story to be dictated by the world. Be that as it may, it is clear that one can commit oneself to a life of chameleon-like variety, as does Don Juan in Kierkegaard's version of the legend. Even interpreted narratively, then, the norm of authenticity remains a formal one. As with Kierkegaard's Knight of Faith, one cannot tell who is authentic by looking at the content of their lives.

Authenticity defines a condition on self-making: do I succeed in making myself, or will who I am merely be a function of the roles I find myself in? Thus to be authentic can also be thought as a way of being autonomous. In choosing “resolutely”—that is, in committing myself to a certain course of action, a certain way of being in the world—I have given myself the rule that belongs to the role I come to adopt. The inauthentic person, in contrast, merely occupies such a role, and may do so “irresolutely,” without commitment. Being a father authentically does not necessarily make me a better father, but what it means to be a father has become explicitly my concern. It is here that existentialism locates the singularity of existence and identifies what is irreducible in the first-person stance. At the same time, authenticity does not hold out some specific way of life as a norm; that is, it does not distinguish between the projects that I might choose. Instead, it governs the manner in which I am engaged in such projects—either as “my own” or as “what one does,” transparently or opaquely.

Thus existentialism's focus on authenticity leads to a distinctive stance toward ethics and value-theory generally. The possibility of authenticity is a mark of my freedom, and it is through freedom that existentialism approaches questions of value, leading to many of its most recognizable doctrines.

3. Freedom and Value

Existentialism did not develop much in the way of a normative ethics; however, a certain approach to the theory of value and to moral psychology, deriving from the idea of existence as self-making in situation, are distinctive marks of the existentialist tradition. In value theory, existentialists tend to emphasize the conventionality or groundlessness of values, their “ideality,” the fact that they

arise entirely through the projects of human beings against the background of an otherwise meaningless and indifferent world. Existential moral psychology emphasizes human freedom and focuses on the sources of mendacity, self-deception, and hypocrisy in moral consciousness. The familiar existential themes of anxiety, nothingness, and the absurd must be understood in this context. At the same time, there is deep concern to foster an authentic stance toward the human, groundless, values without which no project is possible, a concern that gets expressed in the notions of “engagement” and “commitment.”

3.1 Anxiety, Nothingness, the Absurd

As a predicate of existence, the concept of freedom is not initially established on the basis of arguments against determinism; nor is it, in Kantian fashion, taken simply as a given of practical self-consciousness. Rather, it is located in the breakdown of direct practical activity. The “evidence” of freedom is a matter neither of theoretical nor of practical consciousness but arises from the self-understanding that accompanies a certain mood into which I may fall, namely, anxiety (*Angst*, *angoisse*). Both Heidegger and Sartre believe that phenomenological analysis of the kind of intentionality that belongs to moods does not merely register a passing modification of the psyche but reveals fundamental aspects of the self. Fear, for instance, reveals some region of the world as threatening, some element in it as a threat, and myself as vulnerable. In anxiety, as in fear, I grasp myself as threatened or as vulnerable; but unlike fear, anxiety has no direct object, there is nothing in the world that is threatening. This is because anxiety pulls me altogether out of the circuit of those projects thanks to which things are there for me in meaningful ways; I can no longer “gear into” the world. And with this collapse of my practical immersion in roles and projects, I also lose the basic sense of who I am that is provided by these roles. In thus robbing me of the possibility of practical self-identification, anxiety teaches me that I do not coincide with anything that I factually am. Further, since the identity bound up with such roles and practices is always typical and public, the collapse of this identity reveals an ultimately first-personal aspect of myself that is irreducible to *das Man*. As Heidegger puts it, anxiety testifies to a kind of “existential solipsism.” It is this reluctant, because disorienting and dispossessing, retreat into myself in anxiety that yields the existential figure of the outsider, the isolated one who “sees through” the phoniness of those who, unaware of what the breakdown of anxiety portends, live their lives complacently identifying with their roles as though these roles thoroughly defined them. While this sort of stance may be easy to ridicule as adolescent self-absorption, it is also solidly supported by the phenomenology (or moral psychology) of first-person experience.

The experience of anxiety also yields the existential theme of the absurd, a version of what was previously introduced as alienation from the world (see the section on Alienation above). So long as I am gearing into the world practically, in a seamless and absorbed way, things present themselves as meaningfully co-ordinated with the projects in which I am engaged; they show me the face that is relevant to what I am doing. But the connection between these meanings and my projects is not itself something that I experience. Rather, the hammer's usefulness, its value as a hammer, appears simply to belong to it in the same way that its weight or color does. So long as I am practically engaged, in short, all things appear to have reasons for being, and I, correlatively, experience myself as fully at home in the world. The world has an order that is largely transparent to me (even its mysteries are grasped simply as something for which there are reasons that are there “for others,” for “experts,” merely beyond my limited horizon). In the mood of anxiety, however, it is just this character that fades from the world. Because I am no longer practically engaged, the meaning that had previously inhabited the thing as the density of its being now stares back at me as a mere name, as something I “know” but which no longer claims me. As when one repeats a word until it loses

meaning, anxiety undermines the taken-for-granted sense of things. They become absurd. Things do not disappear, but all that remains of them is the blank recognition that they are—an experience that informs a central scene in Sartre's novel *Nausea*. As Roquentin sits in a park, the root of a tree loses its character of familiarity until he is overcome by nausea at its utterly alien character, its being *en soi*. While such an experience is no more genuine than my practical, engaged experience of a world of meaning, it is no less genuine either. An existential account of meaning and value must recognize both possibilities (and their intermediaries). To do so is to acknowledge a certain absurdity to existence: though reason and value have a foothold in the world (they are not, after all, my arbitrary invention), they nevertheless lack any ultimate foundation. Values are not intrinsic to being, and at some point reasons give out.

Another term for the groundlessness of the world of meaning is “nothingness.” Heidegger introduced this term to indicate the kind of self- and world-understanding that emerges in anxiety: because my practical identity is constituted by the practices I engage in, when these collapse I “am” not anything. In a manner of speaking I am thus brought face-to-face with my own finitude, my “death” as the possibility in which I am no longer able to be anything. This experience of my own death, or “nothingness,” in anxiety can act as a spur to authenticity: I come to see that I “am” not anything but must “make myself be” through my choice. In committing myself in the face of death—that is, aware of the nothingness of my identity if not supported by me right up to the end—the roles that I have hitherto thoughtlessly engaged in as one does now become something that I myself own up to, become responsible for. Heidegger termed this mode of self-awareness—awareness of the ultimate nothingness of my practical identity—“freedom,” and Sartre developed this existential concept of freedom in rich detail. This is not to say that Heidegger's and Sartre's views on freedom are identical. Heidegger, for instance, will emphasize that freedom is always “thrown” into an historical situation from which it draws its possibilities, while Sartre (who is equally aware of the “facticity” of our choices) will emphasize that such “possibilities” nevertheless underdetermine choice. But the theory of radical freedom that Sartre develops is nevertheless directly rooted in Heidegger's account of the nothingness of my practical identity.

Sartre (1992:70) argues that anxiety provides a lucid experience of that freedom which, though often concealed, characterizes human existence as such. For him, freedom is the dislocation of consciousness from its object, the fundamental “nihilation” or negation by means of which consciousness can grasp its object without losing itself in it: to be conscious of something is to be conscious of not being it, a “not” that arises in the very structure of consciousness as being-for-itself. Because “nothingness” (or nihilation) is just what consciousness is, there can be no objects in consciousness, but only objects for consciousness.[16] This means that consciousness is radically free, since its structure precludes that it either contain or be acted on by things. For instance, because it is not thing-like, consciousness is free with regard to its own prior states. Motives, instincts, psychic forces, and the like cannot be understood as inhabitants of consciousness that might infect freedom from within, inducing one to act in ways for which one is not responsible; rather, they can exist only for consciousness as matters of choice. I must either reject their claims or avow them. For Sartre, the ontological freedom of existence entails that determinism is an excuse before it is a theory: though through its structure of nihilation consciousness escapes that which would define it—including its own past choices and behavior—there are times when I may wish to deny my freedom. Thus I may attempt to constitute these aspects of my being as objective “forces” which hold sway over me in the manner of relations between things. This is to adopt the third-person stance on myself, in which what is originally structured in terms of freedom appears as a causal property of myself. I can try to look upon myself as the Other does, but as an excuse this flight from freedom is shown to fail, according to Sartre, in the experience of anguish. For instance, Sartre writes of a gambler who, after losing all and fearing for himself and his family,

retreats to the reflective behavior of resolving never to gamble again. This motive thus enters into his facticity as a choice he has made; and, as long as he retains his fear, his living sense of himself as being threatened, it may appear to him that this resolve actually has causal force in keeping him from gambling. However, one evening he confronts the gaming tables and is overcome with anguish at the recognition that his resolve, while still “there,” retains none of its power: it is an object for consciousness but is not (and never could have been) something in consciousness that was determining his actions. In order for it to influence his behavior he has to avow it afresh, but this is just what he cannot do; indeed, just this is what he hoped the original resolve would spare him from having to do. He will have to “remake” the self who was in the original situation of fear and threat. At this point, perhaps, he will try to relieve himself of freedom by giving in to the urge to gamble and chalking it up to “deeper” motives that overcame the initial resolve, problems from his childhood perhaps. But anguish can recur with regard to this strategy as well—for instance, if he needs a loan to continue gambling and must convince someone that he is “as good as his word.” The possibilities for self-deception in such cases are endless.

As Sartre points out in great detail, anguish, as the consciousness of freedom, is not something that human beings welcome; rather, we seek stability, identity, and adopt the language of freedom only when it suits us: those acts are considered by me to be my free acts which exactly match the self I want others to take me to be. We are “condemned to be free,” which means that we can never simply be who we are but are separated from ourselves by the nothingness of having perpetually to re-choose, or re-commit, ourselves to what we do. Characteristic of the existentialist outlook is the idea that we spend much of lives devising strategies for denying or evading the anguish of freedom. One of these strategies is “bad faith.” Another is the appeal to values.

3.2 The Ideality of Values

The idea that freedom is the origin of value—where freedom is defined not in terms of acting rationally (Kant) but rather existentially, as choice and transcendence—is the idea perhaps most closely associated with existentialism. So influential was this general outlook on value that Karl-Otto Apel (1973:235) came to speak of a kind of “official complementarity of existentialism and scientism” in Western philosophy, according to which what can be justified rationally falls under the “value-free objectivism of science” while all other validity claims become matters for an “existential subjectivism of religious faith and ethical decisions.” Positivism attempted to provide a theory of “cognitive meaning” based on what it took to be the inner logic of scientific thought, and it relegated questions of value to cognitive meaninglessness, reducing them to issues of emotive response and subjective preference. While it does not explain evaluative language solely as a function of affective attitudes, existential thought, like positivism, denies that values can be grounded in being—that is, that they can become the theme of a scientific investigation capable of distinguishing true (or valid) from false values. In this regard Sartre speaks of the “ideality” of values, by which he means not that they have some sort of timeless validity but that they have no real authority and cannot be used to underwrite or justify my behavior. For Sartre, “values derive their meaning from an original projection of myself which stands as my choice of myself in the world.” But if that is so, then I cannot, without circularity, appeal to values in order to justify this very choice: “I make my decision concerning them—without justification and without excuse” (Sartre 1992:78). This so-called “decisionism” has been a hotly contested legacy of existentialism and deserves a closer look here.

How is it that values are supposed to be grounded in freedom? By “value” Sartre means those aspects of my experience that do not merely causally effectuate something but rather make a claim on me: I do not just see the homeless person but encounter him as “to be helped”; I do not just hear

the other's voice but register "a question to be answered honestly"; I do not simply happen to sit quietly in Church but "attend reverently"; I do not merely hear the alarm clock but am "summoned to get up." Values, then, as Sartre writes, appear with the character of demands and as such they "lay claim to a foundation" or justification (Sartre 1992:76). Why ought I help the homeless, answer honestly, sit reverently, or get up? Sartre does not claim that there is no answer to these questions but only that the answer depends, finally, on my choice of "myself" which cannot in turn be justified by appeal to a value. As he puts it, "value derives its being from its exigency and not its exigency from its being." The exigency of value cannot be grounded in being itself, since it would thereby lose its character as an ought; it would "cease even to be value" since it would have the kind of exigency (contrary to freedom) possessed by a mere cause. Thus, against then-current value-theoretical intuitionism, Sartre denies that value can "deliver itself to a contemplative intuition which would apprehend it as being value and thereby would derive from it its right over my freedom." Instead, "it can be revealed only to an active freedom which makes it exist as a value by the sole fact of recognizing it as such" (Sartre 1992:76).

For instance, I do not grasp the exigency of the alarm clock (its character as a demand) in a kind of disinterested perception but only in the very act of responding to it, of getting up. If I fail to get up the alarm has, to that very extent, lost its exigency. Why must I get up? At this point I may attempt to justify its demand by appeal to other elements of the situation with which the alarm is bound up: I must get up because I must go to work. From this point of view the alarm's demand appears—and is—justified, and such justification will often suffice to get me going again. But the question of the foundation of value has simply been displaced: now it is my job that, in my active engagement, takes on the unquestioned exigency of a demand or value. But it too derives its being as a value from its exigency—that is, from my unreflective engagement in the overall practice of going to work. Ought I go to work? Why not be "irresponsible"? If a man's got to eat, why not rather take up a life of crime? If these questions have answers that are themselves exigent it can only be because, at a still deeper level, I am engaged as having chosen myself as a person of a certain sort: respectable, responsible. From within that choice there is an answer of what I ought to do, but outside that choice there is none—why should I be respectable, law-abiding?—for it is only because some choice has been made that anything at all can appear as compelling, as making a claim on me. Only if I am at some level engaged do values (and so justification in terms of them) appear at all. The more I pull out of engagement toward reflection on and questioning of my situation, the more I am threatened by ethical anguish—"which is the recognition of the ideality of values" (Sartre 1992:76). And, as with all anguish, I do not escape this situation by discovering the true order of values but by plunging back into action. If the idea that values are without foundation in being can be understood as a form of nihilism, the existential response to this condition of the modern world is to point out that meaning, value, is not first of all a matter of contemplative theory but a consequence of engagement and commitment.

Thus value judgments can be justified, but only relative to some concrete and specific project. The "pattern of behavior" of the typical bourgeois defines the meaning of "respectability" (Sartre 1992:77), and so it is true of some particular bit of behavior that it is either respectable or not. For this reason I can be in error about what I ought to do. It may be that something that appears exigent during the course of my unreflective engagement in the world is something that I ought not to give in to. If, thanks to my commitment to the Resistance, a given official appears to me as to be shot, I might nevertheless be wrong to shoot him—if, for instance, the official was not who I thought he was, or if killing him would in fact prove counter-productive given my longer-term goals. Sartre's fictional works are full of explorations of moral psychology of this sort. But I cannot extend these "hypothetical" justifications to a point where some purely theoretical consideration of my obligations—whether derived from the will of God, from Reason, or from the situation itself—

could underwrite my freedom in such a way as to relieve it of responsibility. For in order for such considerations to count I would have to make myself the sort of person for whom God's will, abstract Reason, or the current situation is decisive. For existentialists like Sartre, then, I am “the one who finally makes values exist in order to determine [my] actions by their demands.” Commitment—or “engagement”—is thus ultimately the basis for an authentically meaningful life, that is, one that answers to the existential condition of being human and does not flee that condition by appeal to an abstract system of reason or divine will. Yet though I alone can commit myself to some way of life, some project, I am never alone when I do so; nor do I do so in a social, historical, or political vacuum. If transcendence represents my radical freedom to define myself, facticity—that other aspect of my being—represents the situated character of this self-making. Because freedom as transcendence undermines the idea of a stable, timeless system of moral norms, it is little wonder that existential philosophers devoted scant energy to questions of normative moral theory. However, because this freedom is always socially (and thereby historically) situated, it is equally unsurprising that their writings are greatly concerned with how our choices and commitments are concretely contextualized in terms of political struggles and historical reality.

4. Politics, History, Engagement

For the existentialists engagement is the source of meaning and value; in choosing myself I in a certain sense make my world. On the other hand, I always choose myself in a context where there are others doing the same thing, and in a world that has always already been there. In short, my acting is situated, both socially and historically. Thus, in choosing myself in the first-person singular, I am also choosing in such a way that a first-person plural, a “we,” is simultaneously constituted. Such choices make up the domain of social reality: they fit into a pre-determined context of roles and practices that go largely unquestioned and may be thought of as a kind of collective identity. In social action my identity takes shape against a background (the collective identity of the social formation) that remains fixed. On the other hand, it can happen that my choice puts this social formation or collective identity itself into question: who I am to be is thus inseparable from the question of who we are to be. Here the first-person plural is itself the issue, and the action that results from such choices constitutes the field of the political.

If authenticity is the category by which I am able to think about what it means to “exist,” then, the account of authenticity cannot neglect the social, historical, and political aspects of that existence. Thus it is not merely because twentieth-century existentialism flourished at a time when European history appeared to collapse and political affairs loomed especially large that existential philosophers devoted much attention to these matters; rather, the demand for an account of the “situation” stems from the very character of existence itself, which, unlike the classical “rational subject,” is what it is only in relation to its “time.” This is not to say, however, that existential philosophers are unanimous in their account of the importance of historical factors or in their estimation of the political in relation to other aspects of existence. Emmanuel Levinas, for example, whose early work belonged within the orbit of existential philosophy, opposed to the “horizontal” temporality of political history a “vertical” or eschatological temporality that radically challenged all historical meaning, while Sartre, in contrast, produced a version of Marxist historical materialism in which existentialism itself became a mere “ideology.” But we cannot stop to examine all such differences here. Instead, we shall look at the positions of Heidegger and Sartre, who provide opposing examples of how an authentic relation to history and politics can be understood.

4.1 Heidegger: History as Claim

For Heidegger, to exist is to be historical. This does not mean that one simply finds oneself at a particular moment in history, conceived as a linear series of events. Rather, it means that selfhood has a peculiar temporal structure that is the origin of that “history” which subsequently comes to be narrated in terms of a series of events. Existential temporality is not a sequence of instants but instead a unified structure in which the “future” (that is, the possibility aimed at in my project) recollects the “past” (that is, what no longer needs to be done, the completed) so as to give meaning to the “present” (that is, the things that take on significance in light of what currently needs doing). To act, therefore, is, in Heidegger’s terms, to “historize” (*geschehen*), to constitute something like a narrative unity, with beginning, middle, and end, that does not so much take place in time as provides the condition for linear time. To exist “between birth and death,” then, is not merely to be present in each of a discrete series of temporal instants but to constitute oneself in the unity of a history, and authentic existence is thus one in which the projects that give shape to existence are ones to which I commit myself in light of this history. Though it belongs to, and defines, a “moment,” choice cannot be simply “of the moment”; to be authentic I must understand my choice in light of the potential wholeness of my existence.

That this choice has a political dimension stems from the fact that existence is always being-with-others. Though authenticity arises on the basis of my being alienated, in anxiety, from the claims made by norms belonging to the everyday life of *das Man*, any concrete commitment that I make in the movement to recover myself will enlist those norms in two ways. First, what I commit myself to will always be derived from some “possibility of *Dasein* that has been there” (Heidegger 1962:438): I cannot make my identity from whole cloth; I will always understand myself in terms of some way of existing that has been handed down within my tradition.[19] I “choose my hero” (Heidegger 1962:437) by, for instance, committing myself to a philosophical life, which I understand on the model of Socrates, or to a religious life, which I understand on the model of St. Francis. The point is that I must understand myself in terms of something, and these possibilities for understanding come from the historical heritage and the norms that belong to it. Heidegger thinks of this historical dimension as a kind of “fate” (*Schicksal*): not something inevitable that controls my choice but something that, inherited from my historical situation, claims me, holds a kind of authority for me. The second way in which the everyday norms of *das Man* are enlisted in authentic choice stems from the fact that when I commit myself to my “fate” I do so “in and with my ‘generation’” (Heidegger 1962:436). The idea here seems roughly to be this: To opt for a way of going on is to affirm the norms that belong to it; and because of the nature of normativity (rules) it is not possible to affirm norms that would hold only for me. There is a kind of publicity and scope in the normative such that, when I choose, I establish a standard for others as well. Similarly, Heidegger holds that the sociality of my historizing restricts what can be a genuine “fate” or choice for me. Acting is always with others—more specifically, with a “community” or a “people” (*Volk*)—and together this “co-historizing” responds to a “destiny” (*Geschick*) which has guided our fates in advance (Heidegger 1962:436). Not everything is really possible for us, and an authentic choice must strive to respond to the claim that history makes on the people to whom one belongs, to seize its “destiny.” Along this communitarian axis, then, existential historicity can open out onto the question of politics: who are “we” to be?

Heidegger suggests that it was this concept of historicity that underwrote his own concrete political engagement during the period of National Socialism in Germany. Disgusted with the political situation in Weimar Germany and characterizing it as especially irresolute or inauthentic, Heidegger looked upon Hitler’s movement as a way of recalling the German people back to their “ownmost” possibility—i.e., a way for Germany to constitute itself authentically as an alternative to the political models of Russia and the United States. Heidegger’s choice to intervene in university

politics at this time was thus both a choice of himself—in which he chose his hero: Plato's “philosopher-king” (see Arendt 1978)—and a choice for his “generation.” Much is controversial about Heidegger's engagement for National Socialism (not least whether he drew the appropriate consequences from his own concept of authenticity), but it provides a clear example of a kind of existential politics that depends on an ability to “tell time”—that is, to sense the imperatives of one's factic historical situation. Heidegger later became very suspicious of this sort of existential politics. Indeed, for the idea of authenticity as resolute commitment he substituted the idea of a “letting-be” (*Gelassenheit*) and for engagement the stance of “waiting.” He came to believe that the problems that face us (notably, the dominance of technological ways of thinking) have roots that lie deeper than can be addressed through politics directly. He thus famously denied that democracy was sufficient to deal with the political crisis posed by technology, asserting that “only a god can save us” (Heidegger 1981:55, 57). But even here, in keeping with the existential notion of historicity, Heidegger's recommendations turn on a reading of history, of the meaning of our time.

4.2 Sartre: Existentialism and Marxism

A very different reading, and a very different recommendation, can be found in the work of Sartre. The basis for Sartre's reading of history, and his politics, was laid in that section of *Being and Nothingness* that describes the birth of the social in the “Look” of the other. In making me an object for his projects, the other alienates me from myself, displaces me from the subject position (the position from which the world is defined in its meaning and value) and constitutes me as something. Concretely, what I am constituted “as” is a function of the other's project and not something that I can make myself be. I am constituted as a “Frenchman” in and through the hostility emanating from that German; I am constituted as a “man” in the resentment of that woman; I am constituted as a “Jew” on the basis of the other's anti-semitism; and so on. This sets up a dimension of my being that I can neither control nor disavow, and my only recourse is to wrench myself away from the other in an attempt to restore myself to the subject-position. For this reason, on Sartre's model, social reality is in perpetual conflict—an Hegelian dialectic in which, for ontological reasons, no state of mutual recognition can ever be achieved. The “we”—the political subject—is always contested, conflicted, unstable.

But this instability does have a certain structure, one which Sartre, steeped in the Marxism of inter-war French thought (Alexandre Kojève, Jean Hyppolite), explored in terms of a certain historical materialism. For social relations take place not only between human beings but also within institutions that have developed historically and that enshrine relations of power and domination. Thus the struggle for who will take the subject position is not carried out on equal terms. As Simone de Beauvoir demonstrated in detail in her book, *The Second Sex*, the historical and institutional place of women is defined in such a way that they are consigned to a kind of permanent “object” status—they are the “second” sex since social norms are defined in male terms. This being so, a woman's struggle to develop self-defining projects is constrained by a permanent institutional “Look” that already defines her as “woman,” whereas a man need not operate under constraints of gender: he feels himself to be simply “human,” pure subjectivity. Employing similar insights in reflection on the situations of ethnic and economic oppression, Sartre sought a way to derive political imperatives in the face of the groundlessness of moral values entailed by his view of the ideality of values.

At first, Sartre argued that there was one value—namely freedom itself—that did have a kind of universal authority. To commit oneself to anything is also always to commit oneself to the value of freedom. In “Existentialism is a Humanism” Sartre tried to establish this by way of a kind of transcendental argument, but he soon gave up that strategy and pursued the more modest one of

claiming that the writer must always engage “on the side of freedom.” According to the theory of “engaged literature” expounded in *What is Literature?*, in creating a literary world the author is always acting either to imagine paths toward overcoming concrete unfreedoms such as racism and capitalist exploitation, or else closing them off. In the latter case, he is contradicting himself, since the very idea of writing presupposes the freedom of the reader, and that means, in principle, the whole of the reading public. Whatever the merits of this argument, it does suggest the political value to which Sartre remained committed throughout his life: the value of freedom as self-making. This commitment finally led Sartre to hold that existentialism itself was only an “ideological” moment within Marxism, which he termed “the one philosophy of our time which we cannot go beyond” (Sartre 1968:xxxiv). As this statement suggests, Sartre’s embrace of Marxism was a function of his sense of history as the factic situation in which the project of self-making takes place. Because existing is self-making (action), philosophy—including existential philosophy—cannot be understood as a disinterested theorizing about timeless essences but is always already a form of engagement, a diagnosis of the past and a projection of norms appropriate to a different future in light of which the present takes on significance. It therefore always arises from the historical-political situation and is a way of intervening in it. Marxism, like existentialism, makes this necessarily practical orientation of philosophy explicit.

From the beginning existentialism saw itself in this activist way (and this provided the basis for the most serious disagreements among French existentialists such as Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Camus, many of which were fought out in the pages of the journal founded by Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, *Les Temps modernes*). But the later Sartre came to hold that a philosophy of self-making could not content itself with highlighting the situation of individual choice; an authentic political identity could only emerge from a theory that situated such choice in a practically oriented analysis of its concrete situation. Thus it appeared to him that the “ideology of existence” was itself merely an alienated form of the deeper analysis of social and historical reality provided by Marx’s dialectical approach. In focusing on the most important aspects of the material condition in which the existential project of self-making takes place—namely, economic relations under conditions of scarcity—Marx’s critique of capital offered a set of considerations that no “philosophy of freedom” could ignore, considerations that would serve to orient political engagement until such time as “there will exist for everyone a margin of real freedom beyond the production of life” (Sartre 1968:34). Marxism is unsurpassable, therefore, because it is the most lucid theory of our alienated situation of concrete unfreedom, oriented toward the practical-political overcoming of that unfreedom.

Sartre’s relation to orthodox Marxism was marked by tension, however, since he held that existing Marxism had abandoned the promise of its dialectical approach to social reality in favor of a dogmatic “apriorism” that subsumed historical reality under a blanket of lifeless abstractions. He thus undertook his *Critique of Dialectical Reason* to restore the promise of Marxism by reconceiving its concept of praxis in terms of the existential notion of project. What had become a rigid economic determinism would be restored to dialectical fluidity by recalling the existential doctrine of self-making: it is true that man is “made” by history, but at the same time he is making that very history. This attempt to “reconquer man within Marxism” (Sartre 1968:83)—i.e., to develop a method which would preserve the concrete details of human reality as lived experience—was not well received by orthodox Marxists. Sartre’s fascination with the details of Flaubert’s life, or the life of Baudelaire, smacked too much of “bourgeois idealism.” But we see here how Sartre’s politics, like Heidegger’s, derived from his concept of history: there are no “iron-clad laws” that make the overthrow of capitalism the inevitable outcome of economic forces; there are only men in situation who make history as they are made by it. Dialectical materialism is the unsurpassable philosophy of those who choose, who commit themselves to, the value of freedom. The political

claim that Marxism has on us, then, would rest upon the ideological enclave within it: authentic existence as choice.

Authentic existence thus has an historical, political dimension; all choice will be attentive to history in the sense of contextualizing itself in some temporally narrative understanding of its place. But even here it must be admitted that what makes existence authentic is not the “correctness” of the narrative understanding it adopts. Authenticity does not depend on some particular substantive view of history, some particular theory or empirical story. From this point of view, the substantive “histories” adopted by existential thinkers as different as Heidegger and Sartre should perhaps be read less as scientific accounts, defensible in third-person terms, than as articulations of the historical situation from the perspective of what that situation is taken to demand, given the engaged commitment of their authors. They stand, in other words, less as justifications for their authors' existential and political commitments than as themselves a form of politics: invitations to others to see things as the author sees them, so that the author's commitment to going on a certain way will come to be shared.

5. Existentialism Today

As a cultural movement, existentialism belongs to the past. As a philosophical inquiry that introduced a new norm, authenticity, for understanding what it means to be human—a norm tied to distinctive, post-Cartesian concept of the self as practical, embodied, being-in-the-world—existentialism has continued to play an important role in contemporary thought, in both the continental and analytic traditions. The Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, as well as societies devoted to Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Jaspers, Beauvoir, and other existential philosophers, provide a forum for ongoing work—both of a historical, scholarly nature and of more systematic focus—that derives from classical existentialism, often bringing it into confrontation with more recent movements such as structuralism, deconstruction, hermeneutics, and feminism. In the area of gender studies Judith Butler (1990) draws importantly on existential sources, as does Lewis Gordon (1995) in the area of race theory. Interest in a narrative conception of self-identity—for instance, in the work of Charles Taylor (1999), Paul Ricoeur, David Carr (1986), or Charles Guignon—has its roots in the existential revision of Hegelian notions of temporality and its critique of rationalism. Hubert Dreyfus (1979) developed an influential criticism of the Artificial Intelligence program drawing essentially upon the existentialist idea, found especially in Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, that the human world, the world of meaning, must be understood first of all as a function of our embodied practices and cannot be represented as a logically structured system of representations. Calling for a “new existentialism,” John Haugeland (1998) has explored the role of existential commitment in scientific practices as truth-tracking practices. In a series of books, Michael Gelven (1990, 1997) has reflected upon the distinctions between existential, moral, and epistemological or logical dimensions of experience, showing how the standards appropriate to each intertwine, without reducing to any single one. A revival of interest in moral psychology finds many writers who are taking up the question of self-identity and responsibility in ways that recall the existential themes of self-making and choice—for instance, Christine Korsgaard (1996) appeals crucially to notions of “self-creation” and “practical identity”; Richard Moran (2001) emphasizes the connection between self-avowal and the first-person perspective in a way that derives in part from Sartre; and Thomas Nagel has followed the existentialist line in connecting meaning to the consciousness of death. Even if such writers tend to proceed with more confidence in the touchstone of rationality than did the classical existentialists, their work operates on the terrain opened up by the earlier thinkers. In addition, after years of being out of fashion in France, existential motifs have once again become prominent in the work of

leading thinkers. Foucault's embrace of a certain concept of freedom, and his exploration of the "care of the self," recall debates within existentialism, as does Derrida's recent work on religion without God and his reflections on the concepts of death, choice, and responsibility. In very different ways, the books by Cooper (1999) and Alan Schrift (1995) suggest that a re-appraisal of the legacy of existentialism is an important agenda item of contemporary philosophy."

1.1.1 Bad Faith (self-deception and resentment)

Bad faith

A critical claim in existentialist thought is that individuals are always free to make choices and guide their lives towards their own chosen goal or "project". The claim holds that individuals cannot escape this freedom, even in overwhelming circumstances. For instance, even an empire's colonized victims possess choices: to submit to rule; to negotiate; to act in complicity; to resist nonviolently; or to counter-attack.

Although circumstances may limit individuals (facticity), they cannot force persons as radically free beings to follow one course over another. For this reason, individuals choose in anguish: they know that they must make a choice, and that it will have consequences. For Sartre, to claim that one amongst many conscious possibilities takes undeniable precedence (for instance, "I cannot risk my life, because I must support my family") is to assume the role of an object in the world, merely at the mercy of circumstance—a being-in-itself that is only its own facticity.

Intentional Consciousness and Freedom

For Sartre this attitude is manifestly self-deceiving. As human consciousness, we are always aware that we are not whatever we are aware of. We cannot, in this sense, be defined as our 'intentional objects' of consciousness, including our facticity of personal history, character, bodies, or objective responsibility. Thus, as Sartre often repeated, "Human reality is what it is not, and it is not what it is." An example would be if one were now a doctor but wished and started to "transcend" to become a pig farmer. One is what one is not—a pig farmer—not who one is—a doctor): it can only define itself negatively, as "what it is not"; but this negation is simultaneously the only positive definition it can make of "what it is."

From this we are aware of a host of alternative reactions to our objective situation (i.e., of freedom) since no situation can dictate a single response. Only in assuming social roles and value systems external to this nature as conscious beings can we pretend that these possibilities are denied to us; but this is itself a decision made possible by our freedom and our separation from these things. It is this paradoxical free decision to deny to ourselves this inescapable freedom which is "bad faith."

Sartre's Examples

Sartre cites a café waiter, whose movements and conversation are a little too "waiter-esque". His voice oozes with an eagerness to please; he carries food rigidly and ostentatiously. His exaggerated behaviour illustrates that he is play acting as a waiter, as an object in the world: an automaton whose essence is to be a waiter. But that he is obviously acting belies that he is aware that he is not (merely) a waiter, but is rather consciously deceiving himself.

Another of Sartre's examples involves a young woman on a first date. She ignores the obvious sexual implications of her date's compliments to her physical appearance, but accepts them instead as words directed at her as a human consciousness. As he takes her hand, she lets it rest indifferently in his, refusing either to return the gesture or to rebuke it. Thus she delays the moment when she must choose to either acknowledge and reject his advances, or submit to them. She conveniently considers her hand only a thing in the world, and his compliments as unrelated to her body, playing on her dual human reality as a physical being, and as a consciousness separate and free from this physicality.

Sartre tells us that by acting in bad faith, the waiter and the woman are denying their own freedom, but actively using this freedom itself. They manifestly know they are free but do not acknowledge

it. Bad faith is paradoxical in this regard: when acting in bad faith, a person is both aware and, in a sense, unaware that they are free.

Two Modes of Consciousness

Sartre tells us that the consciousness with which we generally consider our objective surroundings is different from the consciousness of ourselves being conscious of these surroundings (pre-reflective and reflective consciousness respectively), though neither can properly be called unconsciousness. He gives the example of running after a bus: one does not become conscious of one's running after the bus until one has ceased to run after it, because until then one's consciousness is focused on the bus itself and not one's chasing it.

In this sense consciousness always entails being self-aware (being-for-itself). Since for Sartre consciousness also entails a consciousness of our separation from the world, and hence freedom, we are also always aware of this. But we can manipulate these two levels of consciousness, so that our reflective consciousness interprets the factual limits of our objective situation as insurmountable, whilst our pre-reflective consciousness remains aware of alternatives.

[edit] Freedom and Morality

One convinces oneself, in some senses, that one is bound to act by external circumstance, in order to escape the anguish of our freedom. Sartre says man is condemned to be free: whether he adopts an 'objective' moral system to do this choosing for him, or follows only his pragmatic concerns, he cannot help but be aware that they are not - fundamentally - part of him. Moreover, as possible intentional objects of one's consciousness, one is fundamentally not part of oneself, but rather exactly what one, as consciousness, defines oneself in opposition to; along with everything else one could be conscious of.

Fundamentally, Sartre believes one cannot escape responsibility by adopting an external moral system, as the adoption of a moral system is in itself a choice that we endorse, implicitly or explicitly, and which one must take full responsibility for. Sartre argues that, one cannot escape responsibility, as each time one attempts to part oneself from one's freedom of choice, the very act in itself is a choice exercised freely.

As a human, one cannot claim our actions are determined by forces exterior to the self; this is the core statement of existentialism. One is 'doomed' to this eternal freedom; human beings exist before the definition of human identity exists. One cannot define oneself as a thing in the world, as one has the freedom to be otherwise. One is not "a philosopher", as at some point one must/will cease the activities that define the self as "a philosopher". Any role that one might adopt does not define one as there is an eventual end to one's adoption of the role; i.e. other roles will be assigned to us, "a chef", "a mother". The self is not constant, it cannot be a thing in the world. Though one cannot assign a positive value to definitions that may apply to oneself, one remains able to say what one is not. For example, an adult human male may not be a man, but he is certainly not a woman.

Therefore, one is defined by what one is not.

This inner anguish over moral uncertainty is a central underlying theme in existentialism, as the anguish demonstrates a personal feeling of responsibility over the choices one makes throughout life. Without an emphasis on personal choice, one may make use of an external moral system as a tool to moralize otherwise immoral acts, leading to negation of the self. According to existentialism, dedicated professionals of their respective moral codes - priests interpreting sacred scriptures, lawyers interpreting the Constitution, doctors interpreting the Hippocratic oath - should, instead of divesting the self of responsibility in the discharge of one's duties, be aware of one's own significance in the process. This recognition involves the questioning of the morality of all choices, taking responsibility for the consequences of one's own choice and therefore; a constant reappraisal of one's own and others' ever-changing humanity. One must not exercise bad faith by denying the

self's freedom of choice and accountability. Taking on the burden of personal accountability in all situations is an intimidating proposition - by pointing out the freedom of the individual Sartre seeks to demonstrate the social roles and moral systems we adopt to protect us from being morally accountable for our actions.

The Limit-Situation as the origin of the Concept of Boundary

A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing. That is why the concept is that of *horismos*, that is, the horizon, the boundary. Space is in essence that for which room has been made, that which is let into its bounds. That for which room is made is always granted and hence is joined, that is, gathered, by virtue of a location. Accordingly, spaces receive their being from locations and not from "space."

"The holographic principle states that the entropy of ordinary mass (not just black holes) is also proportional to surface area and not volume; that volume itself is illusory and the universe is really a hologram which is isomorphic to the information "inscribed" on the surface of its boundary."

Parmenides, Heraclitus and Lacan - the dispute of the "One" in Psychoanalysis

"It is always perilous to approach Lacan from a philosophical point of view. For he is an anti-philosopher, and no one is entitled to take this designation lightly.

Considering him in relation to the Pre-Socratics is a still more risky undertaking. References to these thinkers in Lacan's work are rare, scattered, and above all mediated by something other than themselves. There is, moreover, the risk of losing one's thought in a latent confrontation between Lacan and Heidegger, which has all the attractions of a rhetorical impasse.

Having arrived at this perspective on the scope of Lacan's texts, one should not lose sight of the fact that it is a localization, the disinterested examination of a symptom.

The revelatory power of Lacan's references to the Pre-Socratics is secret - I would almost say encoded. Three thinkers are invoked: Empedocles, Heraclitus and Parmenides. The invocation is itself caught up in four principal problems. The first can be formulated as follows: to what originary impulse of thought is psychoanalysis the heir? The question reaches far beyond the point where, with Descartes, we enter the modern epoch of the subject, or what Lacan calls the subject of science. Of course, psychoanalysis could appear only within the element of this modernity. But as a general figure of the will to thought (*vouloir-penser*), it enigmatically bears a confrontation with what is most originary in our site. Here it is a question of knowing what is at stake when we determine the place of psychoanalysis in the strictly Western history of thought, in which psychoanalysis marks a rupture, and which is not at all constituted by but, rather, punctuated by philosophy.

The second problem concerns the relation - which is decisive for Lacan - between psychoanalysis and Plato. Driven by rivalry and contestation, this relation is unstable. Lacan's references to the Pre-Socratics clarify the principle behind this instability.

The third problem is, of course, that of providing an exact delimitation of Lacan's relation to Heidegger. It is to Heidegger that we owe the reactivation of the Pre-Socratics as the forgotten source from which our destiny took flight. If it is not a matter here of 'comparing' Lacan to Heidegger - which would be meaningless - the theme of origins alone compels us to search for some measure of what led one to cite and translate the other.

Finally, the fourth problem concerns the polemical dimension of psychoanalysis. With respect to what primordial division of thought does psychoanalysis make its stand? Can one inscribe psychoanalysis within an insistent conflict that long preceded it? There is no doubt that Lacan here makes use of the canonical opposition between Parmenides and Heraclitus. Lacan opts, quite explicitly, for the latter.

Freud's work was a new foundation, a rupture. But it was also the product of an orientation within thought that rests on divisions and territories that pre-existed it.

Lacan's references to the Pre-Socratics thus attest - and herein lies their difficulty - not so much to what is truly revolutionary in psychoanalysis as to what inscribes it within dialectical continuities of what we might call continental reach.

1

Those of Lacan's psychoanalytic discoveries that can be made to enter into resonance with the Pre-Socratics can be grouped around two themes: the primacy of discourse and the function of love in the truth-process.

On several occasions Lacan praises the innocent audacity of the Pre-Socratics, who identified the powers of discourse with the grasping of being [la prise sur l'être]. Thus, in the seminar on transference, he writes: 'Beyond Plato, in the background, we have this attempt, grandiose in its innocence -this hope residing in the first philosophers, called physicists - of finding an ultimate grasp on the real under the guarantee of discourse, which is in the end their instrument for gauging experience.' [1]

How are we to characterize this peculiar balancing of the 'grandiose' and the 'innocent'? The grandiose aspect lies in the conviction that the question of the Real is commensurable with that of language; the innocence is in not having carried this conviction as far as its true principle, which is mathematization. You will recall that Lacan holds mathematization to be the key to any thinkable relation to the Real. He never varied on this point. In the seminar *Encore*, he says, without the slightest note of caution: 'Mathematization alone reaches a real.' [2] Without mathematization, without the grasp of the letter (la prise de la lettre), the Real remains captive to a mundane reality driven by a phantasm.

Is this to say that the Pre-Socratic physicists remain within the bounds of the mythic narrative which delivers us the phantasm of the world? No, for they outline a genuine rupture with traditional knowledge, albeit one innocent with regard to the matheme.

The latter point is essential. Lacan does not conceive of the Pre-Socratics as the founders of a tradition, or as a lost tradition in themselves. A tradition is what 'tra-dicts' (fait tra-diction) the reality of the phantasm of the world. In placing their trust in the pure supremacy of discourse, the Pre-Socratics had the grandiose audacity to break with all traditional forms of knowledge.

This is why their writings prefigure mathematization, although the latter is not present in its literal form. The premonition appears in its paradoxical inversion, the use of poetic form. Far from opposing, as Heidegger did, the Pre-Socratic poem to Plato's matheme, Lacan has the powerful idea that poetry was the closest thing to mathematization available to the Pre-Socratics. Poetic form is the innocence of the grandiose. For Lacan, it even goes beyond the explicit content of statements, because it anticipates the regularity of the matheme. In *Encore*, he writes:

Fortunately, Parmenides actually wrote poems. Doesn't he use linguistic devices - the linguist's testimony takes precedence here - that closely resemble mathematical articulation, alternation after succession, framing after alternation? It is precisely because he was a poet that Parmenides says what he has to say to us in the least stupid of manners. Otherwise, the idea that being is and that nonbeing is not, I don't know what that means to you, but personally I find that stupid. [3]

This text indeed registers an innocence in its trace of stupidity. There is something unreal in Parmenides' proposition on being, in the sense of a still unthought attachment to phantasmatic reality. But the poetic form contains a grandiose anticipation of the matheme. Alternation, succession, framing: the figures of poetic rhetoric are branded, as if by an unconscious lightning flash, with the features of a mathematization to come; through poetry, Parmenides attests to the fact that the grasp of thought upon the Real can be established only by the regulated power of the letter. It is for this reason that the Pre-Socratics should be praised: they wished to free thought from any

figure that involves the simple transmission of knowledge. They entrusted thought to the aleatory care of the letter, a letter that remains poetic for temporary lack of mathematics.

The Pre-Socratics' second foundational innovation was to pose the power of love as a relation of being wherein lies the function of truth. The seminar on transference is, of course, our guiding reference here. Take the following passage: "Phaedraos tells us that Love, the first of the gods imagined by the Goddess of Parmenides, and which Jean Beaufret in his book on Parmenides identifies more accurately, I believe, with truth than with any other function, truth in its radical structure..." [4] In fact, Lacan credits the Pre-Socratics with binding love to the question of the truth in two ways.

First of all, they were able to see that love, as Lacan himself says, is what brings being face to face with itself; this is expressed in Empedocles' description of love as the 'power of cohesion or harmony'. Secondly, and above all, the Pre-Socratics pointed out that it is in love that the Two is unleashed, the enigma of the difference between the sexes. Love is the appearance of a non-relation, the sexual non-relation, taken to the extent that any supreme relation is punctured or undone. This puncturing, this undoing of the One, is what aligns love with the question of the truth. The fact that we are dealing here with what brings into being a non-relation in place of a relation permits us also to say that knowledge is that part of the truth which is experienced in the figure of hate. Hate is, along with love and ignorance, the very passion of the truth, to the extent that it proceeds as non-relation imagined as relation.

Lacan emblematically ascribes to Empedocles this power of truth as the torsion that relates love to hate. Empedocles saw that the question of our being, and of what can be stated of its truth, presupposes the recognition of a non-relation, an original discord. If one ceases to misconstrue it according to some scheme of dialectical antagonisms, the love/hate tension is one of the possible names of this discord.

Freud, as Lacan emphasizes, had recognized in Empedocles something close to the antinomy of drives. In the 'Rome Report', Lacan mentions 'the express reference of (Freud's) new conception to the conflict of the two principles to which the alternation of universal life was subjected by Empedocles of Agrigentum in the fifth century BC'. [5] If we allow that what is at stake here is access to being in the shape of a truth, we can say that what Empedocles identifies in the pairing of love and hate, *philia* and *neikos*, is something akin to the excess of the passion of access.

Lacan, one suspects, recalibrates this reference in such a way as to put increasing emphasis on discord, on non-relation as the key to truth. To this end, he fleetingly pairs Empedocles and Heraclitus. Empedocles isolates the two terms through which the necessity of a non-relation is inscribed; Empedocles names the two passions of access, as deployed by a truth. Heraclitus sustains the primacy of discord; he is the thinker of non-relation's chronological priority over relation. Take, for example, the following lines on the death drive in "Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis": 'a vital dehiscence that is constitutive of man, and which makes unthinkable the idea of an environment that is preformed for him, a "negative" libido that enables the Heraclitean notion of Discord, which the Ephesian believed to be prior to harmony, to shine once more'. [6] In Lacan's work, the negative libido is constantly connected to Heraclitus. In short, the connections between love, hate, truth and knowledge were established by Empedocles and then radicalized by Heraclitus, the originary thinker of discord, of non-relation.

A further proof of the Pre-Socratics' anticipation of the death drive lies in the consequences that can be drawn from their writings regarding God. Since the God of Empedocles knows nothing of hate, and therefore nothing of the nodal point of excess for the passion of access, one would therefore expect such a God's access to truth to be correspondingly restricted. This is precisely what Lacan, adducing Aristotle's commentary in support, attributes to Empedocles in *Encore*:

There was someone named Empedocles - as if by chance, Freud uses him from time to time like a

corkscrew - of whose work we know but three lines, but Aristotle draws the consequences of them very well when he enunciates that, in the end, God was the most ignorant of all beings according to Empedocles, because he knew nothing of hatred.... If God does not know hatred, according to Empedocles, it is clear that he knows less about it than mortals. [7]

For the startling consequences that can be drawn from these considerations of God's ignorance, I refer the reader to François Regnault's marvellous book *Dieu est inconscient*. [8]

What matters here, however, is that we observe that, after noting the poetic anticipation of the free functioning of the matheme, Lacan credits the Pre-Socratics with an intuition that has far-reaching implications for the resources of truth inherent in sexual discord.

2

Let us turn to the problem of stabilizing the relationship between psycho-analysis and Platonism. In Heidegger's strategy, the Pre-Socratics were deployed largely in order to deconstruct Plato and, as a side-effect, to plot the emergence of the system of metaphysics. Does Lacan conduct a similar operation? The answer is complex.

Lacan never pursues purely philosophical objectives. His intention, then, is not to dissect Plato. Rather, Lacan maintains an ambiguous rivalry with Plato. For Plato and psychoanalysis have at least two conceptual undertakings in common: thinking love as transference, and exploring the sinuous trajectory of the One. On these two points, it matters a great deal to Lacan to establish that what he called the 'Freudian way' is different from the Platonic.

In the end, however, it remains the case that Lacan summons the Pre-Socratics to his aid while struggling to mark the boundary between psycho-analysis and Platonism. And it is also clear that the central wager in this attempt at demarcation once more concerns the theme of non-relation, of discord, of alterity without concept; and, consequently, concerns the delinking of knowledge and truth.

Lacan attributes to Plato a desire for being to be completed by knowledge, and therefore an identification (itself entirely a product of mastery) of knowledge with truth. The Idea, in Plato's sense, would be an equivocal point which is simultaneously a norm of knowledge and a reason d'être. For Lacan, such a point can only be imaginary. It is like a cork plugging the hiatus between knowledge and truth. It brings a fallacious peace to the original discord. Lacan holds that Plato's standing declines in the light of Empedocles' and Heraclitus' propositions on the primacy of discord over harmony.

It is therefore certain that, for Lacan as for Heidegger, something has been forgotten or lost between the Pre-Socratics and Plato. It is not, however, the meaning of being. It is, rather, the meaning of non-relation, of the first separation or gap. Indeed, what has been lost is thought's recognition of the difference between the sexes as such.

One could also say that between the Pre-Socratics and Plato, a change takes place in the way difference is thought. This is fundamental for Lacan, since the signifier is constituted by difference. Empedocles and Heraclitus posit that, in the thing itself, identity is saturated by difference. As soon as a thing is exposed to thought, it can be identified only by difference. Plato could be said to have lost sight of this line of argument, since he removed the possibility of identifying difference within the identity of the Idea. We could say that the Pre-Socratics differentiate identity, while Plato identifies difference. This is perhaps the source of Lacan's preference for Heraclitus.

Recalling, in his very first seminar, that the relation between the concept and the thing is founded on the pairing of identity and difference, Lacan adds: "Heraclitus tells us - if we introduce absolute mobility in the existence of things such that the flow of the world never comes to pass twice by the same situation, it is precisely because identity in difference is already saturated in the thing". [9]

Here we see how Lacan contrasts the eternal identification of differences according to the fixed point of the Idea - as in Plato - with the absolute differential process constitutive of the thing itself. The Lacanian conception of the relation between identity and difference - and therefore, in the thing, between the one and the multiple - finds support, contra Plato, in the universal mobilism of Heraclitus. This is what Lacan observes with regard to the God of President Schreber in the text 'On a Question Preliminary to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis'. For Schreber, the Creator is "Unique in his Multiplicity, Multiple in his Unity (such are the attributes, reminiscent of Heraclitus, with which Schreber defines him)." [10]

In fact, what Heraclitus allows us to think - and what Plato, on the contrary, prohibits - is the death drive. The Platonic effort to identify difference through the Idea leaves no room for it; Heraclitean discord, on the other hand, anticipates its every effect. In Seminar VII, when he discusses Antigone's suicide in her tomb, and our ignorance of what is happening inside it, Lacan declares: 'No better reference than the aphorisms of Heraclitus.' Among these aphorisms, the most useful is the one which states the correlation of the Phallus and death, in the following, striking form: "Hades and Dionysus are one and the same". The authority of difference allows Heraclitus to perceive, in the identity of the god of the dead with the god of vital ecstasy, the double investment of the Phallus. Or, as Lacan notes of Bacchic processions: "And (Heraclitus) leads us up to the point where he says that if it weren't a reference to Hades or a ceremony of ecstasy, it would be nothing more than an odious phallic ceremony." [11] According to Lacan, the Platonic subordination of difference to identity is incapable of arriving at such a point.

The Pre-Socratics, then, provide ample material from which to reconstruct, from its origins, a far-reaching disorientation of Plato. In this sense, they form part of the polemical genealogy of psychoanalysis.

3

Turning to Heidegger, we should of course recall that Lacan translated his Logos, which deals in particular with Heraclitus. I believe that three principal connections can be drawn between Lacan and Heidegger. They involve repression, the One, and being-for-death (l'être-pour-la-mort). All three are mediated by the Pre-Socratics.

First, Lacan believes he can go so far as to say that there is at least a similarity between the Freudian theme of repression and the Heideggerian articulation of truth and forgetting. It is significant for Lacan that, as Heidegger remarks, the name of the river of forgetting, Lethe, can be heard in the word for truth, aletheia. The link is made explicit in the first seminar where, in his analysis of repression in the Freudian sense, we come across the following observation: 'In every entry of being into its habitation in words, there's a margin of forgetting, a lethe complementary to every aletheia.' [12] Such a repression, then, can with good reason be called 'originary'. Its originary character accords with the correlation in origins Heidegger establishes between truth and veiling, a correlation constantly reinforced through etymological exegesis of the Pre-Socratics. Secondly, Lacan takes from Heidegger's commentary on Heraclitus the notion of an intimate connection between the theme of the One and that of Logos. This, for Lacan, is an essential thesis. It will later be formulated in structural fashion: the aphorism "there is something of (the) One" (il y a de l'Un) is constitutive of the symbolic order. But starting in Seminar III, in a discussion of the Schreber case, Lacan confirms Heidegger's reading of Heraclitus. Commenting on the fact that Schreber only ever has one interlocutor, he adds:

This Einheit (oneness) is very amusing to consider, if we think of this text on 'Logos' by Heidegger I have translated, which is going to be published in the first issue of our new journal, La Psychanalyse, and which identifies the logos with Heraclitus's En (One). And in fact we shall see

that Schreber's delusion is in its own way a mode of relationship between the subject and language as a whole. [13]

It is in the most intimate part of clinical practice - that which deals with psychoses - that the clarificatory power of Heraclitus' aphorisms, supported by Heidegger, now reappears.

Finally, Lacan believes he can also connect the Freudian concept of the death drive to Heidegger's existential analysis, which defines Dasein as being-for-death. The emblematic figure of Empedocles serves, in the "Rome Report", as the vector for this connection: "Empedocles, by throwing himself into Mount Etna, leaves forever present in the memory of men this symbolic act of his being-for-death". [14]

You will note that in all three occurrences of Heidegger - truth and forgetting, One and Logos, being-for-death - the Pre-Socratics are a required reference. Indeed, they are necessary to the extent that one cannot decide if the Pre-Socratics are a point of suture, or projection, between Lacan and Heidegger; or if, on the contrary, it is Heidegger who allows Lacan access to a more fundamental concern with the Pre-Socratic genealogy of psycho-analysis. I, for one, tend towards the second hypothesis.

4

For Lacan intends to inscribe psychoanalysis within a destiny of thought that is determined by oppositions and divisions originally informed by the Pre-Socratics. On this view there are two crucial oppositions: one, as we have seen, contrasting the Pre-Socratic sense of discord to the dominance of identity in the Platonic schema. But there is also an opposition, perhaps still more profound, within the ranks of the Pre-Socratics, that sets Heraclitus against Parmenides. The clearest text is in Seminar XX:

The fact that thought moves in the direction of science only by being attributed to thinking - in other words, the fact that being is presumed to think - is what founds the philosophical tradition starting from Parmenides. Parmenides was wrong and Heraclitus was right. That is clinched by the fact that, in fragment 93, Heraclitus enunciates *oute legei oute kruptei alia semainei*, "he neither avows nor hides, he signifies" - putting back in its place the discourse of the winning side itself - *oanax ou to manteion este to en Delphoi*, "the prince" - in other words, the winner - "who prophesies in Delphi". [15]

It is interesting to note that Lacan attributes the foundation of the philosophical tradition not to Plato, but to Parmenides.

I said at the outset that the grandiose innocence of the Pre-Socratics was to have broken with the traditional forms of knowledge. But Parmenides himself is also the founder of a tradition. We need, then, to locate two ruptures. On the one hand, the Pre-Socratics break with the mythic enunciation, with the tradition of myth that 'tra-dicts' the imaginary reality of the world. But on the other, at least one of the Pre-Socratics founds a tradition with which Lacan in turn breaks: the philosophical tradition. For Lacan is an anti-philosopher. This anti-philosophy, however, is already manifested, in a certain sense, by Heraclitus. The philosophical idea is that being thinks, for want of a Real (*l'être pense, an manque le réel*). Against this idea, Heraclitus immediately puts forward the diagonal dimension of signification, which is neither revelation nor dissimulation, but an act. In the same way, the heart of the psychoanalytic procedure lies in the act itself. Heraclitus thus puts in its place the pretension of the master, of the oracle at Delphi, but also the pretension of the philosopher to be the one who listens to the voice of the being who is supposed to think.

Finally, Lacan has a dual, even duplicitous relation to the Pre-Socratics, as he does to the entire history of philosophy. It is embodied by the relationship between two proper names: Heraclitus and Parmenides. Parmenides covers the traditional institution of philosophy, while Heraclitus refers to

components of the genealogy of psychoanalysis. Lacan will adopt the same procedure to stabilize his relationship to Plato, distributing it between two proper names: Socrates, the discourse of the analyst, and Plato, the discourse of the master.

But this duplicitous split is an operation carried out within the signifier. "Parmenides is wrong, Heraclitus is right," says Lacan. Should we not take this to mean that, as thought from the point of view of psychoanalysis, philosophy appears as a form of reason that stagnates within the element of this wrong? Or as a wrong which, within the maze of its illusion, none the less makes sufficient contact with the Real to then fail to recognize the reason behind it?"

Hermeneutics as Liminal, Province of the Marginal

"Hermes is just such a mediator. He is the messenger between Zeus and mortals, also between Zeus and the underworld and between the underworld and mortals. Hermes crosses these ontological thresholds with ease. A notorious thief, according to legend, he crosses the threshold of legality without a qualm. "Marshal of dreams," he mediates between waking and dreaming, day and night. Wearer of a cap of invisibility, he can become invisible or visible at will. Master of night-tricks, he can cover himself with night. Master of sleep, he can wake the sleeping or put the waking to sleep. Liminality or marginality is his very essence.

"Liminality" is a term given currency in twentieth century anthropology by Victor Turner of the University of Chicago. Limen in Latin means threshold, and anthropologists like Turner have become interested in a certain state experienced by persons as they pass over the threshold from one stage of life to another. For instance, Turner notes that the rite of passage at puberty has three phases: separation from one's status as child in a household, then a liminal stage, and finally reintegration into society as a full and independent member with rights and responsibilities that the initiate did not have before. During the liminal stage, the between stage, one's status becomes ambiguous; one is "neither here nor there," one is "betwixt and between all fixed points of classification,"² and thus the form and rules of both his earlier state and his state-to-come are suspended. For the moment, one is an outsider; one is on the margins, in an indeterminate state. Turner is fascinated by this marginality, this zone of indeterminacy. He argues that it is from the standpoint of this marginal zone that the great artists, writers, and social critics have been able to look past the social forms in order to see society from the outside and to bring in a message from beyond it.

This marginality is the realm of Hermes. In his recent book, *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, Paul Friedrich remarks (in a brilliant appendix) on the multiple liminality of Hermes and his links with Aphrodite.³ He notes that

1. Hermes moves by night, the time of love, dreams, and theft;
2. he is the master of cunning and deceit, the marginality of illusions and tricks;
3. he has magical powers, the margin between the natural and the supernatural;
4. he is the patron of all occupations that occupy margins or involve mediation: traders, thieves, shepherds, and heralds;
5. his mobility makes him a creature betwixt and between;
6. his marginality is indicated by the location of his phallic herms not just anywhere but on roads, at crossroads, and in groves;
7. even his eroticism is not oriented to fertility or maintaining the family but is basically Aphroditic--stealthy, sly, and amoral, a love gained by theft without moral concern for consequences; and finally
8. Hermes is a guide across boundaries, including the boundary between earth and Hades, that is, life and death.⁴

Truly, one may say that Hermes is the Greeks' "god of the gaps," although not in the sense in which this phrase is used by Bonhoeffer (to refer to a religious attitude that does not turn to God except to

fill in the empty spots and question marks one encounters in life).⁵ Rather, he is one who seems to inhabit an in-between realm, what Carlos Castaneda referred to as the "crack between the worlds."⁶ The meaning of hermeneutics, then, is closely tied to the character of Hermes. We may see some further implications and dimensions of this fact by considering briefly (1) Heidegger's discussion of Hermes and hermeneutics in his famous conversation with a Japanese on the topic of language in *On the Way to Language*, and (2) Walter F. Otto's famous chapter on Hermes in his *The Homeric Gods*.

For Heidegger, it is significant that Hermes is the messenger of the gods and not just other humans; for the message brought by Hermes is not just any message but "fateful tidings" (*die Botschaft des Geschickes*).⁷ Interpretation in its highest form, then, is to be able to understand these fateful tidings, indeed the fatefulness of the tidings. To interpret is first to listen and then to become a messenger of the gods oneself, just as the poets do, according to Plato's *Ion*.⁸ Indeed, part of the destiny of man is precisely to stand in a hermeneutical relation to one's being here and now and to one's heritage. Human beings, insofar as they are truly human beings, says Heidegger, "are used for hearing the message . . . they are to listen and belong to it as human beings."⁹

"From the source of the event of appearing something comes toward man that holds the two-fold of presence and present beings,"¹⁰ says Heidegger. "The human being stands in this gap, this zone of disclosure. One does not so much act as respond, does not so much speak as listen, does not so much interpret as understand the thing that is unveiled. The primary movement here is understanding as an emergence of being. The human being becomes Hermes, the message-bearer, only because one has first and foremost opened oneself to a process of unconcealment: "The human being is the message-bearer of the message which the two-fold's unconcealment utters to it."¹¹ What is interesting and important about this description of interpretation is that it goes behind technique-oriented conceptions to a moment more primordial, a moment before our present thought-forms, in order to grasp something essential. Such interpretation enters into a loving and fundamental dialogue with the greatest efforts of the past to grasp the meaning of being. This primordial listening is hermeneutical in yet another sense: it is a listening to texts. The "message" one must interpret is really the doctrines and thinking of one's forbears as embodied in great texts. To exist hermeneutically as a human being is to exist intertextually. It is to participate in the endless chain of interpretation that makes up the history of apprehending being. Says Heidegger, one enters into dialogue with the doctrines of past thinkers, which were "in turn learned by listening to the great thinkers' thinking."¹² One participates in the endless chain of listening that constitutes essential thinking. "Each human being is in each instance in dialogue with its forbears and perhaps even more and in a more hidden manner with those who will come after it."¹³ Again, this suggests the Hermes-related trait of bringing forth a hidden meaning. Heidegger would have the interpreter pore over the text with the philologist's love of words: "Each word in each case is given its full--most often hidden--weight."¹⁴

We can also understand Heidegger's choice of the term hermeneutics over such alternatives as interpretation when we remember that implicit in the Heideggerian project is the effort to regain a grasp of being that has been lost in modern times and indeed since the time of Plato and Aristotle. One seeks the "hidden weight" of ancient words precisely in order to go behind what is self-evident in modern thinking. This special and intense listening Heidegger calls for is necessary in order to break away from the confines of the modern world view. Hermeneutics, it will be remembered, is the discipline concerned with deciphering utterances from other times, places, and languages--without imposing one's own categories on them (the hermeneutic problem). It is significant that Heidegger attempts to sharpen his reflection by a conversation with a person from a radically alien world--a Japanese. The atmosphere of the conversation is an effort to understand the most difficult and ineffable conceptions--beauty, utterance, language. A Japanese tentativeness and delicacy

pervades the dialogue, and one can understand Heidegger's fascination with a people whose art strives for the letting-be of what is.

But the use of a Japanese dialogical partner is not the only indication of Heidegger's effort to transcend the westernized, modern world view. Heidegger explicitly states that the careful listener will put in question "the guiding notions which, under the names 'expression,' 'experience,' and 'consciousness,' determine modern thinking."¹⁵ If one thinks of these conceptions as constituting the make-up of one's "world," then what Heidegger has in mind is that interpretation as hermeneutics should be "world-shaking," a fateful message that shakes the foundations of thought. Only an interpretation that goes outside the prevailing conceptualities can move toward what Heidegger has in mind--"a transformation of thinking."¹⁶ Unfortunately, the word interpretation fails to suggest a mediation from something outside and alien, but hermeneutics, since it customarily has reference to interpreting ancient texts in another language, has precisely this sense of relating to something essentially other yet capable of being understood.

The mediation Heidegger has in mind here is ontologically significant. It would seem to be a kind of bridge to non-being. The transcending of the already-given world is elsewhere in Heidegger even called the "step back": a "step back" from presentational thought as such.¹⁷ This "step back" is a movement back from embeddedness in a set of fixed definitions of reality, in order to regain access to a certain realm of "latency" which we might also call our deeper sense of the meaning of being. In a recent paper on Heidegger and Lacan, the eminent Heidegger scholar, William J. Richardson, notes that both Lacan and Heidegger root their thinking in a latency lying below the level of manifest consciousness.¹⁸ It is not nonbeing in the sense of a mere emptiness but rather a source of being for which the word "latency" seems rather apt. The mediation, in this case, is not between two well-lighted but incommensurate realms of being but between the well-lighted daylight of consciousness and something more like the mysterious night of what lies below and above consciousness. Heidegger clarified in his well-known letter to Richardson¹⁹ that this realm, as ontological nonbeing, is not the transcendental in the sense of Kant's conditions for the possibility for phenomena but a kind of creative foundation and source for our being-in-the-world.

Again, one feels the parallel between this realm of indeterminacy and what Turner calls liminality. Like the realm of liminality, it is a realm "betwixt and between," not yet defined. Like liminality, it is a source both of creativity and critique of the prevailing forms of thought and being. A human being in the liminal stage or state has the potentialities of a human being but is suspended between stages or states so he or she is neither this nor that. He/she is in the "crack between the worlds," to use a phrase of Castaneda cited earlier.

When we turn to the chapter on Hermes in Walter F. Otto's *The Homeric Gods*, we find these and other dimensions of the liminality of Hermes. .Otto notes, for instance, that "It is Hermes' nature not to belong to any locality and not to possess any permanent abode; always he is on the road between here and there."²⁰ When one is on the road, one may encounter sudden good fortune or sudden misfortune. Hermes is the god of the windfall, the quick, lucky chance. Thus, the traveller or trader who suddenly comes on good fortune will thank Hermes, who as cattle-thief knows how to get rich quick and how to make people poor quickly also. Says Otto, "He is the god not only of sly calculation but also of lucky chances. Everything lucky and without responsibility that befalls a human being is a gift of Hermes."²¹ We may say that the Hermes of sudden lucky breaks, of "deft guidance and sudden gain,"²² is an appropriate god of text interpretation in that the solution to a problem or a burst of insight will come in a flash. And the amorality of Hermes suggests the moral neutrality of understanding as a pure operation of the mind in grasping the point of something. The truth or insight may be a pleasant awakening or rob one of an illusion; the understanding itself is morally neutral. The quicksilver flash of insight may make one rich or poor in an instant. This sudden almost magical flash of insight suggests another dimension of Hermes, his association

with magic. Otto asserts that "his whole character and presence stand under the sign of magic."²³ He has a magical cap and a magical wand. With his cap, the Cap of Hades, he can make himself invisible. With his wand, he can put the waking to sleep or awaken the sleeping. He is thus the mediator belonging to those liminal realms mentioned earlier: the magical realm and the realm of ordinary, everyday reality: between waking and sleeping, day and night, world and underworld, conscious and unconscious.

In a brilliant and memorable section of his chapter on Hermes, Otto points to night--the experience of night--as the key to the nature of Hermes. Again, night seems symbolically to possess the characteristics of liminality. Otto refers to the mysterious realm of night as follows:

A man who is awake in the open field at night, or who wanders over silent paths, experiences the world differently than by day. Nighness vanishes, and with it distance; everything is equally far and near, close by us and yet mysteriously remote. Space loses its measures. There are whispers and sounds and we do not know where or what they are. . . . There is no longer a distinction between what is lifeless and living; everything is animate and soulless, vigilant and asleep at once.²⁴

This realm of "danger and protection, terror and reassurance, certainty and straying,"²⁵ is the realm of Hermes. Hermes is the god who brings this realm of night into day: "This mystery of night seen by day, this magic darkness in the bright sunlight is the realm of Hermes, whom, in later ages, magic with good reason revered as its master."²⁶

We may ask: What is this realm of night in which the nearness and far awayness of objects vanishes, where there is no objective difference between the lifeless and the living, if not the realm of ideas, of thought, of the mind itself? It is the realm of mind not as perennial moral wisdom but as instant insight. For in the objective world of day things have their finite measure, but in the mind, in imagination and dream, in the world of ideas, distances vanish, relationships of time alter, and one senses himself in a different world. As god of magic and mystery and sudden good luck, Hermes is the god of sudden interpretive insights that come from an ability to approach daytime reality with liminal freedom.

Small wonder it is advisable to have Hermes as a guide. The guide-character of Hermes is central. Otto notes a parallel to the Vedic guide-god Pushan who comes to the rescue of those who have gone astray. A knower of roads (like Hermes), Pushan has a special way of helping men: "his manner of giving treasure to men is that he permits men to find it."²⁷

Again, this has a parallel in hermeneutic methods, in that they are designed to enable the text to yield its treasure, but the interpreter only leads the reader to the treasure and then retires. As a guide, the interpreter remains a liminal figure, an outsider, a facilitator.

Hermes, then, remains a god of roads, crossroads, thresholds, boundaries. It is at these locations in ancient times that one found altars to Hermes. He was considered the patron god of migrant skilled and unskilled workers who, in going from place to place, became professional "boundary-crossers."²⁸ Hermes is the god who presides over all transactions held at borders. Thus he is the god of translation and of all transactions between realms. And it would seem to be the essence of hermeneutics to be liminal, to mediate between realms of being, whether between god and human beings, wakefulness and sleep, the conscious and unconscious, life and afterlife, visible and invisible, day and night. The dimensions of the mythic god Hermes suggest a central element in the meaning of hermeneutics: that it is a mediation-between worlds. And in the strongest instances, Hermes' message is "world-shaking": it brings, as Heidegger says, "a transformation of thinking."²⁹

End of Introductory Considerations

1 Horizon-Invental as the temporary unifier of the temporal moment

The Invental as the ground of the event. Threads of the past are gathered from within that temporal horizon and projected in a unified manner upon what one is practically involved with towards the futural temporal horizon. This projection towards the futural horizon together with the gatheredness of the past creates the unified temporal moment of presencing.

"It goes without saying that there is no empirical event – it would be drowned within the indifference of generality and particularity. On the other hand, the event may sometimes provide the basis for a superior empiricism. Whatever the case, the event is not merely the result of superimposing an ontology onto a history, but rather, it introduces a new order. It does not even merge with Being, whether Being is presence, or a pure multiple without presence, or regularity once again. It appears whenever there is a repression, a cutting, or a collapsing of Being. The event thereby indexes a more general ground which may be, depending on the case, an order of presence, of effects or singularities rather than of generalities, of multiplicities or of the multiple rather than of unity. It indexes an ontological ground with which it remains complicit even as it detaches itself from it."

1.1 Personal Events - Grace

The Evental can be personal or societal in effect. Grace can be both a personal event or an event shared in company. It is experienced as a "lightness of Being" that comes at certain times and then disappears. It cannot be willed but only hoped for.

1.1.1 Ereignis - Enowning - Event of Appropriation,

foundational evental nature of Being itself as finite dispensation. An analogous event in one's personal life is the event of sharing one's World with another, whether through Love, Friendship or other means. Despite current society's fear of 'ownedness' when it comes to the human being, referring to another person as mine (e.g. my best friend, my wife) is personally still far preferred to treatment as an independent object. The increase in alternative forms of togetherness that eclipse the primarily legal nature of marriage is one form that ownership of another through co-appropriation has taken in the past few years.

1.1.1.1 Epochal Events

Events that change the world view when a particular world view has exhausted its innermost possibilities.

1.1.1.1.1 The 'god' as the eternal, infinite, but passing guarantor of the new epoch.

Eternity and infinity are not 'above and beyond' finite Time and Space but are modes of the latter, as time-space changes eternities and infinities pass away with their gods. Is therefore the augenblick subtly related to the appearance of volume from the holographic nature of the universe as understood in current physics? A god guarantees the highest principle by its authority. While claims to authority may be a noted fallacy they are one of the most difficult fallacies to argue against.

2 Horizon - Guilt - Call of Conscience as call to Individuate Internal Society

The call of conscience, as a call without worldly meaning, is a call to extricate oneself from everydayness and particularly inauthentic everydayness, and to individuate Dasein's society into a temporarily unified Subject capable of decision and action in a coherent manner.

2.1 Guilt = lack of unified self-constant "I"

Guilt does indeed arise from the nothingness at the root of our being, but not due to lack of eternity (mortality) as Heidegger proposed, but lack of a consistent and constant unifying principle within the subject itself..

2.1.1 Accepting 'call of conscience' as call to initiate a responsible 'count as one' - origin of the authentic "interior" of the Subject

The authentic Subject arises as a result of a temporary unification of the internal society in terms of a "count as one" in order to respond to the Evental in a coherent manner. For convenience and lack of a better term I'm currently referring to this Subject as the 'Invental'.

2.1.1.1 Sin as misunderstanding of the changeability of the Invental.

Without achieving authenticity the 'count as one' that leads to decisions is factually 'the one' or 'the they' in general, 'the one' disburdens by seeming to take responsibility, but when pressed for a decision or a justification, is not to be found. Sin is seen as a leading away of a unique subject from the 'right' path, instead it is the result of a constant irresolute modification of the Invental such that the 'subject' that commits the act is not the same as the 'subject' that believes the act is wrong. The guilt as the hidden lack of correspondence between the true self and the unified subject gets attached to the act, rather than the inauthentic nature of the dasein involved.

2.1.1.1.1 Ethical Decision in the Situation

Aristotle's treatment of situational ethics has yet, in my opinion, to be substantially improved upon. No matter how complex a system one proposes, laws made in advance of a given situation can never take into account all the variables involved.

While most people are outraged at an anti-moral law stance, in their actual lives they base decisions not on an external morality but on a situation by situation basis. Our legal system that investigates things like intent, circumstances etc. also inherently acknowledges that the law is merely a guideline, that the actual decision is situation dependent.

2.1.2 Ressentimente - maintainance of Will (Being) and Power in the External

Ressentiment was first introduced as a philosophical/psychological term by the 19th century philosopher Søren Kierkegaard[1][2][3]. Following thereupon, Friedrich Nietzsche expanded the concept. The term came to form a key part of his ideas concerning the psychology of the 'master-slave' question (articulated in Beyond Good and Evil), and the resultant birth of morality. Nietzsche's first use and chief development of Ressentiment came in his book On The Genealogy of Morals; see esp §§ 10–11).[1] [2].

The term was also put to good use by Max Scheler in his book Ressentiment, published in 1912, and later suppressed by the Nazis.

Currently of great import as a term widely used in Psychology and Existentialism, Ressentiment is viewed as an effective force for the creation of identities, moral frameworks and value systems.

[edit] Perspectives

[edit] Kierkegaard and Nietzsche

The ressentiment which is establishing itself is the process of levelling, and while a passionate age storms ahead setting up new things and tearing down old, razing and demolishing as it goes, a reflective and passionless age does exactly the contrary: it hinders and stifles all action; it levels. Levelling is a silent, mathematical, and abstract occupation which shuns upheavals. ... If the jewel which every one desired to possess lay far out on a frozen lake where the ice was very thin, watched over by the danger of death, while, closer in, the ice was perfectly safe, then in a passionate age the crowds would applaud the courage of the man who ventured out, they would tremble for him and with him in the danger of his decisive action, they would grieve over him if he were drowned, they would make a god of him if he secured the prize. But in an age without passion, in a reflective age, it would be otherwise. People would think each other clever in agreeing that it was unreasonable and not even worth while to venture so far out. And in this way they would transform daring and enthusiasm into a feat of skill, so as 'to do something, for something must be done.'

Søren Kierkegaard, *Two Ages: A Literary Review*

(T)he problem with the other origin of the "good," of the good man, as the person of ressentiment has thought it out for himself, demands some conclusion. It is not surprising that the lambs should bear a grudge against the great birds of prey, but that is no reason for blaming the great birds of prey for taking the little lambs. And when the lambs say among themselves, "These birds of prey are evil, and he who least resembles a bird of prey, who is rather its opposite, a lamb,—should he not be good?" then there is nothing to carp with in this ideal's establishment, though the birds of prey may regard it a little mockingly, and maybe say to themselves, "We bear no grudge against them, these good lambs, we even love them: nothing is tastier than a tender lamb."

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Ressentiment is a reassignment of the pain that accompanies a sense of one's own inferiority/failure onto an external scapegoat. The ego creates the illusion of an enemy, a cause that can be "blamed" for one's own inferiority/failure. Thus, one was thwarted not by a failure in oneself, but rather by an external "evil."

According to Kierkegaard, ressentiment occurs in a "reflective, passionless age", in which the populace stifles creativity and passion in passionate individuals. Kierkegaard argues that individuals who do not conform to the masses are made scapegoats and objects of ridicule by the masses, in order to maintain status quo and to instill into the masses their own sense of superiority.

Ressentiment comes from reactivity: the weaker a man is, the less his capability for adiaphoria, i.e. to suppress reaction. According to Nietzsche, the more a man is active, strong-willed, and dynamic, the less place and time is left for contemplating all that is done to him, and his reactions (like imagining he is actually better) become less compulsive. The reaction of a strong-willed man (a "wild beast"), when it happens, is ideally a short action: it is not a prolonged filling of his intellect.

[edit] Scheler

Max Scheler attempted to reconcile Nietzsche's ideas of master-slave morality and ressentiment with the Christian ideals of love and humility. Nietzsche saw Christian morality as a kind of slave morality, while Greek and Roman culture was characterized as a master morality. Scheler disagrees. He begins with a comparison of Greek love and Christian love. Greek love is described as a movement from lower value to higher value. The weaker love the stronger, the less perfect love the more perfect. The perfect do not love the imperfect because that would diminish their value or corrupt their existence. Greek love is rooted in need and want. This is clearly indicated by the

Aristotelian concept of God as the "Unmoved Mover". The unmoved mover is self-sufficient being completely immersed in its own existence. The highest object of contemplation, and who moves others through the force of attraction because efficient causality would degrade its nature. In Christian love, there is a reversal in the movement of love. The strong bend to the weak, the healthy help the sick, the noble help the vulgar. This movement is a consequence of the Christian understanding of the nature of God as fullness of being. God's love is an expression of His superabundance. The motive for love is not charity nor the neediness of the lover, but it is rooted in a deeply felt confidence that through loving I become more personalized and most real to myself. The motive for the world is not need or lack (à la Schopenhauer), but a creative urge to express the infinite fullness of being. Poverty and sickness are not values to be celebrated in order to spite those who are rich and healthy, but they simply provide the opportunity for a person to express their love. Rich people are harder to love because they are less in need of your generosity. Fear of death is a sign of a declining, sick, and broken life (Ressent 60). St. Francis' love and care for the lepers would have mortified the Greek mind, but for St. Francis, the threats to well-being are inconsequential because at the core of his being there is the awareness that his existence is firmly rooted in and sustained by the ground of ultimate being. In genuine, Christian love, the lower values that are relative to life are renounced not because they are bad, but simply because they are obstacles to those absolute values which allow a person to enter into a relationship with God. It is through loving like God that we are deified. This is why Scheler sees the Christian saint as a manifestation of strength and nobility and not manifesting resentment.

[edit] Weber

Max Weber in *The Sociology of Religion* relates Ressentiment to Judaism, an ethical salvation religion of a "pariah people." Weber defines Ressentiment as "a concomitant of that particular religious ethic of the disprivileged which, in the sense expounded by Nietzsche and in direct inversion of the ancient belief, teaches that the unequal distribution of mundane goods is caused by the sinfulness and the illegality of the privileged, and that sooner or later God's wrath will overtake them." (Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 110.

3 Horizon - Sudden Shifts in Worldview/Perspectives/Ideologies - Epochs and Subepochs

Within larger epochs there are subepochs and subepochs within those. The choice of the highest principle or god within this shifting situation is often not one or the other but a superstitious mixture of multiple ideas and conflicting concerns.

3.1 Metaphysics as overall Epoch.

Metaphysics, beginning with Plato (idea) and Athens (political democracy), is sublimated for a time but eventually comes to the fore of its own accord.

3.1.1 Christendom as subepoch of metaphysics.

Christianity as institutionalized implemented the "one" of Plato as the God of Creation, ignoring the fact that the God of the old testament 'separated the land from the waters', a very different thing than "creating the universe". The idea of a meaningless universe underlying the world of meaning was unknown to the Hebrews.

"And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so."

This encouraged the loss of poiesis and the domination of techne as the means of revealing, since God as architect could reveal everything.

3.1.1.1 Passing of the Christian God as God's only means of finite self awareness - ek-stasis.

Although within Eckhart there is the notion of co-birth of God and god-in-man to the extent that the God of the Trinity requires man, and the Godhead behind is the fully transcendent transformational, about which no attributes can be definitely surmised. In general Christianity has dealt with the death of Jesus as a move to "Save us from sin.". This saving power, however, can only come at the price of removal of the origin of sin, the Law itself. As noted by Doctorow the four most frightening words to a Christian are "And God became man". There's no hint in this statement that God somehow sent part of himself as a man, remaining himself transcendent.

Following both Greek thought (the gods only hint) and the implications of Genesis (man given lordship through the power to name i.e. give meaning to), man has the unique capability of language and thus an understanding of Being (Be-ing, Beyng) itself that God was incapable of making transparent without Himself becoming man, with all that entails, including mortality. The Holy Ghost, then, would be the Christian God in His final guise, one who is only present in an absent, ghostly mode.

3.1.2 Meaning of Technology

Technology, as the revealing of techne taken to its extreme, is a revealing of Being in a specific mode. While technology indeed reveals beings in their Being, it does so in a definite and limited fashion. The objects of science, in themselves bereft of meaning because divorced from the World

through the scientific reduction, easily take on a new meaning that seems "rational" and "purposeful", two hallmark ideals of current western society. Since human being is also seen as "object-ive" by science the resulting meaning as resource quickly turns around and puts man in the position of constant availability. I often, when busy with other things, turn off my cell phone. The frustration and anger this causes, especially among those that do not know me well, is a wonder in its own right - "how dare he make himself unavailable?".

3.1.2.1 Value vs Worth

Origins of the word "value"

c.1300, from Anglo-Fr. and O.Fr. *valliant* "stalwart, brave," from *prp.* of *valoir* "be worthy," originally "be strong," from L. *valere* "be strong, be well, be worth, have power, be able," from PIE base **wal-* "be strong" (cf. O.E. *wealdan* "to rule," O.H.G. *-walt, -wald* "power" (in personal names), O.N. *valdr* "ruler," O.C.S. *vlasti* "to rule over," Lith. *valdyti* "to have power," Celt. **walos-* "ruler," O.Ir. *flaith* "dominion,"

1570s, "having force in law, legally binding," from M.Fr. *valide*, from L. *validus* "strong, effective," from *valere* "be strong" (see *valiant*). The meaning "supported by facts or authority" is first recorded 1640s.

Worth

from P.Gmc. **werthaz* "toward, opposite," hence "equivalent, worth" (cf. O.Fris. *werth*, O.N. *verðr*, Du. *waard*, O.H.G. *werd*, Ger. *wert*, Goth. *wairþs* "worth, worthy"), perhaps a derivative of PIE **wert-* "to turn, wind," from base **wer-* "to turn, bend" (see *versus*). O.C.S. *vredu*, Lith. *vertas* "worth" are Gmc. loan-words. Worthless is first attested 1588; worthwhile is recorded from 1884.

worth (2) Look up worth at Dictionary.com

"to come to be," now chiefly, if not solely, in the archaic expression *woe worth the day*, present subjunctive of O.E. *weorðan* "to become, be, to befall," from P.Gmc. **werthan* "to become" (cf. O.S., O.Du. *werthan*, O.N. *verða*, O.Fris. *wertha*, O.H.G. *werdan*, Ger. *werden*, Goth. *wairþan* "to become"), lit. "to turn into," from P.Gmc. **werthaz* "toward, opposite," perhaps a derivative of PIE **wert-* "to turn, wind," from base **wer-* "to turn, bend" (see *versus*).

worthy (adj.)

mid-13c., "having merit," from *worth* (1). Attested from c.1300 as a noun meaning "person of merit" (esp. in *Nine Worthies*, famous men of history and legend: Joshua, David, Judas Maccabæus, Hector, Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Arthur, Charlemagne, Godfrey of Bouillon -- three Jews, three gentiles, three Christians).

These short definitions demonstrate the different origins and tendencies of the two words. Value and valuation are capable of being leveled on any resource object as a price. The difference between the mass market of today and the local markets of earlier times isn't in the greed etc. of the shoppers and market owners, but in the difference between market valuation of supposedly interchangeable goods vs the judgment of worth of an individual item. That this extends to humanity is implicit.

3.1.2.1.1 'god money' as guarantor of value of resources

Money is the god that allows one to place a value on any enframed resource, from an orange to a human being. Modern money encapsulates 'value' in the sense of "having force in law, legally binding," and is made into a principle in terms of being "supported by facts or authority".

Currently most money is fiat money, guaranteed by public confidence in the issuer. This confidence comes from the accepted superstition of progress (the gold standard was fully as superstitious, how a pile of useless metal in a basement affects the price of bread has never been made very clear).

This is made possible by the replacement of salvation through other religious means, such as faith or works, to salvation through following the tenets of Science. Science in turn is determined and driven by modern technology as the means by which beings are revealed as resources in the first place. The debate between left and right has degenerated into a feeble joke, because both left and right share the technological/scientific ideology, resulting in no real opposition. Sciencism, for its part, fakes a public debate to keep people occupied by ideologically attacking extreme religious groups to whom thought itself is anathema. "Supported by facts or authority" can really be shortened to "Supported by authority" as facts themselves are theory laden, without the theory they are mere noise, and the questions asked that lead to new theories are socio-politically determined. This epoch began during what was euphemistically known as the "enlightenment", when Science became its own (albeit baseless) endeavour, replacing its position as part of philosophy (philosophy of nature) and leaving behind much of the critical thinking ability and epistemology required to interpret effectively its own results. Without clarification and interpretation the results of scientific endeavour have become as mysterious and unquestioned as any of the tenets of earlier organized religions.

4 Horizon of the Making Present / Presencing - Techne, Production

Poiesis and Techne were, according to Aristotle, the fundamental ways in which beings revealed themselves or were revealed. Techne is a revealing through production, while poiesis self-produces and self-reveals.

It is not difficult, though, to view all beings as though they were revealed through techne, whether by man, God, or some other means. It's one of those ironies of the history of thought that the very technological revealing that spurs the most fundamentalist of atheists is partly made possible by the theological notion that all things are revealed by God through techne.

Recent theoretical biology has had to go back to the notion of poiesis, in a sense. Natural selection is too simple a mechanism to account for the variety as well as the essential similarities of life as we know it. While the means is not understood, organisms evolve and develop partly through a form of self-organization which tends to act in spite of natural selection, rather than due to it. An example would be the similarities in form between single cells, whether single celled organisms in vastly different environments or single cells with different specializations within a differentiated multicellular organism.

4.1 Futural possibilities of internal society limited by tradition, history, past. (choice)

Dasein is of course limited by tradition and inheritance, a person born and raised in sub-Saharan Africa is unlikely to have the freedom to be an astronaut. However tradition and inheritance themselves are also limited in their effectiveness by the choices made - one may inherit racist tendencies but one can choose to change one's ideology to remove those tendencies in one's own life.

4.1.1 Internal society - futural - projecting

As futural the internal society ek-sists. It is in this mode that the primary standing-apart, made possible by Dasein's complex and intentionally recursive nature, can look at one's own being and actions and make the self-judgments impossible to other beings that we know of.

4.1.1.1 Self-Identity based on Self Difference - Invental as ground.

state. This begins to look isomorphic to the holographic description of the universe in superstring theory.

'A thing is' by virtue of taking part in an ideology of thing and whole. This relates back to the irruption by Being into the World that sets the principle and god for the epoch as always historical, i.e. the limit the past sets on particular possibilities. World is for itself with no giver. This is the correspondent to the Real of the Invental.

Although this appears to stay with the idea of re-presentation and the intrinsic distance between subject and World. This error comes from the conflation of World (meaningful structure) with Universe (meaningless noumenal).

Hermeneutic Deconstruction - Truth

Truth as self-revealing of things - a-letheia, interplay with self-concealing (strife of World and Earth)

4.1.1.2 Subject as self-constant "I"

The self-constant I of the subject is generally known as the ego. The ego is by nature selfish, deficient in care and full of rational and irrational fear and anxiousness. While seemingly impossible to eradicate, authenticity corresponds to a loss of interest in the ego's proclivities and the ego's replacement, when needed, by the self-unifying Invental Subject. The Invental is a count as one of all the tendencies, conflicting and otherwise, that a single Dasein ek-sists as. Inauthenticity corresponds to a giving-in to the fears and anxious proclamations of the ego and losing resolve to make the necessary decisions and then act upon them.

This is a long way from voluntarism however, as the decisions and actions are situationally dependent and the situation is never one of complete freedom, as Sartre would have it.

4.1.1.2.1 Subject of the Ego Cogito

No determination of meaning of either ego or cogito. Descartes drawn to the substantial "I" by misinterpreting the Real as self constant and self-consistent.

4.1.1.2.1.1 Truth as Correctness – Measurement

Is underdeterminability a limitation of non-final theories only? Precisely when is it noted that a theory is final other than when the subject matter of the theory is fully determined?

See : Curve It, Gauge It, or Leave It?

Practical Underdetermination in Gravitational Theories

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4.1.1.2.1.1.1 Object

The infamous "in-itself", Kantian noumenon.

The Object of Science

Science "... is derived from the Latin scientia, "knowledge", the nominal form of the verb scire, "to know". The Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root that yields scire is *skei-, meaning to "cut, separate". "Universe" of science, mediated by metaphysics and logic (unlike the immediacy of World) hence unprovable, based on faith.

If the universe is systemic and calculable what is the effect of Godel's Theorem?
Holographic universe of string theory – remains systematic and calculable.

"All physical systems register and process information. The laws of physics determine the amount of information that a physical system can register (number of bits) and the number of elementary logic operations that a system can perform (number of ops). The Universe is a physical system. The amount of information that the Universe can register and the number of elementary operations that it can have performed over its history are calculated. The Universe can have performed 10^{120} ops on 10^{90} bits (10^{120} bits including gravitational degrees of freedom)."

URL:

<http://link.aps.org/doi/10.1103/PhysRevLett.88.237901> DOI: 10.1103/PhysRevLett.88.237901
PACS: 03.67.Lx, 89.70.+c, 98.80.Hw

What happens to the object or in-itself when the universe as viewed as information (Shannon's Entropy as equivalent to Thermodynamic Entropy). Is there a sense to the word information in information theory other than the calculation of calculable possibility?

<http://cell-auto.com/>

"Thermodynamic entropy and Shannon entropy are conceptually equivalent: the number of arrangements that are counted by Boltzmann entropy reflects the amount of Shannon information one would need to implement any particular arrangement..." of matter and energy. The only salient difference between the thermodynamic entropy of physics and the Shannon's entropy of information is in the units of measure; the former is expressed in units of energy divided by temperature, the latter in essentially dimensionless "bits" of information, and so the difference is merely a matter of convention.

The holographic principle states that the entropy of ordinary mass (not just black holes) is also proportional to surface area and not volume; that volume itself is illusory and the universe is really a hologram which is isomorphic to the information "inscribed" on the surface of its boundary [6]."

However deterministic such schemes appear on the surface. Not all possibilities of the universe are 'necessities'. By choosing a particular avenue many other universal possibilities are blocked off. This is the case whether the choice is made on a quantum level or an intentional level by human beings or other creatures.

Foundations of Scientific Belief

Despite numerous attempts at a "scientific" epistemology that can provide a framework for the gulf between subject and object the factual basis remains the onto-theo-logical notion that "God would not lie.", unless one accepts Hegel's notion of absolute knowledge, which is still onto-theological at basis. i.e. scientific atheism depends one way or another on theism for justification of its own reasoning and logic.

Notes on the 'Skin Bounded Individual' via Discussion of the Master/slave Dialectic

"The slave is a part of the Master, a living but separated part of his bodily frame." (Aristotle, Politics 1255b-10)

Neither Master nor slave is a stable singular being, in sharing a World both Master and slave share in each other's Being. The movement towards 'consensual slavery' implicitly recognizes the topological, non relational view of shared Being and chooses a place other than the Master's. Whether ethically justifiable or not, it points to a human need for a definite, comfortable 'place' of one's own from which to be.

Nietzsche

257. Every elevation of the type "man," has hitherto been the work of an aristocratic society and so it will always be—a society believing in a long scale of gradations of rank and differences of worth among human beings, and requiring slavery in some form or other. Without the pathos of distance, such as grows out of the incarnated difference of classes, out of the constant out-looking and down-looking of the ruling caste on subordinates and instruments, and out of their equally constant practice of obeying and commanding, of keeping down and keeping at a distance—that other more mysterious pathos could never have arisen, the longing for an ever new widening of distance within the soul itself, the formation of ever higher, rarer, further, more extended, more comprehensive states, in short, just the elevation of the type "man," the continued "self-surmounting of man," to use a moral formula in a supermoral sense.

To be sure, one must not resign oneself to any humanitarian illusions about the history of the origin of an aristocratic society (that is to say, of the preliminary condition for the elevation of the type "man"): the truth is hard.

Let us acknowledge unprejudicedly how every higher civilization hitherto has originated! Men with a still natural nature, barbarians in every terrible sense of the word, men of prey, still in possession of unbroken strength of will and desire for power, threw themselves upon weaker, more moral, more peaceful races (perhaps trading or cattle-rearing communities), or upon old mellow civilizations in which the final vital force was flickering out in brilliant fireworks of wit and depravity. At the commencement, the noble caste was always the barbarian caste: their superiority did not consist first of all in their physical, but in their psychical power—they were more complete men (which at every point also implies the same as "more complete beasts").

[Higher Class of Being]

258. Corruption—as the indication that anarchy threatens to break out

among the instincts, and that the foundation of the emotions, called “life,” is convulsed—is something radically different according to the organization in which it manifests itself. When, for instance, an aristocracy like that of France at the beginning of the Revolution, flung away its privileges with sublime disgust and sacrificed itself to an excess of its moral sentiments, it was corruption:—it was really only the closing act of the corruption which had existed for centuries, by virtue of which that aristocracy had abdicated step by step its lordly prerogatives and lowered itself to a function of royalty (in the end even to its decoration and parade-dress). The essential thing, however, in a good and healthy aristocracy is that it should not regard itself as a function either of the kingship or the commonwealth, but as the significance highest justification thereof—that it should therefore accept with a good conscience the sacrifice of a legion of individuals, who, for its sake, must be suppressed and reduced to imperfect men, to slaves and instruments. Its fundamental belief must be precisely that society is not allowed to exist for its own sake, but only as a foundation and scaffolding, by means of which a select class of beings may be able to elevate themselves to their higher duties, and in general to a higher existence: like those sun-seeking climbing plants in Java—they are called Sipo Matador,—which encircle an oak so long and so often with their arms, until at last, high above it, but supported by it, they can unfold their tops in the open light, and exhibit their happiness.

[Life Denial]

259. To refrain mutually from injury, from violence, from exploitation, and put one’s will on a par with that of others: this may result in a certain rough sense in good conduct among individuals when the necessary conditions are given (namely, the actual similarity of the individuals in amount of force and degree of worth, and their co-relation within one organization).

As soon, however, as one wished to take this principle more generally, and if possible even as the fundamental principle of society, it would immediately disclose what it really is—namely, a Will to the denial of life, a principle of dissolution and decay.

Here one must think profoundly to the very basis and resist all sentimental weakness: life itself is essentially appropriation, injury, conquest of the strange and weak, suppression, severity, obtrusion of peculiar forms, incorporation, and at the least, putting it mildest, exploitation;—but why should one for ever use precisely these words on which for ages a disparaging purpose has been stamped?

Even the organization within which, as was previously supposed, the individuals treat each other as equal—it takes place in every healthy aristocracy—must itself, if it be a living and not a dying organization, do all that towards other bodies, which the individuals within it refrain from doing to each other it will have to be the incarnated Will to Power, it will endeavour to grow, to gain ground, attract to itself and acquire ascendancy—not owing to any morality or immorality, but because it lives, and because life is precisely Will to Power. On no point, however, is the ordinary consciousness of Europeans more unwilling to be corrected than on this matter,

people now rave everywhere, even under the guise of science, about coming conditions of society in which “the exploiting character” is to be absent—that sounds to my ears as if they promised to invent a mode of life which should refrain from all organic functions.

From the reading. . .

“The noble type of man regards himself as a determiner of values; he does not require to be approved of. . . he is a creator of values.”

“Exploitation” does not belong to a depraved, or imperfect and primitive society it belongs to the nature of the living being as a primary organic function, it is a consequence of the intrinsic Will to Power, which is precisely the Will to Life—Granting that as a theory this is a novelty—as a reality it is the fundamental fact of all history let us be so far honest towards ourselves!

[Master Morality]

260. In a tour through the many finer and coarser moralities which have hitherto prevailed or still prevail on the earth, I found certain traits recurring regularly together, and connected with one another, until finally two primary types revealed themselves to me, and a radical distinction was brought to light.

There is master-morality and slave-morality,—I would at once add, however, that in all higher and mixed civilizations, there are also attempts at the reconciliation of the two moralities, but one finds still oftener the confusion and mutual misunderstanding of them, indeed sometimes their close juxtaposition—even in the same man, within one soul. The distinctions of moral values have either originated in a ruling caste, pleasantly conscious of being different from the ruled—or among the ruled class, the slaves and dependents of all sorts.

In the first case, when it is the rulers who determine the conception “good,” it is the exalted, proud disposition which is regarded as the distinguishing feature, and that which determines the order of rank. The noble type of man separates from himself the beings in whom the opposite of this exalted, proud disposition displays itself he despises them. Let it at once be noted that in this first kind of morality the antithesis “good” and “bad” means practically the same as “noble” and “despicable”,—the antithesis “good” and “evil” is of a different origin. The cowardly, the timid, the insignificant, and those thinking merely of narrow utility are despised; moreover, also, the distrustful, with their constrained glances, the self-abasing, the dog-like kind of men who let themselves be abused, the mendicant flatterers, and above all the liars:—it is a fundamental belief of all aristocrats that the common people are untruthful. “We truthful ones”—the nobility in ancient Greece called themselves.

It is obvious that everywhere the designations of moral value were at first applied to men; and were only derivatively and at a later period applied to actions; it is a gross mistake, therefore, when historians of morals start with questions like, “Why have sympathetic actions been praised?” The noble type of man regards himself as a determiner of values; he does not

require to be approved of; he passes the judgment: What is injurious to me is injurious in itself; he knows that it is he himself only who confers honour on things; he is a creator of values. He honours whatever he recognizes in himself: such morality equals self-glorification. In the foreground there is the feeling of plenitude, of power, which seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of a wealth which would fain give and bestow:—the noble man also helps the unfortunate, but not—or scarcely—out of pity, but rather from an impulse generated by the superabundance of power. The noble man honours in himself the powerful one, him also who has power over himself, who knows how to speak and how to keep silence, who takes pleasure in subjecting himself to severity and hardness, and has reverence for all that is severe and hard. “Wotan placed a hard heart in my breast,” says an old Scandinavian Saga: it is thus rightly expressed from the soul of a proud Viking. Such a type of man is even proud of not being made for sympathy; the hero of the Saga therefore adds warningly: “He who has not a hard heart when young, will never have one.” The noble and brave who think thus are the furthest removed from the morality which sees precisely in sympathy, or in acting for the good of others, or in *dèintèressement*, the characteristic of the moral; faith in oneself, pride in oneself, a radical enmity and irony towards “selflessness,” belong as definitely to noble morality, as do a careless scorn and precaution in presence of sympathy and the “warm heart.”

It is the powerful who know how to honour, it is their art, their domain for invention. The profound reverence for age and for tradition—all law rests on this double reverence,—the belief and prejudice in favour of ancestors and unfavourable to newcomers, is typical in the morality of the powerful; and if, reversely, men of “modern ideas” believe almost instinctively in “progress” and the “future,” and are more and more lacking in respect for old age, the ignoble origin of these “ideas” has complacently betrayed itself thereby.

A morality of the ruling class, however, is more especially foreign and irritating to present-day taste in the sternness of its principle that one has duties only to one’s equals; that one may act towards beings of a lower rank, towards all that is foreign, just as seems good to one, or “as the heart desires,” and in any case “beyond good and evil”: it is here that sympathy and similar sentiments can have a place. The ability and obligation to exercise prolonged gratitude and prolonged revenge—both only within the circle of equals,—artfulness in retaliation, refinement of the idea in friendship, a certain necessity to have enemies (as outlets for the emotions of envy, quarrelsomeness, arrogance—in fact, in order to be a good friend): all these are typical characteristics of the noble morality, which, as has been pointed out, is not the morality of “modern ideas,” and is therefore at present difficult to realize, and also to unearth and disclose.

[Slave Morality]

It is otherwise with the second type of morality, slave-morality. Supposing that the abused, the oppressed, the suffering, the unemancipated, the weary, and those uncertain of themselves should moralize, what will be the common element in their moral estimates? Probably a pessimistic suspicion

with regard to the entire situation of man will find expression, perhaps a condemnation of man, together with his situation. The slave has an unfavourable eye for the virtues of the powerful; he has a skepticism and distrust, a refinement of distrust of everything “good” that is there honoured—he would fain persuade himself that the very happiness there is not genuine. On the other hand, those qualities which serve to alleviate the existence of sufferers are brought into prominence and flooded with light; it is here that sympathy, the kind, helping hand, the warm heart, patience, diligence, humility, and friendliness attain to honour; for here these are the most useful qualities, and almost the only means of supporting the burden of existence. Slave-morality is essentially the morality of utility. Here is the seat of the origin of the famous antithesis “good” and “evil”:—power and dangerousness are assumed to reside in the evil, a certain dreadfulness, subtlety, and strength, which do not admit of being despised. According to slave-morality, therefore, the “evil” man arouses fear; according to mastermorality, it is precisely the “good” man who arouses fear and seeks to arouse it, while the bad man is regarded as the despicable being. The contrast attains its maximum when, in accordance with the logical consequences of slave-morality, a shade of depreciation—it may be slight and well-intentioned—at last attaches itself to the “good” man of this morality; because, according to the servile mode of thought, the good man must in any case be the safe man: he is good-natured, easily deceived, perhaps a little stupid, un bonhomme. Everywhere that slave-morality gains the ascendancy, language shows a tendency to approximate the significations of the words “good” and “stupid.”

[Creation of Values]

A last fundamental difference: the desire for freedom, the instinct for happiness and the refinements of the feeling of liberty belong as necessarily to slave-morals and morality, as artifice and enthusiasm in reverence and devotion are the regular symptoms of an aristocratic mode of thinking and estimating.— Hence we can understand without further detail why love as a passion—it is our European specialty—must absolutely be of noble origin; as is well known, its invention is due to the Provencal poet-cavaliers, those brilliant, ingenious men of the “gai saber,” to whom Europe owes so much, and almost owes itself.

261. Vanity is one of the things which are perhaps most difficult for a noble man to understand: he will be tempted to deny it, where another kind of man thinks he sees it self-evidently. The problem for him is to represent to his mind beings who seek to arouse a good opinion of themselves which they themselves do not possess—and consequently also do not “deserve,”—and who yet believe in this good opinion afterwards. This seems to him on the one hand such bad taste and so self-disrespectful, and on the other hand so grotesquely unreasonable, that he would like to consider vanity an exception, and is doubtful about it in most cases when it is spoken of. He will say, for instance: “I may be mistaken about my value, and on the other hand may nevertheless demand that my value should be acknowledged by others precisely as I rate it:—that, however, is not vanity (but self-conceit, or, in most cases, that which is called ‘humility,’ and also

‘modesty’).” Or he will even say: “For many reasons I can delight in the good opinion of others, perhaps because I love and honour them, and rejoice in all their joys, perhaps also because their good opinion endorses and strengthens my belief in my own good opinion, perhaps because the good opinion of others, even in cases where I do not share it, is useful to me, or gives promise of usefulness:—all this, however, is not vanity.”

The man of noble character must first bring it home forcibly to his mind, especially with the aid of history, that, from time immemorial, in all social strata in any way dependent, the ordinary man was only that which he passed for:—not being at all accustomed to fix values, he did not assign even to himself any other value than that which his master assigned to him (it is the peculiar right of masters to create values).

It may be looked upon as the result of an extraordinary atavism, that the ordinary man, even at present, is still always waiting for an opinion about himself, and then instinctively submitting himself to it; yet by no means only to a “good” opinion, but also to a bad and unjust one (think, for instance, of the greater part of the self-appreciations and self-depreciations which believing women learn from their confessors, and which in general the believing Christian learns from his Church).

“Everywhere slave-morality gains ascendancy, language shows a tendency to approximate the meanings of the words ‘good’ and ‘stupid.’”

In fact, conformably to the slow rise of the democratic social order (and its cause, the blending of the blood of masters and slaves), the originally noble and rare impulse of the masters to assign a value to themselves and to “think well” of themselves, will now be more and more encouraged and extended; but it has at all times an older, ampler, and more radically ingrained propensity opposed to it—and in the phenomenon of “vanity” this older propensity overmasters the younger. The vain person rejoices over every good opinion which he hears about himself (quite apart from the point of view of its usefulness, and equally regardless of its truth or falsehood), just as he suffers from every bad opinion: for he subjects himself to both, he feels himself subjected to both, by that oldest instinct of subjection which breaks forth in him.

It is “the slave” in the vain man’s blood, the remains of the slave’s craftiness—and how much of the “slave” is still left in woman, for instance!—which seeks to seduce to good opinions of itself; it is the slave, too, who immediately afterwards falls prostrate himself before these opinions, as though he had not called them forth.—And to repeat it again: vanity is an atavism.

Ressentiment

Ressentiment is 'a state of repressed feeling and desire' which becomes generative of values. The condition of resentment is complex both in its internal structure and in its relations to various dimensions of human existence. While it infects the heart of the individual, it is rooted in our relatedness with others. On the one hand, resentment is a dark, personal secret, which most of us would never reveal to others even if we could acknowledge it ourselves. On the other hand, resentment has an undeniably public face. It can be creative of social practices, mores, and

fashions; of scholarly attitudes, academic policies, educational initiatives; of political ideologies, institutions, and revolutions; of forms of religiosity and ascetic practices.

The concept of resentment was first developed systematically by Nietzsche in his account of the historical emergence of what he terms 'slave morality' and in his critique of the ascetic ideal. While references to this condition can be found throughout his works, the chief sections in which he develops this notion are in his early work *The Genealogy of Morals*. Max Scheler provides an eidetic account of this complex affective phenomenon in his book entitled *Resentment*. The picture of resentment that emerges from these two thinkers is in part a function of their methodological approaches and their abiding philosophic interests. Nietzsche's historical approach to the development and the corruption of morality is empiricist and deterministic, but it does not have the marks of the narrow positivism that emerged later. His historical method is informed by his philological training in ancient Hellenic texts and by Enlightenment ideals. So, although Nietzsche writes of cultural conflicts in the ancient world as historical fact, he actually uses them as models with universal anthropological significance. His account of the conflict between the Roman warrior class and the Palestinian priestly class is reminiscent of Hegel's master/slave dialectic and prefigures Freud's use of mythological models of conflict. Scheler's phenomenological approach to resentment aims at an understanding of the condition as a whole and in its constitutive elements. Scheler was concerned with grounding an a priori axiological ethics through a phenomenological typology of the field of affectivity. An account of the heart would not be complete without an investigation of the corrosive condition of resentment. His concern is not so much with the historical emergence of resentment but with its constitution as an affect, its relation to the objective hierarchy of values fundamental to his ethics, and its social and political significance. Scheler's approach, then, is more synchronic in contrast to Nietzsche's more diachronic approach. In spite of these significant differences in approach and emphasis, a single picture of resentment emerges from their works.

One may not be surprised by the contention that rationality is the ground of science and analysis. In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle states that it is the task of the philosopher not only to analyze through the use of syllogisms, but also to examine the principles of syllogisms. He proceeds to formulate "the most certain principle of all—the most knowable, and absolute." It is that "the same person cannot at the same time hold the same to be and not to be." (2) Aristotle considered this principle of non-contradiction to be the origin of all axioms, the basis of all syllogistic analysis, the ultimate ground of all scientific knowledge. Similarly, one may not be surprised to read in Kant's *Foundations for the Metaphysics of Morals* that the law of reason, this same law of non-contradiction, is the fundamental principle of his formal a priori ethics. It is this basic law of rationality which receives its moral formulation in the apodictic categorical imperative. (3) It is the rationality of the agent that makes her worthy of respect, and undergirds the practical imperative. It is not surprising that rationality would be found to be fundamental to science in general or to ethical knowledge specifically. What is curious is that rationality may also be essential to that most "irrational" perversion of morality—resentment. How could rationality be at the very core of affective corruption? Even the well-ordered heart, for Scheler, is non-rational, let alone the corrupt heart. I intend to show how a rationality essential to resentment can be found in the very affects which give rise to and fuel resentment. As we will see, resentment always starts with and involves one or more negative feelings. Nietzsche's account of resentment focuses on the desire for revenge, and Scheler's account focuses on envy.

The story according to Nietzsche's account in the *Genealogy* is that the Palestinian Jewish rabbis constituted a noble class who believed that they had a special position as mediators between God and His chosen people. This station in life conferred on them a spiritual superiority to other Palestinians and to all non-Jews. The Romans who conquered them had a different set of values.

They too saw themselves as noble, but their superiority consisted primarily in their physical might, their vital strength which enabled them to conquer and enslave others and occupy their lands. The Jewish priests resented the imposition of this Roman control over their lives, but they felt impotent to do anything about it. The brute power of the Romans particularly galled them, because they believed themselves to be their superiors intellectually and spiritually. The Roman warrior conquerors did not feel particularly resentful about the claims of spiritual superiority of the Jews, because these claims even if true in no way interfered with their own aspirations. The members of the noble Roman class were able to pursue and satisfy their desires and enjoy the kind of life they valued. The members of the noble Jewish class, meanwhile, felt their powerful positions unjustly usurped by their conquerors, but were unable to openly retaliate. The Jewish priests did not simply resign themselves in humility to their inferior social position. They had a deep sense of self-esteem and pride, and this fueled a simmering rage at their situation and hatred toward their conquerors. All of this, so far, according to Nietzsche is perfectly natural and understandable. The perversion and corruption enters in not with the ruthlessness and bloody violence of the conquerors nor with the frustration, rage, hatred, and desire for revenge of the conquered, but with the mendacity and self-deception to which the conquered ultimately resort. In order to maintain pride and a sense of superiority over their conquerors, the Palestinians both reaffirmed the value of the spiritual, and denied the values of vital might, political prestige and power, and worldly riches.

Christianity with other-worldly orientation and its ascetic practices represents for Nietzsche the crown of Jewish resentment, its most elaborate and perfect achievement. Nietzsche traces the birth of the Christian ideal to the following mechanism of resentment:

the Jews, that priestly people, who in opposing their enemies and conquerors were ultimately satisfied with nothing less than a radical revaluation of their enemies' values, that is to say, an act of the most spiritual revenge. For this alone was appropriate to a priestly people, the people embodying the most deeply repressed priestly vengefulness. (4)

With the emergence of Christianity we have the successful slave-revolt in morality with its accompanying new set of values and virtues, and its underlying ascetic ideal. The slave revolt in morality begins when resentment itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the resentment of natures that are denied the true reaction, that of deeds, esteemed, desired and possessed by the noble. It is the rejection of external goods such as honor and prestige, political power and influence, wealth, physical strength and beauty; and as well a disparagement of those virtues, especially courage and pride, characteristic of the Greco-Roman nobleman, Aristotle's megalopsychos. This devaluation is not simply an intellectual denial of their worth, but the gradual formation of negative affective responses to these goods and virtues. The goods and virtues associated with the despised nobility, themselves come to be hated as evil. (5) In the place of the negatively apprehended values, traits and devices found expedient for sheer survival of the weak are elevated to the status of goods and virtues. Thus, the weakness of the oppressed is transformed into virtue and the original power and strength of the noble is now considered evil and sinful.

Scheler is not concerned with the historical genealogy of resentment; instead, he describes the sociological conditions which foster it. Scheler considers resentment to arise as a function of the inequality in social conditions. While he would not consider the inequality of social positions to be unnatural—in fact, he considers it to be inevitable—one's response to this inequality can be more or less healthy, more or less corrupt. Drawing on the work of Simmel, he distinguishes two basic attitudes to perceived inequality—that of the noble man and that of the common man. It should be noted that while the categories, noble and common, are basically sociological, Scheler considers an individual of any socio-economic stratum, even of either gender, to be capable of nobility. But he does not believe that members of lower classes and women in general are typically blessed with nobility of spirit.

Both types compare themselves to others: "Each of us—noble or common, good or evil—continually compares his own value with that of others." (6) The common man derives his awareness of his relative worth through comparison with others, but the noble man enjoys an original sense of his own self-worth. The noble man's original self-confidence pre-conditions his apprehension of the values borne by others. Scheler distinguishes this non-reflective self-confidence from pride, which he views as a derivative, deliberate grasping at self-worth. Scheler here contributes a fine distinction not found in Nietzsche, for whom to be noble simply meant to be naturally proud. The immediate sense of self-worth is not experienced by the common man nor does he apprehend values independently of their being possessed by others. Scheler writes, "The noble man experiences value prior to any comparison, the common man in and through a comparison." (7) The common man's valuation is derivative. He watches the noble man and since he identifies the noble man with all that is good and desirable, he attaches value to whatever the noble man possesses.

Scheler further distinguishes two fundamental types of the common man: the arriviste represents the strong, energetic type and the man of resentment represents the weak. The arriviste vigorously pursues the goods and stations in life which are associated with the values possessed by the noble, but he does not pursue these goods for their intrinsic worth. His efforts are expended for the sake of being more highly esteemed than others. The insecurity of the arriviste is profound. He must unceasingly construct a sense of his worth through comparisons with others. Feelings of self-satisfaction are accumulated through looking down upon those he has surpassed, but these feelings are impermanent. The vision of those who surpass him continuously fuels his competitive drive. Scheler does not explicitly distinguish the arriviste from the aspiring noble man. I think we can conclude that the mark of nobility is not to have attained all the goods and bear all the values, but to aspire to those goods as intrinsically valuable, for their own sake and not for the sake of rising above others.

The second type of common man shares the ontological insecurity of the arriviste, but he feels a profound weakness. This is the man of resentment. His weakness is not fleeting; it does not come upon him like an illness, but he experiences it as a permanent condition of his existence. He feels fundamentally alienated from the values possessed by the noble man. He senses that there is an impassable divide between the object of desire and himself. The man of resentment differs little from the arriviste originally, but as Scheler's account reveals, his condition becomes increasingly complex.

The easiest way to review Scheler's eidetic description of the unit of affectivity, named resentment, is to describe it as if it emerges gradually in stages. Inasmuch as resentment functions as an underlying affective condition that permeates one's conscious intentionality, there is no simple experience or apprehension of resentment. It is manifested in myriad ways. Yet, this whole affective unit has a number of essential constituents. Initially there is a desire for the values apprehended as possessed by others and as borne by certain goods. For example, there are the values of physical strength, health, beauty, liberty, intelligence, wisdom, integrity, fidelity, and holiness. This list follows roughly the course of Scheler's a priori hierarchy of values. The mere apprehension of values possessed by others and borne by specific goods is not distinctive of the man of resentment. So far, as we have seen, the aspiring noble man and the arriviste also apprehend such values. We must add to this apprehension the fundamental sense of insecurity and lack of self-worth, which the man of resentment shares with the arriviste. What sets the man of resentment apart from the arriviste is his sense of impotence, his feeling of weakness. Yet, it is possible to feel incapable of striving for what one apprehends as valuable, and simply resign oneself to one's lot in life; and such resignation is not invariably unhappy, resentful, or despairing. In order for resentment to take hold there must be the addition of certain negative affects in

response to this perceived inability to attain what one so deeply desires. Nietzsche focuses on the negative feelings hatred and the desire for revenge in his genealogy. Scheler expands upon Nietzsche's account by offering us a tour through his own wax museum of affective horrors. He describes such negative affects as anger, rage, begrudging, rancor, spite, Schadenfreude, hatred, malice, the tendency to detract, jealousy, envy, resentment, desire for revenge. Ressentiment does not involve in every case all of these negative tendencies, desires and emotions, but it necessarily involves some such negative affect. Scheler provides a phenomenology of envy to exemplify the development of resentment.

Envy is itself a complex and cyclic emotion. It involves the apprehension of values possessed by another, a strong desire for those values, a feeling of impotence to attain those values, and a sense of injustice at this inability. A sense of injustice, as we have seen, grounded in an original sense of self-worth, underlies and fuels the desire for revenge. If one does not feel that one deserves to possess the desired value, then a feeling of impotence would simply lead to resignation. But with a notion of entitlement combined with a fundamental rational exigence for consistency, the apprehension of a desired value possessed by another leads one to the unspoken insistence: "Why can't I have that? I deserve that too!" When one feels, "I deserve that, by right, even more than that other one," a feeling of resentment emerges. But envy does not necessarily lead to resentment, and resentment alone is not resentment. The sense of injustice combined now with the persistent desire for the value and its continued frustration due to weakness and finitude naturally makes one angry. As these elements of envy interact, they are intensified and the anger can grow into a simmering rage. In the envious, rage is directed toward the other who possesses the desired value and grows into a hatred of that person or type of person. The more one's attention is directed towards the object of one's envy, the more impotent one feels and in fact becomes. Envy is an extremely stressful affective syndrome, which has no internal equilibrium or term. The rage ignites the desire, which is again thwarted by the feeling of powerlessness, and the simmering sense of unfairness rekindles the rage.

Envy becomes resentment when one convinces oneself that the envied values, which are beyond one's reach, are not really valuable after all:

To relieve the tension, the common man seeks a feeling of superiority or equality, and he attains his purpose by an illusory devaluation of the other man's qualities or by a specific "blindness" to these qualities. But secondly—and here lies the main achievement of resentment—he falsifies the values themselves which could bestow excellence on any possible object of comparison. (8)

The original desire for these values, however, and the negative feelings of rage and hatred for those who possess these values, are not eliminated through this devaluation. They are repressed to lead a subterranean life in the psyche. One is not conscious of one's own desire and one's own rage and spite. This repression successfully eliminates from consciousness the painful frustration of envy. One can even feel good about oneself; one can feel happy and superior to the poor individuals who possess the now devalued and ridiculed values.

Drawing on Nietzsche's and Scheler's accounts of resentment, we can sum up its internal structure. It is a cycle with the following constitutive elements: an original sense of self-worth; the apprehension of and desire for certain values; the frustration of one's desire for those values; a sense of impotence to achieve those values; a sense of the unfairness or injustice of not being able to attain them; anger, resentment, hatred towards the bearer of those values, and often a desire to seek revenge; the devaluation of the originally sought values; repression of the desire for the devalued values and of negative affects such as hatred, envy, desire for revenge; a feeling of superiority over those who seek and possess the now devalued values; and a confirmed sense of self-worth.

Ressentiment is a cycle inasmuch as it recurs. The person of resentment relives the desires and feelings which constitute the condition even as these affects are repressed. The cycle of

ressentiment, significantly, begins and ends with a sense of self-worth.

We found in Nietzsche's story of the ancient Palestinian nobility a wounded pride which fueled their vengefulness. Similarly, the sense of desert characteristic of envy is consistent with a feeling of self-worth. Scheler, however, omits this element from his account of envy, and consequently from his description of resentment. He begins his analysis with the distinction between the noble and the common man, and characterizes the latter as lacking a fundamental sense of self-worth. I think Nietzsche is closer to the mark in this regard. He argues that a desire for revenge is not typical of a slavish mentality. One who has no spirit, limited self-consciousness, and consequently is not enlightened as to her autonomy, tends to be content with her lot in life. To seek vengeance or feel envy one must have some sense of personal dignity, at least an inchoate notion that one deserves better simply because of being oneself.

According to Kant, the dignity and worth of a person is due to her rationality. One has worth not insofar as one acts rationally or thinks rationally, but because the law of reason is intrinsic to the self as a rational being. One may have worth a priori and yet not have any sense of self-esteem. The person of resentment, though, at least according to Nietzsche, is a person of pride, one who feels self-worth. And, as we have seen above, the envious person must also have a sense of self-worth in order to feel that she also deserves to possess what is possessed by the other. Thus, the person of resentment not only has intrinsic worth as a rational being, but also has a sense of her worth. Rationality grounds the worth of the person and, conversely, a sense of self-worth leads to rational demands for consistency. If feels oneself to be worthy—as worthy as any other, then one deserves to possess the values enjoyed by the other. If the other robs me of my prestige and power, then the other deserves to suffer. Such sentiments fuel envy and the desire for revenge. The sense of fairness, justice, proper balance at work in these feelings is rooted in the basic law of reason. The perceived injustice of the situation would have no sting if one were content with inconsistency, if one did not have within a rational exigence. The fact that in envy, the desire for revenge, and the resentment which may ensue the use of one's reason is partial and faulty, does not diminish the essentially rational nature of these affects.

Further, the need for repression of the negative affects and the need to devalue the unattainable values are also a function of the rationality of the person of resentment. For example, it is necessary to repress the hatred one feels towards another only because it would be inconsistent with the friendly manner one wishes to adopt in their presence. Or, it is necessary to deny the value of an unattainable value only insofar as its desirability would be inconsistent with contentment in its absence. Again, the reasoning in these examples is partial and mistaken, but there is a demand for consistency that makes such machinations necessary.

Hegel

179. Put two self-consciousnesses face-to-face and it's like putting two mirrors face-to-face: each reflects itself in the other, each sees itself in the other. Its like this: I know; you know; I know that you know; you know that I know; I know that you know that I know; you know that I know that you know -- this goes on and on, and nobody can stand it.

182-183. Domination and submission are based on useful action involving objects of natural biological desire. How would I know if I were the dominant person? Because while I would do things FOR MY SELF, you would also do everything FOR MY SELF and not for your self. I would live strictly FOR MY SELF; you would live FOR ANOTHER. You would not live for yourself at all. Since you will do everything for my self and nothing for your self, you will effectively cease to live. You will have no life of your own; you'll be dead.

185-186. Tension builds. The symmetry of mutual recognition is unstable. The symmetry must be broken so that of the two opposed self-consciousnesses, one is going to be only recognized (master), the other only recognizing (slave).

187. The only way to settle the matter is in a fight to the death, in which one self-consciousness wins (lives) and the other loses (dies). the relation of the two self-conscious individuals is such that they have to settle their equal oppositio by means of a life-and-death struggle -- a dialectical death-match! Freedom can only be won by risking one's whole life, by holding nothing back.

It's like playing a game of chicken: both contestants know that one of them has to surrender or they'll both die. The pressure on each to surrender increases.

192. It might seem like the master's got it made: the slave does all his or her work, and recognizes the master's power. The problem is, this isn't the kind of recognition that the master wanted. The master wanted to be recognized by somebody that he or she respects as an equal, as a peer. Instead, the master gets recognition only from a slave, and the master knows that the slave doesn't really respect him or her, but resents and hates the master.

195. Work involves discipline and skill. As the slave becomes more disciplined and skilled, his or her power balances that of the master. Immediately after the life-or-death struggle, the master controls the slave and the master is independent; the slave is controlled by the master and the slave is dependent. But now things are equalized: the master controls the slave, but the master is dependent; the slave is controlled by the master, but the slave is independent. The dialectic has balanced the relations between master and slave. Ironically, this is what the master wanted in the first place: the master didn't really want a slave, but respect from a peer.

The result of the slave's turning into a craftsman is that the master also turns into one: the master and slave both realize that they each benefit more from mutual exchange of services rather than from domination. Political domination turns into economic cooperation.

Beyond Hegel and Nietzsche – Consensual Master/slave Relations

Modern society has introduced a strange twist on the Master/slave dialectic, that of consensually based Master/slave relations. While in a sense any business or military organization functions in this way, some coercion, whether by wages or patriotism or otherwise has historically been involved. The uniqueness of the current small but noticeable contingent of consensual Master/slave situations (that they have their own organizations, their own subculture and set of shared meanings etc.) points to a different possibility of resolution of the dialectic itself.

The topology of an any intimate situation the members are placed in such a manner that the "between" of each member's place is the conjoining of the members themselves, in that they are not isolated subject-things but are the "open" that creates the place in which they can appear to one another as the people they are. As a result there is no "between" in the common sense of a space between objects (subject-egos) but a shared place that is constituted by the members themselves. Each "place", and the situation-place as a whole has differences that imply what is appropriate for each member as far as duties and comportment to the other members and to any other beings that appear in that clearing.

Each consensual Master/slave topology, as well, is unique, as the topology of the individuals within it and their appropriate places. What "proper" means in this instance varies topology to topology although there are certain attributes in common. As a topology itself, the different 'places' do not imply the type of hierarchy of being as in Nietzsche, nor an initial struggle as in Hegel. The topology comes together on the accord of the members themselves with full mutual recognition. This recognition is possible in the first place because each member recognizes the other(s) as initially equal. What is 'appropriate' then to each member is simply the place in which they feel the most comfortable. In some topologies the differences of place are restricted to only one or a few situations, in others they extend to all member interactivity. Consensuality, as well, may be ongoing or the need for consent may be one of the 'rights' given up by the slave at the initiation of the topology or later on when full trust is established.

The underlying difference between the Master and slave in their comportment is that the Master's comportment is always firstly a listening, while the slave's is always firstly a hearing. The similarity is intentional, but the implied difference is crucial. Hearing, *horen*, meant both to hear and to obey, with no differentiation. A proper hearing, then, implies obedience. The Master, though, listens. Any speaking, especially an ordering speaking, is simultaneously a careful listening. The care taken in the listening is what determines the appropriateness of the ordering. Without careful listening the ordering is arbitrary and leads to tyranny rather than mastery. That this situation can have an intrinsic bearing on the meaning of 'enowning' as enownment/enslavement is a fairly obvious consequence.

4.2 External Society - Past - Reaching - Tradition

4.2.1 Historical, history of Moments / Epochs / Breakages

4.2.1.1 Moment of Nihilism - theology as script of the death of God

"God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?"

"A man is running through a marketplace shouting, "I seek God! I seek God!" He arouses some amusement; no one takes him seriously. Maybe he took an ocean voyage? Lost his way like a little child? Maybe he's afraid of us (non-believers) and is hiding?-- much laughter. Frustrated, the madman smashes his lantern on the ground, crying out that "God is dead, and we have killed him, you and I!" "But I have come too soon," he immediately realizes, as his detractors of a minute before stare in astonishment: people cannot yet see that they have killed God. He goes on to say: This prodigious event is still on its way, still wandering; it has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time, the light of the stars requires time, deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars—and yet they have done it themselves.

—trans. Walter Kaufmann, *The Gay Science*, sect. 125

Earlier in the book (section 108), Nietzsche wrote "God is Dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. And we — we still have to vanquish his shadow, too." The protagonist in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* also speaks the words, commenting to himself after visiting a hermit who, every day, sings songs and lives to glorify his god:

'And what is the saint doing in the forest?' asked Zarathustra. The saint answered: 'I make songs and sing them; and when I make songs, I laugh, cry, and hum: thus do I praise God. With singing, crying, laughing, and humming do I praise the god who is my god. But what do you bring us as a gift?' When Zarathustra had heard these words he bade the saint farewell and said: 'What could I have to give you? But let me go quickly lest I take something from you!' And thus they separated, the old one and the man, laughing as two boys laugh. But when Zarathustra was alone he spoke thus to his heart: 'Could it be possible? This old saint in the forest has not yet heard anything of this, that God is dead!'

The death of God is a way of saying that humans are no longer able to believe in any such cosmic order since they themselves no longer recognize it. The death of God will lead, Nietzsche says, not only to the rejection of a belief of cosmic or physical order but also to a rejection of absolute values themselves — to the rejection of belief in an objective and universal moral law, binding upon all individuals. In this manner, the loss of an absolute basis for morality leads to nihilism. This nihilism is what Nietzsche worked to find a solution for by re-evaluating the foundations of human values. This meant, to Nietzsche, looking for foundations that went deeper than Christian values. He would find a basis in the "will to power" that he described as "the essence of reality."

Nietzsche believed that the majority of people did not recognize this death out of the deepest-seated

fear or angst.

Altizer offered a radical theology of the death of God that drew upon William Blake, Hegelian thought and Nietzschean ideas. He conceived of theology as a form of poetry in which the immanence (presence) of God could be encountered in faith communities. However, he no longer accepted the possibility of affirming belief in a transcendent God. Altizer concluded that God had incarnated in Christ and imparted his immanent spirit which remained in the world even though Jesus was dead.

Unlike Nietzsche, Altizer believed that God truly died. He is considered to be the leading exponent of the Death of God movement.

While we lack a proper name for God, there is nonetheless an actual naming of namelessness which is the naming of nothingness. The synthesis which Altizer brings about, however, is more than linguistic: the naming of God takes place in a world devoid of truth and knowledge. In a post-Nietzschean world we are confronted by the emptiness of our myths, for we have abandoned ourselves to the abysmal depths of a profound mystery. Altizer locates this mystery in the depths of a fully transfigured subject, and so it is that the naming of God is the inevitable naming of ourselves. The mystery is entirely dialectical; it is the speaking and naming of God as the historical actualization of God. For Altizer, then, it is the absolute turning away from us and from God that ensures an absolute negativity which is likewise, by that very negativity, an apocalyptic naming of the nameless. Rejecting God, turning away from the outside or the invisible, is an active process. It depends upon a certain tension between the self and other, or the inside and outside, which does not immediately resolve itself in the act of rejection. It is that tension between opposites which maintains the presence of absence even in the rejection of an absolute outside: “[T]his is that pure transcendence which is reversed in a uniquely modern atheism, an atheism impossible apart from this very transcendence, and hence an atheism essentially related to that transcendence, so that our atheism is a true heterodoxy, and as such inseparable from Christian orthodoxy”

5 Evental - Origin of the Horizon, Fourfold of the Event, the Highest Principle, a god and man that for a moment stands outside ontology.

The Event as non-ontological is the origin of the Horizon, the evental nature of which changes the meanings associated to whole and part within the world. Some thing-idea presents as the highest principle. A god guarantees this Principle. Man responds to the event in terms of fidelity/infidelity. Žižek's notion that the 'people of the Holy Ghost' were originally faithful (*fidelus*) to the event of the death of God. Meaning of 'faith' changes from 'faithfulness' (i.e. I am faithful to my wife) to 'belief' between Matthew/Mark and John within the Christian tradition.

Badiou sees the Event as outside ontology, but the twin (and related) ideologies of revolutionary marxism and technology cause him to raise the *matheme* above natural language, leaving him stuck in its limits, and also leading him to the same conclusion as Descartes, which is merely to say that the substantial subject is without doubt, which of course it is if mathematics is the basis. Badiou's reintroduction of the Subject in this sense is then a betrayal of his fundamental insight.

5.1 Socio-cultural context in our theories of the universe.

Premise 1: scientific theories always have a socio-cultural background, not in content but in why the question was raised.

Premise 2: facts derived from experimentation on theories are theory-laden, in that they only have any sense in terms of the theory, otherwise they are merely noise.

Premise 3: as a result of the above the results of scientific theories and experiments, through interpretation, are brought back within the World of the as-structure, meaning, logos, ereignis.

Whether more accurate models imply better ontological realism as to the noumenal universe, they are at the same time bound to developments in thinking as a whole through a particular socio-cultural base.

References therefore to scientific theory are not to justify philosophy on a scientific basis but rather to show the prevalence of certain unwritten ideas, and the way they affect our research in natural science as much as our literary theory.

5.1.1 Epicureus and Aristotle, Meister Eckhart, Quantum Mechanics, Heidegger on matter, the 'nothing', the Godhead

- **Atomisms**
- **Defintion of empty space**
- **Epicureus**

Following his belief that the world is made of matter and empty space, he states that the world has no beginning, nor does it have an end. This world has always existed and will always exist.

According to Epicurus, nothing comes into existence from nothing. This argument leads him into the belief that there is no higher being that created the universe and man. Furthermore, he believes that the universe is limitless and that there is always empty space for an unlimited amount of atoms to fall.

Aristotle

Aristotle does not accept the concept that there is the possibility of empty space and void, that there exists a space in which nothing exists. Aristotle disagrees mainly because of his notion of potentiality. According to his idea of potentiality, wherever there is space, there is potentially a substance. Potentiality is just the possibility of having some form, and what is formed into a substance is matter. Therefore, wherever there is space there has to be matter. Matter never exists unformed; as a result, the idea of empty space, or a void, is a contradiction in terms. Although they both agree that matter does exist, Aristotle believes that everything is made up of matter, and there is never the chance of void, empty spaces.

Empty space is indistiguishable from unformed matter, since nothing can come from nothing what we perceive as empty space is merely unformed matter. What is not actual matter exists as pure potential.

20th Century Quantum Mechanics

In quantum mechanics, the vacuum is defined as the state (i.e. solution to the equations of the theory) with the lowest energy. To first approximation, this is simply a state with no particles, hence

the name.

Even an ideal vacuum, thought of as the complete absence of anything, will not in practice remain empty. Consider a vacuum chamber that has been completely evacuated, so that the (classical) particle concentration is zero. The walls of the chamber will emit light in the form of black body radiation. This light causes momentum, so the vacuum does have a radiation pressure. This limitation applies even to the vacuum of interstellar space. Even if a region of space contains no particles, the cosmic microwave background fills the entire universe with black body radiation originating from the space's boundary.

An ideal vacuum cannot exist even inside of a molecule. Each atom in the molecule exists as a probability function of space, which has a certain non-zero value everywhere in a given volume. Thus, even "between" the atoms there is a certain probability of finding a particle, so the space cannot be said to be a vacuum.

More fundamentally, quantum mechanics predicts that vacuum energy will be different from its naive, classical value. The quantum correction to the energy is called the zero-point energy and consists of energies of virtual particles that have a brief existence. This is called vacuum fluctuation. Vacuum fluctuations may also be related to the so-called cosmological constant in cosmology. The best evidence for vacuum fluctuations is the Casimir effect and the Lamb shift.[18] In quantum field theory and string theory, the term "vacuum" is used to represent the ground state in the Hilbert space, that is, the state with the lowest possible energy. In free (non-interacting) quantum field theories, this state is analogous to the ground state of a quantum harmonic oscillator. If the theory is obtained by quantization of a classical theory, each stationary point of the energy in the configuration space gives rise to a single vacuum. String theory is believed to have a huge number of vacua - the so-called string theory landscape.

Interestingly each quanta of space contains an infinite quantity of energy. The inherent overflow is known as the Casimir effect.

Distinguishing unformed matter from the void is not only not possible, it would damage the theorem that the most basic particles of matter are precisely forms in the void. Having no mass but only angle and potentially spin, it could be put that while the materialists have a point down to the absolute lowest level of matter, at that initial stage, at least, form precedes matter.

Eckhart and Other Christian and Gnostic Mysticism

God--the personal God--is the self realization, or revelation, of the Godhead, the forthcoming of the Godhead into personalization and manifestation. The Godhead is the "unnatured Nature," i.e. the unoriginated Reality, the Ground of all revelation; God is the "natured Nature," i.e. the Divine expressed in Personal Form. The Godhead is the Wordless One; God is the uttered Word. The procession of God, in Eckhart's system, is by no means the same thing as the Divine Emanations in the system of Plotinus and his followers. For Eckhart there is no mere "overflow" of the Godhead--his idea is much subtler than that. The forthcoming of God is in this wise. The Godhead, "the unnatured Nature," in an "Eternal Now," beholds Himself, i.e. becomes an object of consciousness to Himself, and thus He becomes revealed to Himself. This is the beginning of the process of revelation. This is called "the begetting of the Son," the uttering of the Divine "Word." When God becomes conscious of Himself, there is differentiation into subject and object, or, as Eckhart says, into Father and Son. But we must not suppose that it happened at a temporal moment, before which the Son was unborn and God was not yet God. That view is too crude. Eckhart insists that the Son is eternally begotten;"

i.e. The self realization of the Godhead in God provides for self-consciousness, the begetting of the Son provides for Love.

Leibniz

The identity of indiscernibles is an ontological principle which states that two or more objects or entities are identical (are one and the same entity), if they have all their properties in common. That is, entities x and y are identical if any predicate possessed by x is also possessed by y and vice versa. A related principle is the indiscernibility of identicals, discussed below.

The principle is also known as Leibniz's law since a form of it is attributed to the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. It is one of his two great metaphysical principles, the other being the principle of sufficient reason. Both are famously used in his arguments with Newton and Clarke in the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence.

Heidegger and Set Theory, "Zero, Absence, 'the Nothing', and the Empty Set"

In English: the empty class is defined as the group of things that are not themselves ($\{x: x \text{ does not equal } x\}$). And because this group can be found in any collection of objects (that is, there is always room for nothing in any collection), by a set-theoretical axiom we deduce that this collection is itself a set: the set of nothing. Lewis continues to note (with language rarely found in texts on mathematical logic) that the empty set can also be thought of as "a little speck of sheer nothingness, a sort of black hole in the fabric of Reality itself...a special individual with a whiff of nothingness about it." 16 17

Heidegger's definition of 'the nothing' is "the negation of the totality of beings." Given the definition of the empty set as the set of things that are not themselves, it is difficult to ignore the similarities between "the set of nothing," a set-theoretical entity that refers to all things that are not; and "the negation of the totality of beings." The former, an entity in a logic used for purposes of communication, can be used to refer to the latter. Thus mathematical logic can alleviate the aforementioned worries about Heidegger's 'the nothing'.

To head off some initial concerns: this paper does not equate Heidegger's ontology with that of set theory. In fact set theory, as Potter notes, is a language used to communicate about objects. This is a point in harmony with Heidegger's comment concerning mathematical knowledge's lack of rigor—that is, it is difficult to make claims about the metaphysical status of other objects (like geese) using mathematics. Set theory is thus an ideal tool for Heidegger's arguments because it is a language with which we can logically interpret his idea of 'the nothing'.

But with such an unusual (and by no means obvious) correlation between a phenomenological account of metaphysics and a branch of mathematical logic, a more careful explanation of arithmetic and how it helps Heidegger is necessary to make this connection clear.

3) Zero, Absence, 'the Nothing', and the Empty Set

A simple way of thinking about numbers, such as zero or one or two, is that they are a method of counting. Numbers quantify objects in the world: they account for the presence of things. For instance, take the statement "there are two cumquats in the basket." 'Two' in this sentence tells us how many objects, namely cumquats, there are in the basket. There are also no elephants in the basket. Zero, then, is a number that tells us how many elephants are in the basket: none.

Bringing the discussion back to set theory, one might say that the empty set is the set of all the elephants in the basket. If we wanted to talk about the set of all things that are not in the basket, we would use the same language: the empty set is the set of all things that are not in the basket.

Straying now from the basket image entirely, it is clear that the empty set is the set of all things that are not—it is the set of nothing.

This brings us back to Heidegger. As has been noted several times, Heidegger defines 'the nothing' as "the negation of the totality of beings." To alleviate the problems of contradiction in Heidegger's

concept of 'the nothing', I think it is possible to adopt a set-theoretical understanding of it. To restate the problem at hand: how are we to discuss a concept called 'the nothing' when thought necessarily thinks of something? If we remember the empty set at this point and conclusion from section two, we should be able to speak logically about the collection of negated things: we can just refer to the 'the nothing' with the empty set and continue the discussion without issue. But can the empty set really refer to "the negation of the totality of beings"? Perhaps a better question to address before this one is: Where do Heidegger's ideas meet the quantificational realm of mathematics, and how does this meeting ground provide a sturdy platform on which Heidegger and set theory can be brought together?

Heidegger writes that

We can of course think the whole of beings in an 'idea,' then negate what we have imagined in our thought, and thus 'think' it negated. In this way we do attain the formal concept of the imagined nothing...¹⁸

If we were to imagine 'the nothing' as such, we might picture a cloudy mass with no particular shape or size. Here, again, we find that we are thinking about something that is nothing. This is a problem also present in the concept of the number zero: to what does zero really refer? If it refers to simply nothing, then it still seems to be the case that this nothing is something because a word is used to refer to it and words necessarily refer to things. So this confusion about zero ends up being somewhat short-sighted: zero refers to the absence of things—not just absence. We experience the absence of things all the time, and thus we experience the nothing all the time: "we do know the nothing if only as a word we rattle off everyday."¹⁹ The number of elephants in the basket is one case, but there are countless others. For example, the number of red letters on this page is zero. The number of dogs in my last philosophy lecture was zero. The number of books that I have read by Dan Brown is zero. Indeed, when we ask if there are any red letters on this sheet of paper the answer, given that there are none, is some variation of: there are not any red letters on the paper. So when we negate a thing (not-red letter, not-dog, not-elephant, etc) the linguistic result is that we have no-thing. We refer to a thing's absence with an absence—the fact that it is not present. Zero is how we deal with this absence in arithmetic. It is here, where zero and negation meet, that Heidegger's metaphysics meets mathematics.

The most important connection here is between the reference of the word 'zero' and the definition of 'the nothing' because it is parallel to the connection between 'the nothing' and the empty set. If we imagine sets as circles, like Venn diagrams, the empty set refers to the number of things that two non-overlapping circles share: nothing (remember the gaggles of geese sharing no goslings in common). The empty set is the collection of all things that are not quantified as one: all the red letters on this page, the dogs in my last lecture, the number of Dan Brown books I have read, etc. Going back to Machover's technical definition of the empty set "for $n = 0$ we get the empty class $\{ \} = \{x: x \text{ does not equal } x\}$," remember that the empty class is at the zero value in a numbered collection of objects. The empty set is thus a singular entity that refers to all things that are absent. In other words: it is a collection whose members are no-things. Now we see more clearly how the empty set refers to Heidegger's 'the nothing': the former refers to a set of things that are not and the latter refers a group of things that are not. Here, it is hard to see how the empty set could not be utilized as a theoretical aid for Heidegger's account of metaphysics.

But, one might ask, is there a philosophical difference between the presence of a thing and the being of a thing? In other words, can we equate the mathematical concept of presence with Heidegger's concept of being? Heidegger writes that "the nothing...is nonbeing pure and simple."²⁰ These questions highlight the differences between the philosophical approaches of a set theorist and a phenomenologist like Heidegger. If mathematical presence (denoted by any number greater than zero) and being (which denotes an extremely complex existential state of affairs) are similar, then

zero does in fact refer to the negation of a thing as Heidegger means it when he writes “nonbeing... pure and simple.” But are nonbeing and absence similar in this regard? This is a significant issue that deserves much attention. But a thorough response to these questions would entail an analysis of Heidegger’s conception of being and the mathematical philosopher’s conception of existential quantification. Such an analysis is not within the bounds of this essay, but, again, is deserving of close attention.

While this issue remains up in the air, there are several more concrete problems with the present account. First among them is that Heidegger explicitly says the ‘the nothing’ is not an object: “The nothing is neither an object, nor any being at all.”²¹ In the definitions provided here of the empty set, all have called the empty set an object or entity that is quantifiable as one thing. This is a problem for the claim that there is a relationship between the empty set and the nothing. However, as mentioned in the beginning of the paper, the ontology of set theory is not identified with that of Heidegger’s here. The claim is merely that set theory provides a logical way of referring to the nothing, which is supposedly an incoherent entity. While it appears to be the case that ‘the nothing’ is something and therefore a dubious topic for philosophical argument, the empty set is an entity (also composed of nothing) that is used to refer to the collection of objects that are not; and it is confidently and extensively written about by logicians of axiomatic set theory. So whether or not the empty set is a being does not necessarily affect its use as term with which we can talk about ‘the nothing’.²²

Logicians, however, disagree about how to interpret the empty set; that is, how it fits into the rest of set theory. Lewis, for instance, claims that set theory need only be thought of as “memberlessness” in set theory to do the empty set’s work.²³ These differing interpretations might limit the empty set’s helping power. If it is supposed to refer to the nothing, and some of interpretations of the empty set (like Lewis’) have little to do with its characterization as “the collection of things that are not,” then the relationship between the two (that one refers to the other) is less clear. This matter of interpretation is certainly a problem. But consider the Machover quotation cited several pages ago that stipulates nothingness as being present in any grouping: “Clearly, \emptyset is included in any class and in particular any set...” That absence should be accounted for in set theory makes some sense. Recall the basket of cumquats. If there are no elephants present in that basket, that must be accounted for. While there are quite a few no-things in the basket (no-pterodactyls, no-Japanese babies, no-stalagmites, the list goes on) it is clear that nothing, to some extent, is present in the basket (because there are no Japanese babies, stalagmites, etc). So it goes with any set or class. And while it is not mandatory according to Lewis that nothing be accounted for in set theory, it certainly makes things much easier. In fact, in set theory, it is possible to derive the entire set of natural numbers (one, two, three, four... all the way to infinity) from nothing. As Lewis himself remarks You better believe in it the empty set, and with the utmost confidence; for then you can believe with equal confidence in its singleton, the class of that singleton and the null set, the new singleton of that class, the class of that new singleton and the old singleton and the null set, and so on until have enough modeling clay to make the whole of mathematics.²⁴

As noted above, nothing is always present in collections of things. Given this, along with the very fact that the empty set is interpretable at all, the differing interpretations of the empty set do not present debilitating problems for the present account. So the empty set and ‘the nothing’ can, in fact, still have a working relationship.

Of course, mathematics itself is a language of ontology. Mathematical innovations are never the result of simple derivation from the known, but always involve an ontological consideration.

5.1.1.1 Time - Western - African - Heideggerian

Aristotle's Definition of Time

Linear sequence of 'nows' stretching into the past and the future.

Time - Deleuze on Bergson, Aristotle and Leibniz

"The first shift observed by Deleuze leaves behind the Euclidian geometry of movement as an essential character of time. It also leaves behind Aristotle, who follows the Platonic logic to proclaiming that 'time is a number' (Deleuze 1989: 130). For Aristotle, time moves by increments, some of which are so small as to allow us to call them instants. Once divided into instants, time becomes the purview of sciences, first abstract, such as mathematics, physics and astronomy and then bio-technological: cryogenics, bionics, robotics, etc. The connection of time to technology makes Deleuze use Ford's assembly line as a metaphor for the movement image; it is a line that moves and, as it moves, it accumulates, adds to the original image thus making the image appear as if it gets fuller and fuller with every frame and every cut until it reaches completeness. Charles Chaplin's 1936 film *Modern Times* serves as an illustration of this model; in general, argues Deleuze, the old cinema fills up the space of perception by showing time as a sequentially ordered movement toward a pre-specified point of destination (imaginary) or backward toward an achieved product (memory).

Leibniz

Deleuze contrasts this naturalistic concept of time with Leibniz's process-oriented concept, which he summarizes in *The Logic of Sense*:

Time is the result of the operation of compossibility. The latter means that, with the monads being assimilated to singular points, each series is extended in other series which converge around these points, another world in another time begins in the vicinity of points which would bring about the divergence of the obtained species (2001: 297, italics in the original)

The syntactic complexity of this quote matches its logic. Traditional interdisciplinary divides point to the incompatibility of 'points' and 'species', making it impossible to conceive of a system that would position a mathematical and a biological concept next to each other without creating some kind of ambiguity. However, argues Deleuze, if we approach ambiguity not as a mathematical deficiency, as would Aristotle, but as Leibniz did – in line with his differential mathematics – in terms of a space created by an addition to nothing (defined as 'zero plus one,' where 'one' is an instant), time would indeed show itself as ambiguous. But unlike Plato's thinking of time as the ambiguity of pursuit, which can only lead to the past, or as the progressive development in a series along an infinitely long path, which is but a prolongation of the present, Leibniz thinks of time as if it were a forgotten future, or a future that has been committed to memory before it actually occurred."

Second shift: From Leibniz to Bergson

However, for Leibniz, time is still bonded by number; moreover, like Aristotle, Leibniz gives absolute priority to number 'one'; hence, monadology. Both mathematics and philosophy begin with 'one', leaving us little if any room to think time as 'many'. At the same time, claims Deleuze, it was Leibniz who first suggested that time should be viewed as 'a movement'. Following this logic, Bergson suggested that time was the movement of number 'one'. If Leibniz begins and ends with 'one', Bergson takes 'one' as the nexus of multiplications: "'One' can only multiply itself. It is the most abstract number' (2002: 58). In multiplication, time is non-directional; hence, the

human ability to experience time as it moves for itself. 'For Leibniz', Deleuze writes, 'the countdown never begins and never stops, or, rather, "everything is the beginning"' (1989: 45). For Bergson, time runs like a stream, everything is movement, or 'durations of different tensions' as opposed to 'the homogenous time of beginnings and origins' (2004: 275). In this definition of time, the tensions should be understood as the temporal effects of the matter on the world and the world on the matter. This kind of genesis was particularly attractive for Deleuze given his interest in the empiricism of a transcendental kind.

After Bergson

As a philosopher of time, Bergson is definitional for Deleuze, who begins his *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2* with one of many commentaries on Bergson and essentially constructs his own model of time on the basis of the Bergsonian view of time: 'a state of things that would constantly change, a flowing-matter in which no point of anchorage nor center of reference would be assignable' (1986: 57). No wonder then that Deleuze approaches time at the intersection of memory and matter. At the same time, concerned with both semiotics and phenomenology, Deleuze makes sure that he puts a hyphen in the compound word 'time-image,' stressing our understanding that image belongs to time and does not just represent time. It also designates a relationship of mutual contamination of the two terms. The content available to consciousness blends with the subconscious absorption of this content, bringing memory to perception. This is to say that 'time-image' collapses the two parallel times together in a space which, as I argued earlier, can be defined as 'liminal'. This kind of space does not know the distinction between the past, present and future. In that space, time appears only as singular memory.

'CRYSTAL-IMAGE'

For accessing this kind of time, Deleuze suggests a particular visual aesthetics, – the new cinema (e.g. Italian neo-realism, French neo-classicism, Russian neo-symbolism). According to Deleuze, the new cinema is what produces singular memory in the intolerable, the unbearable and the impossible. Its mission is 'to make holes, to introduce voids and white spaces, to rarify images, by suppressing many things that have been added to make us believe that we were seeing everything' (Deleuze 1986: 22). By openly embracing this agenda, the cinema of the last half of the 20th century severed its connection with the cinema that had come before it. The latter showed just an image; the former shows an analytic of an image. With this 'extra', the distinction between the real and the imaginary had to be foregone: the new cinema was very convincing in demonstrating its indiscernability.⁷ In turn, the same feature brought in a new conception of frame and framings, which exposed 'transcendentals' for an analytic intervention. For Deleuze 'transcendentals' show themselves as ambiguous signs (e.g., Peirce's 'thirdness'); hence the need to supply their phenomenological exposure with a semiological interpretation, helping us follow ambiguity toward its appearance in an assemblage, which is the minimal unit of 'visual semiosis.'

According to Deleuze, 'Cinema does not just present images, it surrounds them with a world' (1989: 68). An opening line of the chapter on 'crystal-image' in *Cinema 2*, this quote not only confirms the relationship between the world and imagery; it establishes the direction of fit: images to the world (e.g. memory to photographic or

cinematographic image). This is not to say that images do not come from the world; on the contrary, the kind of analysis Deleuze presupposes deals precisely with the movement from the actual to the virtual toward a mirror image; hence, the significance of the semiotic concept 'mirror' for Deleuze's entire philosophy: 'Mirror is a turning crystal, with two sides if we relate it to the invisible character ... and the crystal turns over on itself' (1989: 88). The emergent signs and their assemblages in the film are based on the confluence of the two.⁸ I see in the film what I otherwise could have seen in the mirror, except that the film shows more than a reflection, while mirror does only that. Both create oblique, opaque and obscure images; however, only the film shows dynamic indiscernability of the actual and the virtual: 'Distinct, but indiscernible, such are the actual and the virtual which are in continuous exchange' (1989: 71). This insistence on the material presence without content (body without organs) reflects Deleuze's emphasis on the pure signifier. He finds it in the concept 'crystal-image'. The choice of the name for the concept can be explained through the physical properties of mineral morphology: the structure of a crystal allows us to see how, with each turn of the crystal, what is opaque and virtual becomes luminous and actual. This reversibility makes all sorts of binaries coalesce, taking us beyond anthropological structuralism with its staple distinctions: 'hard' and 'soft', 'saying' and 'said', 'past' and 'future', 'here' and 'there'. Our thoughts become matter, while matter becomes an object of our thoughts. The 'crystal-film' is therefore the kind of film that exposes the relations between what is being reflected and the act of reflecting, or, to put it in phenomenological terms, the 'given' and 'givenness'. Once again, we must remind ourselves that the kind of phenomenology that preoccupies Deleuze is neither strictly speaking transcendental, although it examines 'transcendentals' or 'liminalities,' nor is it empirical, although it presupposes 'matter.' The liminal in-between that it explores is not empty; it contains a prime mover, and it is in that pivot that we find one of the most basic conditions for our experience of the world as image: 'what we see in the crystal ... is time, in its double movement of making presents pass, replacing one after the next, while going towards the future, but also of preserving all of the past, dropping it into the obscure depth' (Deleuze 1989: 87). The 'crystal-film' that rises from the liminal place gives us a glimpse of time, and of course, the time that appears is inalienable from the place of its appearance.

African Notion of Time

If you can make an African understand the Western type of future he will probably deem any belief in it ridiculous, fatiguing, superfluous and dangerous. In his eyes, you'd better spend your time in making the present, because that is the relevant issue. The present has to be made. Now this "making" of the present should not be associated with working. It has to do with social interaction, community life, and using the opportunities the day brings. So maybe it is best to say that *sasa* is, or is coming about by, the interaction all forces of nature around your community and your community's attempts to profit from the opportunities revealed, or "given", to it now. Time is not an eternal grid over which life runs regularly. Life itself is time. Time is the result of what all agents in the world do and how this interacts. That means there is no available "amount" of time. Time is "spun" by the forces of nature. The time web is made of living events. It is generally acknowledged that African societies are more relaxed and people seem to have "plenty of time". That is a primitive Western way to state things, good for a start, but not good enough. For example, suppose an African ship builder agrees with another African to be paid half the value of a boat at

the moment wood, nails and strips shall be purchased on the other half at delivery (3). Westerners would interpret these agreements as about numerical points in linear time: action 1 at date-time point 1, action two at date-time point 2. Then, if at date time point 1 nothing happens, this is interpreted as "retardation", or "postponement" of action, and as a breach of the agreement. On second thought, which is already a better approximation of African reality, it seems to Westerners that Africans "have" time that can be "inserted" in the time line.

Time in Heidegger

Time within Heidegger's works is akin to space in that it also has 3 dimensions, past, present and future. Dasein is oriented towards the future in terms of possibilities (choice) that it inherits from the past (tradition, culture). Authentic Dasein is oriented towards the future also in making things presence through resolute decision and action.

note: the "making presence" or "making the present" in African time-sense amount to the same thing, the 'now' is made, not simply experienced. Both Heidegger's account of authentic time and the account of African time-sense note that unlike westerners people with the other sense of time always seem to have plenty of it, rather than constantly chasing after it.

Political Origin of Measured Time

It has been reported that an engaging Roman prostitute invented the first means of accurately measuring an hour, in order to know when her customers' time was up. Time, within the period known as the enlightenment was measured with greater and greater accuracy, in order that it could have a monetary value placed on it. Marxism in practice, rather than reversing this trend, merely consolidated it by placing the value on the labour itself, and levelling down different types of labour, rather than the time spent, where the labour was, of course, still measured by clock time. There is no further marxist/capitalist debate because simple success at what both aimed at achieving in practice has been awarded already.

5.2 Invention as difference and repetition

The invention both echoes and is echoed by the socio-cultural context. Rather than the notion of a free-floating meme or semiotic signifier decisions are made, actions taken, and the inherited idea may change radically and arbitrarily.

6 Horizon - Ideology - the boundary that arises in order to traverse the hermeneutic circle between thing and World

Ideology as the mechanism of the hermeneutic circle:

Defines identity through:

Memory - Interpretation - Understanding - Discourse (individual / collective)

i.e. everyone has an ideology of their own, not simply those that subscribe to a definitively conceptualized ideology.. This in itself is not a bad thing. While ideology functions predominantly through prejudgment and assumptions, it is by these means that we come to an understanding of something quickly without analysis from the ground up In practice we discern the uniqueness of something by subtracting from our prejudgments and assumptions where they prove false. It is therefore a rigid ideology that is inherently problematic, as it fails to recognize that any given ideology must modify itself constantly in response to the demands of experience and reality.

Memory

"These are as many reasons to explain that the religious dimension does not offer any magic solution to the problem of the European memory, between an impossible silence, an illegitimate choice and an elitist rationalisation."

From spirituality to governance?

– Religion, identity and the European public sphere

<http://www.epsnet.org/2004/pps/foret.pdf>

Impossible silence - Heidegger?

Illegitimate choice - Habermas?

Elitist rationalization - ?

Often attributed to individual origin:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ideologies_named_after_people

"Dominant ideologies appear as "neutral", holding to assumptions that are largely unchallenged. Meanwhile, all other ideologies that differ from the dominant ideology are seen as radical, no matter what the content of their actual vision may be. The philosopher Michel Foucault wrote about the concept of apparent ideological neutrality. Ideology is not the same thing as philosophy. Philosophy is an analytic method for assessing ideologies and belief systems. Some attribute to ideology positive characteristics like vigor and fervor, or negative features like excessive certitude and fundamentalist rigor.

Organizations that strive for power will try to influence the ideology of a society to become closer to what they want it to be. Political organizations (governments included) and other groups (e.g. lobbyists) try to influence people by broadcasting their opinions.

When most people in a society think alike about certain matters, or even forget that there are alternatives to the status quo, we arrive at the concept of hegemony, about which the philosopher Antonio Gramsci wrote. Such a state of affairs has been dramatized many times in literature: Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell; Brave New World by Aldous Huxley; and A Wrinkle in

Time by Madeline L'Engle. Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman have argued that social ideological homogeneity can be achieved by restricting the conceptual metaphors transmitted by mass communication."

6.1 Ideologies

Ideology is structural, ideologies are historico-cultural.

6.1.1 Roman Catholic Ideology - Theology and Practice

"a condition of justice, fellowship, and self-fulfillment far beyond anything that might normally be considered possible or even desirable in the more well-heeled quarters of Oxford and Washington." Such a condition writes Fish, would not be desirable in Oxford and Washington because, according to Eagleton, the inhabitants of those places are complacently in bondage to the false idols of wealth, power and progress. That is, they feel little of the tragedy and pain of the human condition, but instead "adopt some bright-eyed superstition such as the dream of untrammelled human progress" and put their baseless "trust in the efficacy of a spot of social engineering here and a dose of liberal enlightenment there."

Then as he has in the past, Eagleton goes on to skewer the shockingly superficial work of Ditchkins—Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins- and their sophomoric takes on religion. It is their embrace of "progress" which really gets to Eagleton. Progress to the author is simply another superstition. He says:

"The language of enlightenment has been hijacked in the name of corporate greed, the police state, a politically compromised science, and a permanent war economy," all in the service, Eagleton contends, of an empty suburbanism that produces ever more things without any care as to whether or not the things produced have true value."

<http://theologyinthevineyard.wordpress.com/2009/05/04/progress-the-new-superstition/>

<http://ontologicalangst.blogspot.com/2009/05/progress-and-other-superstitions-of.html>

6.1.2 Scientific-Secular Ideology - Beliefs and Practice and Problematics

that Atheism rests on naive and untenable positivism:

What, for Dawkins, would constitute evidence of God's existence? Suppose an angel of the Lord were to appear before Dawkins, even as he was delivering another lecture on the delusion that God exists. Would such an experience change Dawkins' views?

Fish has spent his whole career pointing out why it wouldn't: not because of the nature of angels, but because of the nature of interpretation. As long as Dawkins remains who he is now, he will remain incapable of seeing an angel of the Lord.

After all, a genuine atheist must interpret such an event as a temporarily inexplicable hallucination, or a sudden psychotic break, or a clever technological trick – in short, as anything but evidence that atheism is false. (An atheist who questions the truth of atheism is ceasing to be a genuine atheist precisely to the extent that he is asking himself a genuine question).

Thus the only way someone like Dawkins will ever see any evidence for the existence of God will be if he loses his faith that he never will.

Dawkins' exploration of the probability of the existence of gods (for the moment ignoring his statistical inadequacy) is mostly irrelevant to the people he apparently wants to dissuade from their beliefs. The Greeks had religion with no pretension that it "explained" anything, the point was understanding through metaphor. Given that such things as the "gene" in Dawkins' own works are not things but metaphors, he is on shaky ground when he attacks other works that do the same in the

same manner. Using probability itself in terms of belief is also unwise if one believes in the origin of the universe as an initial singularity. Currently the physics that examines that area is looking for possible reasons that the singularity might have found itself in such a singularly unlikely state (having a probability of being in that state exponentially lower than anything that does exist in order to result in the universe as observed) at the moment the expansion began. While there are potential scientific reasons for such a situation, and pointers to those reasons are currently affecting theoretical biology as much as theoretical physics, since most atheists are unaware of the issues, never mind the potential solutions, their belief systems remain without rational foundation.

Most religion is primarily about understanding things that are as they are, not explaining how they came to be that way.

6.1.3 Marx / Althusser Marxist Notion of Ideology

Problem with this is that it stays with the idea of re-presentation and the intrinsic distance between subject and World. This error comes from the conflation of World (meaningful structure) with Universe (meaningless material noumenal).

World != "real conditions of existence", the latter is, fundamentally, a meaningless phrase - existence is a trait of each Dasein performed in an individual manner, conditions that are real to me are not real to someone else as a result of the individual/cultural performance of existence, not due to their ideology. Dasein exists in "dwelling in the world" which implies that the conditions in which Dasein dwells are part of the performance of that existence.

So the "real world" becomes, not something that is objectively out there, but something that is the product of our relations to it, and of the ideological representations we make of it--the stories we tell ourselves about what is real become what is real. That's how ideology operates. "

6.1.3.1 False Consciousness

False consciousness is the Marxist thesis that material and institutional processes in capitalist society are misleading to the proletariat, and to other classes. These processes betray the true relations of forces between those classes, and the real state of affairs regarding the development of pre-socialist society (relative to the secular development of human society in general).

This is essentially a result of ideological control which the proletariat either do not know they are under or disregard with a view to their own POUM (probability/possibility of upward mobility)[1]. POUM (not to be confused with the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification, POUM) or something like it is required in economics with its presumption of rational agency; otherwise wage laborers would be the conscious supporters of social relations antithetical to their own interests, violating that presumption[2].

[edit] Theory

The concept flows from the theory of commodity fetishism — that people experience social relationships as value relations between things, e.g., between the cash in their wage packet and the shirts they want. The cash and the shirt appear to conduct social relations independently of the humans involved, determining who gets what by their inherent values. This leaves the person who earned the cash and the people who made the shirt ignorant of and alienated from their social relationship with each other. So the individual "resolves" the experiences of alienation and oppression through a false understanding of the natural need to compete with others for limited goods.

In Marxist terms, not only is there no such objective need separate from the formulation of the

general problem of production in society, moreover, Marx said each against all competition is antithetical to the very concept of society and therefore sets up a contradiction or historical dynamic which over time is resolved in favour of the class with the greatest ability to act in its own rational self interest. Ruling elites, traditional or otherwise, suffer from false consciousness to the extent that they see the social orders they command as predetermined or inevitable.

In contradiction to this I propose an examination of Schurmann's historical exegesis of epochal events. Heidegger noted in 1946 that existentialism had not achieved a distinct enough view on history to make a discussion with Marxism productive. I would contend that, as far as Heideggerean rather than Sartrean existentialism has disseminated it is Schurmann who developed the most comprehensive view of history with which to engage such a discussion.

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