The Enduring Significance of the Minimal Phenomenological Self:
Disclosure and Subjectivity

by

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Abstract

Certain recent influential commentarial trends - predominantly philosophical, but adaptive to the findings of current neuroscience and theoretical psychology - seek to extrapolate a coherent, foundational account of the first personal nature of experience as constitutive of "self-hood" in a so-called "minimal" sense.[1] Such research professes a strict adherence to a very specific interpretation of key classic phenomenological sources. What is questionable, we shall suggest, is the controvertible need to identify reflexivity, envisaged in largely neo-Sartrean terms, as the apparent locus for so-called "minimal" self-hood. Reflexivity so envisaged - as a first-personal, non-positing, self-givenness and qualitative "mineness" - is claimed to represent a "dative of manifestation," a minimal experiential structure that is argued to underwrite other derivative accounts of "self-hood" across the disciplines. Principally by means of re-examining certain source texts, our enquiry aims to critically engage and challenge this thesis. To this end we propose to thematise and interrogate the direct equation Heidegger makes in *Being & Time* (and elsewhere) between Dasein (human being) and disclosedness: "To say that [Dasein] is 'illuminated' means that *as* Being-in-the-world [Dasein] is cleared in itself...in such a way that it *is* itself the clearing....*Dasein is its*

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[1]   See, for example:

Castañeda, H-N. (1999), *The Phenomeno-Logic of the I: Essays on Self-Consciousness*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Cermolacce, M., Naudin, J., Parnas, J. (2007), "The 'Minimal Self' in Psychopathology: Re-Examining the Self-Disorders in the Schizophrenia Spectrum." *Consciousness and Cognition* 16/3.

Damasio, A. (2010), *Self Comes to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain*. Toronto: Random House.

Gallagher, S. (2000), "Philosophical Conceptions of the Self: Implications for Cognitive Science." *Trends in Cognitive Science* 4/1.

Gallagher, S., Zahavi, D. (2021), *The Phenomenological Mind* (3rd. Edition). Abingdon: Routledge.

Hart, J.G., (2009), *Who One Is: Book One, Meontology of the "I" - A Transcendental Phenomenology*. Berlin: Springer Science and Business Media BV.

Hohwy, J. (2007), "The Sense of Self in the Phenomenology of Agency and Perception." *Psyche* 13/1.

Metzinger, T. (2003), *Being No One: The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Siewert, C.P. (1998), *The Significance of Consciousness*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Zahavi, D. (2005), *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Investigating the First Person Perspective*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Zahavi, D. (2020), *Self Awareness and Alterity: A Phenomenological Investigation* (2nd. Edition). Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

disclosedness."[2] Building on the phenomenological research of Husserl, Heidegger positions his account of the subjective field as essentially disclosive in terms of a retrieval and restoration (as he sees it) of the classical conception of truth as *alêtheia*, or "unconcealment." We shall thereafter consider the extent to which an analogous interpretation of disclosedness may also be found in the phenomenological work of Sartre. Despite their conspicuously divergent terminologies and agendas, we aim to demonstrate that Sartre's conception of the subjective field, or consciousness, as a fundamentally disclosive "decompression of being" converges in significant and illuminating ways with Heidegger's account of Dasein as a disclosiveness "in-the-world." We argue that self-hood in its most originary, "minimal" sense is thus most convincingly conceived in terms of a recurrent, historical "event" of unconcealment and "self-constitution" - always in and through the achievement of an intelligible and meaningful world. As we shall see, both thinkers reject a substantivized conception of the self (as a bearer of predicates) - including the idea of a minimally substantivized "dative of manifestation" - in favour of a view of the self as the process or "event" of being disclosed. Precisely in these terms, Heidegger and Sartre may both be said to envisage the subjective field as a foundational "event," or "space," of disclosedness itself.

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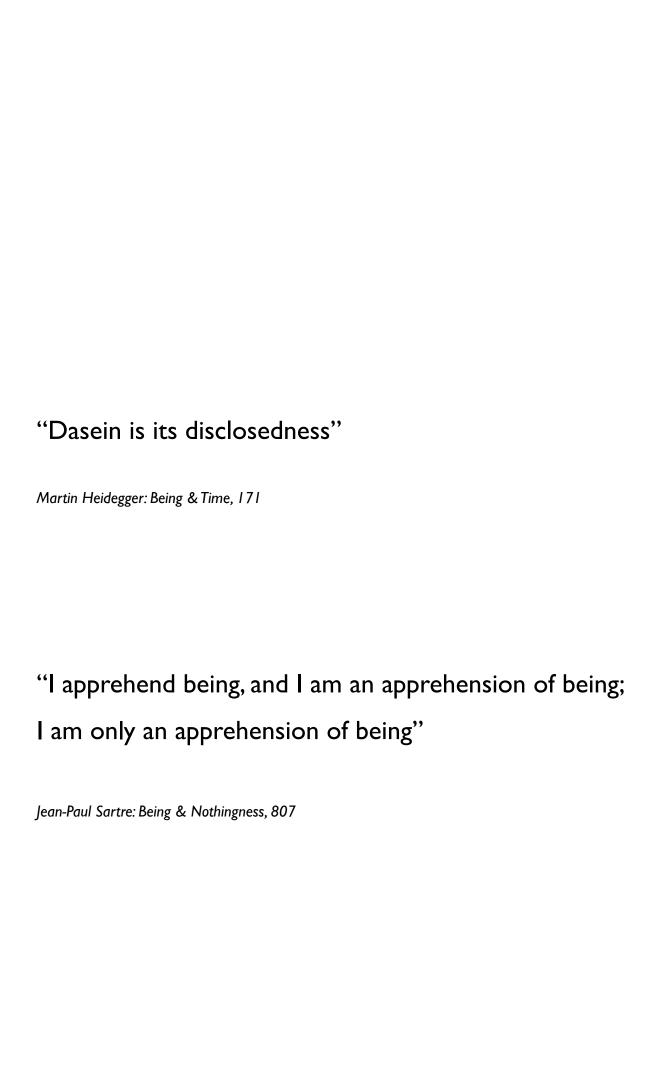2 *Being & Time*, p. 171.

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Last, but certainly not least, I want to express my deepest thanks to my wife, to whom this work is dedicated. Without her belief and her confidence in me this thesis would never have been written at all.

"Dasein is its disclosedness"

Martin Heidegger: Being & Time, 171

"I apprehend being, and I am an apprehension of being;
I am only an apprehension of being"

Jean-Paul Sartre: Being & Nothingness, 807

Introduction

0.1 Opening Comments

It would be fair to say that in one form or another various objectivist assumptions concerning the nature and status of the "subjective field" or "the self" persist within philosophic enquiry even to this day, most notably - and yet perhaps most surprisingly - in the field of analytic philosophy of mind. When viewed from a traditional perspective, however, the interrogation of human "self-hood," due largely to its longevity and insistence, betokens a continuing absence of any convincingly plausible philosophical consensus. Little wonder - in so far as, on the one hand, regardless of the dimensionality of the historical frame of reference in which it lies suspended,[3] the conceptuality surrounding "self-hood" permits us to posit the basic reflexive intimacy and familiarity of our own self-experience - of our own convincing and seemingly reliable self-presence. On the other hand, such conceptuality formally marks out the explicitness and durability of an apparently substantial subject, of human identity itself. In the latter respect, the idea of "self-hood" is emblematic of one aspect of the conventional logical distinction between subject and object, knower and known, thought and being, and ultimately of course between appearance and "reality" itself. In such orthodox terms subjectivity implies the presence of underlying psychic structures which, in combination, constitute human identity - whether these are envisaged as some kind of underlying substratum, or as an explanatory point of interface between otherwise

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[3] See, e.g., Taylor 1989: 32.

supposedly distinct physical and psychic spheres. Given the plethora of variations on the theme of "self-hood" within modern philosophy, up to and including the refinement and nuance of versions in the present, it can seem that the apparently intractable problematics we have inherited continue to perturb and frustrate even our most enlightened thinking. It is more recently claimed that the only viable means philosophic investigation might have of making constructive, positive headway in relation to questions concerning the self is by committing to a far broader, multi-disciplinary approach. Other voices assert, perhaps rather more predominantly, that the only feasible means of authentically elucidating "the subject" is to closely follow and be adaptive to the most recent discoveries of cognitive neuroscience and theoretical psychology.

It is worth recalling that this latter debate is nothing new. In the 1840's - the decade following Hegel's death - certain prominent thinkers began to challenge the popular and generally accepted speculative idealist tradition which had held sway since at least the time of Kant, and sought to re-define the purpose and method of philosophic discipline, specifically in light of the dramatic rise of the empirical sciences in the first half of the century.[4] Even today, whilst philosophy of mind clearly struggles to maintain a distinct and discrete integrity in the face of its dependence on the largely undisputed and overwhelming cultural authority of scientific method, it nevertheless remains the case that an almost mandatory reliance on both the discoveries and the assumptions of cognitive neuroscience now provides the focus for analytic enquiry into subjectivity. Any approach to the problem of "the self" which falls outside either the "…sterilised, 'value-free' language of social science…", or which bypasses certain strands of contemporary philosophy which have "…become enshrined in mainstream psychology [or neuroscience]…",[5] is generally dismissed as being of only extremely limited and marginal (if any) significance. Nevertheless, as Charles Taylor assures us, although even in these senses "the self" can be an object of study like any other, at the same time

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[4] Beiser 2014: 15-16.

[5] Taylor: 1989: 34.

"…there are [however] certain things which are generally held true of objects of scientific study which don't hold for the self."[6]

Taylor groups these conceptual obstacles into four categories,[7] which we may summarise as follows: (i) an object of study is "to be taken absolutely," i.e., as it is independently of us, and not in its meaning for any subject; (ii) the object is what it is entirely independently of subjective interpretation; (iii) the object can in principle be captured in explicit description; (iv) the object can - in principle - be described without reference to its surroundings.

In this study our intention is to find a way of responding positively and creatively to the difficulties outlined by Taylor. We propose to mark out the intentions and methods of an alternative phenomenological - and largely hermeneutic - response to fundamental analytic assumptions concerning the subjective field. It should become clearer as we progress that the phenomenological investigation of subjectivity, from its Husserlian origins to the present, is coloured throughout by an implied, though sometimes overt, criticism of deeply sedimented objectivist assumptions regarding the status and the nature of "the self."[8] From a strictly phenomenological perspective, the idea of the "self" no longer references an isolated, "self-sufficient" subjectivity, conceived naïvely as standing in opposition to, or removed from, a world of entirely mind-independent objects, other subjects, relations and states of affairs. Rather, phenomenological method - as initially envisaged by Husserl and subsequently developed in later phenomenological research - involves working from the premise that, at ground level, "…[the] subject and world are *co-originary* and are inseparably related to one another."[9] Hence the principle thesis of this enquiry, which will rely on our interpretive engagement with certain key phenomenological sources, will be to show that it is subjectivity conceived primarily as a "disclosedness" or "openness" in the world, as a dynamic

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[6] Taylor 1989: 33.

[7] See Taylor 1989: 33-34.

[8] c.f. Mertens 2012: 168 - 169.

[9] Mertens 2012: 169.

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unfolding and uncovering of being, that we must look to for a way to effectively articulate, in so-called "minimal" terms, the question of self-hood. As we intend to demonstrate, the subjective field envisaged in phenomenological terms as the meaningful disclosure of an intelligible world, may be understood as *in itself* a "self-disclosure" - potentially conceivable as both individualised and qualitatively realisable.

From a wider perspective, however, phenomenological method remains at best controversial, particularly insofar as recent thinking around questions concerning subjectivity, as noted above, extends ever more widely, beyond the confines of philosophy, into fields such as psychiatry, social theory, cognitive neuroscience, literary theory, and so forth. This plurality, which characterises much of the recent literature,[10] is in one sense welcome, but at the same time does seem to underlie and configure a proliferation of reductionist, quasi-scientific agendas at work within what is predominantly an Anglo-American, and hence analytic, context. Although diverse, what these analytic approaches appear to have in common is a largely unquestioned reliance on fundamental, objectivist pre-suppositions - perhaps most tellingly the need to accommodate the causal role of the mental in a manner compatible with explanatory realism.[11] In this light, phenomenological research, due in large part to its perceived legacy of challenging the epistemic privilege enjoyed by empirical science, is consequently confined (with a few exceptions) to the margins of current mainstream Anglo-American thinking.

Somewhat ironically, however, within phenomenology itself we encounter, broadly speaking, a similarly intimidating plurality of "selves." One initial challenge our enquiry must face, therefore, in attempting to navigate this range of views both positively and investigatively, is spelt out by Gallagher: "The only consistent theme to be found in the phenomenological literature on the

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[10] See, for example, Neisser 1988: 35-39, Strawson 1999: 307-332, Damasio 1999, Klein 2012: 363-366, Gallagher 2000: 14-22.

[11] See Ratcliffe 2003: 353.

concept of self is constant disagreement."[12] In a similar vein, we must heed Moran's words of caution:

> "It is important not to exaggerate, as some interpreters have done, the extent to which phenomenology coheres into an agreed method, or accepts one theoretical outlook, or one set of philosophical theses about consciousness, knowledge and the world."[13]

Our way forward, suitably forewarned, will nevertheless be to cautiously assess the possibility of determining a meaningful convergence of views amongst the phenomenological sources we intend to consult, specifically in relation to the subjective field envisaged as human disclosedness in-the-world. We anticipate that any commonality of focus to be found amidst what we shall shortly discover is a considerable diversity of views will undoubtedly mean that, as Mertens observes,[14]

> "…despite their differences, [all] these [phenomenological] philosophers focus on that which has been neglected in other scientific approaches: the origins of understanding something as meaningful…"[15]

In this spirit, we shall address and attempt to demonstrate what is unique and distinctive about the *phenomenological* investigation of subjectivity, and thereby hopefully avoid simply adding to the already extensive sectarian conflict which characterises much of the current literature.

Our primary focus throughout will be on relevant aspects of the work of Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre. It will be particularly important, as we proceed, to examine the reasons why Heidegger, in creatively extending the phenomenological research of his erstwhile mentor Husserl, comes to position his own account of the subjective field, envisaged as a disclosedness "in-the-world," in direct relation to a transcendental theory of truth conceived as unconcealment. To this end, we propose to thematise and interrogate the direct equation Heidegger makes in *Being & Time*,[16] *On the*

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[12] Gallagher 2012b: 122.

[13] Moran 2000: 3.

[14] Mertens 2012: 168.

[15] Mertens 2012: 168.

[16] Hereafter BT.

Essence of Truth,[17] and elsewhere, between Dasein (human-being) and "unconcealment" or disclosedness itself. Although an important feature of our enquiry, we do not rely exclusively on historical exposition, however, and to ensure a critical context for our findings we intend to subject relevant aspects of Heidegger's existential analytic of Dasein to additional scrutiny by comparatively analysing equivalent conclusions arrived at by Sartre in his *The Transcendence of the Ego*[18] and subsequently in *Being & Nothingness*.[19] Despite their conspicuously alternative terminologies and agendas, we aim to show there is a deep affinity between Heidegger's views and Sartre's analysis of the subjective field (or "being-for-itself") conceived as a fundamentally self-constituting differentiation and disclosure of being (in-itself). Our basic contention will be that these superficially diverse interpretations of "self-hood" are found on analysis to have a traceable, mutually illuminative, correspondence. Despite the much publicised heterogeneity of post-Husserlian phenomenological research, and in direct contrast to certain recent commentarial trends, we propose to argue that it is *precisely* in relation to the question of disclosedness and the unconcealment of a meaningful world that the ontological, as well as the practical, concerns of both Heidegger and Sartre can be seen to converge.[20] Amongst Heidegger's most celebrated theses in his *Being & Time* is the proposal that "…Dasein *is its disclosedness*…", [21] i.e. that Dasein conceived as itself the locus of truth, and as the unconcealment of being in a primordial and originary sense, is grounded in this fundamental equivalence. As should become clear, the development of Heidegger's language and terminology indicates an increasingly shared ground or synonymity between disclosedness and human being-in-the-world, such that ultimately neither can be correctly understood apart from the other - actually, as Haugeland observes, only *as* the other.[22] Alongside all of these considerations, we shall endeavour to throw Heidegger's views into relief by reviewing

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[17] Hereafter ET.

[18] Hereafter TE.

[19] Hereafter BN.

[20] c.f. Fell 1979: 27.

[21] BT: 171, and also see: Kisiel 2014: 8.

[22] Haugeland 1989: 51

Sartre's account of consciousness conceived as the differentiation and - as he puts it - "decompression," by negation, of the sheer plentitude and density of undifferentiated being (-in-itself). For Sartre being-for-itself (subjectivity) only exists at all in terms of this nihilation - a self-negating, disclosive engagement and correlation with self-identical being-in-itself - and crucially, therefore, it cannot exist "…as a simple coincidence with itself."[23]

Throughout our investigation, however, it is important we do not lose sight of the fact that the history and development of phenomenology throughout the 20th century, as memorably and accurately caricatured by Ricoeur, is "…a history of Husserlian heresies."[24] Indeed, current opinion remains divided over whether phenomenology as transcendental philosophy or as existential analysis sustains any of its commitments to Husserl's founding intentions.[25] Despite this apparent "diaspora," characterised by an inveterate reluctance to become any kind of "discipline" in a strictly Husserlian sense, phenomenology as a continually evolving philosophical program nevertheless remains arguably the most radically coherent and consistent philosophic challenge to the ongoing analytic project of attempting to reductively naturalise consciousness and its structures.

0.2 Thesis Structure

This study comprises six chapters, followed by concluding remarks. The first chapter addresses a recent trend in the literature which it will be important for us to consider, concerning the attempt to determine, from a phenomenological perspective, the status of the "self" in so-called "minimal" or "core" terms. In order to suitably position our own enquiry in relation to recent, related thinking, we will therefore briefly review current work in this field. Such research draws selectively on certain "classic" phenomenological sources in order to demonstrate an alleged consensus regarding self-

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[23] Dastur 2008: 269.

[24] Ricoeur 2004: 182.

[25] Levy 2016: 511-524.

hood envisaged in minimal terms as the qualitative dimension of purely intentional, fundamental reflexivity. It is argued that amongst leading phenomenologists (including Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre) a convincing consensus in respect of "minimal self-hood" is traceable, although as we shall see this is in fact articulated in largely neo-Sartrean terms. The focus for such research is the idea of a "core" or irreducible "self," grounded in the reflexive structures of consciousness and characterised primarily as the qualitative "mineness" or "for-me-ness" of first-personal experience. We shall outline, and challenge, salient features of this project, and shall question whether some of the most telling insights of earlier phenomenological enquiry are displaced, perhaps even lost, by such intense focus on the strictly internal structures of phenomenal consciousness.

Chapter two provides, in fairly broad strokes, an overview of specific features of Husserl's early, innovative phenomenological research. In addition to highlighting the origins of the conceptual and terminological frame of reference subsequent phenomenological investigation will typically inhabit, we shall especially focus on Husserl's evolving commitment to the idea of transcendental subjectivity. We shall in particular asses the idea of a transcendental ego conceived by him as both a functional structure of consciousness, and as the ground of possibility for experience itself. We shall conclude by briefly referencing what Heidegger refers to as the three principle and inter-related "discoveries" of early Husserlian phenomenology, i.e. the intentionality of consciousness, the theory of categorial intuition, and the phenomenological *apriori*.[26]

Chapter three is devoted to a consideration of Heidegger's introduction and formalisation of the notion of disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*) in *Being & Time* and other works of the same period, and his characterisation of Dasein in metaphorical terms as a disclosive (lighted) clearing (*Lichtung*) in the midst of a dark surrounding forest.[27] Heidegger portrays Dasein existentially as a place or "event" of "openness" or "lighting-up" (an illumination within and of being) - as the possibility of "unconcealment."[28] We go on to consider the important distinction Heidegger marks

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[26] See: *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901), *Logische Untersuchungen*, trans. J. N. Findlay. Routledge, 1970, hereafter LI.

[27] See, e.g., BT: 171, 214,401-402.

[28] Dahlstrom 2001: 45.

out within disclosedness between what he refers to as "uncoveredness" (or "discoveredness") and disclosure itself, and will aim to situate Heidegger's retrieval and (as he sees it) restoration of the ancient Greek conception of truth as *alêtheia* or "unconcealment" within this overall context.

Chapter four resumes the appraisal of Heidegger's claims concerning the equivalence of Dasein and disclosedness, specifically in relation to the question of truth understood as unconcealment. We open, however, with a brief overview of the second of the early Husserlian "discoveries" previously referred to: the theory of categorial intuition, primarily as seen through the lens of Heidegger's subsequent critical exposition. Our aim is to show that it is here Heidegger begins to see the possibility of a potentially phenomenological approach to ontological questions concerning the meaningful disclosure of the being of entities for and by Dasein,[29] specifically with reference to Heidegger's appropriation of the Husserlian idea of "appresentation." Thereafter, having noted the extent to which Heidegger's views regarding unconcealment have resulted in a variety of interpretations across the secondary literature, we attempt to constructively address at least some of this confusion by anchoring our analysis in and around Heidegger's short 1930 essay, *On the Essence of Truth*.[30] We anticipate that extrapolating and tracing the conceptual progression of this essay, specifically in light of our leading enquiry, should enable us to achieve a far less equivocal understanding of Heidegger's conception of truth as an originary unconcealment, certainly post *Being & Time*, and the immediate bearing this has on the question of the correlation between Dasein and disclosedness itself.

In chapter five we turn our attention to Sartre's analysis of subjectivity in his *Being & Nothingness*, specifically with reference to his evolving idea that the subject and the disclosure of an intelligible and meaningful world are in a sense co-given. We shall contend that there is a clear synonymity between Heidegger's identification of Dasein as a space of "openness" or clearing, and Sartre's understanding of the subject (being-for-itself) conceived as a kind of "decompression of being" (*décompression d'être*). Intrinsic to Sartre's ontological thesis in *Being & Nothingness* is the

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[29] Sheehan 2015: 62.

[30] c.f. Braver 2009: 25.

notion that the for-itself, conceived in a foundational sense as a "no-thing" (i.e. an internal negation, constituting the origin and source of absence and negativity in all its forms), as such disclosively "decompresses" the undifferentiated compression of being (-in-itself). We examine Sartre's claims regarding how being-for-itself constitutes "the undoing of the in-itself"[31] and how the tightly woven ("ontologically fused") indiscriminable threads of difference and quality comprising being-in-itself are, as it were, "unravelled" in terms of consciousness conceived as a disclosive "negative" event.[32] We go on to explore the role played by the concept of *ipseity* (or "self-ness") in Sartre's analysis of the immediate structures of the for-itself. In our penultimate chapter we propose to show that Sartre's account of human-reality as inherently disclosive and "decompressive" importantly not only mirrors but arguably augments Heidegger's analysis of human disclosedness in *Being & Time*.

In chapter six we will draw together and integrate key threads of our enquiry from the preceding chapters. Our central purpose will be to elucidate and clarify what we have maintained throughout is a fundamental, coherent affinity between Heidegger's and Sartre's accounts of subjectivity. Each thinker, despite their clearly disparate, larger agendas, considers the subjective field in its most essential yet arguably "minimal" form to consist in, and arise from, the disclosive correlation of Dasein or being-for-itself and a meaningful, intelligible world. Although the foregoing chapters have provided essentially separate, exegetical accounts of Heidegger's and Sartre's respective approaches to the question of subjectivity and the disclosive nature of human being, we will here seek to not only integratively consider our analyses in combination - highlighting areas of both convergence and divergence - but will also, from the author's own perspective, expand on the affinity we have defended throughout. Having briefly considered some possible reasons why the affinity we are alleging has been largely marginalised in the secondary literature, we shall consider the possibility of achieving a convincing, reliable consensus regarding the subjective field envisaged as a disclosive "coming to be" of self-understanding. We shall highlight the thematic significance for both Heidegger and Sartre of the idea that, in a fundamental

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[31] Laycock 2012: 191.

[32] Laycock 2012: 191-192.

sense, it is *via* the exploration and analysis of human disclosedness in the world that the question of subjectivity itself may be brought to light. We will argue that, sympathetically approached, a consideration of the disparities between the two may usefully clarify and consolidate our appreciation of an underlying, essential affinity. Finally, we shall briefly consider what bearing the affinity we are proposing might have on how subjectivity has been approached by more recent phenomenologically-based research, particularly those studies which are unambiguously adaptive to the findings of current neuroscience and theoretical psychology, as discussed in chapter two. As mentioned above, this issue is of relevance in that the research in question seeks to establish an unconditional concurrence amongst "classic" phenomenologists in support of the contention that so-called "minimal self-hood" may be identified as the qualitative, experiential structures - the first-personal givenness - of the phenomenal aspects of self-consciousness.

Our concluding remarks will be restricted to a brief review of how the obstacles identified by Taylor (see above), which limit a purely analytic approach to the question of the self, have been separately addressed and challenged in our enquiry - perhaps most significantly and suggestively by choosing to adopt what might be described as a hermeneutic approach to the various issues raised. We seek to show that in this respect we have self-consciously mirrored the styles, methods and strategies of both Heidegger and Sartre, whose general approach to the problem of self-hood may be characterised as in itself hermeneutic. The focus of our enquiry has properly concerned, in this light, the subjective field envisaged and interpreted as "self-constituting" - precisely in terms of "being-disclosively-in-the-midst-of-the-world." In other words, the subject is finally understood *as disclosure itself*.[33]

Finally, we must very briefly mention our reasons for choosing not to address certain particularly significant, perhaps relevant, areas of the work of especially Heidegger which appear to bear on the question of subjectivity and disclosedness, and which under other circumstances, and in a different

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[33] Overgaard 2004: 197.

context, might undoubtedly be justifiably and fruitfully included. Needless to say, there is in the literature considerable, heated debate concerning the seemingly moralistic nature of some of the language Heidegger uses on occasion throughout *Being & Time*. Indeed, some commentators see embedded in the overall structure of this work an implied undercurrent of aspirational moralism,[34] although for various reasons this is a debate I do not intend to engage with in the context of our present enquiry. I believe that the many arguably ethical or moral dimensions and considerations that potentially bear on our findings we may here justifiably and confidently avoid, insofar as an alternative route would clearly demand an extensive enquiry of a very different nature.

For example, toward the conclusion of §64 of *Being and Time* Heidegger suggests that, assuming Dasein conceived as a "they-self" lives in the "common-sense ambiguity of publicness," and has succumbed to and is "lost" within the way in which things have been prevalently interpreted by the "they," the "I" cannot consequently be considered authentically itself, and that inevitably therefore Dasein's "I saying" - its self-expression - may in general be characterised by a negative "loudness and frequency."[35] Alternatively, this apparently moralistic bias on the part of Heidegger is alleged in relation to his tendency to reference *das Man* (questionably translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as "the They") often in a negative sense, and thereby suggest that the social or collective nature of everyday meaning and intelligibility is actually questionable or superficial. He appears to claim that so conditioned, Dasein is in fact prevented from achieving an authentic understanding of its own self and condition, nor is enabled to engage with its "ownmost" self.[36] Apparently, Dasein can never achieve a realistic, clear understanding of its own self-hood if it remains "dispersed" in the "They-self," and if the consequent obstructions are not (somehow) radically removed.[37] Of course, such seemingly moralistic language concerning the question of subjectivity is the subject of considerable criticism, not least from those commentators who

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[34] See, for one example, Gordon 2016: 177.

[35] See BT: 345, 369.

[36] See BT: 165.

[37] c.f. Gordon 2016: 177.

perceive political undertones at work. At the least, as Gordon suggests, it certainly seems puzzling that in Heidegger's analysis of "social intelligibility" there is the clear implication that there is some other - apparently *better* or preferable - means in terms of which Dasein may make sense of its self.[38] Of equal concern is Heidegger's background intentions in relation to his introduction of a supposed disparity between what he describes as "authentic" and "inauthentic" ways of being. In this respect, the view expressed by Sikka is emblematic of much of the commentary: "…the ideal of authenticity Heidegger outlines is *a decidedly ethical one*."[39] What is important here, however, regarding Heidegger's discussion in *Being & Time* of authenticity is that despite his many and fervent denials that there is any sort of evaluative content implied, the clearly aspirational quality of a movement away from the inauthenticity of a self-hood immersed in, and conditioned by, "fallenness" and "they-ness," toward a seemingly elevated vantage point of greater authenticity and self-clarity will not, it seems to us, further or usefully inform our very specific analysis of human disclosedness. Although Heidegger himself robustly repudiates any suggestion that there is a moralistic or any kind of evaluative aspect intended here, it is nevertheless difficult to entirely absolve him, especially in light of the ubiquitous proclamations throughout his work concerning the "irresolute fallenness" of a self-hood conceived in terms of the "they-ness" of our everyday inauthentic self, in contrast with the "constancy" of the so-called "resoluteness" *en route* to authenticity. Despite the many protestations (for example: "In relation to these phenomena, it may not be superfluous to remark that our own interpretation is purely ontological…and is far removed from any moralising critique of everyday Dasein…"[40]), tackling questions regarding the potentially evaluative sense or intention of such aspects of Dasein's existentiality falls far outside the remit of our enquiry, and as stated above is unlikely to have any significant bearing on the overall coherence of our highly focused enquiry.

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[38] Gordon 2016: 177.

[39] Sikka 2018: 12.

[40] BT: 210-211.

0.3 Our Project

It can be argued that phenomenological research, whether overtly or by implication, represents an attempt to resolve, or perhaps at best pacify,[41] the predicament posed in its original form by Husserl as the so-called "paradox of subjectivity" (see our discussion in chapter two). The empirical ego is immersed in the world and constrained by its laws, yet the ego envisaged by Husserl as transcendental conditions appearance and is seemingly free from such constraints.[42] It appears that all attempts to clarify this apparently paradoxical understanding of "self-hood," at least in primarily analytic terms, will likely lead to a dead end, as Carr eventually realises.[43] In fact, Carr concludes his extensive investigation of this problem by eventually conceding that the two views (transcendental and empirical) of the phenomenological subject can neither be avoided nor reconciled, but must necessarily conclude - as they started - in paradox.[44]

As we shall see, despite their considerable differences it is unquestionably the case that for Husserl as well as for Heidegger the subject does not either stand above, nor is in any sense detached from, the world. It can only really be a subject *for* the world by entering disclosively *into* the world.[45] For Heidegger, Dasein conceived as being "in-the-midst-of-the-world" appears to suggest the possibility of what we might call "co-disclosure" - of the emergence or "arising" of self-hood in direct, synchronous relation to the disclosure of a meaningful world - in the sense that transcendental subjectivity encompassed by, and yet encompassing, the world may be seen as a unique "event" of openness and unconcealment, or, as Overgaard has it, as a mode of being "…in-the-world-*as*-subject-for-the-world…."[46] In view of his marked terminological tendency to compartmentalise conscious experience and structure it accordingly, Husserl typically articulates the dynamics of the

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[41] See Carr 1999.

[42] c.f. Oksala 2012: 139-166.

[43] Carr 1999: 91,96.

[44] Carr 1999: 96.

[45] Overgaard 2004: 203.

[46] Overgaard 2004: 204.

subjective field in terms of polarised structures, e.g., subject-object, noesis-noema, consciousness-unconsciousness, inner-outer, immanent-transcendent, and so on. In contrast, we find that both Heidegger and Sartre approach the phenomenon of subjectivity from an ontological perspective, largely free of such traditional epistemological distinctions. As Overgaard points out, this strategy entails that subjectivity understood in transcendental terms must consequently be fundamentally revised: the subject is no longer conceived as in any sense "extra-mundane" - it is already and completely "being-in-the-world."[47] Hence, it is misleading - as some recent phenomenological research has attempted to do - to interpret the subject as constituting, in some kind of "core" or "minimal" sense, an apparent "dative of manifestation."[48] Rather, both Heidegger and Sartre reveal a subject envisaged as an intrinsically disclosive "being-in-the-world," and selfhood - in its most foundational, actually minimal sense - as an "event" or space of unconcealment. Dasein is not a thing in the world alongside other things, but is distinguished from all other beings in terms of its unique ability to understand, question and interrogate being itself:

> "Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it….this implies that Dasein, in its Being, has a relationship towards that Being…*understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's Being.*"[49]

In our penultimate chapter we shall see that, for Sartre, consciousness is to be understood as essentially a disclosive relation to the non-conscious, transcendent world. On this account, consciousness as such only exists at all in terms of this differentiation by negation (i.e. consciousness is conscious of what it is not), and therefore as the "decompression" of infinitely dense being-in-itself. We encounter in Sartre the somewhat paradoxical notion that the sheer,

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[47] Overgaard 2004: 196.

[48] See chapter 1.

[49] BT: 32.

spontaneous "upsurge" of consciousness amidst being is simultaneous with, but also consequent upon, the emergence of a meaningful and intelligible world. Consciousness of that which appears, therefore, is entirely "in-and-of-the-world," and subjectivity itself constitutes this negative, disclosive engagement with being-in-itself. We shall argue that there is a notable equivalence here with Heidegger: Dasein has access to the being of beings on the basis that, as Heidegger claims, being is "open" (*erschlossen*) or "disclosed" to it - a disclosedness which precedes all possible comportment towards things.[50] Dasein (actually, "*there*-being") can thus be seen as intrinsically an event or space of possibilities, in which and for which, as part of the same movement, the world is disclosed along with, and in terms of, its own arising. Overgaard attempts to capture precisely this sense of disclosure as found in Heidegger: "*I am the point where the world opens up, but in such an amazing way that I am myself essentially manifested as well.*"[51]

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[50] c.f. Dastur 2008: 271.

[51] Overgaard 2004: 197.

Chapter 1

Recent Research

1.1 Opening Remarks

In order to throw our own enquiry into relief in relation to recent, similar research, this chapter will be devoted to briefly reviewing certain aspects of such research, which as we shall see is centrally committed to exploring and fixing the status of "self-hood" or "subjectivity" in largely experiential, "minimal" terms.[52] It should become clearer as we progress that the research under consideration - which we intend to challenge - presupposes and relies on a very specific understanding of "self-consciousness," in terms of which a so-called "minimal' or "core" conception of subjectivity is accepted as foundational and explanatory. We shall see that a basic conception of "self-hood" is pre-supposed which derives from a highly specific interpretation of the basic reflexive structures of consciousness and its associated qualitative aspects. In addition, we shall also note that there seems to be an enthusiastic willingness to embrace and positively incorporate elements drawn from a variety of other disciplines and fields: especially, for example, narrativity theory or the recent discoveries of cognitive neuroscience and theoretical psychology. In view of its self-professed reliance on a particular reading of excerpts drawn from a range of "classic" phenomenological

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[52] c.f., for example, Zahavi 2005; Metzinger 2003; Hohwy 2007; Gallagher 2000; Cermolacce, Naudin, Parnas 2007; Damasio 2011; Castañeda 1999; Hart 2009; Siewert 1998, etc.

sources, an initial point of concern has to be the questionable validity of this attempt to deliver, in neo-Sartrean terms, a "bespoke" version of pre-reflective self-consciousness and to identify this as the locus of self-hood understood in minimal terms. The investigation of the phenomenal and qualitative character of conscious experience (i.e., the unique first-personal point of view interpreted as the "quasi-reflective" *qualia* of experiential "for-me-ness" or "mine-ness") is designed to mark out a distinction between the specificity of the individual subject's unique, singular experience, and the subjective character of conscious experience in general. Consequently, the focus for this research becomes the apparent singularity, and the unique, qualitative "feels like," of conscious experience for the subject. In this respect it will pay us to bear in mind Guillot's recent argument that within such research there typically lurks a problematic, but often hidden, conflation of at least three different descriptions of the qualitative character of experience.[53] For instance, although the descriptive labels "for-me-ness," "me-ness," and "mineness" are typically used more or less interchangeably, Guillot argues that these notions are not equivalent: "…in particular, there is no conceptual implication from for-me-ness to me-ness or mineness…the three notions… correspond to different properties."[54] She examines examples of current versions of subjectivity conceived in such "minimal" terms, *all* of which, she claims, are fuelled by "…an undifferentiated use of the three notions…", and as a result she "…find[s] them to be flawed."[55]

1.2 The "Minimal Self"

One representative example of recent phenomenological investigation into the question of "minimal" selfhood, in the terms described above, is that pursued by Dan Zahavi, *et al*.[56] Given the predominance and popularity of Zahavi's particular approach[57] - perhaps the most publicised and

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[53] Guillot 2017.

[54] Guillot 2017: 23.

[55] Guillot 2017: 23.

[56] See, e.g., Zahavi 2005.

[57] Higgins 2020: 535.

influential in the current literature, and largely emblematic of its type - we shall for the sake of simplicity focus in what follows on key aspects of his particular thesis. Zahavi aims to show that what he calls "minimal" selfhood is conceptually interchangeable with the "for-me-ness" and "self-givenness" of experiential "pre-reflective self-awareness."[58] He alleges that it is a basic and demonstrable phenomenological finding that all acts of consciousness are uniquely experienced qualitatively as "my own" or "for me," and that "mineness" in these terms characterises *all* first-personal experience. It is this particular pre-reflective sense of self or "self-consciousness" which Zahavi insists underpins the "mineness" of experience, that is finally identified as the "minimal" or "core" self. It is suggested (although perhaps actually presupposed) that this experientially derived conceptuality of minimal (or "core," or even, on occasion, "thin") self-hood is, from a broadly phenomenological perspective, prior to and therefore foundational for various alternative conceptions of "selfhood" to be found in related mainstream disciplines outside of philosophy - for example in the fields of sociology, developmental psychology, cognitive neuroscience, psychiatry, and so on.

Pre-reflective self-consciousness is distinguished from reflective self-consciousness in that the former is argued to constitute a non-objectifying form of self-acquaintance. Accordingly it transcends the limitations of, and to a large extent the problems associated with, traditional subject-object structures, and thereby suggests that "…the experiential states are…aware of themselves in a non-dual manner."[59] It is argued (and, significantly, *was* so argued by Sartre) that to mistakenly conceive pre-reflective self-consciousness merely as a form of object cognition will result in either an infinite regression of reflections, or alternatively the eventual realisation that the very thing to be explained has actually been presupposed all along. In general, the phenomenological investigation of consciousness essentially involves a recognition that in fact all conscious acts fundamentally exemplify a primal form of non-objectifying self-awareness. As Sartre himself says,

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[58] Higgins 2020: 536.

[59] Zahavi 2005: 35.

"…reflection lacks any kind of primacy in relation to reflected consciousness: it is not by means of the former that the latter is revealed to itself. On the contrary, non-reflective consciousness is what makes reflection possible: there is a pre-reflective *cogito*, which is the condition of the Cartesian *cogito*."[60]

Although Zahavi normally has a very high regard for Husserl's achievements, he dismisses the idea of a transcendental ego constituting a formal or actual ground of possibility for synthetic, intelligible experience as unfeasible, and hence a redundant feature of what amounts to a broadly problematic neo-Kantian account of experience. What we are left with, however, appears to be a similarly generic, though largely un-clarified, "sense" of an underlying, "minimal" substratum of ego-less, non-reflective "self-awareness." Reflexivity so envisaged as a first-personal, non-positing, self-givenness and qualitative "mineness" is claimed by Zahavi to constitute a "dative of manifestation,"[61] i.e. that to which appearance appears (see below), in the sense of a "minimal" experiential structure that lies behind a plurality of derivative accounts of self-hood, right across the disciplines.

1.3 The First-Person Perspective

As envisaged by Zahavi *et al*, "self-consciousness" is characterised as the qualitative "mine-ness" of first-personal experience, and as such represents *the* definitive structure which grounds our understanding of "subjectivity" in a strictly minimal sense. We are led to believe it is possible to trace a consensus regarding this structure from amongst the works of most leading phenomenologists. The minimal self, from a phenomenological perspective, is not an object of experience, nor a transcendent principle, but rather a necessary, internal structure of consciousness.

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[60] BN: 12.

[61] See below.

Zahavi contrasts his own position with, for example, the formality and abstraction of a broadly Kantian approach. In largely Kantian terms, whereas the stream of consciousness itself is acknowledged to be a constant and incoherent flux, the subject of experience, conceived as a necessarily consistent condition of possibility for intelligible experience, provides - as a transcendental unity of apperception - a unifying centre around which all experience coheres. Consequently, in these terms the self becomes identified as a pure subject, or ego-pole, that any moment of experience necessarily refers back to, and as such "…is the subject of experience rather than the object of experience."[62] Zahavi insists, however, that "…rigorous phenomenological investigation of what it means to be a self…"[63] must of course involve a structural analysis of experience - but *exclusively* in terms of its first personal, qualitative aspects. In this way, so he claims, subjectivity is revealed to possess an "experiential reality," and is thus "…identified with the…first personal givenness of the experiential phenomena."[64] Consciousness of "myself," therefore, does not imply or suggest an awareness, as it were, of a "…pale and detached…"[65] quasi-entity located "behind," or in some sense guaranteeing the coherence of, the stream of consciousness, but refers instead to the immediate awareness of the first-personal mode of the givenness of experience itself. The "self" is not something standing beyond or opposed to the stream of consciousness, but is a function, as Zahavi puts it, of the qualitative givenness of experience.[66]

As mentioned above, there is an emphasis across the research we are considering on what is claimed to be a discoverable consensus, garnered from a range of classic phenomenological sources, that apparently supports and adds credibility to the idea of the "minimal," qualitative nature of first-personal "self-consciousness." In this respect it does seem, however, that to some extent Zahavi's account of the "experiential self" appears to rely perhaps too heavily on his very specific

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[62] Zahavi 2005: 104.

[63] Zahavi 2005: 105.

[64] Zahavi 2005: 106.

[65] Zahavi 2005: 106.

[66] c.f. Zahavi 2005: 106.

reading of the nature of pre-reflective self-consciousness, especially as he reads this in Sartre.[67] This tight focus on a "ground-level" understanding of "self-ness" in such terms does seem to mean, however, that the social, linguistic and potentially "projective" dimensions of "self-ness" tend to remain largely unexplored and unexplained. In some of his later work Zahavi does attempt to at least partially address this lacuna: he extends his account of minimal self-hood by means of positively incorporating what he suggests is the derivative yet complementary idea of narrativity theory:

> "The experiential core self is an integral part of the structure of phenomenal consciousness
>
> and must be regarded as a pre-linguistic presupposition for any narrative practice."[68]

Zahavi believes that what he typically refers to as the "narrative self" is in fact a life-long *process* - i.e. a largely self-constituting development of significant and affirmative narrative structures, which are nevertheless, he claims, grounded in, and entirely derivative of, the qualitative aspects of pre-linguistic and pre-reflective first-personal experience.[69] In the recent literature the resultant structure has sometimes been accused of causing more problems than it purports to solve, and has been seen by some critics as leading to an ultimately unnecessary "layering of selves."[70] Zahavi responds to such criticism by devoting a substantial portion of his *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Investigating the First-Person Perspective*[71] to clarifying what for him is the obvious priority of a minimal, qualitative notion of first-personal givenness (such as he promotes) over numerous alternatives. At the same time, he argues that the idea of self-hood, in any conceptually comprehensive sense, is only achievable provided a narrative element is recognised and accepted. We noted above the contrast Zahavi draws between his own conception of minimal selfhood and the more traditional, largely Kantian idea of the subject envisaged, in a transcendental sense, as a persistent and identical unity of apperception. In this context he suggests that, however, subjectivity itself can only be

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[67] Gusman 2015: 323.

[68] Zahavi 2007b: 191.

[69] See, e.g., Zahavi 2008: 205.

[70] See, e.g., Zahavi 1999: 26.

[71] Zahavi 2005,

convincingly interpreted as both constituted by, and yet constituting, a "narrativity" or what is sometimes referred to as a "life-story." This structure is accounted for as a recurrent, extended narrative process around which a sense of self-hood is woven and arises in terms of our coherent experience of ourselves and the world. He claims that self-hood conceived, in these appropriately "minimal" terms as a form of qualitative "self-awareness," represents *the* necessary condition of possibility for "self-ness" (or as he terms it, "ipseity"[72]) understood as the outcome of an inherent, inevitable yet necessarily subsidiary, narrative process.[73] According to Zahavi, the first-personal givenness of experience means that all "conscious life" is already intrinsically individuated, and it is "self-hood" so understood that narrativity theories must presuppose and, as it were, extend. In support of his view, Zahavi invites us to consider the findings of recent analyses of schizophrenic experience, which he believes indicate that a stable, reliable experience of "self-ness" in minimal terms (as he describes it) is apparently a self-evidently necessary condition for "mental health." Schizophrenic symptomatology is read by Zahavi, perhaps somewhat superficially, as suggesting that, in line with current neurological and psychiatric research, mental disturbance in these terms constitutes a largely unexplained and damaging subversion of the first-personal givenness of experience, and hence is consequently disruptive of a foundational "sense of ipseity."

Whilst Zahavi does acknowledge Sartre as the author of the idea of pre-reflective consciousness on which Zahavi heavily relies, it remains to be convincingly shown whether this pre-reflective, qualitative sense of self as interpreted by Zahavi is as he claims unambiguously present in all of the primary phenomenological sources referenced. As Schear observes:

> "…we learn from Zahavi…that Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Paul Ricoeur, Michel Henry -
>
> indeed even Heidegger - all stand united in its endorsement. Moreover these writers,

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[72] See our discussion in chapter 6.

[73] Zahavi 2005: 110-112, 129-130.

according to Zahavi, explore the pre-reflectively self-conscious character of experience in *complementary* ways."[74]

We remarked in our introduction on the heterogeneity of the post-Husserlian phenomenological tradition, which is notably rife with dissension and disagreement, even from its earliest days. In this light, it appears that Zahavi's pressing need to discover a "complementary" harmony amongst his primary sources - despite the fact that the consensus he seeks is arguably either simply unavailable or at the very least questionable - means that on occasion credulity is perhaps a little stretched. There are moments when he concedes that the congruence he anticipates is certainly elusive, although we are left with the suspicion that his subsequent attempts to synthesise clearly divergent approaches into a cohesive, harmonious account of subjectivity are doubtful. We cannot here assess the degree of success (or otherwise), even on his own reckoning, Zahavi manages to achieve. Nevertheless, especially given our task of identifying and exploring moments of significant convergence between Heidegger and Sartre in relation to their analyses of subjectivity, we must not overlook that our own enquiry will necessarily have to confront similar challenges.

1.4 The Dative of Manifestation

The foregoing overview of Zahavi's claims regarding the "minimal nature" of the subject leaves us, quite naturally, with certain questions. For instance, in what precise sense are such arguably "*un-phenomenological*" findings actually intended? How do they stand philosophically? Can the claims Zahavi makes be read, or *should* they be read, as ironically contravening certain characteristic features of a generally accepted method found in classic phenomenology? We shall address certain concerns regarding Zahavi's general approach in chapter six. For now, all we need note is that from a more ontological perspective there is arguably a tendency here to pre-suppose, possibly unintentionally, and to implicitly revivify "the subject" in a quasi-traditional form as a "presence" or "knower" relative to, or over against, the "knowable." It certainly appears that, at least on the

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[74] Schear 2009: 96.

face of it, under the guise of a so-called "dative of manifestation" the subject, as one aspect of the structural polarity "subject and object," appears to be simply assumed. In any event, it is perhaps arguably retrogressive to conceptualise a "dative" in these terms at all. To conceive of a dative as the apparently necessary counterpart to a "genitive" of manifestation, detached from, and non-positionally independent of, a potentially knowable external reality, suggests that an approach to the idea of self-hood in earlier phenomenological investigation is either overlooked or circumvented. Despite his best attempts to avoid these and other associated difficulties, and yet at the same time remain true to the radical, investigative spirit of early phenomenological research, Zahavi nevertheless appears to presume - and occasionally asserts - the presence of a detached, "knowing" subject in the admittedly questionable form of a "dative of manifestation." Zahavi's focus remains, as we have seen, on consciousness' implied, non-reflective, non-positing sense of (it-)self, and on the concomitant *qualia* (the singular, qualitative sense of experiential "mineness" or "for-me-ness") attaching to first personal experience. Nevertheless, and yet for these very reasons, it seems that Zahavi *et al* must confront the possibility of a bifurcated reality here - a renewed distinction between subjectivity and objectivity, thought and being.

Zahavi's approach to the issue can be said to exacerbate the problem it seeks to diminish: the "subject" in this sense implies a "dative" of manifestation, relative to the "genitive" of appearance, insofar as the appearing *of* something (the genitive) necessitates by default, as it were, a dative or a "dative of appearing" - as that to which appearance appears. To what extent, if at all, this structure so conceived constructively and reliably conveys an understanding of "self-hood" in anything like a genuinely phenomenological sense is what is in question here: in precisely what *phenomenological* sense can a "dative of appearance" be said to convincingly constitute an "*I*" - an identity? Similarly, in what ways might "ipseity," or the so-called "self-ness" of consciousness, albeit descriptive of "minimal self-hood" in Zahavi's reduced terms, accompany or in any sense be associated with a "dative of manifestation?"[75] When consciousness is explained, not in terms of the presence of

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[75] Hart 2009: 34.

egological acts, but rather as a "dative of manifestation," or as "that to which what is manifest is manifest,"[76] there nevertheless remains, so Zahavi argues, minimal "self-hood" - precisely in the sense of what he refers to as the ongoing "agency" of manifestation. He spells out the significance of this notion at work in his own research:

> "On the one hand, every appearance is characterised by a *dyadic* structure; it is an appearance of something for someone. Every appearance has its genitive and its dative. On the other hand, every appearance is characterised by its horizonality, that is, by its reference to a plurality of other appearances. So, if…[the manifestation of all objects]…is characterised by such a dyadic and horizonal structure, what about the dative of manifestation, what about subjectivity itself?"[77]

Although it might seem that superficially all this is perhaps reminiscent of the structures of subjective disclosedness, it would appear that part of the problem, however, lies in overlooking the *positionality* of consciousness that is fundamental to, and necessary for, a comprehensive understanding of human-reality - as Sartre himself realises. Positionality in the sense of the meaningful disclosure and "contextualisation" of *this* _____, (not *that*), in a phenomenological sense, is for Sartre (and as we shall argue, also for Heidegger) the origin of the world *and* myself, and in precisely this sense constitutes a unitary phenomenon or "event" that does not break down into datives and genitives or other clearly incongruous, epistemological structures. In any event, although non-reflective self-consciousness, understood as consciousness non-positionally conscious of positional consciousness, is explicitly recognised (by Sartre) as a fundamental and immediate structure of being-for-itself, reflexivity so conceived does not (for neither Sartre nor Heidegger) constitute self-hood in any fundamental or dimensional sense, let alone an arguably "minimal" sense. Regardless of the extent to which my immediate experience of myself and my world is informed and configured by an inherent "quasi-Sartrean" sense of self (interpreted loosely by Zahavi, as we have seen, as the "mine-ness" of experience) - in actuality "*I*"

[76] Hart 2009: 34.

[77] Zahavi 2007a: 134.

do not "sit apart" from a world which I both rely on and bring to coherence by, as it were, several degrees of separation. As we shall see, for both Sartre and Heidegger, what "*I am*" is *outside*, defined not by self-consciousness or immanent reflexive structure, nor the qualitative features of my experience, but by objectual self-disclosure. As our enquiry progresses we shall attempt to show that, from the perspective of classic phenomenology, a space or event of uncovering and unconcealment, which brings disclosure and the disclosed ("myself and the world," conceived as a unitary phenomenon) to intelligibility and meaningfulness through projection and possibility, is surely where the phenomenological investigation of whatever we might mean by "minimal selfhood" must begin.

1.5 Final Remarks

It is our contention that an analysis of (self-) consciousness as encountered in the recent phenomenological research we have been assessing, centred around reflexivity and an explanation of the so-called "minimal" subject in terms of the qualitative aspects of first-personal experience, represents an attempt to refine, but remains critically limited by, basic assumptions regarding the constitution of subjective awareness and first-personal perspectivity. To be asking at all, even by implication, to *whom* does the world manifest, to *whom* is the world given, or for *whom* does the world emerge as intelligible, presupposes the pure immanence of a knowing subject, somehow detached from, yet beset by, a world of knowable objects which remain, as it were, "out there." As Heidegger says:

> "One of our first tasks will be to prove that if we posit an 'I' or subject as that which is
> proximally given we shall completely miss the phenomenal content of Dasein.
> *Ontologically*, every idea of a 'subject' - unless refined by a previous ontological
> determination of its basic character - still posits the subjectum along with it, no matter how
> vigorous one's ontical protestations against the 'soul substance' or the 'reification of

consciousness'. The Thing-hood itself which such reification implies must have its ontological origin demonstrated if we are to be in a position to ask what we are to understand *positively* when we think of the unreified *Being* of the subject, the soul, the consciousness, the spirit, the person….[so] we are not being terminologically arbitrary when we avoid these terms…in designating those entities which we are ourselves."[78]

We could say that by analysing *appearance*, phenomenology is not interested in subjectivity as just one topic along side a range of others.[79] As Grøn points out, given that the subjective field arguably represents the heart of the phenomenological project, at the same time it unquestionably comprises its central difficulty.[80] The research we have considered in this chapter proposes that self-evidently there is no manifestation or appearance without a so-called "dative of manifestation."[81] That being apparently so, as we have noted, what might be the sense, or conditions, in which it is possible to characterise this "dative" as an *I*? Is it the case that the dative (grammatically an indirect object of a verb) of appearing, as that to which appearance appears, is in itself an object *for* consciousness? Given the context, we would also question in what possible ways could a sense of the personal either survive or be justified? How are we to construe the possibility of a transcendental subjective field as "subjective" *in this sense* only in so far as it is interpreted functionally as one aspect of manifestation?[82] We shall further address these issues in more detail in chapter six. For now, it is to be hoped that our present enquiry will ultimately help to reduce at least some of this confusion.

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[78] BT: 72, my italics.

[79] See our introduction.

[80] Grøn 2010: 84.

[81] See, e.g., Hart 2009: 34; Zahavi 2007; Castañeda 1999: 20; Overgaard 2004: 45.

[82] c.f. Overgaard 2004: 45.

Chapter 2

The Phenomenological Background

2.1 Preliminary Comments

Our primary purpose in this chapter is to briefly review salient features of Husserl's early phenomenological research, and at the same time touch upon aspects of the terminological and conceptual frame of reference classic phenomenology will come to inherit and inhabit - a basic review of which will prove invaluable as our enquiry progresses. We shall briefly examine aspects of Husserl's ongoing analysis of subjectivity in view of its relevance to our overall enquiry into a potential convergence of views on the part of Heidegger and Sartre in this respect. It remains a matter of continuing debate whether Husserl, in his earliest work (primarily the proto-phenomenological *Logical Investigations* of 1900/1901[83]), either simply evades the question of whether or not consciousness coheres around a transcendental, synthesising ego, or whether he simply sees the question as redundant given the apparent integrity and cohesion of an otherwise ego-less stream of consciousness. We shall consider his significant decision to preserve the transcendental ego from the strictures of phenomenological reduction (see below), and shall

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[83] Hereafter LI1 and LI2.

consider how transcendental subjectivity, conceived as a formal structure synthesising and unifying (in largely Kantian terms) the manifold of experience, comes to represent for Husserl the ground of possibility for experience itself.

It might be helpful as a starting point to provisionally set out identifiable phases in Husserl's philosophic career. Although the proposed divisions are somewhat arbitrary, we will for present purposes rely on a generally accepted fourfold scheme - as follows:[84] (i) a pre-phenomenological period, prior to 1900, comprising the very earliest (principally mathematical) works; (ii) a proto-phenomenological phase, inaugurated by the *Logical Investigations*[85] of 1900-1901, and including the equally significant *The Idea of Phenomenology*,[86] based on lectures delivered in 1907; (iii) the so-called "turn" to transcendental phenomenology (including the "discovery" of the transcendental ego), extending from *Ideas 1*[87] of 1913; and finally (iv) a deepening, arguably "genetic," commitment to the significance of historicality and cultural contextuality in phenomenological research, and to the notions of intersubjectivity and the "life-world" (*Lebenswelt*), initially broached in the concluding section of the *Cartesian Meditations*[88] of 1931 and culminating in *The Crisis of European Sciences*[89] of 1936. Our main interest here will be with (a) the second, "proto-phenomenological" stage, essentially Husserl's development of the concept of intentionality, and (of particular significance for Heidegger, as we shall see) the theory of categorial intuition which concerns the possibility of direct and immediate, non-sensuous intuition, founded on sensuous intuition, of the categorial and propositional structures of objects and states of affairs in the world;[90] and with (b) the third stage, especially Husserl's installation of a transcendental ego as a necessary and explanatory structure within consciousness. Husserl consistently recognises a mundane subject,

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[84] See Priest 2000: 1.

[85] Husserl 1970b; 1970c.

[86] Hereafter IP.

[87] Hereafter Ideas 1.

[88] Hereafter CM.

[89] Hereafter CES.

[90] See chapter four.

in the sense of an empirical ego, which is available to reflection and which inhabits the world as one object amongst and alongside all other objects. With the arrival of *Ideas 1*, however, subjectivity is increasingly envisaged in transcendental terms, and conceived as such differentiates and constitutes as meaningful this very same world of which the ego considered in an empirical sense comprises just an infinitesimal part.

The influence upon Heidegger of the achievements of his teacher is considerable, as we shall see. Similarly, although also critical of Husserl on occasion, Sartre's earlier philosophic works, culminating in *Being & Nothingness*, are nevertheless deeply embedded in, and indebted to, not just certain isolated features of Husserl's phenomenological method, but more generally to Husserl's philosophic intent and integrity. In this respect, as Levy observes,[91] many of the critical aspects of Sartre's comprehensive analysis of human-reality as found in *Being & Nothingness* are unquestionably grounded in and inspired by Husserl's phenomenological research.[92]

2.2 Reduction and The Natural Attitude

In the 1870's Husserl's teacher at the time, Franz Brentano (1838-1917), whose reputation derives primarily from his work in the philosophy of psychology, famously established a demarcation of the mental from the non-mental by restoring the notion of intentionality, from scholastic origins, as definitive of the mental.[93] His thesis that all and only mental phenomena are intentional is perhaps questionable, but his further claim that *only* mental phenomena are intrinsically and exclusively intentional seems to have inspired Husserl's early phenomenological work. Phenomenology, re-thought as an entirely new discipline by Husserl, is introduced by him as a means of investigating and analysing the intentional structures of consciousness (and phenomena, insofar as these are consciously experienced), supposedly unencumbered by theories of causal explanation or by

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[91] Levy 2016: 511-524.

[92] Levy 2016: 512.

[93] See Brentano 2015.

ontological pre-conceptions of any kind. To this end, Husserl devises and employs a unique methodology - the aptly named phenomenological reductions, by means of which all the beliefs and assumptions about ourselves and the nature of the world, all our theoretical and ontological commitments, which together comprise what Husserl refers to as our "natural attitude," are deliberately suspended or "parenthesised." The very nature of consciousness experience itself cannot be grasped, Husserl maintains, unless such persistent, naturalistic distortions are removed.[94] Naturalistic attempts to account for and explain consciousness in causal terms - by means of following, for example, neurological or evolutionary theory, are for Husserl dangerously prejudicial. He argues that these rely too heavily on potentially misleading and questionable assumptions about the nature and structures of consciousness, which, Husserl alleges, are in any event ultimately grounded in one or another version of a basically Cartesian account of the mental.[95] By putting into suspension any and all such theories, phenomenological reduction aims to reveal the actual semantic and intentional character of all conscious experience. Indeed, Husserl maintains that the move to reductively parenthesise the presuppositions of the natural attitude reveals that in fact intentionality itself is intrinsic to consciousness.

Husserl does not rely on just one single species of methodological reduction. Throughout his career he develops a range of reductive strategies, designed to both enable, and meet the challenges of, philosophical investigation conceived - as he puts it - as an eidetic science. Despite repeated attempts, he failed to finally amalgamate, at least to his own satisfaction, the various reductions into a coherent, overall theory. Although it remains much disputed, it is argued by some commentators[96] that the deployment of phenomenological reduction tends to situate Husserl's project firmly in the shadow of Kantian transcendental idealism, particularly insofar as Husserl comes to believe that in fact it is subjectivity conceived in transcendental terms which configures and meaningfully constitutes the world - i.e. that *all* experience is inherently constitutive, and in this sense relative to

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94 Moran 2005: 26.

95 c.f. Crowell 2012: 201.

96 See, e.g., Smith 2003: 179ff.

a transcendental subject. Certainly for Husserl, the reduction so understood supposedly enables the investigation of this originary, "primal" state, more or less unencumbered.[97] Husserl's so-called "transcendental turn," which reflects his developing commitment to transcendental subjectivity conceived as the ground of possibility for experience, has been (and still is) much debated, especially in light of the allegation that this move apparently involves an unnecessary perpetuation of excessive "metaphysical baggage."[98] Despite Carr's view[99] that Husserl is arguably best appreciated as *maintaining* a transcendental tradition inaugurated by Kant, it is perhaps more practical, as Luft suggests, to interpret Husserl (at least from the point of view of our present enquiry) as "complimenting" and, as it were, *attempting to complete* the Kantian project. In other words, the "…top-down deductive approach of Kant was supplemented…[by Husserl's] bottom-up method that concretely worked up to the 'facts' Kant and the Kantians took for granted."[100]

In view of severe limitations of space we cannot usefully engage in the debate concerning the complex relation between Husserl's early phenomenological research and Kant's critical philosophy. For the present, therefore, we will simply accept Husserl's own conviction that the reductive structural analysis of conscious experience finally delivers a convincingly reliable and stable infrastructure of understanding, by means of which original and creative philosophical investigation may proceed:

> "Let the idea guiding our meditations be at first the Cartesian idea of a science that shall be
>
> established as radically genuine…an all-embracing science."[101]

In *The Idea of Phenomenology* (1907)[102] Husserl announces that the reduced analysis of transcendental consciousness, with all our existential beliefs in abeyance, finally enables access to a

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[97] Luft 2012: 243.

[98] Luft 2012: 244.

[99] See Carr 1999.

[100] Luft 2012: 244.

[101] CM: §3.

[102] Hereafter IP.

"…wholly new dimension."[103] As he puts it: "…[philosophy] *needs an entirely new point of departure* and an entirely new method distinguishing it in principle from any 'natural science.'"[104] Accordingly, phenomenological investigation is distinguished from the methods of natural science in two principle ways: (i) by the adoption of the "phenomenological" or "transcendental" attitude, thereby suspending the natural attitude and all its contents; and (ii) the recognition that "pure" or transcendental phenomenology does not comprise…

> "… a science of facts, but instead…[it comprises] a science of essences (an 'eidetic' science), a science which aims exclusively at securing 'knowledge of essences' and no 'facts' at all."[105]

What is unique about phenomenological method, so Husserl claims, is that it constitutes an attempt to directly address the primary problems of philosophy in the complete absence of any of the traditional epistemological structures and presuppositions characteristic of the natural attitude.[106] He goes so far as to claim that *all* previous philosophical enquiry has been to greater or lesser extents determined by the belief structures of the natural attitude, and for this reason must consistently fail to finally achieve the necessary shift in perspective which might allow incisive investigation. The notion of the natural attitude, which grounds Husserl's early methodology,[107] is first comprehensively described in *Ideas 1*[108] as the primordial structure of our everyday, normative involvement in and with the world.[109] For Husserl, the concept represents a summation of the entire pattern of belief which presents the world as unquestionably *pre-given*. As Luft expresses it, the natural attitude

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[103] IP: 19.

[104] IP: 19.

[105] Dahlstrom 2014: 3.

[106] c.f. Zahavi 2003: 44.

[107] c.f. Luft 1998.

[108] See Ideas I: §§27-31.

[109] See CES: §38

"…undergirds the everyday life we live, as it were, naturally, i.e. dealing in a 'straightforward way' with other human beings, animals, plants, things, making plans, performing actions, pursuing interests etc."[110]

For Husserl, our "everyday" mode of being thus characterised presupposes a tacit positing of the world itself as an independent horizon of being.[111] Our ubiquitous and spontaneous beliefs about, and our overall immersion in, the world as it appears to exist "for us" is described by Husserl as the "general thesis" - a thesis which, he claims, is conceded by all the positive sciences. This is perhaps most evident when we consider, for example, the correlation between natural science and its implicit complicity in the belief that the world, "reality" itself, has an existence entirely independent of minds and experience. Not only does direct realism in this sense fundamentally underwrite the natural sciences, Husserl points out, but at the same time it similarly informs and structures our everyday, "natural" experience - prior to any kind of "theoretical" attitude. He claims that our pre-suppositions so configured, regardless of their pervasiveness and apparent "natural-ness," fundamentally lack any philosophical credibility. As he says:

"No conceivable theory can make us stray from the principle of all principles: that each intuition affording [something] in an originary way is a legitimate source of knowledge… Let us continue to recognise that each theory in turn could itself draw its truth only from originary givenness."[112]

This deliberate parenthesising of the beliefs and ontological commitments which constitute the natural attitude is described by Husserl as the *epoché*: a term borrowed from classical scepticism, where it originally refers to a suspension of judgement or to abstention.[113] It is important to understand that the *epoché* viewed as a means of "putting out of action," or "abstaining from," our positional beliefs about the world, and thereby enabling an unprejudiced apprehension of the field

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[110] Luft 1998: 155.

[111] Russell 2006: 61, my italics.

[112] Ideas I: §24.

[113] Moati 2016: 455, and see Ideas I: §§27ff.

of transcendental consciousness, is not a process of denial or doubt. As we have seen, it does not imply the rejection of reality, but rather *the suspension* of our habitual acceptance of the natural attitude itself. Thus, the natural attitude is not circumvented or, as it were, "removed" in reduction. Rather, although the natural attitude is denied any immediate plausibility or validity as such, it is at the same time *sustained* precisely insofar as, subject to the terms of the *epoché*, it becomes phenomenologically "available". In the same way, our typical, everyday attitudes toward "reality" are transformed:

> "We are no more taking anything from the fully valid being of the world, as the universe of realities than we are taking anything from the fully valid geometrical being of a square by denying…that it is round. The real actuality is not "re-interpreted" or even denied but an absurd interpretation of it is set aside, absurd because the interpretation contradicts its *very* sense, which has been clarified in a patently discernible way."[114]

Before considering Husserl's "discovery" of a transcendental ego within consciousness,[115] as an important preliminary we shall first briefly mention a significant problem Husserl recognises he must face in this regard, famously dubbed by him the "paradox of subjectivity."

2.3 The Paradox of Subjectivity

For Husserl, the *epoché* discloses the world as phenomenon, as *sense*, although at no point does he suggest or even imply that the world is just and only phenomenon, or just and only sense.[116] Rather, for him as for Kant, it is possible to view the "one and only" world, as it is experienced, in two alternative ways - in either empirical or transcendental terms. Carr suggests that analogously both Husserl and Kant recognise and seek to allow for these two distinct, yet related, perspectives on, or

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[114] Ideas I: §55.

[115] See, e.g., Ideas I.

[116] c.f. Carr 2003: 182.

"appropriations" of, the world. As he says, in this respect it is therefore possible for both of them to envisage the "one and only" subject under either of these two alternative aspects: as either transcendental or empirical.[117] In other words, the subject may be explained as a matter of empirical fact, occupying an objectual place in the world alongside and in combination with all other objects - as an interactive, historically conditioned, culturally embedded agent that both constitutes and is constituted by facticity and social meanings.[118] In these terms, the empirical self relates causally to all other environmental objects, relations and states of affairs. Alternatively, the subject may be viewed "…from the perspective of the experience-world relation,"[119] - a perspective recognising that the subject's relation to the world is fundamentally meaning-bestowing (or "constituting"), and which as such represents a ground of possibility for the experience of an intelligible and meaningful world. Given this distinction, subjectivity becomes conceptualised under alternative yet simultaneous aspects - as either "constituted" (empirical) or as "constituting" (transcendental). In an attempt to clarify the dilemma, Husserl writes:

> "Just as the reduced Ego is not a piece of the world, so, conversely, neither the world nor
>
> any worldly Object is a piece of my Ego, to be found in my conscious life as a really
>
> inherent part of it, as a complex of data of sensation or a complex of acts."[120]

As he goes on to suggest, the *I* so understood is not some merely fragmentary, "tail-end" component of the world, but in fact constitutes the very condition of its possibility - not as existing, but as meaning and sense. In other words, that by means of which the world is constituted, *as world*.[121] It is this intensely paradoxical distinction, which we find in both Husserl and Kant, between the subjective field conceived simultaneously as both transcendental and empirical, which lies at the heart of the problematic Husserl eventually comes to refer to as the "paradox of subjectivity."

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[117] Carr 2003: 183.

[118] Carr 2003: 180.

[119] Carr 2003: 183.

[120] CM: §11.

[121] See Overgaard 2005: 148.

2.4 Husserl, Sartre and the Ego

Husserl's claims regarding the post-reduction presence of a transcendental ego within consciousness are famously challenged by Sartre, whose incisive critique of Husserl's doctrine is found in the opening section of Sartre's 1937 essay, *The Transcendence of the Ego*.[122] We shall here briefly assess Sartre's challenge, which touches in important ways on the question of subjectivity envisaged in transcendental terms. His essay opens with a sustained interrogation of what he alleges are a range of difficulties intrinsic to Husserl's position. On the basis of his own reading of the Kantian conception of subjectivity understood as a transcendental unity of apperception[123] Sartre attempts to expose what he believes is a fundamental misreading of Kant's intentions in this context on the part of Husserl. He does so by seeking to positively exploit the Kantian distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* philosophical claims.[124] There are evidently no implied existential assumptions, Sartre observes, informing Kant's claims concerning the role and function of the transcendental unity of apperception. Rather, Kant's sole concern in this regard seems to be to formally determine the logical conditions necessary for the possibility of intelligible experience. Kant's thesis consequently rests on *de jure* conditions which are "…merely the set of conditions necessary for the existence of an empirical consciousness,"[125] i.e., not something that itself necessarily exists.[126] What Sartre wants to know, therefore, in what he emphasises are entirely *de facto* terms,

> "…is [whether] the *I* which we encounter in our consciousness made possible by the synthetic unity of our representations, or is it the *I* that in fact unifies the representations among themselves?"[127]

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[122] Hereafter TE.

[123] See the earlier stages of the Transcendental Deduction in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, trans. Paul Guyer, Allen Wood, 1998).

[124] See TE: 2-9, and c.f. Gardner 2011: 58.

[125] TE: 3.

[126] Gardner 2011: 58.

[127] TE: 3-4.

In addressing this problem, Sartre questions whether - as we might naturally assume - we could turn for help to rigorously phenomenological (*de facto*) methodology itself, particularly since Husserl's analysis of consciousness apparently constitutes not a critical, deductive (Kantian) approach, but rather a "…*de facto*…descriptive science."[128] It is precisely in relation to this very question, however, so Sartre alleges, that Husserl appears to betray his own principles. The method of phenomenological reduction (*epoché*), discussed above, in terms of which *all* existential assumptions about the world are suspended, should by rights ensure that any ontological suppositions concerning the status of an apparently transcendental ego, located within or "amidst" consciousness, be parenthesised accordingly. Sartre accuses Husserl of subverting the integrity of his own methodology here, insofar as Husserl claims that the transcendental ego is apparently philosophically unavoidable, i.e. that as structurally necessary the ego so conceived constitutes the ground of possibility for meaningful, conscious experience. The transcendental ego, envisaged as a formally functional aspect of consciousness, is according to Husserl *therefore* capable of surviving any and all phenomenological reduction. Sartre believes that Husserl's belated "discovery" (see below) of the presence of a transcendental ego within consciousness stems in large part from a basic misunderstanding of Kant's account of the role and status of self-consciousness. Be that as it may, an inveterate characteristic, so Sartre reminds us, of all phenomenological method is supposed to be the denial of dogma and a "sustained suspicion" of all *a priori* metaphysical premises.[129] Accordingly, Sartre insists that in order for phenomenology to remain true to its own principles Husserl's transcendental ego has to be be susceptible to the reduction. In short, for Sartre, the ego has to go - insofar as the fundamental error to which Descartes and, latterly, Husserl succumb is an unquestioned readiness to accept the basic premise that the "self," whether envisaged in functional or substantial terms, is a condition which in some form pre-exists, and which may therefore be encountered only subsequently.

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[128] TE: 4.

[129] Moran 2000: 4.

A transcendental ego, conceived by Husserl as an immanence in and for consciousness, is simply not necessary, so Sartre argues, to explain the singularity, the coherence, or indeed the unity of consciousness, nor does it represent some kind of necessary, underlying condition of possibility for synthesised, intelligible experience, even (or especially) in a broadly Kantian sense. Indeed, as Sartre observes, there cannot be a transcendental ego comprising a unifying structure of consciousness for the basic reason that consciousness so envisaged would be a self-contradiction. Consciousness, which he maintains is absolutely without content, is in itself, as intentional, unified *in any event*, and in a pre-reflective sense is a non-positional and non-thetic *self*-awareness.

We must now review Husserl's reasons for concluding that, *contra* Sartre's challenge, a transcendental ego - understood as logically necessary and therefore unavoidably present within consciousness - must as such be safeguarded against the rigours of the phenomenological reduction. Examining his thinking in this respect will enable us to gain a sense of the earlier stages of the phenomenological investigation of subjectivity, and of course the move to recognise the "co-givenness" of the subject and its environment, or of self and world.

2.5 Transcendental Subjectivity

Husserl employs the terms "ego" (*das Ego*) or "I" (*Ich*) interchangeably to reference, on the one hand, the psycho-physical empirical ego[130] conceived of as a contingent yet durable subjectivity, and on the other hand, the transcendental ego (*das transzendentale Ego*) or "pure" ego. This fundamental, aspectual demarcation constitutes the problem of the "paradox of subjectivity," referred to above. Certainly, Husserl's belief that the ego is, as he puts it, 'self-constituting," by which he means that because the ego is inveterately sense-giving it must be so in relation to itself, appears to anticipate the paradox as presented. As a result, we are from the outset confronted with a dichotomous situation: an empirical ego understood to be *in* the world, over against a transcendental

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[130] c.f. CM: §11.

ego construed as *for* the world. The empirical ego is the psycho-physical "*me*" (for Sartre, as we shall see, a product of and for reflection) in causal interaction with all other objects, i.e. a potentially examinable object for, say, empirical psychology. On the other hand, the ego in its transcendental aspect is not in itself discernible by phenomenological, or any other, mode of investigation, and as a formal structure of consciousness is not directly encounterable or a describable function of experience. Rather, the pure ego constitutes the "centre" around which an unstable stream of consciousness in constant flux coheres intelligibly, and as such it enables, or as it were "configures," each act of consciousness - including, necessarily, our so-called "horizonal" awareness. As mentioned above, Husserl comes to rely explicitly, as evidence for his position, on Kant's theory of the transcendental unity of apperception.[131] However, in the early *Logical Investigations* of 1900/1901,[132] which Sartre approvingly references, Husserl sees no need to posit a pure, transcendental ego within consciousness in order to explain the inherent unity or coherence of experience. At this preliminary stage in his phenomenological research Husserl believes there is simply no transcendental *I* or ego, either materially or formally, beyond or underlying the stream of consciousness, or indeed prior *in any sense* to an empirical objective self.[133] However, the second edition of the *Logical Investigations* published in 1913 includes the memorable footnote, appended to his earlier pronouncements regarding the absence of a transcendental ego, to the effect that:

> "I have since managed to find it [the transcendental ego], i.e. have learnt not to be led astray
>
> from a pure grasp of the given through corrupt forms of ego-metaphysic."[134]

The far-reaching implications of Husserl's revised understanding of the subjective field and the structural integrity of consciousness, quietly announced without argument in this subsequent footnote, is typically associated in the commentary with heralding what has come to be referred to as Husserl's "transcendental turn." Symptomatic of the "turn" is the growing conviction that

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[131] Ideas I: §57.

[132] Hereafter LI.

[133] Russell 2006: 145.

[134] LI 2: 1, §8: 92.

positioned outside these so-called "corrupt forms" of metaphysical speculation there remains the explanatory necessity of establishing (in a clear emulation of Kant) conditions for the possibility of experience, but now *via* an "ego-hood," a transcendental subject. By the time of *Ideas I* Husserl is ready to assert that although the *epoché* naturally suspends the psycho-physical field of the empirical ego, in direct contrast the pure ego (as the unassailable ground of transcendental subjectivity) is for him unquestionably irreducible.[135] So conceived, the pure ego is not, in one sense, envisaged as some kind of ephemeral, evanescent fluidity; nor, in another sense, does it have the status of an intentional object (such as the empirical ego) for consciousness. Rather, the pure ego as transcendental now becomes the synthesising, disclosive ground of possibility for experience itself. As expressed by Husserl in *Ideas II*:[136]

> "The Ego is the identical subject functioning in all acts of the same stream of consciousness; it is the centre whence all conscious life emits rays and receives them; it is the centre of all effects and actions, of all attention, grasping, relating, and connecting, of all theoretical, valuing, and practical position-taking, of all enjoyment and distress, of all hope and fear, of all doing and suffering, etc. In other words, all the multi-formed particularities of intentional relatedness to Objects, which here are called acts, have their necessary *terminus a quo*, the Ego-point, from which they irradiate."[137]

The transcendental ego, identified as the self-identical ego-pole of all acts of intentional consciousness, is now described by Husserl as directing "intentional rays" toward potentially experienceable, intentional objects, relations and states of affairs.[138] For example:

> "I take myself as the pure Ego insofar as I take myself purely as that which, in perception, is directed to the perceived [etc.]…In the accomplishment of each act there lies a ray of

[135] c.f. Russell 2006: 146.

[136] *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution,* trans. R. Rojcewicz, A. Schuwer.

[137] Ideas II: 112.

[138] See Ideas I: §21.

directedness I cannot describe otherwise than by saying it takes its point of departure in the 'Ego'."[139]

Significantly, as Overgaard suggests, at this stage Husserl characterises the transcendental subject straightforwardly, though not in so many words, as an apparent "dative of manifestation," or "…as the one *to whom* the world is present."[140] In the previous chapter we noted potential difficulties associated with a recent tendency in certain phenomenological research to explain the subject in seemingly "minimal" terms as a "dative of manifestation."[141] We should note in this respect that for Husserl the transcendental subject construed as a "point of view" on the world, as an *apriori* point from which a world is disclosed, means that its structural integrity is not by definition directly examinable or knowable. Instead, it is only by reductively analysing its "noematic correlate" - the intentional object, relation or state of affairs as given - that the structures of the transcendental subject are actually by implication deducible. In an anticipatory sense, therefore, can we say that for Husserl it is crucially only *through* the disclosure of a world that "self-hood" - in whatever sense - may as such become manifest? In this regard, however, we would again have to ask whether characterising the transcendental subject as the "place" or "locus" of manifestation in precisely this sense might not simply mean artificially extending the apparent logical distance between the subject and the world? It may be that the orthodox view of a fundamental separation between subject and object is simply exacerbated here in the attempt to define transcendental subjectivity primarily in terms of "location," or even "relation" - a move which thereby arguably perpetuates a clearly positional, ontological, yet entirely *unnecessary*, duality.

It is essential we do not overlook that, contrary to one commentarial trend, Husserl consistently and convincingly envisages the human subject as multi-faceted and multi-dimensional. We find him at different times and in different contexts distinguishing between, for example, the transcendental

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[139] Ideas II: 103, my italics.

[140] Overgaard 2004: 136, my italics.

[141] See the section devoted to a consideration of the idea of the dative of manifestation in chapter 1.

ego, the "real" ego, the mundane, empirical ego, the psychological ego, and so on.[142] In fact, we can say that Husserl tends to conceive the ego in essentially "aspectual" or dimensional terms, i.e. the ego is understood to be, in a sense, simultaneously both founded and foundational. As Bowler reminds us, however, the pure ego identified as the transcendental "ego-pole" of intentional activity does not…

> "…simply ground the diachronic identity of the subject and the stream of lived experience, but also underlies the whole range of actual and possible objects of intentional regard and affectation at any given moment."[143]

Conceived thus, the transcendental ego grounds - as its possibility - the horizon of intentionality, or as Husserl expresses it: "…the pure ego is the centre of all intentionality."[144] Crucially though, for Husserl, the ego ("the *I*") and the world are *co-given*, and as such are conceptually indissoluble:

> "…I am what I am…*as subject of a surrounding world*. The concepts of ego and surrounding world are related to one another inseparably."[145]

Husserl clearly construes the world as a horizon of intra-referential sense, a horizonal ground of possibility that always motivates, conditions and affects the ego in significant and meaningful ways. In fact, in order to suitably reflect this dimensionality and the significance of the horizon of our experiencing in these terms, Husserl tends to interpret the notion of "world" in different ways, depending on the context. For example, he often refers to what he calls the "surrounding world" (*Umwelt*):

> "The surrounding world is the world that is perceived by the person in his acts…it is the world of which this personal ego is conscious, the world which is there for it, to which it relates in this way or that way…"[146]

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[142] Bowler 2016: 94.

[143] Bowler 2016: 94.

[144] Husserl 1989: 116.

[145] Husserl 1989: 195.

[146] Husserl 1989: 195.

On other occasions, however, he may emphasise a conception of the world as primarily the ground of (the possibility of) intersubjectivity, i.e. a "reality" held in common and shared by all individual consciousnesses.[147] Although overlooked in some commentary, Husserl increasingly recognises (at least from *Ideas II* onward, but especially in his later work) a so-called "spiritual" world: the *Lebenswelt*, or life-world. On this account, the world is predominantly understood in overtly historical and cultural terms. Indeed, we should note that especially in the later work we encounter more emphasis on the correlation between the so-called personal or "spiritual" ego and the historical, cultural "life-world" in which it lies embedded. It is primarily in this latter phase of his phenomenological research that Husserl develops the idea that the ego so conceived is itself fundamentally historically situated, configured, and so contingent. As early as *Ideas II* he explicitly distinguishes between what he refers to as material entities, which he interestingly characterises as "history-less realities," and "psychic realities" (i.e. "personal" or "spiritual" realities) which he claims have "precisely a *history*." As he puts it:

> "After our expositions of the differences between material nature and what is psychic, the idea of reality consequently needs a more exact delimitation…and now something remarkable shows itself, namely the fact that *material things* are conditioned exclusively from the outside and are not conditioned by their own past; they are *history-less realities*… on the other hand, it pertains to the essence of *psychic reality* that as a matter of principle it cannot return to [its same] total state: psychic realities have precisely a *history*."[148]

What appears to be at work here is a decidedly interpretive approach to the question concerning the ground and essential constitution of intentional experience. Although, as we shall see later on, Heidegger will eventually abandon many aspects of Husserlian method, this particular, interpretive - arguably hermeneutic - approach, and Husserl's growing concern with the significance of horizonal sense and meaning, will profoundly influence the early Heidegger's *modus operandi*,

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147 See, e.g., CM: §5.

148 Husserl 1989: 144-145.

specifically as he prepares the existential analytic of Dasein around which *Being & Time* will largely cohere.

2.6 Husserl and Heidegger

We have learnt that, in a distinctly post-Kantian sense, Husserl envisages the formal presence of a transcendental ego, in all its aspectual complexity, as that around which the manifold of experience, the stream of consciousness, coheres and is both intelligibly and meaningfully configured. In his own words, "…the pure ego is *given in absolute selfhood* and in a unity which does not present itself by way of adumbrations…"[149] In *Ideas 1*, whilst attempting to convincingly demonstrate that the transcendental ego is necessarily impervious to the phenomenological reduction, as discussed above, Husserl explains in suitably graphic terms that the ego,

> "…living through [the manifold of experience] is still nothing that could be taken *for itself*
> and made its *own* object of investigation. Apart from its 'manners of relating' or 'manners of
> behaving,' it is completely devoid of any essential components. It has no explicable content
> whatsoever, it is in and for itself indescribable: pure ego and nothing further."[150]

In a more positive vein, the transcendental ego is envisaged in *Ideas II* as existing *absolutely*, i.e. as absolutely simple ("…it lies there absolutely clear…"[151]), and, as such, both diachronically and numerically identical.[152] In light of these claims it is perhaps little wonder, then, that the early Heidegger becomes increasingly suspicious, and eventually openly critical, of a supposedly rigorous phenomenological account of experience which nevertheless appears to be underpinned by, and dependent on, unambiguous egological structures. From a very early stage, Heidegger comes to believe that the idea of a pure ego, envisaged in the foregoing sense, is a largely artificial construct: it is, he suggests, the outcome of intense but sadly faulty reasoning on the part of Husserl, whom he

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[149] Husserl 1989: 111, my italics.

[150] Ideas 1, §80, p. 154.

[151] Husserl 1989: 111.

[152] Husserl 1989: 103-114.

reads as mistakenly and fruitlessly employing overtly traditional, transcendental means to determine the apodictic, absolute ground of human subjectivity. Whereas for Husserl the pure transcendental ego encountered *via* reflection within the phenomenological reduction opens up for investigation hitherto unexplored ontological regions, Heidegger wants to challenge the idea that "…life and lived experience are captured in reflection," which, as he claims in *Toward the Definition of Philosophy*, "…reduces lived experience to a *process* that passes before an ego."[153] In these early Freiburg lectures of 1919 he elaborates on this theme as follows:

> "The objective occurrence, the happening as objectified and known, we describe as a *process*; it simply passes before my knowing 'I', to which it is related only by being-known, i.e. in a flaccid I-relatedness reduced to the minimum of life-experience."[154]

Significantly, whether he intends it or not, the (very) early Heidegger here appears to at least echo Hume - i.e. he simply cannot find the "*I*":

> "To be sure, it would be no ill-conceived reification and substantification of the lived experience if I said that it contained something like 'I comport myself.' But what is decisive is that simple inspection (*Hinsehen*) does not discover anything like an 'I.' What I see is just that 'it lives' (*es lebt*), moreover that it lives toward something, that it is directed toward something…"[155]

Importantly for us, it is possible to discern at this early stage, especially in the idea of "movement" or the "directedness" *toward* something (i.e. intentional comportment), a premonition of the notion of human disclosedness itself, which, as we shall soon discover, Heidegger will subsequently bring to the fore as fundamentally determinative of the subjective field, of Dasein itself. But more on this later.

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[153] Bowler 2016: 96.

[154] Heidegger 2008: 59.

[155] Heidegger 2008: 53.

Heidegger's criticism of Husserl at this time largely revolves around his reading of Husserl's particular methodology, insofar as Heidegger's primary focus is on developing a comprehensive *ontological* framework in terms of which the everyday existentiality of Dasein may be plausibly analysed. Consequently, he is dismissive of what he sees as Husserl's less than convincing forays into a specifically ontological analysis of "the subject." Heidegger alleges that Husserl evidently limits himself by mistakenly attempting to transition from a more orthodox reading of substance to a seemingly refined but, in fact, equally problematic ontology of subject and object.[156] In response, Husserl remains adamant that his own phenomenological investigations positively constitute a strictly pre-theoretical, *presupposition-less* account of the immediate structures of consciousness. He claims these structures are described precisely as they appear in the "givenness" of experience, and are appropriately elucidated within the application of the *epoché*. By introducing the topic of the phenomenological reduction in relation to the question of the status and role of transcendental "ego-hood," Husserl implies there is a critical distinction between the empirical "human being as a natural being,"[157] over against what he refers to as *pure* ego. Although he anticipates difficulties ahead, throughout his career Husserl remains committed to a fundamental differentiation - originating in Kant - between the empirical and the transcendental ego:[158]

> "If what remains for us as a residuum of the phenomenological suspension of the world and the empirical subjectivity belonging to it, is a pure ego…then along with it a *sui generis* - not constituted - transcendence presents itself, a transcendence in immanence. Given the immediately essential role that this transcendence plays in each *cogitatio*, we will not be permitted to subject it to a suspension."[159]

It appears that the distinction Husserl is making here does not depend on some kind of structural differential, nor the presence of specific, identifiable properties, but rather on a "dual aspect" - i.e.

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[156] c.f. Bowler 2016: 97.

[157] Ideas I: §57.

[158] See Carr 1987: 137.

[159] Ideas I: §57.

actually concurrent means of conceiving the relations between the ego and everything "non-ego." This distinction is grounded in the interface between the ego - in terms of its properties, possibilities and activities - and "the world," and how such possibilities stand in relation to all other entities which are deemed "non-ego." This relation is interpreted as the "aspectual" division between, on the one hand, certain distinguishable properties and activities of the ego which may be understood as standing in a *causal* relationship to everything non-ego, and, on the other hand, as *intentionally* related. Carr explains:

> "Understood intentionally, everything other than the ego can have only the status of an object for its consciousness…[i.e.] it has no other status than that of having meaning *for* the ego, meaning something *to* it. What means nothing to the ego *is* nothing for it, has in this context nothing to do with it. The ego is considered the subject of a consciousness whose essence is to be conscious *of something*, and anything else figures in this scheme only if it has the value of such a *something*."[160]

Of immediate relevance for us is that the foregoing claims clearly bespeak the disclosive nature of consciousness. We are not just concerned here with the objective status of entities conceived as independent of experience, but rather with their givenness to consciousness, i.e. the intentional relationship, in terms of which the transcendental ego is both passively determined and actively determining. Provided it is correct to say that the object "transcends" consciousness, even though the object is itself given *to* consciousness, it never becomes "a part" of consciousness, nor does it become assimilated as some kind of conscious "content" or "representation." In these terms, a "sense of transcendence" is, as it were, "conferred" upon the object.[161] The transcendental ego *is* ego, Husserl claims, only insofar as it is "co-given" with everything "non-ego." Simply put, the ego so conceived as "the transcendental subject" of intentional consciousness bestows or "confers" sense and meaning, as opposed to "everything else" which, as non-ego, has sense or meaning conferred on it. Indeed, we might suggest here that Husserl is perhaps anticipating the possibility of

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[160] Carr 1987: 144.

[161] Carr 1987: 145.

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the simultaneity, or "co-givenness," of "self-constitution" within and in terms of the singular, unitary event of world disclosure.

In conclusion, and in expectation of what is to come, we must briefly mention Heidegger's assessment (pre-*Being & Time*) of what he refers to as the three principle and inter-related "discoveries" of early Husserlian phenomenology. In a lecture course delivered at Marburg in 1925, first published in translation in 1985 as *The History of the Concept of Time*,[162] Heidegger uniquely addresses what he identifies as the three central Husserlian innovations: intentionality, the phenomenological *apriori*, and perhaps most significantly (at least for our study), categorial intuition. Heidegger reads these aspects of Husserl's early phenomenological research as constructively and significantly contributing toward the formulation and consolidation of his own evolving programme into the question of the meaning of being. We are unable to consider in any detail Heidegger's exposition of the themes of intentionality and the phenomenological *apriori* in the present study, but the concept of categorial intuition is certainly of particular relevance to our enquiry into the subjective dimension of disclosure, and accordingly in chapter four we will critically assess Heidegger's positive response to this Husserlian theory.

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[162] Hereafter HCT.

Chapter 3

Heidegger: The Clearing

3.1 Introduction

Our central concern in this chapter is to clarify the role of the idea of disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*) as it occurs in Heidegger's work, particularly with reference to the explicit equation he makes in *Being & Time* between disclosedness and Dasein itself. Following a provisional sketch of the general sense of the concept as it is used by Heidegger, we will assess his reasons for employing in *Being & Time* (and other texts of the same period) the metaphor of a forest "clearing" to elucidate a sense of disclosedness. He chooses the imagery of an illuminated and illuminating clearing (*Lichtung*) in the midst of a dark surrounding forest[163] in order to best articulate, by analogy, a sense of human-reality as essentially an "openness" or "lighting," a disclosedness in-the-world conceived as an "event" or "space" of unconcealment.[164] We shall thereafter clarify the crucial distinction Heidegger makes in *Being & Time* between, on the one hand, what he refers to as "uncoveredness," or the "discovery" of discrete, singular, "foreground" entities within the world, and on the other hand, the "disclosure" of a "background" horizon of

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[163] See, e.g., BT: 171, 214,401-402.

[164] Dahlstrom 2001: 45.

sense and significance in terms of which entities achieve intelligibility. It is Heidegger's belief that truth traditionally conceived in apophantic, propositional terms as correspondence is grounded in a more primal sense of truth as "unconcealment." Consequently, as our enquiry proceeds we propose to thematise and situate Heidegger's retrieval and, as he sees it, "restoration" of the original ancient greek conception of truth as *alêtheia* or "unconcealment." We shall consider this issue in more detail in our next chapter. As we shall see, for Heidegger truth conceived in this foundational sense no longer entails the problematic of "false appearances" over against a "true reality" - a strategy which, so he believes, enables him (as he rather grandly puts it) to inaugurate the ending of traditional metaphysics, or, as he occasionally suggests, to bring it to a "culmination," by finally abandoning the metaphysical and conceptual structures of the reality-appearance distinction itself.[165]

Our penultimate task in this chapter will be to consider disclosedness envisaged as the contextualisation by Dasein of its intentional objects. We shall contend that, for Heidegger, everything "non-Dasein" is inevitably and always revealed as intelligible *via* a process of existential and historical "contextualisation." By these means we hope to clarify in what way this event presupposes the prior disclosure of an environmental context or horizon, which by implication culminates in the possibility of "*self*-disclosure." We shall conclude by examining Heidegger's interpretation of understanding as a form of projection - as a constant forward movement into possibilities, and the relation between understanding so envisaged and disclosedness.

As we observed in the last chapter, in the course of his early phenomenological research into the structure of consciousness, Husserl presents a largely Kantian understanding of the human subject which is not limited by the contingency of "thing-hood," nor envisaged reductively as an objectual "self" in opposition to a manifold of equivalent "things." Generally speaking, for Husserl "the subject" represents a ground of possibility for intelligible and meaningful perspectives on the world

[165] Braver 2007: 9.

- including of course all degrees and levels of objectivity itself. He realises that from the moment the subject becomes objectified and formally construed as an examinable physical or ideal thing in the world, philosophical enquiry tends to lose sight of the actual sense of the subjectivity it set out to explain. This is not to suggest, of course, that within phenomenological analysis the subject has always completely eluded - arguably sometimes completely legitimate - objectification as such. Rather, when viewed phenomenologically, certain essential features of subjectivity simply cannot be made objective. As we shall see, Heidegger remains committed to exploring the meaning of being in ways that do not, for him, perpetuate the fundamental division of reality into a completely artificial dichotomy of subject and object - and ultimately of thought and being. Accordingly, he attempts to navigate between, on the one hand, scientific models of "reality" which tend to privilege objectivity, and on the other hand an overtly subjectivist, existentialist approach committed (so Heidegger believes) to granting an unrealistic priority to a largely world-determining subject.

The generally accepted "standard" view of Heidegger[166] suggests that the concept of "Dasein" (literally, "there-being") should not be read as just a stand-in for the "human subject." It is pointed out in most commentary that the terminology around "subjectivity" or "self-hood," which as we shall see Heidegger in any event attempts to avoid, simply does not transition into, nor is it interchangeable with, the terminology of "Dasein" and its cognates. It should become evident, however, that although the so-called "standard" account may be considered reliable in many important respects *as far as it goes*, it would nevertheless be mistaken to read Heidegger as seeking to undermine, or even eliminate, the concept of "the subject" or "subjectivity" from his phenomenological research. Rather, the strategy he admits to is to erode highly specific, traditional models of the subject,[167] principally through a diagnostic approach which will enable him to demonstrate in concrete terms, and from a range of perspectives, their ultimate ontological implausibility. Øverenget summarises:

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[166] See, e.g., Polt 1999:43-45, and, e.g., Carman 2003: 35-38.

[167] See Øverenget 1998: 2.

"Heidegger challenges the interpretation of the subject as a thing-like entity that is not in the world, but…by allowing subjectivity back into the world, he is not eliminating subjectivity and thereby treating it like any other thing in the world."[168]

In contrast to a conception of the "subject" as an *apriori* and independent psychic entity that is removed from the world by several degrees of separation, Heidegger re-envisages the subject, "that is not a thing," in a unitary sense as "being-in-the-world." As mentioned, Heidegger (both early and late) rarely employs, and then if the context demands it only reluctantly, traditional terminology formally associated with "the subject," "the mind," "the self," "subjectivity," or "consciousness," etc. Rather, unlike Husserl, he tends in preference to deploy a range of neologisms, a tactic of his with which we shall become increasingly familiar. Just for now, however, all we need note is that although the existential analytic of Dasein in *Being & Time* examines Dasein in terms of various fundamental structures, or *existentiales* (i.e. essential features of its being), including - importantly for us - disclosedness and understanding, Heidegger will rarely present Dasein as emblematic, in traditional terms, of "subjectivity" or the "subject."

3.2 Disclosedness in *Being & Time*

In §16 of *Being & Time* Heidegger first explicitly raises the issue of disclosedness. In the course of a discussion concerning how our constitutive assignment of meaning toward entities perceived as "ready-to-hand" or "available" (*Vorhandensein*) is disturbed and consequently transitions on those occasions when the entity as given is, for example, lost or broken, Heidegger makes the observation that these referential contexts "…which circumspection [normally] discovers…"[169] become, as he puts it, "broken," and that the entity which has already been "disclosed" consequently comes to be apprehended in a new light. We are told that he will henceforth employ the terms "disclose" and "disclosedness" in a "technical" sense: "In the passages that follow [these terms] shall signify '*to*

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[168] Øverenget 1998: 2.

[169] BT: 105.

lay open' and 'the character of *having been laid open*.'"[170] As used here these terms do *not* mean "…to obtain indirectly by inference."[171] In their translation of *Being & Time*,[172] Macquarrie and Robinson make the point that the verb *erschliessen* can mean not only "disclose" in the sense Heidegger seems to intend here, but equally, in certain constructions, can also carry the meaning of "to infer" or "to conclude."[173] Their comments help to clarify Heidegger's semantic intentions:

> "To say that something has been disclosed or laid open in Heidegger's sense does not mean that one has detailed awareness of the contents which are thus disclosed, but rather that they have been laid open to us as implicit in what is given, so that they may be made explicit to our awareness by further…discrimination of the given, rather than by any inference from it."[174]

Entdecktheit is a term Heidegger first begins to use with any regularity in 1925 in his *History of the Concept of Time*[175] (a text which is convincingly argued to represent a preliminary draft of the earlier sections of the forthcoming *Being & Time*[176]), to refer to disclosure - though in a rather more expansive and less defined sense than the term carries in later work. With the arrival of the published version of *Being & Time* in 1927 the sense of this "*aletheic* dimension" of Dasein has become suitably refined. Disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*) now formally refers to the "unconcealment," in a foundational sense, of "the world" understood as a horizon of sense and meaning, whereas its twin term "discoveredness" or "uncoveredness" (*Entdecktheit*)[177] becomes restricted to the revealing (or "unconcealing") of specific singular, foreground objects, relations or states of affairs,[178] as we shall discuss (see below). *Entdecktheit* is usually translated as either

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[170] BT: 105, my italics.

[171] BT: 105.

[172] See BT.

[173] BT: 105n.

[174] BT: 105n-106n.

[175] See HCT.

[176] See Kisiel 1993.

[177] These terms are used interchangeably in the earlier text.

[178] Kisiel 1993: 494. See also: BT: 118, and BP: 70-71.

"uncoveredness" or "discoveredness," or sometimes both interchangeably.[179] We will follow this latter practice here and use whichever translation seems most appropriate in context.

Mid-way through *Being & Time*, Heidegger says,

> "By its very nature, Dasein brings its 'there' along with it. If it lacks its 'there,' it is not factically the entity which is essentially Dasein; indeed, it is not this entity at all. *Dasein is its disclosedness*."[180]

From a strictly phenomenological perspective objects, relations and states of affairs as experienced in the world are comprehended as *phenomena* - not as mere "appearances" which, in terms of the Kantian distinction between the *phenomenal* and *noumenal*, are typically considered to either stand apart from, or are an "expression" of, or an adjunct to, "reality" itself. For Heidegger, the *phenomena* is whatever is given to consciousness, as it is given - not an "appearance" in the sense of an "emanation," as it were, of "reality," but rather (as Welton has it) as "…a reality *that appears*."[181] Thus, phenomenological investigation of the very structure of experience seeks to focus on, and preserve direct access to, the immediate "presence" of *phenomena* as what is originally given in experience, rather than risk the theoretical confusion that arises from the play of arbitrary distinctions between so-called "higher-order," i.e. scientific or logical constructions and the "primary being" of things. Welton's account of the disclosure of *phenomena* reduces what he refers to as the "…differentiated structure exhibited by phenomena"[182] to a basic fourfold schema, which may be useful to us here. The schema he proposes, which as we shall see unmistakably echoes the hermeneutic structure of understanding as expounded by Heidegger in *Being & Time*, comprises: (i) *as-structure* (pre-predicative interpretation); (ii) *for-structure* (a recognition of the "for whom" of disclosure); (iii) *in-structure* (the "contextualisation" by consciousness of its

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[179] See, e.g., BT.

[180] BT: 171.

[181] Welton 2000: 21.

[182] Welton 2000: 22.

objects), and finally (iv) *from-structure* (the appearance or "extraction" of things from, or "out of," prior hiddenness or concealment). We shall selectively borrow from Welton's schema in what follows.

All objects, relations and states of affairs in the world are ultimately determinate, in the sense that all *phenomena* "come forth" and are given and disclosed within experience *as* something. This process describes what Heidegger comes to refer to as the "as-structure": basically, our intrinsic capacity to always take something *as* something - but not however as some kind of preliminary, formal determination of "the thing," to which properties may then subsequently be predicated or attached. Rather, the "as-structure" describes an interpretive, essentially pre-predicative "pre-understanding," such that we do not, as it were, "…throw a 'signification' over some naked thing which is present-at-hand, we do not stick a value on it."[183] When something within-the-world is encountered, the thing in question, as such,

"…*already has an involvement* which is disclosed in our understanding of the world, and

this involvement is one which gets laid out by the interpretation."[184]

For Heidegger it is the horizon, conceived as an environmental matrix or "….interconnected field…" of intra-relationality and sense which, as a ground of possibility for disclosure, comprises a referential totality which is understood in advance. The horizon is thus, as it were, "*articulated into*" the as-structure of disclosure.[185] It is important to emphasise that the "as-structure" as such does *not* imply that an event of interpretation occurs only subsequently, i.e. that it follows, or results from, or is in some sense caused by, the appearance of the object or state of affairs. Rather, as Welton significantly expresses it, the as-structure is perhaps most appropriately conceived as

"…that *'fold'* in phenomena that allows them to appear. In Husserl's and Heidegger's

language this '*fold*' is called the sense of the object."[186]

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[183] BT: 190.

[184] BT: 190-191, my italics.

[185] c.f. Guignon 1983: 96.

[186] Welton 2000: 22, my italics.

For Husserl, the "sense of the object" refers to the "*what*" (the presence) of the phenomenon, prior to constitutive interpretation, whereas Heidegger limits "*what-ness*" to a property "drawn from" the object conceived as "present-at-hand," or "occurrent,"[187] but which corresponds to the "sense-structure" of the thing as it is encountered pre-theoretically.[188] Provided we can accept that sense-structure so conceived articulates the presence, the givenness, of the phenomenon, then at least such meaningfulness entails that there is one *for whom* the phenomenon is intelligible and has significance. It is crucially important to appreciate that this "*for-structure*" is not an additional feature or component of the "as-structure," but in fact represents a ground of possibility for disclosure, rather than, as we considered in chapter one, a mere "dative of manifestation" in the more recent sense of this idea.[189]

We will shortly consider the reasons behind Heidegger's use of the imagery of a "forest clearing" to characterise and explain the disclosedness of Dasein (see below). As a result it will become clearer that the appearance of the *phenomenon* for Dasein is only possible at all in terms of a certain "openness" or "clearing" that "reveals" the intended object or state of affairs - that allows it to "stand out," *in context*. In other words, as Welton puts it, "…[entities] come to light in an open dimension where they show themselves."[190] The rider "in context," which underpins all reference to the "standing out" or "being revealed" of entities, is of particular importance. In *Being & Time* "involvement in a context" describes a necessary condition of possibility for the "coming forth," or as Heidegger has it the "being set free," of objects, relations and states of affairs as encountered in the world. This structure is identified by Welton as the "*in-structure*" of *phenomena*,[191] by which is meant a dimension or space which is not in itself the appearance of the phenomenon, but rather suggests the means by which appearance may take place. For Heidegger, when a given entity

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[187] See on for Heidegger's distinction between objects conceived as present-at-hand (or occurrent) and ready-to-hand (or available).

[188] c.f. Welton 2000: 22-24.

[189] See chapter 1.

[190] Welton 2000: 22.

[191] Welton 2000: 22.

within-the-world "…has been proximally freed for its Being, *that Being is its 'involvement.'*"[192] As we shall discuss below, unconcealment describes a positional, interrogative apprehension which intrinsically "makes sense" of the intended object, relation or state of affairs by means of a projective engagement or appropriation that, as it were, reveals or "unfolds" the sense, the significance, of its object for us - always in terms of the disclosure of a context of meaning and possibility. The fourth and final structural aspect of the "differentiation of *phenomena*" schema is what Welton calls the "*from-structure*." Given that phenomena are envisaged as appearing within, and in terms of, a "clearing," it follows that they can only appear or emerge *from* a dimension that is in itself not cleared, "…from what remains hidden, from the darkness circumscribing each clearing."[193] The implication here seems to be that, as we shall consider further in chapter four, although the so-called "from-structure" arises as coincident with the "in-structure," the former can never in a sense be brought into view in the same way as the latter.

Importantly, the "sense of the object," its determinate presence, does not derive solely from the way in which the entity becomes intelligibly thematised merely through corresponding moments of "bare" apprehension. Rather, the sense *unfolds*, within an un-thematised horizon of potential meaning, in terms of a necessarily internal relation. As Welton puts it, the "web" of meanings and significance "…is made up of multiple ways of experientially assimilating relevant objects *in contexts*."[194] Otherwise put, given that meanings so understood are not extracted exclusively from the world of things (realism), nor the world of the mind (idealism), the aptly named *in-structure* as accounted for here relies entirely on the disclosure of an intra-referential-totality or "horizon" - which, as we shall see, in phenomenological terms constitutes the world itself, the "horizon of all horizons." For Husserl, Heidegger, and as we shall see also for Sartre, phenomenology is not limited to merely an analysis of the structures of consciousness *per se*, but rather consciousness as structurally, dynamically and necessarily disclosive, always within and in terms of the world. It is in

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[192] BT: 116, my italics.

[193] Welton 2000: 22.

[194] Welton 2000: 23, my italics.

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precisely these terms that the horizon itself is understood to ground the sense-determination of objects, relations and states of affairs, but always in light of "…a sense that always exceeds what is given,"[195] as we shall see.

3.3 The Clearing

From an ontological perspective, the enquiry into the meaning of being represents *the* interrogative strategy around which Heidegger's entire philosophical project coheres, from the very earliest stages up to and including his final works:

> "…ontological enquiry is indeed more primordial, as over against the ontical inquiry of the positive sciences…but remains itself naïve and opaque if in its researches into the Being of entities it fails to discuss the *meaning of Being in general*."[196]

Pippin observes that this interrogation, which drives the entire existential analytic of Dasein in *Being & Time*, in fact concerns "…the 'possibility' of the meaning of being at all, rather than any direct answer to the question."[197] As such, Pippin notes, when considered from Heidegger's unique perspective, the terms and remit of the question broaden and extend to such a significant degree that it becomes barely possible to sufficiently acknowledge all the philosophical implications, and how in the end the entirety of our lived experience, in all its seeming dimensionality, is enveloped by Heidegger's question. As expressed by Pippin,

> "…[this question] seems to cover the intelligibility, the deep existential familiarity, of someone uttering noises at me, of ink marks on a page, of having to make breakfast, seeing that someone is angry with me, or facing a decision…"[198]

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[195] Welton 2000: 23; and see chapter 4 for an account of the significance for Heidegger of the notion of "excess" or "surplus" in terms of the theory of categorial intuition.

[196] BT: 31, my italics.

[197] Pippin 2007: 201.

[198] Pippin 2007: 201.

And so on. Heidegger himself repeatedly claims, in *Being & Time* and elsewhere, that the *Seinsfrage* does not concern *what* there is, nor what *basic kinds* there are, let alone *why* there is something rather than nothing. In fact, at its most foundational level the *Seinsfrage* actually addresses the very possibility of intelligibility itself, how sense is ever made of anything, and consequently how it is that there is a "clearing" (*Lichtung*) or "lighting" at all - an event of *Unverborgenheit* (unconcealment) "…such that a 'sense' of being is possible."[199] In order to better understand Heidegger's actual intentions here, we must first examine the very specific role the striking imagery of a forest clearing plays in *Being & Time* (and other related texts), particularly his portrayal of Dasein's being-in-the-world in terms of a "lighted clearing" or an "openness" amidst the "concealment" or darkness of undisclosed, undifferentiated being. In this regard, we should note that throughout his career Heidegger untiringly seeks a convincing means of delineating and explaining being *not* as a state of affairs already given, but rather as an "event" which, understood as intrinsically disclosive, allows the coming-to-presence of things in the world. As Guignon puts it, "…being just is the complex event of emerging-into-presence itself."[200]

As we shall see, Heidegger's language in such contexts often indicates a shared ground, a synonymity, between disclosedness and human being-in-the-world, such that neither can be correctly understood apart from the other - in fact, as Haugeland suggests, only *as* the other.[201] In any event, it certainly appears that the reference to illumination is intentionally suggestive, in that it appears to invite us, from an existential perspective, to read Dasein as none other than a "lighting-up" of being, envisaged here as the openness and translucent clarity of a clearing, encountered amidst the density of a dark surrounding forest which otherwise only conceals its inhabitants.[202] In what we would suggest amounts to a clear anticipation of certain distinctive features of the characterisation of Dasein as a clearing, the following passage, which occurs toward the conclusion

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[199] Pippin 2007: 201.

[200] Guignon 1989: 106.

[201] c.f. Haugeland 1989: 51.

[202] Dahlstrom 2001: 45.

of *The History of the Concept of Time*,[203] sheds a telling light on Heidegger's decision to develop this particular imagery. Although somewhat lengthy, we will give the passage in full in view of its relevance. In the midst of a discussion regarding Dasein conceptualised as "being-in-the-world," Heidegger expands on his thesis as follows:

> "The moments of 'toward something', of 'already being involved in', and of 'being ahead' are all phenomena having the character of discoveredness. They are not sighted in the sense that they themselves could be the theme of seeing. Rather, they have a *sight* in themselves. As far as I can see, this peculiar constitution of Dasein provides the basis for understanding an old idea and interpretation of Dasein, whereby it is said that the *lumen naturale*, the 'natural light', is inherent in human Dasein. Dasein by itself, by its nature, in what it is, has a light. It is intrinsically defined by a light. To take an example, this means that a mere thing, a stone, has no light within itself, which means that what it is and how it is towards its environs, if we can speak at all of an environment for the stone, is without sight. We cannot even say that it is dark, since darkness is in fact the negation of light. There is darkness only where there can be light. The manner of being of a mere thing stands beyond or before light and dark. By contrast, the idea that the *lumen naturale* belongs to the Dasein of man means that *it is lighted within itself*, that it is involved in something, has and sees this something and together with it is this very involvement. With the phenomenon of discoveredness, we have arrived at nothing other than the concept, as it were, the category of this structure of being, the phenomenon which was already manifestly seen in the old interpretation of Dasein as the *lumen naturale*."[204]

The imagery of a lighted clearing (*Lichtung*) is clearly implied here, and evokes the possibility of a kinship between the existential structures of Dasein and the traditional imagery of the *lumen naturale*, or the "natural light," of human understanding and reason.[205] It appears likely that

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[203] HCT.

[204] HCT: 297-298.

[205] See Davis 2009: 39ff.

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Heidegger's choice of such imagery is motivated by the need to give some kind of provisional expression to the structural idea that the "self-ness" of Dasein is itself - from a primordial perspective - interpreted as an event or space of disclosedness, of uncovering and unconcealment. Subjectivity itself becomes, on this account, envisaged as a "bringing to light" and, in this particular sense, a "lighting up" of being - and as such appears to point toward the possibility of a synchronous "self-disclosure" in exactly these terms.[206]

Heidegger comes to believe, quite early in his career, that his erstwhile mentor Husserl remains unnecessarily beholden to inherently dualistic Cartesian epistemological structures - central amongst which is the subject-object relation itself. Indeed, Heidegger claims that it is specifically his reliance on this structure that leads Husserl astray in his misleading attempt to explain the consciousness-object relation. The end result is that Husserl's - admittedly innovative - phenomenological analysis of the structures of experience remains constrained by what Heidegger claims is an overly dogmatic adherence to these intrinsically problematic, epistemic structures. Somewhat ironically, so Heidegger suggests, this approach unavoidably results in an ever widening and eventually unbridgeable gap between human apprehension and entities as apprehended - between Dasein and the world. Heidegger develops a radically alternative hermeneutic strategy, which enables him, so he believes, to directly and interpretively address questions concerning knowledge and human experience in the world. His primary aim is to demonstrate the primacy of the disclosive relation of Dasein to things, over against the things themselves *as related*.[207] Thus, even in Heidegger's earlier works we find that the idea of Dasein conceived as a disclosive "clearing" is already at work, behind the scenes, and that Dasein is on occasion provisionally referred to as, for example, an "open space" or an "openness," in terms of which beings are said to

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[206] See chapter 5 for an account of Sartre's notion of "self-ness" in terms of the circuit of ipseity.

[207] c.f. Bernasconi 2006: 25.

"stand out" as meaningful. In other words, Dasein is already coming to be seen as a "…disclosive …possibility of phenomena."[208]

It has been argued recently[209] that Heidegger's recurrent attempts to adequately articulate the disclosive and meaning-bestowing nature of Dasein as "being-in-the-world" clearly correspond with equivalent ongoing semantic adjustments to the metaphorical imagery of the clearing. In the later work, although the metaphor itself is sustained, its reference and form continue to evolve: the meaning of the clearing as representative specifically of human understanding diminishes, and the clearing construed in terms of lighting also fades.[210] The metaphor's principle purpose and points of reference gradually shift toward a sense in which the clearing is understood as constituting an "appropriative" openness - and the illumination or manifestation of beings within, and in terms of, the clearing comes to refer to something distinct from human understanding and existence, i.e. the latter become viewed as that *by which* we apprehend (…are "*open for*") this "light" and what appears in it.[211] Of more immediate concern to us, however, is the sense and purpose of this imagery as it occurs in *Being & Time* and other works from the same period.

3.4 Openness

As mentioned above, Heidegger's employment of the imagery of a lighted clearing[212] in *Being & Time* seems designed to evoke or echo the scholastic conception of the human intellect or rationality as the *lumen naturale* (natural light) - an illumination or disclosure of things, rendering them viewable and so bringing them to intelligibility. It is generally assumed that Heidegger's use of the traditional Latin form is indicative of a correspondence (or perhaps a distinction) he wishes to

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[208] Davis 2009: 39ff.

[209] And has been cogently: see Schatzki 2002: 177.

[210] Figal 2014: 40.

[211] Schatzki 2002: 177.

[212] See BT: 171.

exploit between the classical or scholastic traditions, and his own position.[213] We have already

noted that the existential analytic of Dasein has thus far revealed a being (human-being) which, at a

primordial level, just *is* disclosedness - conceived as the unconcealment of, as the possibility of, a

significant world.[214] From this perspective, Dasein becomes identified as in itself *die Lichtung*, and

in this sense becomes recognised, as Dahlstrom puts it, as "…*the clearing* in which [entities]

disclose their manners of being."[215] Drawing on the etymology of the term "Da-sein" (very roughly

and literally "there-being"), Heidegger claims that

> "…in the expression 'there' we have in view this essential disclosedness. By reason of this
>
> disclosedness, this entity [Dasein], together with the Being-there of the world, is there for
>
> itself."[216]

As Dahlstrom has it, entities "in the dark" may only be concealed from, and entities "in the light"

only may be accessible to, an entity (Dasein itself) that is illuminated or cleared (*gelichtet*) in this

existential sense.[217] As such, the unitary phenomenon "being-in-the-world" represents an existential

perspective from which Dasein is envisaged as itself "…*being the clearing*…",[218] and by means of

which entities reveal their "ways of being." On this account, Dasein is clearly not to be understood

as some kind of isolated, self-sufficient "sphere" of immanence. Rather, in light of his on-going

diagnostic project to "re-envision" orthodox metaphysics, Heidegger is in fact seeking to undermine

and subvert the traditional conception of "self-hood" as an enclosed, self-sufficient subjectivity

entirely independent of, yet mediately related to, a world of other knowable objects. The existential

analytic of Dasein in *Being & Time* unfolds a radical, essentially hermeneutic approach to the

question of self-hood - which, by refusing to objectify the self in any sense at all, both anticipates

and challenges the current analytic attempt to reductively naturalise the mind or consciousness.

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[213] See, e.g., Aristotle, Aquinas.

[214] Capobianco 2011: 90.

[215] Dahlstrom 2001: 290-1.

[216] BT: 132.

[217] Dahlstrom 2001: 290-1.

[218] Dahlstrom 2001: 290-1, my italics.

Insofar as we are understood to comprise "being-in-the-world," for Heidegger the notion of "selfhood" in a contingent sense thereby implies that what we are is *outside* (*being-in* the world), outside and uniquely alongside, and thus immersed in, the world. Heidegger reverses our everyday understanding by arguing that Dasein (the subjective field) in a specific sense exists outside, in the open, or as Polt puts it, human beings in a sense "…*are* the opening, or the clearing…" and that therefore "…[we are to] to think of ourselves as an event of opening."[219] Dasein is *in* the world, though not in the spatial, purely material sense of one thing contained inside another thing, but in terms of *dwelling* in it, inhabiting it - being, disclosively and meaningfully, amidst and within the world. "Being-in-the-world" and Dasein are not separable terms, and hence what, or more precisely *who*, "I am" must depend on the uniqueness, the particularity and singularity of my world, as given. In other words, I am how things show themselves, are given to me - or, to repeat, "Dasein is its disclosedness."[220] So conceived, Dasein is its own *there*, or clearing:

> "When Dasein directs itself towards something and grasps it, it does not somehow first get out of an inner sphere in which it has been proximally encapsulated, but its primary kind of Being is such that it is always 'outside' alongside entities which it encounters and which belong to a world already discovered."[221]

Heidegger makes the same point, perhaps rather more circumspectly, in his *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*:

> "…the intentional Dasein which…relates itself as an existent is always already immediately dwelling among things. For the Dasein there is no outside, for which reason it is also absurd to talk about an inside."[222]

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[219] Polt 1999: 57.

[220] BT: 171.

[221] BT: 89.

[222] BP: 66.

Truth conceived in a primary sense as unconcealment (*alêtheia*) represents a vital continuity in Heidegger's thinking, as we shall consider in our next chapter.[223] In *Being & Time,* as we have seen, Dasein is itself conceived as the clearing, and is thus understood to be an event or space of truth, in the precise sense of the disclosure or unconcealment (*alêtheia*) of being, in all its manifold senses. We should note here that terms such as "space" or "event," as we use them in this specific context, are intended to reference an essentially intentional and reflective occurrence, and not an "event" or "space" in the usual, practical sense of these terms. From an ontological perspective, Dasein may therefore be understood as the locus (the "event," in our exact sense) of significant, intelligible "presence-ing." Dahlstrom argues that the activity (or "event") of disclosure so characterised is not only what makes possible the discovery and uncovering of all entities, but also, in a founded, subsidiary sense, propositional or judgemental truth.[224] Braver simply but imaginatively seeks to capture the far-reaching implications and potency of these ideas:

> "Man and being are not two distinct entities or separable phases in a process but rather flip sides of a single coin, different aspects of an event…our seeing and thinking about the world in a sense echoes the world's manifesting itself to us, in that we reveal being's self-revelation. Whereas being presences beings, we can bring being itself to presence by thinking it. That is why our 'letting beings be, is the fulfilment and consummation of the essence of truth in the sense of the disclosure of beings'[225]…Thus we *have* found the essence of man, the one feature that continues through all historical changes: we are the clearing of being, we are the circle of light in this dark universe."[226]

In less rhetorical terms, we can perhaps say that Heidegger's creative deployment of the imagery of a clearing enables him to clarify the status of human existence, not as a property or function, nor a capacity or behaviour, but rather in terms of a direct equation of *die Lichtung* and Dasein, envisaged

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[223] c.f., e.g., Wrathall 2011: 4.

[224] Dahlstrom 2001: 291.

[225] See ET: 129.

[226] Braver 2014: 170.

in structural combination as being disclosively "in-the-world." Thus, for Heidegger, the clearing represents the "place" of possibility: an "…indefinitely complex space of possible ways for things (including human beings) to be."[227]

Are we now perhaps entitled to say that the clearing is a clearing of being? Possibly. As "illumination" the clearing is understood to constitute the showing (as it were, the "lighting-up") of beings as "being some way," i.e. a revealing (for and by Dasein) of the potential sense and meaningfulness of objects and states of affairs as projectively encountered in the world precisely in terms of our possibilities and purposes. So conceived, projective understanding describes the "openness" of the clearing, which in this sense constitutes possible ways of being, i.e. possible "ways to be." As Schatzki points out "…these possible ways of being do not exist except as objects of understanding."[228] If we accept, then, that on Heidegger's terms it is only *as understood* that there can be any possibility of things, that there can be "things" and that there is a world, we must conclude it is projective understanding itself which, as it were, "clears," and which constitutes the the possibilities it unfolds and uncovers.

3.5 Disclosedness and Uncoveredness

In its simplest form, the basic distinction Heidegger marks out between disclosure and uncoveredness can be expressed in the following way: the intra-referential totality or horizon within and through which entities manifest is itself *disclosed*, whereas, and always in terms of this unconcealment, the individual entity (the singular object, relation or state of affairs, whether physical or ideal) within the world - everything "not-Dasein" - is *uncovered* or "discovered." "Uncoveredness" in this sense is therefore founded on, or actually pre-supposes, disclosedness as prior. As Heidegger says in *The History of the Concept of Time*:

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[227] Schatzki 2002: 181, and see BT: 183-185.

[228] Schatzki 2002: 179, my italics.

"The manifold of things encountered here is not an arbitrary manifold of incidental things; it is first and only present (*gegenwärtigt*) in a particular *correlation of references*…it is precisely out of this totality that, for example, the individual piece of furniture in a room appears. My encounter with the room is not such that I first take in one thing after another and put together a manifold of things in order then to see a room. Rather, I primarily see a referential totality as closed, from which the individual piece of furniture and what is in the room stand out."[229]

In order for a singular entity in the world to be "discovered" or "uncovered" (i.e. to meaningfully appear for us at all), its "horizon of meaning," the matrix of reference and significance in terms of which the entity is revealed and makes sense, must in an *apriori* sense already be disclosed. For Dasein, "…*whose basic state* is being-in-the-world,"[230] disclosure of the horizon in these terms is possible only as understanding. Indeed, there are occasions when Heidegger suggests that "to exist" in a primary sense means "to understand" - not in a detached, world-less sense as some kind of epistemic self-sufficiency, nor as an absurdly endless, regressive layering of "self-reflections," but rather as grounded in, and determined by, Dasein's immersive being-in-the-world. In this sense, Dasein's self-understanding (or, as Heidegger occasionally calls it, "self-knowing") is a fundamentally contingent event, and depends on the recurrent projection of our own ever-shifting possibilities, projects and purposes (i.e. Dasein's "for-the-sake-of-which"[231]) always in and through the experiential disclosure of the world. In hermeneutic terms, the world no longer comprises just a totality of facts, of objects and states of affairs in infinite combination, but is rather a horizon of significance and sense, or, as Lafont expresses it, "…a web of meanings that structures Dasein's understanding of itself and of everything that can show up within the world."[232]

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[229] HCT: 186-187.

[230] Øverenget 2004: 193, my italics.

[231] See, e.g., BT: 116.

[232] LaFont 2005: 270.

The very particular terminology at work here is indicative of Heidegger's underlying resolve to transcend, as it were, traditional epistemic structures, and to subvert what he sees as ultimately naïve accounts of a "reality" substantially divided against itself. As he says in *Being & Time*,

> "…the world itself is not an entity within-the-world; and yet it is so determinative for such entities that only insofar as 'there is' a world can they be encountered and show themselves, in their being, as entities which have been discovered."[233]

Heidegger's hermeneutic model of understanding relies on an interpretation of Dasein as always *already* positioned within, and engaged with, a symbolically structured world.[234] In these terms "the world" (envisaged as a horizon of intelligibility) is characterised by some commentators as a "space of meaning"[235] in terms of which entities, now differentiated and determined, achieve meaning and affirmability. The truth of entities so disclosed cannot be considered independently of Dasein, and Dasein's (self-)understanding and "(self-)knowing" cannot occur autonomously of a world so revealed. In fact, it is these distinct yet related aspects of the equation Heidegger marks out in *Being & Time* between Dasein and disclosedness that are presented synthetically as the unitary phenomenon "being-in-the-world."

In his *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* Heidegger writes:

> "World is not something subsequent that we calculate as a result from the sum of all beings. The world comes not afterward but beforehand…Beforehand: that which is unveiled and understood already in advance in every existent Dasein before any apprehending of this or that being…World is that which is already previously unveiled and from which we return to the beings with which we have to do and among which we dwell…We always already understand world in holding ourselves in a contexture of functionality."[236]

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[233] BT: 102.

[234] Lafont 2005: 282.

[235] e.g. Crowell 2001a.

[236] BP: 165.

Although disclosedness is prior in the sense of constituting a context or ground of possibility for the meaningful uncovering or discovery of individual entities, the former does not occur separately from, or independently of, the latter. In spite of what may appear to be a somewhat arbitrary distinction, these two moments of unconcealment are co-given, aspectual dimensions of a whole. In seamless combination they together constitute unconcealment, i.e. the apprehension and contextualisation of entities, brought to meaning and intelligibility in terms of their total referential and categorial structure. Later in the same work, Heidegger elaborates on the distinction - also a correlation - between the twin concepts of disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*) and uncoveredness (*Entdecktheit*). He suggests that the intentional structure of perception, viewed from a broadly Kantian perspective, reveals that such an approach to the relation between our cognitive faculty and the object of sensory perception is, as he puts it, "full of confusion."[237] In contrast with Kant's claim that the external object of perception is not in any sense correlated with the interiority of the cognitive faculty, which latter is claimed to occupy immanent space within the subject, Heidegger wants to show that whatever is meant by "the subject" or "subjectivity" in this context, along with the cognitive faculty, should be seen in ontological terms as intentionally structured. It is demonstrably misguided, he argues, to suppose, as Kant apparently does, that the cognitive faculty itself represents the "…terminal member of the relation between an external thing and the internal subject."[238] Rather, the essence of the so-called cognitive faculty is best described, Heidegger suggests, as the *relating itself*, and it is in precisely these terms that Dasein may consequently be convincingly characterised as a "self-relating" existent which, as stated above, is always already immediately dwelling among things.[239]

We should recall that for Heidegger Dasein is distinguished in terms of being a comportment in the world, and as "comportment" is in this sense, always and inherently, an uncovering of entities - an uncovering, that is, underwritten by and grounded in a prior disclosure of

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[237] BP: 66.

[238] BP: 66.

[239] BP: 66.

being ("extantness"), which *is* essentially comportment itself. The perceptibility of objects, relations or states of affairs in the world, their uncoveredness, presupposes a prior disclosure of being as their ground of possibility. Thus, Heidegger maintains, it is by means of seeking to understand the disclosedness of Dasein itself, as belonging to the intentionality of perception, that we might stand any chance of clarifying the sense of existence itself.[240]

3.6 Contextuality

From the foregoing we can see that Heidegger's hermeneutic analysis of the issue of projective understanding reveals a number of significant features concerning human disclosedness. In summary, these are: (i) an equation is to be drawn between Dasein and disclosedness[241]; (ii) there is a conceptual equivalence of disclosedness (in the sense of "unconcealment") and truth (*alêtheia*); (iii) the world as experienced is not constituted or created by the subject in any purely idealistic sense, but nor is it completely independent of the subject in broadly realist terms. Rather, Dasein discloses the world meaningfully, *as it is*; and finally (iv) there is a distinction to be made between the *uncovering* of individual objects, relations or states of affairs as these are encountered in the world, and the *disclosure* of a horizonal context of sense and significance in terms of which the uncovering of entities as intelligible becomes possible. Specifically in relation to (iv), we would suggest it seems disclosedness on Heidegger's understanding may be convincingly elucidated as an activity or "event" of "contextualisation," insofar as it concerns our immediate uncovering of, and the significance of our engagement with, entities as encountered. We are using the term "contextualisation" here precisely to describe the meaningful uncovering and "unfolding" of the being of *phenomena*. The term refers to a positional, interrogative apprehension, which uncovers the given *as intelligible* - and the "en-forming" of the sense and significance of the object, *via* moments of projective differentiation. Conceived as an event of unconcealment, contextualisation

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[240] See BP: 72.

[241] BT: 171.

entails a construal of meaning and sense - although, for Heidegger, there is no suggestion here that the sense of what is disclosed is either entirely subjectively constituted, nor merely the passive reception of a "mind-independent" reality. Rather, in straightforward terms, it is the "as structure" of understanding (see above) which is here analysed as purposefully and simply disclosing *X* as *X*, and not as *Y*.

Given, therefore, that objects, relations and states of affairs as we encounter them in the world are necessarily disclosed *by us*, as they are *in context*, what we actively exclude or diminish in the act of contextualisation (in a sense, what is negated or surpassed) is necessarily of equivalent significance in relation to the positing and uncovering of an entity as what we might positively affirm, include, accept, and so on. Of course, it might be objected that an interpretation of disclosure in these terms, in what on the face of it amounts to an admission of our active involvement in the constitution or creation of the sense and significance of the world, is at least suggestive of an implicit idealism. Certainly on some readings Heidegger can be interpreted, with some justification, as being at least partially committed to the view that the solipsistic bestowal or imposition of meaning on an otherwise sense-less, vacuous world belongs largely within the remit of a transcendental subjectivity. It is important to be clear, nevertheless, that from Heidegger's perspective, disclosedness - which we are here envisaging as an event of contextualisation - is arguably best explained as an engagement with the world which is underwritten by a prior awareness, or as Heidegger puts it, a "pre-understanding." Naturally, this is only possible in terms of the disclosure of a horizon of potential sense and significance, i.e., a contextual environment comprising an intricately woven web of historical, cultural and existential reference and sense. It is disclosedness so understood that represents the environmental ground of possibility for the contextualisation (the "uncovering") of objects, relations and state of affairs, as experienced by us, always in meaningful relation to all other objects of our awareness, in endless combination. The object can only be experienced by us relationally or "contextually" *via* a disclosive pre-understanding of its categorial structure, i.e. its empathies or antagonisms, its relational dissonance

or harmonies, its alterity or identity, its possibilities, purposes and so on. In order for an entity to be interpreted - in experience - as "what it is" the object must be contextualised in advance within and through intentional awareness. It is the object so understood, unmediated and non-constituted, which, for Heidegger, appears - *as what it is* - for consciousness.[242] Thus, as disclosed, it is not a phenomenal "version" or representation of a noumenal reality which appears for consciousness, somehow interposed and mediating between an assumed "thing in itself" and our awareness of it. The object of consciousness as disclosed remains the object it was, and is; but now the object is grasped, meaningfully and intelligibly, *in context*.

As we shall consider in detail in the next chapter, for Heidegger disclosedness represents a primary or originary level of truth,[243] which as such constitutes the ground from which correspondence theories of truth conceived in apophantic, propositional terms are derived. One particular difficulty with this account arises when we seek to stabilise the apparent disjunction between (i) the claim that in order for there to be authentic understanding at all it must be the "unadulterated" object as given, "just as it is in itself," that is disclosed as an "object of knowledge," and (ii) for there to be understanding at all, the act or event of disclosure, in bringing its object from concealment "up into the light," necessarily "gives form to" or configures the categorial structure and hence intelligibility of the appearance itself. In other words, are we to understand Heidegger as implying that, in an idealist sense, it is projective apprehension conceived as a bestowal or configuration of meaning which makes possible our experience of the world as seemingly significant and affirmable? As we have seen, the interpretation of disclosedness as a process of contextualisation entails that, in very basic terms, to have an understanding of *X* can only mean to grasp *X in its context*. It seems this structure gains some additional stability when considered in conjunction with Heidegger's account of the congruity, yet also the distinctiveness, of disclosedness and the phenomenon of un-coveredness, which in combination comprise an event of disclosure. As we are now aware,

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[242] BT: 189.

[243] See in particular chapter 4 for a detailed analysis of Heidegger's interpretation of truth in a foundational sense as *alêtheia*, or unconcealment.

uncoveredness is founded on, and pre-supposes, disclosedness as prior. Heidegger endeavours to capture the significance of this structure in a telling passage from *The History of the Concept of Time*. During the course of an enquiry into the nature of understanding, he tells us:

> "The manifold of things encountered here is not an arbitrary manifold of incidental things; it is first and only present (*gegenwärtigt*) in a particular correlation of references...it is precisely out of this totality that, for example, the individual piece of furniture in a room appears. My encounter with the room is not such that I first take in one thing after another and put together a manifold of things in order then to see a room. Rather, I primarily see a referential totality as closed, from which the individual piece of furniture and what is in the room stand out."[244]

It is important to note that "understanding," as used here, essentially characterises Dasein insofar as the understanding itself, as an *existentiale* of Dasein, is elucidated by Heidegger as "...a basic *mode of Dasein's being*..."[245] Understanding conceived as a species of cognition in any orthodox, traditional sense must of course be distinguished here from the meaning he actually intends:

> "With the term 'understanding' we have in mind a fundamental *existentiale*, which is neither a definite *species of cognition* distinguished, let us say, from explaining and conceiving, nor any cognition at all in the sense of grasping something thematically"[246]

As Øverenget suggests, the critical distinction between "...understanding *qua* comportment towards beings and primary understanding which is a kind of self-understanding..."[247] certainly implies an evidently close correspondence between these two senses, and yet at the same time bespeaks a significant ontological distinction. Understanding conceived in its primary sense suggests "self-directed" understanding, which Heidegger reads as foundational for comportment in all its senses.

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[244] HCT: 186-187.

[245] BT: 182, my italics.

[246] BT: 385.

[247] Øverenget 1998: 122

He claims in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* that if we take understanding to be a basic determination of existence, then it is as such the ground of possibility "…for all of Dasein's particular possible manners of comportment."[248]

3.7 Understanding, Possibility and Projection

On occasion Heidegger describes the being of Dasein as a "potentiality-for-being" (*Seinkönnen*), by which he means a potentiality which manifests existentially in the understanding. In *Being & Time* he expresses this thought in the following way:

"If the term 'understanding' is taken in a way which is primordially existential, it means to be projecting towards a potentiality-for-being for the sake of which any Dasein exists."[249]

As we have learnt, the existential analytic in *Being & Time* reveals Dasein to be in an overall sense a disclosive, relational comportment in the world. Disclosedness in this context suggests a movement toward or into possibility (i.e. its own possibilities), and thus the role of "projection" is envisaged by Heidegger as distinctive of this dynamic. Indeed, Heidegger claims that the existential structure of understanding is none other than projection (*Entwurf*) itself, in the sense of a constant forward movement into possibility.[250] Øverenget attempts to capture the apparent chain of correspondences underlying this structure by suggesting the following schema:

"…the essence of Dasein is existence, existence is understanding, understanding is self-understanding, and self-understanding is an incessant projection towards possibilities."[251]

Although this proposed conceptual development seems, at least on the face of it, to be largely consistent with Heidegger's thinking it is, however, important we remain aware that, insofar as "projection" is for Heidegger the principal structure of primary understanding, this movement into

[248] BP: 276.

[249] BT: 385.

[250] BT: 184-185.

[251] Øverenget 1998: 123.

or toward possibility (which he claims represents a form of "self-understanding") is *not*, however, a reflective activity. Projection is not, as it were, merely a series of regressive reflections but is rather a projection *away from oneself* toward what "one is not yet." Consequently, the self-understanding to which Heidegger refers is *not*, in these terms, a matter of introspectively and thematically achieving a kind of reflective awareness of a prior, "already appearing" substantial self. For Heidegger, there is no such self prior to, or underlying, primary understanding. Rather, "…the self…*appears with the projection…*"[252] and consequently it would be fundamentally misleading to characterise "self-understanding" as some kind of reflective engagement with a "prior self," in any sense of the term. It is in the nature of primary understanding *as projection* to constitute a "self" as a structural moment or movement within the disclosure of Dasein itself[253] - i.e. within *self-disclosure*.

In this regard Heidegger makes an intriguing equation - in the midst of *Being & Time's* existential analytic - between understanding and "sight" or "seeing" (*Sicht*): "…[In] its *projective* character, understanding goes to make up existentially what we call Dasein's sight [*Sicht*]."[254] As "seeing," projection is contrasted by Heidegger with sight in all its other forms - in particular sight in the sense of "pure apprehension" or "pure perception." Apprehension in this latter sense (here clearly echoing Hegel's analysis of the apparent "sense-certainty" of consciousness in the initial stages of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*[255]) discloses its objects, Heidegger suggests "…as in themselves already extant, being encountered of themselves, on their own account."[256] In contrast, "projective seeing" or understanding is not "pure" in this sense insofar as it does not just terminate in its object, but rather unconceals or reveals entities meaningfully without making whatever has been disclosed into some kind of object of contemplation.[257] On this account, projection

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[252] Øverenget 1998: 123, my italics

[253] c.f. Øverenget: 124.

[254] BT: 186, my italics.

[255] Hegel 2018: 60-68.

[256] BT: 118.

[257] BP: 281.

(understanding) is not just a movement toward, or a "going outward," which as it were terminates in its object, but is rather a "going beyond" or a "going past" the perceived entity toward the horizonal sense-making disclosure of a referential totality, in terms of which the intended object in its singularity is apprehended as intelligible. Wrathall clarifies Heidegger's analysis:

> "Projecting [as described]…is apprehending x by looking at y. The 'x' is the particular entity or event we understand. The 'y', Heidegger tells us, is a possibility."[258]

We might also say that it is in terms of a "pattern of possibilities" that the object, relation or state of affairs is incorporated or woven into a reliably meaningful world. In the latter stages of his *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* of 1929-30[259] Heidegger explains that projection does not describe a phased or staged process of sequential related actions, but refers rather to the unity of an originary and "properly unique" kind of action:

> "…what is *most proper* to such activity…is what is expressed in the prefix 'pro-' (*Ent-*), namely that in pro-jecting (*Entwerfen*), this occurrence of projection *carries* whoever is projecting *out and away from themselves* in a certain way."[260]

Expressed in these terms it seems that the world (actually, ourselves-within-the-world, in a unitary sense), conceived in terms of pro-jective understanding, constitutes (as some commentators suggest) a so-called "space of possibilities." In fact, as Heidegger claims,[261] envisaged thus not only is the world *qua* world disclosed as significant, but entities are uncovered in terms of their e.g., serviceability, usability, detrimentality, etc., and the contextual totality of inter-related, referential involvements is thus ultimately revealed as "…the categorial whole of a *possible* interconnection of…[objects and states of affairs]."[262]

Conceived by Heidegger as "seeing" in this sense, understanding discloses its object in terms of its meaning *for me*: i.e. what the object might become or what it might be, or has been, or

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[258] Wrathall 2013: 190.

[259] Hereafter, FCM.

[260] FCM: 363.

[261] BT: 184.

[262] BT: 184.

indeed what the object might not become, or could never be.[263] He also claims that "seeing" as related principally to existence, may be explained as a form of "transparency" (*Durchsichtigkeit*). At first glance, this proposed correlation between "seeing" and transparency seems to imply that objects, relations or states of affairs in the world are understood insofar as, by analogy, they are "transparent" - in the sense that they suggest or allow the apprehension of related and inherent possibilities, as it were, "through" or "beyond" themselves. Heidegger explains, however, that what he means by the "transparency" of entities primarily points toward what he describes as a "knowledge of the self" (*Selbsterkenntnis*), although notably in a sense far removed from the traditional or classical idea of "self-knowledge." The correlation between the "transparency" of sight and the idea of "self-knowledge," in the somewhat rarefied sense with which these terms are used here, is not meant to suggest that we discover and have an awareness of a substantial, prior self, but suggests rather a "seizing upon" the fundamental disclosedness of Dasein in-the-world, "… throughout all the constitutive items which are essential to it, and doing so with understanding."[264] The existential significance of "seeing" appears to derive, for Heidegger, from an interpretation of sight as what enables or allows entities to be encountered and disclosed, "…*as themselves*… unconcealedly."[265] "Transparency," as the term is employed in *Being & Time*, indicates a seeing - strictly speaking a "self-seeing" - which is clearly not to be understood as some kind of inspection of a persisting "object-self," in terms of which, as Heidegger puts it, we might for example find ourselves "…perceptually tracking down and inspecting a point called the Self [*Selbstpunktes*]."[266] If "self-seeing" simply amounted to reflective awareness of a purely immanent ego-entity the result would be, Heidegger suggests, an inevitable *opacity* that would sabotage the essential and definitive "worldliness," or "outside-ness," of Dasein. In this regard, we should note the highly suggestive parallel, seemingly unexplored to date in the secondary literature, between on the one hand

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[263] c.f. Wrathall 2013: 190.

[264] BT: 146.

[265] BT: 187.

[266] BT: 186-187.

Heidegger's use of the notions of transparency and opacity in relation to his analysis of projective understanding, and, on the other hand, Sartre's characterisation of consciousness (being-for-itself) in his *The Transcendence of the Ego* and *Being & Nothingness* as an empty translucency, essentially devoid of the "opacity" of "being," which (as we shall discover in chapter five) Sartre directly contrasts with the oblique opacity and density of undifferentiated, undisclosed being-in-itself.[267]

Projective understanding is found to have a kind of recursive structure, by which is meant that in order for there to be an adequate appropriation and understanding of the so-called patterning of possibilities, these are themselves typically projected elsewhere onto something else.[268] As Heidegger notes, the possibilities which manifest in relation to, and disclose, the intentional object originate with, and are conditioned by, the unique disposition and existential comportment of the one who projects:

> "We shall now attempt to clarify the structure of the understanding that is constitutive of existence. To understand means, more precisely, *to project oneself upon a possibility*, in this *projection* to keep oneself at all times in a possibility. A can-be, a possibility *as* possibility, is *there* only in projection, in projecting oneself upon that can-be."[269]

It can only be the particular historical and factical "disposition" of Dasein, understood as a unique configuration of possibilities and potential meanings, which in projection determines, and yet is determined by, the world. As projected, this pattern of possibilities constitutes a "can-be" (i.e. "the ability to be") of Dasein itself, and so in projection Dasein is "…unveiling itself as this can-be, in this specific being."[270] Projection onto possibility, which is intrinsic to disclosure itself, thus constitutes in terms of possibilities themselves a "self-understanding" or "self-manifestation," as mentioned above. Importantly, as we have noted, this "self-seeing" is not a detached self

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[267] See chapter 5.

[268] See Wrathall 2013: 189.

[269] BP: 277.

[270] BP: 277.

contemplation or a regressive quasi-reflective activity, so that "…the ego… become[s] the object of some cognition or other." Instead, for Heidegger, projective understanding constitutes the way in which "…I *am* the possibility."[271] As such, understanding conceived as projection essentially represents Dasein's *existentiell* understanding of itself - always in terms of that very projective understanding. Whatever projection discloses does not thereby become, as disclosed, something present-at-hand, detached and separate from us, but rather implies a "self-seeing" - Dasein's own insight into itself. Indeed, as Heidegger uses the term, the "self-understanding" of Dasein should not be read as some kind of provisional "free-floating" reflective knowledge of or about itself - as it were, a "self-objectification." As primarily *self*-understanding, or *self*-seeing, disclosive understanding itself envisaged as self-projection is not a mode of cognition but in fact represents the determination of existence itself, i.e. Dasein "…*becomes what it is* in and through this understanding…"[272] In other words, as disclosedness Dasein is always only that which it understands itself to be in terms of this disclosive projection and this "patterning" of its "ability-to-be."

In this context, we must not overlook, as Wrathall reminds us, that Dasein is always at any given moment projecting onto a distinct plurality or, as it were, a dimensionality of different possibilities.[273] In that any given possibility actually constitutes a horizon, a "space of possibilities" or a "horizon of sense," understanding in itself is not thereby finally reducible to the mere activity of interpretation as such, in that "…we continue to hold open, and see in terms of, possibilities we have not diverted ourselves into."[274] It is, however, not by means of an act of "cognition" (in the traditional, epistemic sense) that the ever shifting horizon of possibilities, in terms of which the world as a significant "open field" of potential significance always has sense for us, is encountered

[271] BP: 277.

[272] BP: 278, my italics.

[273] c.f. Wrathall 2013: 192.

[274] Wrathall 2013: 192.

and engaged. Projection as explained by Heidegger does not describe a "mental state," but rather, as we have been attempting to show, the "self-seeing" in terms of which Dasein navigates a potentially significant world. In short, understanding is not a mode of cognition but is in fact "…the basic determination of existence."[275] Dasein's possibilities are not thereby "empty logical possibilities" which in a formalised sense "lie outside" as pure abstractions, and from which we may detach. Rather, they constitute and resonate with the actual determinations of our existence, and *are* only as possibilities *of* Dasein "…in whatever way Dasein may comport toward them." As Heidegger says: "…it is the possibility it is only if Dasein becomes existent in it."[276]

3.8 Concluding Comments

For Heidegger, fundamental to our understanding of human-reality is the recognition of our encounter with ourselves in the midst of a world that is already uncovered.[277] In order to illustrate this point in his early *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, Heidegger describes the presence of a table in his own home. In view of the relevance for our enquiry of this seemingly incidental example, we will conclude by quoting Heidegger in full:

> "What is there in *the* room there at home is *the* table (not 'a' table among other tables in other rooms and houses) at which one sits *in order to* write, have a meal, sew, play. Everyone sees this right away, e.g., during a visit: it is a writing table, a dining table, a sewing table - such is the primary way in which it is being encountered in itself. This characteristic of 'in order to do something' is not merely imposed on the table by relating and assimilating it to something else which it is not. Its standing-there in the room means: Playing this role in such and such characteristic use. This and that about it is 'impractical,' unsuitable. That part is damaged. It now stands in a better spot in the room

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[275] BP: 276.

[276] BP: 276.

[277] Wrathall 2011: 23.

than before - there's better lighting, for example. Where it stood before was not at all good (for….). Here and there it shows lines - the boys like to busy themselves at the table. These lines are not just interruptions in the paint, but rather: it was the boys and it still is. This side is not the east side, and this narrow side so many cm. shorter than the other, but rather the one at which my wife sits in the evening when she wants to stay up and read, there at the table we had such and such a discussion that time, there that decision was made with a *friend* that time, there that *work* written that time, there that *holiday* was celebrated that time. That is *the* table - such as it is there in the temporality of everydayness."[278]

This eloquent account of the awareness of a table at home in all its dimensionality demonstrates, amongst other things, that entities as encountered in the world cannot - at least as initially and immediately experienced - be posited as separate from our involvements and engagements with those things. We would also suggest that, within the disclosure itself, neither can the inevitability and simultaneity of "self-seeing," or an arising of "self-ness," be posited aside from the things themselves. As we have endeavoured to demonstrate, and as Heidegger himself asserts when he introduces this particular example of immediate and primary encounter with the world: "…this schema *must be avoided*: what exists are subjects and objects, consciousness and being."[279]

The original structure which, according to Heidegger, underwrites the referential totality of sense that constitutes the "world" is, as he puts it, "grasping" or "seeing-as." The projective event itself, in terms of which the intended object, relation or state of affairs is "grasped" and engaged as intelligible, manifests and elucidates its sense, its potential purposefulness (or otherwise). It appears that two distinct, but related, aspects of the same structure are discernible here: projective human understanding, and the given intelligibility of objects. In other words, "seeing-as" and "being-seen." Consequently, as Mulhall puts it, "…the foundation or ground of being-in-the-world is thus a unified framework or field of meaning with a very specific nature."[280] The uncovering or discovery

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[278] OHF: 69.

[279] OHF: 62, my italics.

[280] Mulhall 2005: 85.

of entities is, as we have seen, necessarily founded on, and only possible in terms of, a prior disclosure of the given within a horizon of relational sense and meaning, i.e. within the world.[281] In terms of the Husserlian theory of categorial intuition, which we shall consider in the next chapter, this context, as Fell indicates,[282] is in itself implicitly invoked by the copula (the "*is*"), which he suggests must always carry the meaning of "is *as_____*". In actual usage the verb "is" almost never references mere isolable, un-positioned appearance, but implicitly situates the appearance structurally *where it is*, or presupposes and means an appearance *as what it is* in terms of its relationality and referentiality. In other words, contextually disclosed - or as Heidegger puts it, "…what counts is the context."[283] Given that appearance can only make sense in terms of its categorial structure, its relationality and its contextual horizon, the copula (the "*is*") seemingly refers only to "exists" without in itself making any further ontological or contextual claims or commitments. The "is" *appears* as transitive and transitional, "mere copula" as it were, and hence dissimulating all ontological claims.[284] Naturally, whilst we must acknowledge that the "is" implicitly instantiates, as it were, a manifold of "*as*-es," as Heidegger reminds us it is essential to see that:

> "…a single determinate trait runs through them all. It directs our contemplation of being
>
> (*Sein*) to a definite horizon, in which understanding is effected."[285]

Fell argues that this "horizon" unquestionably represents the clearing itself, which is always determined and definite - not a mere vacancy, not a mere empty open space, but rather a "specific" openness, an "event" in the sense we have been using the term, or as Heidegger expresses it in his later work, an "appropriating event" - understood as disclosure.[286] Indeed, the distinct correlation between projective understanding and the as-structure becomes clearer in retrospect: the as-

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[281] But c.f. Mulhall 2005: 85-86.

[282] Fell: 1979: 203.

[283] IM.

[284] Fell 1979: 203.

[285] IM.

[286] Fell 1979: 203.

structure as such constitutes the totality of reference, the intra-referential context of relations and significance that actually makes possible disclosure itself:[287]

> "…Dasein's projective understanding and the intelligibility of [objects] are related in just the way the concept of seeing-as is bound up with that of being seen; they are two aspects of the same thing."[288]

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[287] Mulhall 2005: 85.

[288] Mulhall 2005: 85.

Chapter 4

Heidegger: Truth and Disclosure

4.1 Introduction

It should come as no surprise that the explicit equivalence Heidegger speaks of, in *Being & Time*, between Dasein and disclosedness,[289] provokes a range of responses across the secondary literature. Indeed, the lack of what we might take to be a convincing consensus in the commentary regarding this crucial aspect of Heidegger's existential analytic of Dasein tends to persist. In the present chapter we shall attempt to directly address at least some of this uncertainty by means of drawing out specific implications of Heidegger's ever-evolving interpretation of the concept of truth as "unconcealment" or *alêtheia*. This approach will enable us to gain better insight into Heidegger's intentions in bringing Dasein and disclosedness together in the way that he does, and what the implications may be for the question of subjectivity. Given the complexity and density of the texts with which we are primarily concerned it is especially important we maintain a tight and purposeful focus throughout. Consequently, we propose to anchor our discussion in and around the progressive

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[289] See, e.g., BT: 171.

unfolding of key moments in Heidegger's short 1930 essay, *On the Essence of Truth*.[290] This essay, which follows *Being & Time* by a few years, is noted for its explicit resumption of the question of truth. As Braver observes, it "…takes the form of an extended chain of thinking built by repeatedly introducing new terms and linking them to ideas and terms established earlier in the essay."[291] Given this thematic structure, our task here will be to summarily trace its progression, which culminates in an account of Dasein conceived as essentially an event or space of unconcealment. Our starting point in this chapter, however, will be to initially review aspects of the theory of categorial intuition, introduced by Husserl in the sixth of his *Logical Investigations*,[292] upon which Heidegger subsequently commented in some detail in his *History of the Concept of Time* (1925). Our purpose in addressing Heidegger's reading of this particular feature of Husserl's early phenomenological research is to enable us to gain a sense of the initial development of the idea of human disclosedness, at least as Heidegger sees it. We will concisely review Heidegger's critical assessment of Husserl's theory, focussing our attention on Heidegger's subsequent modification of Husserl's notion of "appresentation," by which means, as we shall see, he anticipates the forthcoming idea of disclosedness itself.

Thereafter, we shall move on to introduce our principle theme by considering the idea of the "logical prejudice" - the traditional convention which presupposes that the originary form of "truth" is propositional or assertive. It is precisely the task of locating and elucidating the theoretical foundation or ground for truth conceived in such apophantic, propositional terms that occupies Heidegger throughout his essay, *On the Essence of Truth*. We will track and critically analyse key features of the essay's conceptual development, and along the way will briefly detour to examine Heidegger's analysis of the structural conditions of falsehood, which he marks out in his *Logic: The Question of Truth*,[293] based on lectures delivered over 1925 and 1926. This exercise will grant us a

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[290] Hereafter ET.

[291] Braver 2009: 25.

[292] Investigation VI, Section II, Chapter 6: Sensuous and Categorial Intuitions. *Logische Untersuchungen*, trans. by J.N. Findlay.

[293] Hereafter LT.

specific insight into Heidegger's conception of truth as a fundamental disclosedness and unconcealment, and will help us see how the question of subjectivity approached in these terms becomes suitably clarified and consolidated.

Heidegger unceasingly revised and adapted his thinking, and so the division between an early and a later Heidegger, evident in almost all commentary, has become ubiquitous and to a large extent mandatory. There is no particular reason to challenge these distinctions here, at least not in terms of our present enquiry. Nevertheless, it may be worth noting that, in general terms, Heidegger's positioning and priorities in relation to questions concerning the disclosive and meaning-bestowing nature of subjectivity do not appear to undergo transition or fluctuate across the different stages of his career quite as markedly as some commentators like to suggest. That said, with a view to simplifying matters, we shall (as mentioned above) concentrate our critical attention on the essay *On the Essence of Truth*,[294] a work which is considered by many to stand at the very threshold of Heidegger's so-called *kehre* (or "turning") and in these terms to explicitly develop the themes of disclosure and truth. We shall occasionally also reference some earlier lectures - in particular the *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*[295] based on lectures from the summer semester of 1927 which extends and explores themes introduced in *Being & Time*, and in addition will visit certain later works, specifically: *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected Problems of Logic*[296] from 1937-1938; *The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*,[297] derived from lectures delivered in 1931-1932; and finally, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*[298] from 1936-1938.

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[294] See ET.

[295] Hereafter BP.

[296] Hereafter BQP.

[297] Hereafter ETPC.

[298] Hereafter CP.

4.2 Categorial Intuition

Towards the end of his life Heidegger admitted retrospectively that for him it was the basic distinction Husserl made in *The Logical Investigations*[299] between sensuous and categorial intuition, and their respective objectivities, which finally enabled, so Heidegger claimed, a provisional formulation of the *Seinsfrage* (the question of the meaning of being) itself. In his final seminar Heidegger mentions that he found in Husserl's presentation of categorial intuition - as a direct and concrete intuition of "meaningful presence" - an anticipation of the later development of the idea that being must somehow be correlated with the "steadfast" intelligible presence of an entity. It is in this seminar (held at Zähringen in 1973) that, whilst commenting on Husserl's original project, Heidegger makes the significant observation that Husserl

> "...touches lightly, *brushes the question of being* in the sixth chapter of the sixth
>
> *Logical Investigation*, with the notion of categorial intuition."[300]

In the published report of the Zähringen seminar,[301] discussion around Heidegger's notion of the "world-hood of the world" gives way to a debate concerning the theory of categorial intuition as developed by Husserl, and in particular the fact that the point of departure for Husserl's theory was his analysis of sensuous intuition. For Husserl, what is perceived sensibly is just and only sense data. The so-called "ground of the sensuous" is what Husserl refers to in this early work as the *hyle*, i.e. "that which affects sensibly, in short, the sense data (blue, black, spatial extension etc.)."[302] Heidegger observes that, according to Husserl, "...*along with* these sense data, an *object* becomes visible in perception. The object is not given in the sensuous impression. The objectivity of the object cannot be perceived sensibly..."[303] In other words, the fact that the object is an object does

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[299] Hereafter LI.

[300] Taminiaux 1977: 67, my italics.

[301] See Heidegger 2012.

[302] Heidegger 2012: 65.

[303] Heidegger 2012: 65.

not arise within or from a sensuous intuition,[304] and yet, the object in question, *as an object*, is in fact perceived. In a traditional sense the object is understood to be a thing, i.e. a "substance," in line with the Kantian categories of the understanding. Hence, through knowledge conceived in Kant's terms as a "bringing-into-form" *via* the understanding, the object in question becomes posited as "…a synthesis of intuition and concept."[305] On Heidegger's reading, what Husserl is attempting to articulate, again from a largely Kantian perspective, is latent and implied - insofar as we are led directly to the idea of a "given to intuition." For Husserl, categorial intuition describes an intuition that "…brings a category [into] view…", or, perhaps, an intuition that is as it were "directed to" a category."[306] In short, according to Heidegger, Husserl's demonstration is actually successful insofar as he makes clear that we are "…thinking the categorial as given."[307] In a straightforward illustration Heidegger attempts to bring out what he believes to be the true significance of Husserl's insight:

> "I see this book before me. But where is the substance in this book? I do not see it in the same way that I see the book. And yet this book is a substance I must 'see' in some fashion, otherwise I could not see anything at all. We encounter here the Husserlian idea of 'surplus' [*Überschuss*]…[The] '*is*,' through which I observe the presence of the inkwell as object or substance, is a 'surplus' in relation to the sensuous affections. But in a certain respect the 'is' is given *in the same manner* as the sensuous affections: the '*is*' is not added to the sense data; it is 'seen' - even if it is *seen* differently from what is sensibly visible. In order to be 'seen' in this way, it *must* be *given*. For Husserl, the categorial (that is, the Kantian forms) is just as given as the sensuous. There is therefore a thoroughly categorial intuition."[308]

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[304] Heidegger 2012: 65.

[305] Heidegger 2012: 66.

[306] Heidegger 2012: 66.

[307] See Heidegger 2012: 66.

[308] Heidegger 2012: 66.

As Husserl suggests, categorial structure - and in particular the *copula* - may in some sense be said to constitute a "surplus" of meaning. What marks out Husserl's theory as radically innovative is that categorial intuition conceived in these terms is directly analogous to sensuous intuition, and that he presents categorial structure (for example, the "*is*") as encounterable, as *given*, and therefore as immediately and unconditionally accessible. Husserl here entirely reverses the Kantian idea that the categorial is merely "deduced" from the table of judgements, and is therefore an entirely immanent, subjective creation.

It remains curious that regardless of the obvious significance of Husserl's theory for the early Heidegger, there is a singular lack of any *overt* reference to the notion of categorial intuition in *Being & Time*. This complete silence throughout Heidegger's *magnum opus* concerning the very notion which reportedly galvanised and inspired his journey toward "fundamental ontology" means that we have to look elsewhere for a satisfactory explanation as to why Husserl's theory continued to exercise such prominence for him. We have already mentioned that Husserl consistently emphasises the presence of a so-called "horizon" of awareness at all stages of his structural analysis of consciousness. It is this focus on the implications of the environing "world," in and for all our experiencing, that will profoundly influence the younger Heidegger.[309] For Husserl, as indeed it becomes for Heidegger, the "world" represents the ultimate horizon of sense: i.e., all entities and all meaningful combinations and relations amongst and between objects, relations and states of affairs are its parts and moments. This "world of experience" notably lies at the very heart of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology,[310] and although Heidegger rarely acknowledges the debt, his subsequent analysis of Dasein in terms of the unitary phenomenon "being-in-the-world" is unquestionably influenced by such features of Husserl's earlier analysis of human experience. The integrative horizon of disclosure and understanding lying behind Heidegger's existential analytic, an idea he develops throughout and beyond *Being & Time*, represents the inherent, prior meaningfulness of all human comportment and experience. Hence, as we have previously noted, the

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[309] Overgaard 2004: 109-117.

[310] c.f. Moran 2007: 146-7.

conceptual and linguistic frame of reference he increasingly adopts is clearly designed to subvert more orthodox, empiricist versions of human experience. For Heidegger, Dasein encounters and experiences "the world" as *already* meaningful, as an intelligible - because contextualised[311] - referential field comprising, and positively anticipating, the relationality and overt sense of already significant entities. The entities which are disclosed within, and in terms of, this matrix of sense are consequently experienced as intelligible just because of "…their orientation to the human concerns and interests that define that intelligible whole."[312] It is this totality of reference, sense and relation that constitutes, for Heidegger, "the world," in terms of which "meaningfulness" as such is understood as nothing less than "…a categorial determination of the world."[313] Thus, for Dasein the world *qua* world is always disclosed and experienced as a unique, referential environment which is irreducibly significant. Sheehan believes[314] that the wide range of terms and analogies Heidegger employs at different times and in different ways to characterise and determine "world" as thus grounded structurally "in meaningfulness" can be, and are in fact intended to be, read as carrying both a static-intransitive sense and a dynamic-transitive sense. Sheehan explains:

> "'World,' when viewed statically and intransitively, is the *place* of meaningfulness. But viewed dynamically and transitively, it is the *placing* of things in meaning, the enworldling and *contextualising* of them within a set of possibilities that makes things able to be known and used in terms of those very possibilities."[315]

In our experience of any object, *X*, something is given to us immediately, always within the context of an already intelligible, lived and historical environment (the "world") and can only be given as such in terms of this prior and derived significance and relationality. Thus, our initial apprehension of *X* is already significant. Conscious experience so understood does not contain nor imply a "gap," as it were, between the intentional apprehension of *X* and *X* appropriated and emerging as

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[311] See chapter 3.

[312] Sheehan 2015: 118.

[313] Sheehan 2015: 205.

[314] Sheehan 2015: 200.

[315] Sheehan 2015: 200, my italics.

understandable and intelligible. There is no space for a "mental detour"[316] by means of which apparently immanent, "free-floating" processes eventually "deliver up" *X* as meaningful.[317] For Heidegger, conscious experience always occurs (can, normally, *only* occur) within a "contextualising world of meaningfulness."[318]

In light of the foregoing it will come as no surprise that in an anticipatory form the theory of categorial intuition, for Heidegger, configures and gives coherent shape and sense to his developing idea of human disclosedness which will shortly break surface in *Being & Time*. The revealing and intuition of meaningful categorial structure in the world, in terms of the opening up of a horizon of intra-relationality and sense, characterises and captures the essence of disclosure as Heidegger comes to understand it. It is this precise understanding of human being in the midst of the world which will come to determine Heidegger's method of approach to the question of subjectivity, as we shall see.

Categorial intuition may perhaps best be understood, as MacAvoy tells it, as

"…the intuition which fulfils the empty intention of an expressive act…a form of 'seeing'

that belongs to intentionality but which should not be confused with simple perception…"[319] Whereas so-called straightforward perception (i.e. sensuous intuition) constitutes the reception of sensory data, categorial intuition, although founded on sensuous intuition, represents, as Husserl calls it, a "second order" intuition. Expressive acts in the form of judgements, propositions, assertions and so on articulate the "being" or the "meaning" of the intended object, relation or state of affairs and as such are correlated with categorial intuition which fulfils, by "intuition," the expressive intentional act by intuiting the categorial structure of the intended objects or states of affairs. Categorial structure so understood is evidently not available to straightforward sensuous

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[316] Sheehan 2015: 119.

[317] Sheehan 2015: 200.

[318] Sheehan 2015: 118.

[319] MacAvoy 2000: 44.

perception, but Husserl's innovation is to introduce the notion of categorial intuition as a means of describing the process whereby these aspects of the intentional act are actually fulfilled. He argues that the meaningfulness of categorial structure is intuitively, though not sensuously, given (i.e. as opposed to "subjectively projected," in, e.g., a Kantian sense) and that it is therefore, as given, an "objectivity" despite its unavailability to straightforward perception.

In an everyday sense it is normally believed that by means of evidence obtained *via* perception, the truth (or otherwise) of an assertion may be verified. Hence, the truth of the assertion "*X* is red" is determined by means of visual evidence, i.e. of establishing by perception that *X* is, in fact, red. However, the "is," the *being*-red, as a categorial component or structure of the expressive act, is not as such perceived in straightforward sensuous perception. Insofar as it is only "*X*" and "red" *per se* which are in fact sensuously perceived, sensuous apprehension as such is unable to adequately or completely fulfil the expressive act - to verify the truth (or otherwise) of the judgement or assertion. Both Husserl and Heidegger maintain that the "*being*-red," understood as a surplus or excess of intention in the sense mentioned above, is not a subjectively projected quality, imposed, as it were, upon *X* - despite the fact it is not available to sensuous intuition. Rather, categorial intuition understood as a "non-sensuous seeing," not founded on subjective process, grants *X* a "new" objectivity: i.e., "…categorial acts constitute a new objectivity…[which] is always to be understood intentionally."[320] It is on this basis, therefore, that categorial intuition fulfils expressive acts of signification - such as, for example, assertorial judgements.

In his commentary Heidegger reminds us that even so-called simple or sensuous perceptions are in fact always and already *inevitably* pervaded by categorial intuitions. Phenomenological analysis shows that in itself each discrete, momentary perception or profile, within a continuous sequence, of the intended object actually constitutes an implicit yet full and comprehensive apprehension of the object. In other words, the object as a whole, in its self-identity, is given "in full" in each moment. Categorial intuitions are in this sense intentionally engaged with the

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[320] HCT: 71.

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objectivities of sensuous intuition, but "…in a manner which does not coincide…"[321] with the latter's specifically intentional relational-directedness. This *new* objectivity means that categorial acts disclose the given object "*anew*," precisely as what it is.[322] According to Heidegger, although "…simplicity [of the correlative object] means that the real parts and moments included in it *do not stand out in relief*,"[323] these parts can however be explicitly brought into relief by means of what he refers to as "new and special acts of explication."[324]

In his commentary, Heidegger places far greater emphasis than Husserl on the relation between categorial intuition and the concept of truth.[325] In this respect, Heidegger seems to be motivated not merely by his need to endorse Husserl's successful overcoming, as he sees it, of the more obvious constraints of the so-called logical prejudice (see below), but also by his own growing interest in the question of what may constitute the foundation of truth conceived as correspondence, and its relation to the theory of categorial intuition - an issue Husserl had only partially (and, in Heidegger's view, inadequately) explored earlier in the *Logical Investigations*. In concluding his commentary, Heidegger points out that in acts of categorial intuition, ideal structures, which "show themselves in themselves,"[326] are *not* (in whatever sense) the product or result of any sort of constructive, creative cognitive function or subjective process, understood in a broadly Kantian sense. It may be argued here that Heidegger appears to detect what he believes to be a potentially significant correlation between (a) the possibility of the intuition of categorial structure in the world, (b) truth re-conceived in foundational terms as *alêtheia* or "unconcealment,"[327] and (c) his forthcoming interpretation of the being of Dasein as an "event" or "space" of "uncovering" - i.e. as

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[321] HCT: 62.

[322] See HCT: 62.

[323] HCT: 63, my italics.

[324] HCT: 63.

[325] See Dahlstrom 2001: 80.

[326] HCT: 71.

[327] See below.

disclosedness. In this light, it becomes possible to better appreciate the far-reaching significance the early Heidegger attaches to Husserl's theory of categorial intuition, especially insofar as Husserl is here seen to be demonstrating that the disclosure of categorial structure is intrinsic and fundamental to Dasein itself.

4.3 Appresentation and Disclosure

We remarked above on the surprising absence of any explicit reference to the theory of categorial intuition in *Being & Time* or indeed any of Heidegger's later work. This absence should not be construed, however, as evidence that Heidegger somehow looses faith in the theoretical possibility of the direct intuition of categorial structure in the world. Arguably the significance of the theory evidently maintains its traction throughout Heidegger's analysis of truth as *alêtheia* or "unconcealment" in *Being & Time* and beyond, and as we have suggested underlies the crucial role disclosedness will play in his forthcoming existential analytic of Dasein.[328] We have observed that Husserl's exposition of the idea of categorial intuition by analogy with sensuous intuition naturally provokes a range of questions. For example, what exactly is this "seeing" which is allegedly non-sensuous? How are categories such as substance and being *given*? In more strictly phenomenological terms, "How do they *appear*?"[329] We previously noted that the theory of categorial intuition relies on the premise that "being" and "substance" are no less *phenomena* than windows, chairs, tables, etc., and that although they do not appear in the same way are said to nevertheless "accompany" mundane phenomena.[330] Categorial phenomenality as such is situated precisely in this "surplus" or "excessiveness" which, as it were, "overflows" the bounds of the sensuous intuition of specific objects and states of affairs in the world. Kisiel proposes the following schematisation:

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[328] See below.

[329] Kisiel 2002: 97.

[330] Kisiel 2002: 96.

"Being appears (a) in conjunction with particular beings, (b) in a way *that exceeds them*, much like a context in which they can appear, (c) accordingly, as the very condition of their appearance, and (d) so that it must in some way 'precede' their appearance."[331]

Categorial structures so conceived are present, so the later Husserl explains, as a kind of "com-presence of horizons" which are, as he puts it, *"appresented"* with the objects, relations or states of affairs of perception.[332] "Appresentation" (*Appräsentation*) is a term coined by Husserl and first introduced by him during the course of his *Ideas 2*.[333] The term appears to derive directly from his earlier consideration of the subject of apperception in the *Logical Investigations*, and as such it comes to play an important part in his account of the theory of categorial intuition. In *The History of the Concept of Time* Heidegger describes Husserl's theory as involving, as it were, a "double presence" in perception, and introducing the question of the relationality, in intuition, between two kinds of "presence."[334] According to Husserl, a being (in this context, the "presence" of a thing) involves the "co-presence" of an ideal objectivity.[335] The importance of this double presence, i.e. the relation between the straightforward, material presentation of an entity in sensuous intuition and the simultaneous unfolding of categorial structure in categorial intuition, cannot be overstated, insofar as it seems intrinsic to the development of Heidegger's notion of disclosedness. In the perception of, say, a brown cat, we have presented to us not just the cat and the brown - but, as noted above, also *present* is the cat's *being* brown. Founded on sensuous intuition, this second moment, as it were, constitutes the presencing of "…the *objective* correlate of the straightforward intuition."[336] In *Ideas 2* Husserl distinguishes between what he refers to as (i) primary presence (*Urpräsenz*) and (ii) appresence (*Appräsenz*).[337] Primary presence represents the objective correlate

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[331] Kisiel 2002: 97, my italics.

[332] See Kisiel 2002: 97.

[333] *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*, trans. R. Rojcewicz, A. Schuwer.

[334] c.f. Kisiel 2002: 49-50.

[335] c.f. Øverenget 1998: 170.

[336] Øverenget 1998: 170.

[337] Husserl 1989: 170-171.

of sensuous, straightforward perception, whilst "appresence" points to a further presence (a "co-presence") which, although founded on primary presence, actually constitutes its horizon. As Husserl says:

> "We have to note…that what is experienceable in the original sense, being which can be primarily present, is not all of being, is not even all experienceable being."[338]

On this account, being is thus *excess* - it is more than so-called "real" objectivity. The givenness of being in this sense is the horizon or context which is, as it were, "appresented," rather than the "real" objectivity which is given in sensuous intuition.[339] In short, it is primary presence that founds the appresentation of categorial structure. As Husserl says in his later *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, "…categorial formations…make their appearance *apperceptionally*…"[340]

Heidegger is clearly struck by the significance of this correspondence between the theory of categorial intuition, and the structures around primary presence and appresence as outlined by Husserl, to such an extent that he borrows and deploys the term "appresence" frequently throughout his *History of the Concept of Time*. It is also telling that, as Kisiel also observes, whilst retaining the general structure of Husserl's noematic emphasis on appresentation, Heidegger, perhaps unsurprisingly, "…takes the ontological turn and reverses the direction between founding and founded presences."[341] In *Being & Time*'s existential analytic it is the horizonal presence of the world which is the "non-objective" primary given, as opposed to entities, whether these are conceived as *Zuhandensein* (ready-to-hand, available) or *Vorhandensein* (present-at-hand, occurrent), which are considered founded presences. The world conceived as an intelligible whole, as a "…totality of references…"[342] and as a horizon of sense and significance, *appresents* entities

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[338] Husserl 1989: 171-172.

[339] Husserl 1989: 18. And see: Øverenget 1998: 171.

[340] Husserl 1974: appendix II, my italics.

[341] Kisiel 2002: 50.

[342] HCT: 190.

and as such allows us to meaningfully encounter entities within the world, i.e. "…makes them present, allows them to become present."[343] Heidegger puts it thus:

> "The apprehensibility and the objectivity of a thing is grounded in the encounter of the world…it is a world which appresents a thing of the world. It is not world-things taken as real-things which put reality together."[344]

It seems therefore that for Heidegger the fundamental significance of appresentation is that "world" itself is primary presence. Entities are revealed within the context of a world whose fundamental mode of presence is meaningfulness and affirmability: "…*meaningfulness is first of all a mode of presence* in virtue of which every entity of the world is discovered."[345] Dasein's being-in-the-world means that its encounter with, and disclosure of, the world as significant is only possible in terms of understanding, conceived as an original phenomenon:

> "It belongs to the being of Dasein, inasmuch as it is being-in-the-world, to let its world be encountered. The kind of being belonging to letting the world be encountered…is itself one of understanding."[346]

The presence of ideal or categorial objectivity will, for Heidegger, transition into the notion of disclosedness itself in *Being & Time*.[347] Indeed, Heidegger's term "disclosedness," which eventually gains an appropriately technical specificity in *Being & Time*, carries much of the sense of Husserl's term "appresentation." Of course, we must bear in mind that, as mentioned above, Heidegger reverses Husserl's priorities, i.e. in *Being & Time*, disclosedness (appresentation) is given a particular primacy over discoveredness (Husserl's primary presence) - although neither Husserl nor Heidegger believe that appresence and primary presence appear independently of each other, or do not fundamentally imply each other.[348] For Heidegger, the disclosure of the horizon of sense and

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[343] Kisiel 2002: 50.

[344] HCT: 190.

[345] HCT: 210.

[346] HCT: 209.

[347] See Øverenget 1998: 170.

[348] c.f. Øverenget 1998: 172.

meaning is granted an unquestionable priority over the "uncovering" or "discovery" of singular, individual entities and relations, so contextualised[349] - although the latter can only appear *with* the former, and, as "co-given," together constitute a seamless event. In *The History of the Concept of Time* Heidegger writes:

> "It is only because being-in-the-world as understanding and concernful absorption *appresents* the world that this being-in-the-world can also be concerned with this *appresentation* of the world explicitly…"[350]

In this sense, the intuition of categorial structure might be appropriately envisaged as an "illuminated space"[351] - a prior disclosure of being. It is, finally, this illuminative, pre-theoretical understanding which characterises Dasein as disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*).

4.4 The Essence of Truth

Heidegger's essay *On the Essence of Truth* opens with a brief announcement of its central purpose - to discover the essence of truth.[352] Although the essay opens with a brief elucidation of the traditional correspondence theory of truth, it relies throughout upon the assumption[353] of a more fundamental, primordial sense of truth, envisaged as an "open-ness" or "un-hiddenness," underlying and constituting a ground of possibility for truth conceived as correspondence. As Heidegger says elsewhere:

> "…truth as correctness of representing presupposes, in order to be what it is (assimilation to the object), the openness of beings, by which they become capable of being ob-jects in the first place and by which the representing becomes a faculty of presenting something before itself as such. This openness [appears] consequently as *the ground of the possibility of*

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[349] See chapter 3 for a discussion of the distinction Heidegger makes between disclosedness proper and the uncovering of discrete entities.

[350] HCT: 211, my italics.

[351] c.f. chapter 3.

[352] ET: 65.

[353] c.f. BT: §44.

correctness. Accordingly, correctness cannot constitute the original essence of truth if it is itself dependent on *something more original*. The *original essence* of truth must then be sought in a return to this openness."[354]

Propositional truth, i.e. truth understood as correctness (*Richtigkeit*) or correspondence (*Übereinstimmung*), describes truth in terms of the agreement or correspondence of an assertion or judgement with the entities or combinations of entities the assertion or judgement is about. A proposition is "true" insofar as it accurately and correctly *accords* with the (physical or ideal) object, relation or state of affairs about which it says something. For Heidegger, correspondence theory so understood constitutes a *derivative* form of unconcealment. In contrast to a representationalist account of "reality," correspondence is possible only provided our comportment in the world allows for the unique prior showing or disclosure of objects, relations or states of affairs. Heidegger does not simply reject a traditional understanding of truth as a matter of the supposed accord between entities in the world and our propositions, judgements or representations about those entities. He recognises, in *Being & Time*[355] and beyond, that propositional truth so understood has an entirely justifiable place, as it were *within* disclosedness, insofar as the making of assertions and judgements about objects, relations and states of affairs in the world is in itself one aspect of unconcealment. In short, it constitutes *a kind of* disclosure:

> "To say that an assertion '*is true*' signifies that it uncovers the entity as it is in itself. Such an assertion asserts, points out, 'lets' the entity 'be seen' in its uncoveredness. The *being-true* (*truth*) of the assertion must be understood as *Being-uncovering*."[356]

As used here, the term "being-uncovering" appears to refer to a unique and actual engagement with the entity, rather than an apparent correspondence or coincidence of propositional or judgemental acts about or toward the object. Truth so understood in an apophantic sense consequently derives from, and is grounded in, an understanding of truth as the unconcealing and discovery

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[354] BQP: 82, my italics.

[355] See BT: §44.

[356] BT: 261.

(*Entdecktheit*) of entities. The truth of an entity becomes the unconcealing of the entity, in terms of which assertion and judgement may be possible, i.e. in terms of which they can be measured.[357] Propositional truth is thus *grounded* in truth conceived as "unconcealment" simply because an assertion can only correspond (or fail to correspond) with its object provided the object is already understood or disclosed as an object against which assertions or judgements may in fact be gauged. According to Heidegger, then, truth in an apophantic sense constitutes a "founded" mode of unconcealment.[358] As he puts it in *Being & Time*,

> "…[T]he 'definition' of 'truth' as 'uncoveredness' and as 'Being-uncovering', is not a mere explanation of a word. Among those ways in which Dasein comports itself there are some… we call…'true.' From the analysis of these our definition emerges. *Being-true as Being-uncovering, is a way of Being for Dasein*…the most primordial phenomenon of truth is first shown by the existential-ontological foundations of uncovering."[359]

In §44 of *Being & Time* Heidegger suggests that just what precisely is meant by a "relation of accord" between ideal content and a "real" act of judging remains unresolved.[360] As Carman points out, it does seem that for Heidegger the apparent obscurity of the idea of correspondence is not in any significant sense relieved by distinguishing between (i) *real* (concrete) mental acts and objects of knowledge, and (ii) *ideal* (abstract) intentional contents - especially insofar as the correspondence relation itself is apparently not even touched by this distinction.[361] In *Being & Time* Heidegger says:

> "How are we to take ontologically the relation between an ideal entity and something that is Real and present-at-hand?.…[Is] the ontological meaning of the relation between Real and

[357] See Wrathall 2005: 338.

[358] BT: 261.

[359] BT: 263, my italics.

[360] c.f. Kusch 2012: 187.

[361] c.f. Carman 2003: 254.

ideal something about which we must not enquire? Yet the relation is to be one which

subsists…"[362]

The earlier sections of Heidegger's essay are devoted to an enquiry into what might comprise the foundation or ground for truth conceived as correspondence; in other words, how we might essentially construe truth as the ground or, as Heidegger puts it, the "enabling condition" for truth in a derived, propositional sense. An act of assertion or judgement, which may of course be true or false, is a behaviour, an action - and as a moment of relational-directedness toward an object or state of affairs in the world represents, as such, a way of "comporting ourselves toward" entities. In other words, it is intentional:

> "A statement is invested with its correctness by *the openness of comportment*; for only
>
> through the latter can what is opened up really become the standard for the presentative
>
> correspondence."[363]

As mentioned above, in order for assertion or judgement to be even possible, I must necessarily have in the first place some kind of unequivocal prior access to, a prior "openness toward" or "pre-understanding of," the entities of which I am aware. This pre-understanding of their contextual referentiality and categorial form allows me to take the general sense of these as a standard or a measure for what is asserted. Polt expresses this thought in the following way: given that correspondence is made possible by the "openness of comportment," we can formulate correct claims only if we "…already behave in a way that opens us up to beings and opens up beings for us."[364] So, for example, I may make the true claim, "On Wednesday we had half an inch of rain-fall," - a statement which accords with verifiable facts. My statement is a case of "presentative correspondence," referred to above, in so far as it corresponds to and "re-presents" the extent and location of the rain-fall. But, Polt goes on to ask, "…what allows me to make the statement in the

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[362] BT: 259.

[363] ET: 70, my italics.

[364] Polt 1999: 128.

first place? The rain must be already accessible to me, and I must take it as my standard for what I say…"[365] On this basis, "pre-understanding" implies that "…I must be accessible [to beings] so they can be accessible to me"[366] - in that, insofar as I am aware of and attentive of beings, beings are thus accessible, in this critical sense, to me.[367] For reasons such as these, Heidegger argues, the assignment of truth exclusively to assertion and judgement "…as the sole essential locus of truth…"[368] falls away.

These considerations have a direct bearing on our central theme regarding the subjective dimension of disclosedness. For Heidegger human awareness is inveterately interpretive, and in exactly this sense consciousness *is* the disclosure of an intelligible, affirmable, significant world. In precisely these terms, might it not be the case that "concealment" (perhaps, "errancy" - but see on), as prior and necessary, positively constitutes an essential element of Heidegger's conception of Dasein as in itself an *un*concealment or "openness"? As we shall consider shortly, the structural conditions of falsehood reveal, in terms of our comportment in the world,[369] that the primary condition for deception, for me to be deceived at all, is that beforehand I am understood as fundamentally having been disclosively with - or "been alongside," in an *apriori* sense - something in the world. In fact, this so-called "*apriori* being-unto" and "being-with"[370] a world, as Heidegger puts it, does not represent just the basis or ground of possibility for deception, though it is that. Rather, "…it belongs to my existence itself,"[371] and in this sense is a "self-disclosure." In other words, Heidegger clearly believes that insofar as Dasein is its own disclosedness, it is itself disclosed in the act of disclosure. It appears to be the case that an openness of comportment, which ensures (by prior disclosure) a

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[365] Polt 1999: 128.

[366] Polt 1999: 128.

[367] c.f. Polt 1999: 128.

[368] ET: 70.

[369] c.f. L: 178-179.

[370] L: 179.

[371] L: 179, my italics.

pre-given standard or measure of truth, consequently grants propositional correctness the appearance of "fulfilling," or representing, the essence of truth. If so, then we must ask: what may be the ground of, and what enables, this openness - that we are - in the first place?[372]

4.5 The Conditions of Falsehood

In light of these considerations, it will pay us to briefly detour in order to review certain aspects of Heidegger's account of the three structural conditions of falsehood. We hope thereby to bring into sharper focus the (often overlooked) key features of Heidegger's understanding of the disclosive nature of Dasein, referred to above. In his Marburg lectures of 1925-1926 (published subsequently as *Logic: The Question of Truth*[373]) Heidegger conducts what may be considered his most sustained analysis of the issue of falsehood. The three structural conditions of falsehood, as he presents them here, may be summarised as follows: (i) an orientation to the uncovering of things: the prior intending and having of the subject matter; (ii) within this basic comportment of uncovering, a showing of the subject matter in terms of something else; (iii) such "showing-something-as-something-else" is based on the possibility of "synthesising something with something." As proposed, these conditions suggest that the subject matter of an assertion must necessarily be already disclosed - meaningfully - beforehand.[374] The example Heidegger uses is as follows: I am walking through a dark forest, and I observe something apparently coming toward me through the trees. "It's a deer", I say, although this assertion need not be "explicit." As I approach the object I discover it is in fact a bush, and not a deer.[375] The first and most important point to grasp is that underlying these conditions is the pre-supposition of an implicit understanding, or more precisely a "pre-understanding," that traditional epistemology (so Heidegger alleges) either overlooks or disowns:

[372] See ET: 71.

[373] *See* L.

[374] c.f. Dahlstrom 2001: 216.

[375] See L: 158.

"…when speaking about deception (the example of the deer)…we began with a false statement, but…we showed that, as a statement (whether it be explicitly asserted or not), it too was grounded in a prior knowledge."[376]

Thus, in relation to the first condition there is already something given, something *has already appeared*. In other words, there is an *apriori* disclosure of the world.[377] It is not just the case that I have incorrectly judged or have erroneously identified the object I have encountered, but rather, "…in understanding, addressing and being concerned with this thing, I have acted as one who covers-over."[378] Heidegger maintains that necessarily unconcealment is to be understood as grounded in an originary "covering-up" or concealment, in the straightforward sense that the uncovering of an entity entails, or is founded on, its prior concealment or "hiddenness," in addition to the suppression of alternative meanings - which accordingly are absorbed into the "background." We should note that, as Dahlstrom observes, so-called uncovering (unconcealment) and covering-over (concealment) are, for Heidegger, only meaningful in terms of their mutual referentially. In any event, any assertion - as an unconcealment - "…also covers up more or less."[379] From a phenomenological perspective, an entity is only ever given to us in adumbrations, as a sequence of profiles or "shadings," and in these terms the idea of a supposedly "absolute" or unexpurgated and comprehensive disclosure of the given entity is meaningless - if not, in fact, actually a covering over or "concealment." Given that disclosure is fundamentally grounded in a simultaneous, inescapable "concealment," it certainly seems reasonable to suggest that any judgement or proposition may be designated as true only to the extent that it discloses or uncovers an entity as it is in itself more than conceals it.

For Heidegger, the possibility of deception is grounded in the nature of our comportment in the world, i.e. that we are always poised (as it were, "primed") for entities to be, as it were, "given

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[376] L: 176, my italics.

[377] c.f. L: 158.

[378] L: 158, my italics.

[379] Dahlstrom 2001: 399.

up" to us, always in terms of our contextual understanding of the world. With reference to his example, Heidegger glosses the first condition of falsehood by emphasising that it is necessary beforehand for something to be given - for there to be, as he says, "something coming toward me."[380] For deception to be possible and for something to be misrepresented and appear as something it is not, the thing that so appears has to have already been encountered: "...*I have to be moving in the forest*, for example,...if I am to be able to be deceived about things in the world and in the knowledge of the world."[381] Heidegger is here attempting to synthesise (i) the entity itself as (mis-)judged and (mis-)contextualised,[382] and (ii) the disclosure of a horizon of possible meaning and reference. It is disclosure in this latter sense that is relevant to the second condition of falsehood:

> "...I encounter something that I already understand, something that is already articulated as
>
> something, and as such is expected...in my way of dealing with the world."[383]

The entities we encounter in and through our comportment in the world are what they are for us in terms of the relation and reference they bear to other entities. The singular object can only be uncovered or "discovered" from the perspective of the "pre-disclosure" of an intra-referential and meaningful totality:

> "If dissembling and covering-over are to be possible at all, the being itself must have an
>
> ontological structure such that, on the basis of its being (*Sein*) and as the being (*Seiende*)
>
> that it is, the thing offers the possibility of synthesis, indeed demands synthesis with another
>
> being."[384]

"Synthesis" in the foregoing sense enables the disclosure of the entity to the extent that, as Wrathall suggests, it "...affords and solicits us to be directed from the entity to the things and activities with

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[380] L: 158.

[381] L: 178 my italics.

[382] See chapter 3.

[383] L: 158.

[384] L: 156.

which it is involved."[385] The world is a matrix of all such significant relationality,[386] through which we move. Disclosure is not some kind of quiescent or detached observation or examination of entities, but is rather a dynamic event of "self-constituting" engagement amidst the world, whereby we encounter something we already understand, something that is articulated *as something* and, as such, is anticipated and accepted in "our way of dealing with" the world. Our mis-apprehension of the object is only possible because we have already taken this object as_____.[387] Heidegger captures the sense of this structure exactly by pointing out that "the thing" can only appear as a deer because we let whatever encounters us do so "…on the basis of the act of envisioning something" - say, *in this context*, a deer.[388] The act of reading the object as_____ positions the currently (mis-)understood and (mis-)contextualised object in a "logical space" which is dependent on, and determined by, its relations to a select range of other possibilities. This is a feature of the third condition:

> "…the encountering-being can show itself to my act of envisioning as 'this thing' and 'in this way' only because, along with the encountering-being and the other things present in the world…something like 'a deer' can indeed be present among the trees."[389]

An essential aspect of the event in terms of which I "uncover" yet mis-judge an object is that the "space of possibilities"[390] is restricted, i.e. I am "pre-primed" or ready to accept and believe (in this instance, mistakenly) that the bush ahead of me is in fact a deer. It is far less likely, although *just* feasible, that, as Heidegger fancifully suggests, approaching me in the forest is the Shah of Iran, whereas there is no possibility whatsoever that I might encounter anything like "… the cubed root of sixty-nine coming toward me."[391] In short, the context or horizon which I occupy disposes me to

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[385] Wrathall 2011: 63.

[386] Wrathall 2011: 63.

[387] c.f. McManus 2013: 244.

[388] c.f. L: 158.

[389] L: 158.

[390] McManus 2013: 245.

[391] L: 159.

react more affirmatively to "certain solicitations"[392] than to others. As McManus suggests, "…one must grasp the space…one must grasp its place within its broader context and the kinds of entity that might come to stand 'there.'"[393]

4.6 *Alêtheia*

We know from *Being & Time* that, as previously noted, Heidegger understands himself to be restoring the original, archaic sense of the term *alêtheia*. The term he typically uses to translate *alêtheia*, which is normally translated "truth" [*Wahrheit*]), is "unconcealment" (*Unverborgenheit*). Truth so conceived - although subject to some slight semantic adjustments over the course of his career - remains a constant for Heidegger. As such it is mirrored in the very particular terminology with which Heidegger tends to surround it: for example, "disclosedness" (*Erschlossenheit*), "clearing" (*Lichtung*), and so on. As he tells us in *Being & Time*:

> "To say that an assertion "*is true*" signifies that it uncovers the entity as it is in itself. Such an assertion…'lets' the entity 'be seen' in its uncoveredness. Hence the *Being-true* [*truth*] of the assertion must be understood as *Being-uncovering*. Truth has by no means the structure of an agreement between knowing and its object in the sense of a likening of one entity [the subject] to another [the object]."[394]

We have seen that Dasein understood as an intentional comportment "in-the-world" implies, for Heidegger, an "openness" of entities for and to us in *all* our meaningful engagement with the world:

> "…if our representations and assertions - e.g., the statement, 'the stone is hard' - are supposed to conform to the object, then this being, the stone itself, must be accessible in advance: in order to present itself as a standard and measure for the conformity with it. In short, the being, in this case the thing, must be out in the open."[395]

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[392] L: 159.

[393] McManus 2013: 245.

[394] BT: 261.

[395] BQP: 18.

It is this "openness of comportment" (i.e. our comportment in the world understood as the prior disclosure or unconcealment of the object, relation or state of affairs as intended) that unequivocally constitutes *the* ground of possibility for truth in the sense of correspondence.

As Sheehan points out,[396] in classical greek terminology *alêtheia* refers to the intelligibility or openness of "things," and in a syntactic sense occurs only where there is a correlative human act of apprehension - a revealing or a disclosing. For Heidegger, the claim that the "disclosure of an entity" means that the entity is "opened up" as meaningful only in and for an act of (human) apprehension[397] enables him to preserve as significant a "phenomenological correlation" between the apprehension of meaning and the intelligibility of the apprehended. The subjective field envisaged as *in itself* a disclosedness suggests that Dasein conceived *as* the clearing, *as* an event or space of disclosure, represents "…the hidden presence of the openness that lets things be intelligible ('have being')."[398] At this level, *alêtheia* does not refer to disclosure in the sense of correspondence, i.e. a revealing which is either correct or incorrect, true or false. As we have already considered, the metaphor of the clearing represents Heidegger's attempt to articulate disclosure as an event of possibility - as an openness that Dasein itself is. In exactly this sense, the clearing describes the open-space we ourselves are, and in terms of which there is disclosedness and an unfolding of meaning.

4.7 Freedom, Openness and Attunement

In *On the Essence of Truth* Heidegger suggests that the disclosure or unfolding of the entity in the "open region," or clearing is only possible provided there is what he calls a "freeness," or openness, toward whatever is so revealed:

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[396] See Sheehan 2015: 73.

[397] c.f. Sheehan 2015: 73.

[398] Sheehan 2015: 73.

> "Such being free points to…the essence of freedom. The openness of comportment as the inner condition of the possibility of correctness is grounded in freedom."[399]

The unexpected interim conclusion here turns out to be that in fact the essence of truth is in fact freedom itself.[400] "Freedom" in the sense Heidegger uses the term here points to an aspect of Dasein's mode of being, and as such constitutes a dimension of Dasein understood as a disclosedness in itself. As Heidegger puts it, contrary to the common understanding of freedom as a mere absence of constraint in relation to decision and action, it rather characterises

> "… *engagement in the disclosure of beings* as such. Disclosedness itself is conserved in ek-sistent engagement, through which the openness of the open region, i.e., the 'there' ['Da'], is what it is."[401]

As disclosive engagement, or openness, freedom is a readiness or "availability" for what is "…opened up in an open region…"[402] - it is simply "…letting beings be the beings they are."[403] Thus, freedom conceived as our "letting be" of beings is not meant to imply a sense of neglect or indifference, but speaks rather of an engagement and involvement which is both positive and concernful. Similarly, in this context "engagement" should not be read as describing the mere collation and ordering of sensory information. Instead, the term carries the sense of a concernful , caring involvement in and with "the open region," within which the given object, relation or state of affairs comes to stand meaningfully - i.e. an openness in the sense of *alêtheia*. In these terms, freedom is to be understood as a revealing of truth, although precisely in the primary sense that it constitutes a disclosive "letting-be" whereby we "allow" beings to be the beings they already are. At the same time, however, Heidegger clearly needs us to see that freedom so conceived *is* this structure, or perhaps more exactly "…*is as*…" this structure.[404] In other words, Dasein *ek-sists*…

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[399] ET: 71.

[400] ET: 71.

[401] ET: 73, my italics.

[402] ET: 72.

[403] ET: 73.

[404] Gosetti-Ferencei 2004: 53.

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"…as a property of this freedom. The human being ek-sists outside of the realm of beings - in the open of disclosure, and the freedom of this being is not a possession of truth, but is rather possessed by truth in its own process of disclosure and concealment."[405]

Heidegger insists that the idea of disclosedness, although involving an active and immediate engagement with entities in the world, at the same time implies a "withdrawal" or a stepping back, in order to allow a space of possible meanings to emerge - to as it were occur around entities in and of themselves.[406] The idea is that disclosedness in a sense withdraws in the face of beings in order that they might "unfold" (perhaps we might say, "unravel") and thus unconceal themselves, so that "…presentative correspondence might take its standard from them."[407] Importantly, my encountering of entities actually implies my purposeful, concernful involvement with those entities in context, i.e. they become meaningfully disclosed to me *via* my projective purposes and possibilities, my understanding,[408] and consequently there is no suggestion here of passive observation or detached indifference. Indeed, as Polt notes, we can perhaps most fruitfully read Heidegger here as accounting for human freedom "…as a sort of *active passivity*, or better, as an openness that is more basic than either activity or passivity."[409]

It should be evident from what we have said that it is, for Heidegger, subjectivity envisaged as a fundamental disclosedness which by implication underlies these various existential structures of human being, and without which they could not be. The concept of freedom as accounted for here brings together (i) Dasein conceived as an openness or lighting clearing (*Lichtung*) in the midst of the world,[410] i.e. the "*Da*" (the "here" or the "there") where beings are revealed in terms of our comportments and thus achieve intelligibility for us, with (ii) the idea that this "openness" constitutes the necessary ground of possibility for a) Dasein's meaningful encounter with the world

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[405] Gosetti-Ferencei 2004: 54.

[406] ET: 72.

[407] ET: 73, my italics.

[408] See chapter 3.

[409] Polt 1999: 129, my italics.

[410] See chapter 3.

as a whole, and therefore b) truth conceived in a subsidiary and derived sense as correspondence. In a sense we have come full circle here, insofar as it is Dasein conceived *as disclosedness* that is now seen to, as it were, determine or allow the different senses or "levels" of truth. In his later *Basic Questions of Philosophy* we find Heidegger reflecting on this very question. In the midst of an enquiry into the ground of possibility of truth conceived as correspondence, he remarks that, for a representation to be able to "conform" to entities, these entities must,

> "…*prior* to this conformity, and on behalf of it, show themselves to it and thus already stand in the open. The path or relation to beings must also be open, and on it the conforming and correct representation will move and remain…"[411]

We have considered how Heidegger increasingly tends to distance himself from the terminology of "mind" or "subjectivity" or "consciousness," which he believes evokes the idea of a self-sufficient, substantial entity or "inner theatre" that processes sensory representations of a world it acquires across irreducible distance, from outside itself. From a phenomenological perspective, however, Dasein becomes envisaged as being essentially "out in the world," i.e. we are primordially and fundamentally "outside ourselves," disclosively amidst and engaged with beings in the world. It is this attempt to articulate the nature of our fundamentally disclosive involvement with being that underlies the description of our basic comportment in-the-world as *ek-sisting*. Heidegger increasingly relies on the term "ek-sistence" in order to capture a unique sense of human being, as he expresses it in his later *Letter on Humanism*, as "*standing out* into the truth of being"[412]

Heidegger's description of Dasein as a "standing out *into possibility*"[413] appears to refer, within the context of the essay *On the Essence of Truth*, to the phenomenology of Dasein's ek-static being disclosed in terms of its lived existence as a "thrown-projection." Dasein is always "… comport[ing] itself towards its Being as its ownmost possibility. In each case, Dasein *is its*

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[411] BQP: 174.

[412] LH: 156.

[413] See Husserl 1997: 138,n115.

possibility."[414] In other words, this potentiality for being characteristic of Dasein's way of being-in-the-world is grounded, according to Heidegger, in Dasein's disclosive projection as a form of being which must always move forward into possibilities.[415] These existential structures of Dasein are essentially unique, insofar as it is only Dasein that can be said to "ek-sist" in this way. As Siegel has it, at any given moment Dasein "…is at once what it is, what it has been, and what it may yet become."[416] It is in terms of Dasein so understood that Heidegger "…seeks to 'wrest-free' the primitive 'ground' that opens amidst the projections of the horizonal ecstases of one's…singular… temporality."[417] We can perhaps say that this ground, where truth and, of course, "falsehood" are inter-woven into a space or event of disclosure *and* concealment, is itself the clearing (*Lichtung*). Conceived as the clearing, as a fundamental "openness," Dasein *is* in itself therefore essentially freedom (a "letting-be"). As "ek-sisting," in the sense of our disclosive directedness toward beings out in the open, Dasein is inevitably and always the unconcealing of entities. As Braver expresses it:

> "…*this is what we do*…letting beings be, allowing them to manifest fully as they are, [and this] represents the 'fulfilment and consummation', or the 'flourishing' of the unconcealment we are always doing."[418]

In his essay Heidegger now moves on to consider the question of attunement. The term "attunement," or "mood," is used to describe our basic disposition or state of mind, and translates the German *Befindlichkeit*. The Macquarrie and Robinson translation[419] of *Befindlichkeit* as "state-of-mind" is generally considered to be deficient for a number of reasons, which we cannot examine

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414 BT: 68, my italics.

415 BT: 184.

416 Seigel 2005: 571.

417 Luchte 2008: 11.

418 Braver 2009: 33.

419 See BT.

here.[420] There are various other possibilities, including "disposition" or "situatedness," but in what follows we judge it best to rely primarily on Stambaugh's version, i.e. "attunement."[421] As a designation of our affectivity, attunement refers to that dimension of being-in-the-world in terms of which our moods or "states of mind" arise and are structured. It is through "mood" as such that, for Heidegger, things in general "matter to us," and thus affectivity in general terms is linked to the pre-intentional concernful disclosure of being-in-the-world as a whole.[422] Hence, the world "as a whole," i.e., its sense and meaning contextualised and "co-given" in terms of my projective understanding and possibilities, becomes "opened up" as mattering to me in the way that it does.

For Heidegger, then, attunement underlies disclosedness,[423] in that a mood reveals things and myself more actually and vibrantly than theoretical propositions or abstract positions. Thus, it is attunement that determines *how* the world and entities within the world actually appear to me, insofar as moods are pre-reflective and consequently not chosen or constituted. A mood tells us *how* we are, our current disposition and our comportment or state of mind, and precisely in these terms has an existential significance. Given that Dasein is always already attuned (*gestimmtes Sichbefinden*), then "…my mood represents whatever may be the way in which I am primarily the entity that has been thrown."[424] Essentially, in these terms, attunement constitutes Dasein's openness to the world and its capacity to be so affected[425] - our understanding is always so disposed.[426] Attunement can thus be said to be fundamentally *self*-constituting or *self*-disclosive, insofar as it reveals to me my facticity and thrownness,[427] and shows that I am not, in Crowell's formulation, "…a pure egological spontaneity but am passively *exposed* to the world."[428] Indeed,

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[420] But see Polt 1999: 65n for a balanced assessment.

[421] c.f. *Being & Time* trans. by J. Stambaugh.

[422] Crowell 2005: 58, my italics.

[423] Polt 1999: 66.

[424] BT: 389-390.

[425] Dahlstrom 2013: 134.

[426] BT: 182.

[427] c.f. BT: 73.

[428] Crowell 2005: 58.

we might say that, purely in terms of its fundamental role in the disclosure of a meaningful world, attunement as it were momentarily "instantiates" self-hood.

Precisely in relation to the event of disclosure, the "whole ensemble," the background totality of beings, paradoxically remains, or becomes in itself, necessarily vague - we could say "out of focus." In experiential terms, it seems that the more focussed and intensely "concernful" the activity of disclosure (and hence the more engrossed and fixated Dasein becomes) then the more un-graspable, "un-measurable" and un-differentiated, *to the same extent*, the whole is found to be.[429] In other words, Dasein's comportment, in terms of which it "un-conceals" the objects and states of affairs it encounters and with which it is concern-fully engaged, must fail to disclose (we might say obscures or conceals) entities in the whole. This is of course *not* to say that the "event" of horizonal disclosure does not, as it must, establish or reveal a context of meaningful and potentially significant possibilities, as we have seen,[430] but it *is* to say - in broad terms - that the intensification of a disclosive fixation, or as Heidegger calls it an "ontic embroilment," reduces and thereby "obscures" entities in the whole: it moves, as it were, the "rest of the world" out of focus. This appears to be the sense in which Heidegger claims that every disclosure represents a necessary concealment. As he says:

> "Precisely because letting be always lets beings be in a particular comportment that relates to them and thus discloses them, it conceals beings as a whole. Letting-be is intrinsically at the same time a concealing."[431]

We have of course only partially addressed the issue of what the relation is between concealment and Dasein's attunement. It appears from what we have learnt that the principle distinction Heidegger draws is that between, on the one hand, Dasein's necessarily tightly focused contextual and concernful comportment toward, and "uncovering" or "discovery of" discrete, singular objects,

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[429] c.f. Richardson 1963: 219.

[430] See chapter 3.

[431] ET: 76.

relations and states of affairs in the world, and on the other hand, the "disclosure" of beings as a whole, i.e., the revealing of a context, a horizon of sense and possibility always in terms of our attunement.[432] To the extent that disclosive engagement differentiates and embraces individual entities and combinations of entities, everything else - the entire horizonal presence - at the same time becomes increasingly "blurred" or excluded. It might be helpful here, in order to clarify Heidegger's reasoning, to consider a simple analogy Braver uses in an attempt to illustrate the relation between attunement and concealment:

> "Whereas my good mood orients my reactions to *whatever* happens (beings as a whole), changing my car's oil narrows my attention to just what is relevant to the job (a few specific beings). Antarctica, e.g., does not enter my awareness during this process at all and, unlike my cheerful mood, working on my car in no way orients my attitude towards Antarctica should it arise. My car and Antarctica bear no relationship to each other whatsoever, leaving the continent, and virtually everything else in the universe, in the dark while I take care of the oil."[433]

In that freedom as such (i.e. "letting-beings-be") enables particular comportments which involve, and attend only to, the specific objects, relations and states of affairs of my concern, the remainder, beings as a whole, which fall outside this circle of concern and uncoveredness are consequently "concealed" by means of, and in terms of, this very disclosure itself. In short, all comportment conceals. As Heidegger says in his *Origin of the Work of Art*:

> "…thanks to this clearing [opened by a world], beings are unconcealed in certain changing degrees. And yet a being can be concealed, too, only within the sphere of what is lighted. Each being we encounter and which encounters us keeps to this curious opposition of presence in that it always withholds itself at the same time in a concealedness."[434]

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[432] c.f. Braver 2009: 34.

[433] Braver 2009: 34.

[434] OWA: 53.

The entity in terms of which which the content of a proposition, in an apophantic sense, is measured must necessarily have been in some way already disclosed for us. Apophantic truth (and in this sense "falsehood" or "un-truth") is therefore inevitably grounded in, as Sheehan has it, "…a prior disclosedness *qua* [the] intelligible availability of the subject matter of the statement."[435] For Heidegger, there is unconcealment when an understanding of the essence or being of the entity, as disclosed, shapes possibilities for comportment in the world.[436] In *On the Essence of Truth* Heidegger describes "concealment" in terms of "…[preserving] what is most proper to *alêtheia* as its own."[437] What seems to be implied here is that, on the basis that truth in a primary sense is construed as essentially an unconcealment or disclosedness, then "concealment" as such can only reference "*un*-disclosedness," in the sense of what is obscured or "suppressed" *via* disclosure. So conceived, "concealment" coincides with *un*-truth, precisely because "letting be" consistently lets beings be in terms of the particularity of a specific comportment, a particular attunement (see above), that "relates to" or "resonates with" them and thus both discloses them in these terms and to this extent "…conceals beings as a whole."[438] The idea that freedom as a "letting-be" of beings is simultaneously an event of concealment means that disclosure, in this context envisaged as "freedom," is only a possibility in synthesis with this horizon of potential concealment.[439]

Heidegger goes on to claim, however, that the concealment or "hiddenness" of not only individual entities but, as he puts it, the "whole ensemble," is in itself concealed. Concealment conceived as a ground of possibility for disclosure and the revealing of an intelligible world is not only, for Heidegger, a concealing of beings, but at the same time, and as part of the same movement, is recognised as a concealing of this very concealment. Central to this dialectic of un-concealment and concealment is the hermeneutical "as-structure," i.e. the seeing, or grasping, of

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[435] Sheehan 2015: 74.

[436] c.f. Wrathall 2011: 13.

[437] ET: 76.

[438] ET: 76.

[439] Kockelmans 1985: 160.

something *as* something.[440] Given our interpretive nature, "seeing-as" is only possible (as we have already discussed) in terms of projective understanding: the categories "as which" objects are apprehended (as *X*, as *Y*, etc.) are seemingly latent and embedded in Dasein's projective, factical, and historical being. The interpretive structure which, according to Heidegger, guarantees the intelligibility of the seemingly infinite totality of referential relations that constitute the "world" is therefore "seeing-as," or "grasping" - the very structure by means of which we appropriate the object of our apprehension as meaningful, and elucidate its sense and purpose. Surrounding and informing any act of disclosure, as a condition of seeing and understanding something *as* something, lies a manifold of excluded and "subsumed" alternative perspectives and meanings. For me to "take" and embrace the given entity as intelligible and affirmable in the way in which I do (i.e., always projectively, always "historically," at this moment, in this unique context, in terms of my current "attunement") necessarily precludes taking the object otherwise. For example, any object approached and objectified as an examinable item (e.g., a spatio-temporal object, or a memory) will be disclosed as an object precisely in *these* terms and in *this* very light. By virtue of the specificity of this singular apprehension, all other potential or possible modes of disclosure and appropriation - all other possible apprehensions - are, in this single movement of disclosure, simultaneously suppressed and obstructed. In fact, inevitably they will shade into concealment itself. The unconcealing of any given object or state of affairs is consequently, *because it is disclosive*, always a concealing. As Kisiel notes, the basic mode of knowing, in terms of a hermeneutics of facticity, of Dasein as "being-in-the-world,"

> "…is interpretive exposition out of a background of pre-understanding that by and large remains tacit, latent, withdrawn…at most only…a tangential and background presence that shades off into the shadows of being's concealment."[441]

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[440] See chapter 3 for a more expansive account of the "as-structure" of interpretation.

[441] Kisiel 2014: 7; and c.f. HCT: 260.

Against the backdrop of a deeply traditional account of cognition as "knowing" in its most fundamental sense (as a "making present"[442]) Heidegger envisages truth as a "chiaroscuro" disclosedness, as an unveiling of being which might otherwise remain concealed but which, nevertheless, "…must be brought to language."[443]

4.8 Concluding Comments

Kisiel emphasises that it remains undoubtedly one of Heidegger's most celebrated theses, from across his entire career, that "…Dasein IS disclosiveness" - that in fact Dasein is the locus of primal, originary truth as the unconcealment of being.[444] Heidegger himself maintains that the world "opens up" and is disclosed as uniquely meaningful for us always in terms of our specific historical and cultural embedded-ness.[445] As he says toward the conclusion of *On the Essence of Truth*, the seemingly infinite multiplicity of "fields of intelligibility" outside of our own are there for us, and remain for us, consequently, as *mystery*. In fact, as Kisiel observes, it is this region of being, as a conceptual structure, that is fundamentally characteristic of Dasein,[446] insofar as - at the most foundational level - Dasein is thrown and emerges into an already significant world of pre-determined meanings, in terms of which entire fields of being necessarily remain in complete darkness. As Heidegger says:

> "Freedom governs the free space in the sense of the cleared, that is to say, the revealed. To
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> the occurrence of revealing, i.e., of truth, freedom stands in the closest and most intimate
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> kinship. All revealing belongs within a harbouring and a concealing. But that which frees…
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> is concealed and always concealing itself…all revealing comes out of the free, goes into the
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> free, and brings into the free…*freedom is that which conceals in a way that opens to the*

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[442] c.f. Kisiel 2014: 7.

[443] Kisiel 2014: 8.

[444] See Kisiel 2014: 8.

[445] Please refer to chapter 6 for a consideration of these issues.

[446] Kisiel 2014: 9.

light, in whose clearing shimmers the veil that hides the essential occurrence of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils."[447]

On Heidegger's account, truth and un-truth, unconcealment and concealment, are in the end understood to be fundamentally reliant on (or in a sense "reflected in") each other. The "self-disclosive" uncovering of objects, relations and states of affairs in the world necessarily entails the ever present concealment or suppression of the whole. As such, "errancy" as the concealing of entities (and, as we have seen, the concealing of concealing) can now be seen as "belonging" to, or as Heidegger expresses it, "inter-twined with"[448] - the essence of truth.

In conclusion, we should recall that for Heidegger, Dasein envisaged as a disclosive "being-in-the-world" in itself constitutes an unconcealment or "openness" in the world, or as we considered in our previous chapter, a "clearing" (*Lichtung*) - in the sense of a space of illumination.[449] As we have attempted to show, from a phenomenological perspective Dasein so interpreted as an "uncovering" or disclosure of being arguably implies, for Heidegger (and, as we shall see in the next chapter, also for Sartre), a "self-constitution" - in the sense that the possibility of "self-hood" necessarily arises in consort with the possibility and disclosure of an intelligible and significant world.

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[447] QCT: 230, my italics.

[448] ET: 78.

[449] See chapter 3.

Chapter 5

Sartre: Ipseity and the Decompression of Being

5.1 Introduction

Our central task in this chapter is to explore Sartre's analysis of intentional consciousness in its mode of non-objectual self-presence, as found primarily in his *Being & Nothingness*. We will consider in particular his views concerning certain associated questions relative to the status of the subjective field or, as Sartre himself puts it, "self-ness" (*ipséité*) - grounded in a phenomenological analysis of consciousness conceived as fundamentally intentional and disclosive. We aim to show that "subjectivity" or "self-hood," conceived in strictly phenomenological, "minimal" terms, suggests for both Heidegger and Sartre an event - a possibility, as it were - of unconcealment and self-constitution within disclosure of a world, and in the next chapter we shall directly address the extent to which Sartre's thinking, specifically in this regard, can be said to converge in coherent ways with Heidegger's. We suggest that, given a generally sympathetic and affirmative reading, Sartre's approach to what we might call the question of "co-disclosure," i.e. the apparent simultaneity and correlation of *self*-disclosure and *world*-disclosure, creatively augments our

understanding of the fundamental equation, as proposed by Heidegger in *Being & Time,* of Dasein and disclosedness itself.

With a view to unravelling some of the occasionally idiosyncratic threads of Sartre's reasoning and terminology, our first task will be to directly address certain implications of Sartre's account of consciousness as purely intentional. Thereafter we shall critically examine, in more detail than is normally encountered in recent commentary, Sartre's account of being-for-itself (consciousness) envisaged as an essentially disclosive "*decompression*" of the undifferentiated density of being-in-itself - a view which we contend mirrors in significant respects Heidegger's characterisation of Dasein as "the clearing" (see chapter three). Our next two sections will be concerned with Sartre's approach to the question of disclosure itself. We shall initially consider Sartre's reliance on Gestalt theories of perception, which as we shall discover he borrows from in order to elucidate the actual "mechanics" of human disclosure. We then proceed to address his more fundamental views regarding negation and no-thing-ness (in all forms) underlying and configuring our disclosure of the world and of ourselves. Thereafter we shall move on to clarify what, for Sartre, distinguishes the empirical psycho-physical ego or mundane "self," conceived as a product of reflective consciousness, from his idea of the "self-ness" of consciousness, envisaged as a fundamental "ipseity*."* Our findings will better prepare us to tackle Sartre's condensed, tightly argued account of the "self-ness" of disclosive consciousness, characterised by him, as we shall see, as a "circuit of ipseity."[450] His claims regarding the differentiation and disclosure of an intelligible world for and by being-for-itself are fundamentally grounded in ipseity so conceived, and we therefore intend to examine the role this concept comes to play, specifically in relation to subjectivity conceived and elucidated by Heidegger as an unconcealment and a disclosedness.

As we progress it should become clearer that certain key aspects of Sartre's account of ipseity, specifically his account of being-for-itself conceived as a "decompressive" event in the

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[450] see BN: 159-162.

midst of the world, are in part informed by his reading of Heidegger's existential analytic of Dasein in *Being & Time*. We shall however assess these considerations in more detail in our next chapter.

Although Sartre's philosophic style and method has attracted considerable criticism, there are notable exceptions, where his particular approach is admired as coherent and insightful. *Pace* George Steiner, who, reflecting a view found in some commentary, remarks that *Being & Nothingness* is little more than a footnote to Heidegger's *Being & Time*[451] - there can be little doubt that at the least Sartre's *magnum opus* represents an unquestionably unique and challenging philosophic event. As Simone de Beauvoir expresses it, perhaps rather unsurprisingly, in her autobiography:

> "His originality lies in the fact that while allotting a glorious independence to consciousness,
> he bestowed upon reality its full weight; reality gave itself to knowledge in perfect
> translucency but also in the irreducible density of its being."[452]

In direct contrast to such moments of affirmation, much recent criticism tends to be predominantly dismissive, especially in relation to what is frequently regarded as Sartre's questionable willingness to endorse an apparently dualistic ontology.[453] Such accusations tend to linger, which is regrettable (and somewhat ironic), particularly in view of a recent resurgence of interest, within current research in the philosophy of mind, in certain features of Sartre's analysis of reflective consciousness. As our enquiry proceeds, therefore, a question which will recur will be whether Sartre's analysis of human-reality is, as alleged by certain commentators, prone to some form of regressive "two-substance" dualism. His exhaustive analysis of the immediate structures of being-fo*r*-itself, which is systematically extended and refined during the course of *Being & Nothingness*, depicts from the outset consciousness envisaged as a translucent, empty "region" or "mode" of being, fundamentally distinguished from the substantial opacity and density of purely self-identical

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[451] Kleinberg 2018: 112.

[452] de Beauvoir 1961: 107.

[453] See Gardner 2009: 36.

non-conscious being (i.e. being-*in*-itself). It is this regional, or "modal," distinction within being that gives shape to the ontological map of human-reality Sartre gradually unfolds throughout *Being & Nothingness*.

Sartre endeavours to meet this criticism head-on. He readily concedes that strategically the ontology of *Being & Nothingness* can appear to be structurally prone to an ontological dualism, and is quite ready to admit that,

"…after describing the in-itself and the for-itself it seemed difficult to establish a connection between them, and we were afraid of falling into an insurmountable dualism."[454]

Indeed, he goes so far as to suggest that the dichotomy of these two structural regions or modes of being seemingly positioned over against each other clearly threatens to…

"… establish a hiatus, splitting being (as a general category belonging to all existents) into two incommunicable regions, in each of which the notion of Being would have to be taken in an original and particular sense."[455]

As Sartre frequently reminds us, however, what he is *not* asking us to accept here is the idea of some kind of "collision" or confrontation between two distinct and logically incommensurable levels or "dimensions" of being. Similarly, Sartre does *not* invite us to, as it were, simply defer or suppress our concerns regarding his account of being as seemingly substantially divided against itself. He affirms throughout *Being & Nothingness*, repeatedly so in the concluding sections, that being understood in regional or modal terms is being appropriated from the perspective of being-for-itself, which he likens, in typically rhetorical terms, to "a hole within being,"[456] i.e. the for-itself (consciousness) is *only* the pure nihilation of the in-itself. To illustrate this point Sartre employs to dramatic effect a metaphor drawn from popular science. In cosmology, he tells us, it is believed that apparently the annihilation of just one of the atoms constituting the universe would induce, at a catastrophic level, the disruption, fragmentation and eventual collapse of the entire cosmos. He

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[454] BN: 798.

[455] BN: 798.

[456] BN: 799.

suggests that in analogous terms being-for-itself may be seen as an event of "tiny nihilation" within being, and that it is this nihilation which induces a total and irreversible upheaval in being-in-itself. In a phrase heavily pregnant with significance, Sartre concludes: "This upheaval is the world."[457] On other occasions he refers to what he calls the "upsurge" of consciousness in the world as an "absolute event," in the sense of something which "happens to" being-in-itself. It is as if, as Gardner suggests, Sartre is attempting to subsume being-for-itself under "a new metaphysical category," and whether, as such, the for-itself might be more appropriately conceived as an *event*, "…such that being-for-itself is related to being-in-itself as *event-hood* is [related to] to *substantiality*."[458] Gardner attempts to capture by analogy a sense of the for-itself envisaged in these terms:

> "…being-for-itself is related to being-in-itself as a spatial direction is related to an inert material body - the direction does not come from the body and neither affects nor can be affected by it, yet cannot be thought without it."[459]

It is clear Sartre's intention is to characterise "the subjective field" (being-for-itself) as an intrinsically disclosive "event" within being, which as such constitutes a ground of possibility for the differentiation and the "coming to light," *by negation*, of an intelligible and meaningful world. In terminology Sartre borrows from Heidegger, the unitary phenomenon "being-in-the-world" might now be thought of as descriptive of the inevitable, self-disclosive negation and "decompression" of non-relational, self-identical being-in-itself. On his own terms, Sartre finally arrives at a critically compelling account of the relational dependancy *and* the simultaneous exclusivity of being conceived "regionally" - which it seems to us he achieves *without* descending into one or another version of an overtly dual-substance ontology.

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457 BN: 799.

458 Gardner 2009: 58.

459 Gardner 2009: 58.

5.2 A Note on Terminology and a Warning

Before proceeding, a brief word on terminology, followed by a warning. Regarding the term *ipséité* itself: Richmond notes[460] that Sartre is most likely to have encountered this formulation in a French translation of Heidegger's *Being & Time* where it is used to translate Heidegger's *Selbsheit*. This term is normally translated as "selfhood," although Sartre tends to predominantly use *ipséité* when discussing being-for-itself's reflexive relationship to itself. The term is in fact rarely used in French. Its Latinate form (*ipse* - "itself") becomes anglicised as "ipseity," and we will therefore follow Richmond's practice of using this version, untranslated. Another terminological issue concerns the distinction, which we will shortly encounter, between consciousness conceived as "positional" or "thetic." For Sartre, *positional* consciousness describes consciousness with objectual form, i.e. awareness *of* X. *Thetic* consciousness, although in practice often more or less interchangeable with "positional" consciousness, specifically refers to consciousness "with judgemental or propositional form,"[461] i.e. consciousness *that* X. Every act of consciousness is a positional (possibly thetic) consciousness of an object, although, as Morris observes, the terminology can confuse rather than clarify the question of whether or not the positing of an object involves conceptualisation.[462]

The warning, which we must heed, derives from Sebastian Gardner. He suggests that it is a critical mistake, to which some recent commentary appears to be prey, to raise the question of an intelligibly differentiated world of objects and states of affairs at the level of consciousness itself.[463] He reminds us that, for Sartre, "…the nothingness of consciousness needs to be 'routed' through the structures of the for-itself in order for objects to emerge."[464] In other words, "the world" envisaged by Sartre as co-extensive with "the upsurge of a for-itself"[465] (i.e. experienced *as* differentiated and

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[460] BN: liv.

[461] See, e.g., Gardner 2009: 45 for a more detailed account along these lines of the distinction between positional and thetic consciousness.

[462] Morris 2008: 62.

[463] Gardner 2009: 79.

[464] Gardner 2009: 79.

[465] BN: 289.

therefore meaningful) is correlated with the structural reflexivity of being-for-itself, and not consciousness *per se*. As Sartre himself says: "…without *ipseity*, and without the person, there would be no world…"[466]; and hence: "…we see determination appearing as an external negation that is correlative to the internal, radical and ecstatic negation that *I am*."[467]

5.3 Intentionality

In his *Transcendence of the Ego* (1937),[468] and other early works, including *Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of Husserl's Phenomenology* (1934),[469] *The Imagination* (1936),[470] *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* (1939),[471] and *The Imaginary* (1940)[472] Sartre progressively refines his philosophic style which he eventually comes to describe as "phenomenological ontology." It is this particular approach which is destined to become the *modus operandi* for his subsequent overall analysis of human-reality in *Being & Nothingness* (1943).[473] Certain key features of his account of the structures of consciousness are already more or less in place in these early works, although not all of them explicitly. *Being & Nothingness* itself opens with a provisional exposition of the relation between the two modes or, as Sartre sometimes puts it, "regions" of being: being-in-itself (*l'être-en-soi*) and being-for-itself (*l'être-pour-soi*). As mentioned above, very approximately these designations refer to objective and subjective being respectively, or, also very loosely, being-in-itself marks out non-conscious being from being-for-itself, conceived as conscious being.[474] As mentioned above, for Sartre these designations do not differentiate two "kinds" of being, nor do

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[466] BN: 161.

[467] BN: 259.

[468] Hereafter TE.

[469] Hereafter I.

[470] *L'Imagination* (1936).

[471] *Esquisse d'une Théorie des Emotions (*1939).

[472] *L'Imaginaire* (1940).

[473] Hereafter BN.

[474] Barnes 1992: 15.

they mark out some kind of fundamental division within being. What Sartre needs us to see is that being conceived "as a whole" necessarily and always unfolds *thus* in our experience. There are certain ontological implications which follow from this differentiation, which as we shall see bear on Sartre's earlier thesis[475] that *as intentional* consciousness as such has no content in itself.

Sartre tells us that he intends to provide "…an ontological proof of the world" - by which he means that he aims to demonstrate unequivocally that the world may be understood to exist externally and independently of consciousness. His begins by referencing intentionality itself:

> "Consciousness is consciousness of something. This means that transcendence is the constitutive structure of consciousness; that is, that consciousness is born supported by a being which is not itself. This is what we call the ontological proof."[476]

Any object of consciousness, as being "beyond" consciousness, is transcendent: because consciousness is intentional no object of consciousness can be an aspect *of* consciousness. Objects *as* transcendent are not constituted or configured from the "resource-less-ness" of consciousness: "…consciousness could not 'construct' the transcendent by objectivising elements borrowed from its subjectivity."[477] At a fundamental level, it is intentionality that determines consciousness - in so far as "absolutely" consciousness *is*, and *is only*, the disclosure of and presence to transcendence. My positing of a transcendent object, relation or state of affairs is simply to be conscious, and refers to my apprehension of an object that *I am not* - i.e. a pre-reflective awareness of myself as not being the intentional object. As Sartre puts it:

> "The structure at the basis of intentionality and of selfness is the negation, which is the internal relation of the for-itself to the thing. The for-itself constitutes itself outside in terms of the thing as the negation of that thing; thus its first relation with being-in-itself is

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[475] see TE.

[476] BN: 17, my italics.

[477] BN: 194.

negation. It 'is' in the mode of the for-itself; that is, as a separate existent inasmuch as it reveals itself as not being being."[478]

In short, consciousness is nothing apart from *not being* the transcendent object it discloses.[479]

At the outset of his philosophical career, in the early *Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea in Husserl's Philosophy*[480] (an essay written around 1934 but not published until 1947), Sartre briefly outlines the idea of intentionality, which he draws directly from Husserl. This thesis will inform his thinking throughout the ensuing years: namely, that consciousness is (always) consciousness of something. Already in Sartre's earliest philosophic work the term "consciousness" is used almost exclusively in a transitive sense to describe an intentional relation to an object; and it is on this foundation that Sartre will go on to develop his own theories of the emotions and the ego, analyse the processes of imagination, and eventually unfold, in *Being & Nothingness*, a comprehensive topography of human-reality itself.[481] The discussion of intentionality in this early essay appears to be motivated, at least in part, by Sartre's resolve to remove from the theory any traces of idealism.[482] He memorably characterises intentional consciousness in terms of consciousness conceived as a "bursting-forth" into the world. Drawing on Heidegger's account of Dasein as "being-in-the-world," Sartre identifies the idea of "being-in" in dynamic terms as "movement," insofar as "to be" is to

> "…fly out into the world, to spring from the nothingness of the world and of consciousness in order to suddenly burst out as consciousness in the world. When consciousness tries to recoup itself, to coincide with itself once and for all, closeted off all warm and cozy, it destroys itself."[483]

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[478] BN: 146.

[479] c.f. Zahavi 1999: 128.

[480] Hereafter, I.

[481] Hatzimoysis 2011: 11.

[482] Morris 2008: 62. In that Sartre's relationship with different species of both idealism and realism is complex, highly contentious, and as such open to interpretation, due to limitations of space we will unfortunately be in a position to enter this debate in any significant sense in the present study.

[483] I: 4.

Consciousness conceived as necessarily existing as "something other than itself," for Sartre, essentially characterises intentionality as such. Importantly, consciousness is *no-thing* in itself, and as a relation to the world (being) it *is* only insofar as it intends something - i.e. apprehension is the apprehension of something, perception is the perception of something, believing is to believe something, imagination is to imagine something, and so on. Consciousness does not constitute some form of isolable "psychic repository" which accommodates and consists of "contents" other than itself. As Gardner observes, to conceive of consciousness in terms such as these "…would be therefore to change topic, to talk about a *term* of some relation and not the *relating* that consciousness *is*."[484] Consciousness *is* only ever consciousness of its intentional object, and is not in any sense a "latency" - it is not, as it were, some kind of provisionally pre-existing state which, as "content-less" or "intention-less," might nevertheless subsequently intend or contain its object. Sartre claims that consciousness can be said to have being only in so far as it is a positing of that which it is consciousness of, and it is primarily this thesis, therefore, on which the daunting task of dismantling traditional ego-ology will for him depend.

In an everyday sense intentionality describes a fundamental and immediate aspect of our conscious life. It is Sartre's committed, phenomenological analysis of consciousness thus conceived, however, that is distinctive. For example, in terms of my straightforward perceptual experience, my seeing of a tree means the world is directly revealed or disclosed to me. My perception is not of an idea or representation of a tree (however such an "internal structure" might be interpreted), but the tree itself "…just where it is: at the side of the road, in the midst of the dust, alone and writhing in the heat."[485] Sartre envisages consciousness as, in a sense, "fleeing" or "escaping" from itself, always disclosively, *toward* the world. As he puts it (again, with some rhetorical flourish):

"…there is nothing in [consciousness] but a movement of fleeing, a sliding beyond itself. If, impossible though it may be, you could enter 'into' a consciousness, you would be seized by

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[484] Gardner 2009: 45.

[485] I: 4.

a whirlwind and thrown back outside, in the thick of the dust, near the tree, for

consciousness has no 'inside.'"[486]

An act of intentional consciousness is thus simply explained in phenomenological terms as an "event" of disclosure. As we shall see, Sartre claims in *The Transcendence of the Ego*,[487] and subsequently in *Being and Nothingness*,[488] that upon analysis an act of intentional consciousness does not in fact reveal or even imply in any sense any kind of substantive, foundational, transcendental "subject" or "self" behind the scenes. Sartre argues that, although a seemingly specific "subject of experience" might provisionally and fleetingly make an appearance on the margins of intentional awareness, this evanescent sense of a prior, empirical psycho-physical self (or "me") is actually and only a product of reflective consciousness. As such, this appearance is, as Hatzimoysis has it "…only at the level of reflecting on, or offering a metaphysical account of,… experience, neither of which is part of the first-order, ordinary and pre-reflective consciousness of things in the world."[489]

For Sartre, consciousness *is* actually consciousness of _____, and beyond the phenomenality of its intentional object, it is *no-thing*.[490] As he says in *Being & Nothingness*,

> "As Husserl showed, all consciousness is consciousness *of* something…there is no [act of] consciousness that does not posit a transcendent object or, if you prefer, consciousness has no 'content.'"[491]

Thus, consciousness of a table should not be taken to suggest that, in any conceivable sense, the table is *in* consciousness, even (and particularly) in the form of a representation. The table is out there in the world: it is spatially and temporally located, and adjacent to the window and the door.

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[486] I: 5.

[487] Sartre, J-P. (2004), *The Transcendence of the Ego*, trans. Andrew Brown (Abingdon: Routledge). Hereafter TE.

[488] Sartre, J-P. (2018), *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Sarah Richmond (Abingdon: Routledge). Hereafter BT.

[489] Hatzimoysis 2011: n125-126.

[490] Although typically intentionality is described as the *aboutness* of consciousness, Sartre himself never uses the term in this way.

[491] BN: 9.

The brute existence of the table is "…a centre of opacity for consciousness; an infinite process would be required to make an inventory of the total content of a thing…"[492] In that consciousness is inconceivable as a "thing" that may or may not have contents, Sartre urges us to recognise that the philosophical priority here has to be "…to expel things from consciousness and to restore the true relationship between this latter and the world: namely, that consciousness is a positional consciousness *of* the world."[493] The intentionality of consciousness is thus conceived as a disclosive orientation, a relational-directedness, "…outside, towards the table,"[494] but crucially towards *what it is not*.

For Sartre, the synchronic and diachronic cohesion of the manifold of experience (the "stream of consciousness") is grounded entirely in intentionality: the intentional unity of an object guarantees and, as he puts it, "provides for" the unity of the potentially innumerable sensory perspectives and profiles of the object presented in experience. Rather than seek out or invent an underlying transcendental *I*, Sartre urges us to look to the intentionality of consciousness (its transcendence to an object) to explain the coherent unity, structure and sense of experience - particularly insofar as intentionality comprises a disclosive relation or comportment toward and amidst objects, relations and states of affairs within the world. On this understanding, experience of any singular, "foreground" entity is only possible, because grounded in, an overall disclosive consciousness of the world, conceived as a horizon of sense and meaning. In other words, the world, and indeed the "me," *are present* in the "givenness" of any object:

> "…consciousness continually refers back to itself: to speak of 'a consciousness' is to speak
> of the whole of consciousness, and this singular property belongs to consciousness itself,
> whatever its relations with the *I* may in other respects be."[495]

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[492] BN: 9.

[493] BN: 9-10.

[494] BN: 9.

[495] TE: 7.

Sartre's claims in *The Transcendence of the Ego* regarding the pre-reflective *cogito* and the structure of reflective consciousness in general, although transferred more or less intact into *Being & Nothingness*, do undergo some modification in the transition. Pre-reflective consciousness is characterised as consciousness non-thetically aware of itself as conscious of a transcendent object. Whereas at the pre-reflective level consciousness as pure intentionality is immersed positionally amidst a seeming infinity of worldly objects, it is always, simultaneously and inherently, conscious non-positionally of itself (i.e. it does not make an object of itself) *as this positing*.[496] All consciousness, as intentional, is always a "surpassing" of itself, i.e. all consciousness transcends itself towards the (transcendent) object of which it is intentionally aware. Thus, as suggested by Leland,[497] pre-reflective consciousness's consciousness of itself, as non-positional in relation to itself, appears nonetheless to, as it were, "gesture indicatively" toward whatever the object is that the consciousness of which it is conscious is positionally consciousness. This "gesturing" appears to indicate "…an identity which is simultaneously an otherness."[498] It seems perfectly correct, therefore, to accept Sartre's claim that pre-reflective consciousness constitutes, in addition to a thetic awareness of its object, a non-positional, non-thetic consciousness of itself as a positional consciousness of its object.

5.4 The Decompression of Being

Being-in-itself, often referred to by Sartre as just "being," enjoys unmitigated self-coincidence and self-identity:

"…A is A means: A exists in the form of infinite compression, in an infinite density…[T]he in-itself is full of itself and it is impossible to imagine a more complete plentitude, a more

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[496] Leland 1997: 169.

[497] Leland 1997: 169.

[498] Leland 1997: 169.

perfect adequation of any content to its container: there is not the slightest emptiness in being, not the slightest fissure through which nothingness might slip."[499]

In contrast, being-for-itself is characterised as a pure lack, or an absence of self-identity ("it is what it is not" etc). The consequent and inevitably negative and nihilating nature of the interface between being-for-itself and being-in-itself is on occasion strikingly characterised by Sartre as the "*decompression*" of being.[500] On this account, being-for-itself constitutes, as it were, "the undoing of the in-itself,"[501] in that the tightly woven ("ontologically fused") indiscriminable and inseparable threads of difference and quality comprising undifferentiated being-in-itself are, as it were, forced apart and unravelled by the disruptive introduction of a disclosive negativity and differentiation into the world - into being - by consciousness.[502] As expressed by Sartre:

> "…all negation is determination…being is antecedent to nothingness and founds it. We must interpret this as meaning not only that being has logical priority over nothingness but also that, in concrete terms, it is from being that nothingness derives its efficacy. We expressed this by saying that nothingness haunts being."[503]

Given the sheer density or "compression" of being as Sartre describes it, there is no possibility of nothingness, as it were, "slipping in" or just "occurring." The so-called decompression of being, however, is not some kind of "process" or "activity" spasmodically performed by a detached "subject," by means of which the dissipation of the inert mass and profusion of undifferentiated being, a world of objects *in potentia*, is achieved "at a distance." Rather, being-for-itself envisaged as the decompression of being is seen not so much as a "modification" of the in-itself, but more as a disclosive "event" (or possibly even a "retreat," but see below) understood as a self-constituting, "upsurge" of consciousness amidst and within the implacable density of being.[504] In this context, it

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[499] BN: 123, my italics.

[500] See, e.g., BN: 123.

[501] Laycock 2012: 191.

[502] c.f. Laycock 2012: 191-192.

[503] BN: 50.

[504] c.f. Thompson 1994: 185-6.

is important to recall that for Sartre there is at the same time - from a somewhat paradoxical perspective - a mutual exclusivity between the for-itself and the in-itself, and that between them there is on the face of it no possibility of exchange:

> "…what is present to the knowing consciousness is being itself, and…the for-itself adds *nothing* to the in-itself, other than the very fact that there is [*il y ait*] an in-itself, i.e. the affirmative negation."[505]

Given the absolute positivity of being-in-itself there cannot be, for Sartre, the slightest possibility, in even an ideal sense, of any form of difference, referentiality, or any kind of "relational separation," within being.[506] As suggested above, the for-itself may be envisaged in metaphorical terms as a "hole" or "fissure" within being, and as such represents the possibility of meaningful disclosure, whereby objects, relations and states of affairs in the world are revealed as coherent and intelligible *via* the (negating) decompressive disclosure of undifferentiated being. Macann reads Sartre as suggesting that decompression, in the foregoing sense, is best understood as a kind of absence, or possibly a "retreat," and that this absence:

> "…in turn makes possible a certain presence, the presence of being to consciousness. Only through the nothingness of consciousness can being become present to itself *as consciousness*."[507]

What the foregoing highlights for us, even accounting for Sartre's occasional idiosyncratic means of expression, is that it still remains somewhat unclear what, exactly, is *philosophically* revealed here for us by means of this peculiar conceptual amalgam of the notion of unity and a mutual exclusivity expressed in decidedly ambivalent terms as a relationality between being-for-itself and being-in-itself. In other words, how are we to usefully make sense of this seeming dissonance within being

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[505] BN: 302.

[506] Macann 1993: 126.

[507] Macann 1993: 126-127, my italics.

itself, between being conceived, and contrasted, as for-itself *and* in-itself?[508] We have learnt that being-in-itself is characterised primarily in terms of absolute self-identity, whereas being-for-itself is seen as a pure translucency lacking all self-identity. Christiaens seeks to capture a sense of this fundamental relationality:

> "On the one hand the *en-soi* exists only on the edges of the *pour-soi*; on the other hand, the *pour-soi* is the 'neantization' of the *en-soi*, Becoming burning a hole in the massive texture of Being. The *en-soi* as such is never able to simply be *en-soi*, it is always being nothing-ed (*neantisé*); on the other hand, the *en-soi* is haunted by the *pour-soi*, the spectre of classical metaphysics (only Being is real etc.)."[509]

Christiaens' interpretation suggests that arguably[510] Sartre has a persistent, rather regrettable, tendency to deploy figures drawn from traditional metaphysics - sometimes in an apparently literal sense. It seems to us, however, that his reasoning is arguably far more nuanced than some commentators allege. He claims that fundamentally the for-itself is a form of self-apprehension, but that it actually apprehends itself as "no-thing," as uncaused and ungrounded. The seemingly infinite "compression" of being-in-itself, on the other hand, consequently, as Sartre puts it, entails (or, "requires" or perhaps even "needs") the decompressive, disclosive yet subversive, engagement of being-for-itself. As Laycock observes, for Sartre "being" is unintelligible, except as "…being-*for* that which is *for*-itself." In fact, prior to decompression there is no for-itself,[511] i.e. there is no "affirmation *of* self," as it were, in primordial being, no "…internal distantiation which would permit an aerial reflection *upon* self…", and hence, since self-hood in this sense is exclusively a product of reflection, there is, finally, "…no self at all."[512] As Sartre says, "…the for-itself corresponds therefore to a destruction and decompression of the in-itself."[513] Thus, being-for-itself

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[508] c.f. Christiaens 2011: 130.

[509] Christiaens 2011: 130.

[510] See, for example, Hartmann 1966.

[511] Laycock 1994: 45.

[512] Laycock 1994: 45.

[513] BN: 135-136.

is, as Laycock goes on to claim, in itself the very decompression of being, i.e. it is *in itself* the differentiation and disclosure of an intelligible world and of a coherent self-ness.[514] As such, decompression does not describe the dissipation nor the "diminishment" of undifferentiated being-in-itself, but refers rather to the negating, *non-modifying*, disclosure of the world, of being (in-itself*).[515] Being-in-itself is not as such, however, an "immanence" because, as Sartre puts it, immanence is, after all, itself only a relation.[516]

In short, the for-itself represents the possibility by disclosure of an intelligible world. As "no-thing-ness" the for-itself is conceived as an event of inherently "negative contextualisation,"[517] as the unconcealment and differentiation of the in-itself, and hence as the possibility of a meaningful world. Disclosedness so understood, as a necessarily significant, negative event, for Sartre grounds and "allows" self-hood itself[518] - although understood minimally, always in terms of the pre-reflective *cogito*. We would suggest that Sartre's account of the revealing of a world in precisely these terms seems to imply, by default as it were, a provisional conception of the subjective field, the "self," as the decompressive, nihilating event *we are*. As expressed by Laycock: "The for-itself is not the spectator of progressively atomised detail, but is rather the very exhalation of the in-itself. It is not the witness of decompression, *but decompression itself*."[519]

5.5 Figure and Ground

In *Being & Nothingness* Sartre argues that in a fundamental sense all determination is a negation. His reasoning behind this claim turns out to be somewhat elaborate, and is perhaps best prefaced by the following passage - which we shall give in full in view of its significance for us:

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[514] Laycock 1994: 46.

[515] c.f. Thompson 1994: 185.

[516] BN: 27.

[517] See chapter 3.

[518] Laycock 2012: 85.

[519] Laycock 2012: 86, my italics.

"…the *this* is disclosed as a *this* by the 'withdrawal into the ground of the world' of all the other *thises*; its determination - which is at the origin of all determinations - is negation. We should be clear that this negation - seen from the side of the *this* - is wholly ideal. It adds nothing to being, and subtracts nothing from it. The being that is regarded as *this* is what it is, and does not stop being it; it does not become. As such, it cannot be outside itself within the whole, as a structure of the whole, and neither can it be outside itself within the whole, in order to negate, in relation to itself, its identity with the whole. Negation can arrive at the *this* only through a being that has to be presence to the whole of being and, at the same time, to the *this* - i.e. an ecstatic being. And as it leaves the *this* intact as a being-in-itself, as it does not perform any real synthesis of all the *thises* as a totality, the constitutive negation of the *this* is a negation whose type is *external*; the relation of the *this* to the whole is a relation of externality. Thus we see determination appearing as an external negation that is correlative to the internal, radical and ecstatic negation that I am. This explains the ambiguous character of the world, which is disclosed at the same time as a synthetic totality and as a purely additive collection of all the *thises*. Indeed, to the extent that the world is a totality disposed as what the for-itself has radically to be its own nothingness against, the world presents itself as an undifferentiated syncretism. But insofar as this radical nihilation is always beyond some concrete and present nihilation, the world appears to be always on the point of opening up like a box, in order to allow one or several *thises* to appear that already were, within the ground's lack of differentiation, what they are now, as a differentiated figure."[520]

Despite some awkward moments, the gist of this passage is clear and unambiguously portrays consciousness as intrinsically an event of disclosure. The for-itself is envisaged by Sartre as essentially arising in terms of a world *as disclosed* (i.e. as a horizon of sense and referentiality) and, *via* projective understanding, the for-itself unerringly gravitates (Heidegger might say, "insists"[521])

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[520] BN: 259-260.

[521] See chapter 4.

toward significant and meaningful objects, relations and states of affairs as encountered in the world - a world that, in light of our projected concerns, purposes and possibilities, is *already* experienced as intelligible. In the quasi-Gestaltian terms Sartre occasionally makes use of, entities unconcealed within the world are given as intelligible, figural elements always against a ground or horizon *in terms of which* the entity, as given, may be determined:

> "…we must observe that in perception a figure is always constituted against a ground. No object, or group of objects, is particularly earmarked to organise itself as either ground or figure: it all depends on the direction of my attention…each element in the room - person, table, chair - tries to separate itself, to detach itself against the ground constituted by the totality of the other objects, and then collapses back into that undifferentiated ground, and is diluted within it."[522]

Thus, for Sartre, our disclosing, conceived as the "decompressive" differentiation and articulation for us of beings in the world, necessarily occurs against, and by virtue of, the ground itself. It is important to note, however, that this "coming-into-view" *from* the ground *into* saliency, contrasts directly with the opposition, or confrontation, of one "self-sufficient" entity against or relative to another. As Sartre explains, the constitution of one figure in relation to the appearance of another is "the disintegration of the other," in the same way that, in perception, we actively constitute one object as the figure by means of "repelling" the other. This relegation of the "secondary" object, however, means that "…it [may] become the ground and *vice versa*."[523]

Sartre may be seen to frequently fall back on a terminology explicitly drawn from Gestaltian theories of perception. In fact, he appears especially drawn to Gestalt theory's "figure-ground" model of perception, which he believes enables him to more efficiently elaborate aspects of disclosure conceived as a process of contextualisation.[524] This particular feature of Sartre's methodology is seldom addressed in the literature - despite its obvious relevance to his analysis of

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[522] BN: 41.

[523] BN: 55.

[524] Martin 2002: 49.

human experience. As should be evident from the passage given above, the influence of Gestalt theory unquestionably informs Sartre's belief that the specific, singular *this* can be disclosed as *this* only on, or against, the ground or, as he puts it, the presence of "all being." He is perfectly willing to admit the debt: "This original relation between the whole and the *this* is at the source of the relation, illuminated by *Gestalttheorie*, between the ground and the figure."[525]

In view of the decompressive, nihilative nature of the "upsurge" of the for-itself amidst being-in-itself, a *this* can only appear against or in terms of the ground - the intra-referential totality of being - insofar as "…the for-itself is its radical and syncretic negation."[526] The suggestion here is that there is a significant possibility that the *this* becomes, as it were, "diluted" or "muted" if it is apprehended in conjunction with another *this*, or other *thises*, against a field of "not yet differentiated" being. It seems that the revealing of *this* - understood as the differentiation and disclosure of a being as a singular entity contextualised in terms of a field, a horizon, of undifferentiated being - has no permanence. The entity as disclosed is not indefinitely sustained - Sartre makes clear that the act of disclosure "…does not keep it from falling back into the shadows."[527] In other words, from the moment intentional consciousness "releases" *X*, now disclosed *as X*, this figure is inevitably re-absorbed or vanishes (Heidegger might say, is "re-concealed") into the undifferentiated ground from which consciousness, by negation, retrieved it. The horizon of significance and sense in terms of which the articulated figure achieves intelligibility may therefore remain less- (or un-) differentiated as a "segregated whole" - i.e., a *Gestalt*. In these respects Gestalt theory does appear to uniquely and usefully lend itself to phenomenological description, especially in that, as expressed by Köhler, the contents of particular areas of the visual field "…'belong together' as circumscribed units from which their surroundings are excluded."[528]

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[525] BN: 258.

[526] BN: 258.

[527] Sartre 2010b: 70.

[528] Köhler 1970: 137.

We should note that, in this connection it is surely salutary, as Morris observes,[529] that although Gestalt psychology's empirical findings clearly mirror Husserl's horizonal analysis of objects of perception and awareness, it remains the case that the conceptual framework of Gestalt psychology - especially in light of its significance for Sartre's phenomenological analysis of experience - is largely ignored by most commentators.[530] In any event, although Sartre does not avoid what he sees as entirely warranted criticism of certain aspects of Gestalt analysis, there does nevertheless appear to be an undeniable correspondence between a broadly phenomenological approach to the question of experience and certain key features of Gestalt description, especially in relation to the structure of apprehension. Notably, Morris makes the telling observation that clearly some of the terminology which enters into these Gestalt descriptions clearly "…captures something phenomenologically important."[531] For example, Sartre says at one point:

> "…we must observe that in perception a figure is always constituted against a ground. No object, or group of objects, is particularly earmarked to organise itself as either ground or figure: it all depends on the direction of my attention…the ground is something that we see only 'in addition'; it is the object of a purely marginal attention."[532]

Any act of consciousness is never exclusively restricted to just the object of my attention. It must incorporate, though *not* as some kind of supplementary, additional act of consciousness, a non-thetic awareness of the object's referential context or background - an environment that Husserl referred to as the "horizon" of the object. Every thetic, positional consciousness of *X* must necessarily be at the same time, and as a moment of the same act, a non-thetic, non-positional consciousness of *X*'s background - its field or horizon of sense and meaning. Sartre's occasional use of ideas drawn from Gestalt theory in his account of the for-itself's disclosive engagement with and in the world is clearly relevant to our investigation. We shall therefore consider in the next chapter the possibility

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[529] Morris 2008: 120.

[530] Morris 2008: 122n.

[531] Morris 2008: 111, my italics.

[532] BN: 41-42.

that this represents a significant point of convergence between Sartre's views concerning the question of disclosure and Heidegger's equivalent conceptualisation of Dasein as disclosive being-in-the-world. As we shall see, there is an evident and to date largely unexplored relation between certain aspects of the Gestaltian theory of perception as employed specifically by Sartre and the distinction, yet the close relation, Heidegger marks out between the uncovering of the individual, discrete entity against and always in terms of the disclosure of its background horizonal context.

5.6 Negation

Sartre believes that in becoming aware of the *this* consciousness relegates to the background, or negates (or perhaps in Heidegger's terms, "conceals"[533]), the remainder of the world. The intentional object, or combination of objects (physical or ideal), is meaningfully situated as we have seen in reference to the total ground. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Sartre's use of Gestaltian conceptuality throughout his interpretation of human perception and disclosedness is not unconditional. He emphatically rejects in particular the suggestion that the actual "mechanics" of intelligible apprehension as thus accounted for constitutes a kind of "causal explanation." The emergence of a figure, Sartre suggests, is actually dependent on a *spontaneous* movement of consciousness, and, as Cumming observes, by recognising what this figure is, "…consciousness transcends whatever circumstances might be alleged to explain its occurrence as a response to their stimulus."[534] In fact, Sartre's structural analysis of being-for-itself relies essentially on a recognition of its reflexivity, at the heart of which lies his account of determination and disclosure as an "event" of fundamental negation. Insofar as *I* am conscious of *this* object *now*, the object as apprehended must refer "contextually" (or fail to refer) to recent, related objects or states of consciousness I become aware of in relation to my projects, purposes and possibilities. As expressed by Fell:

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[533] See chapter 4.

[534] Cumming 2003: 24.

> "It is as if the temporal passage of the for-itself were a narrow beam of light that traces a path across dark ground where entities wait to be illuminated…[t]his beam of light can centre on *this* only on condition that it does not illuminate everything."[535]

As we saw previously noted, the impossibility of equivalent and simultaneous coherent intentional awareness of all the profiles and perspectives that together comprise the given object, relation or state of affairs means that intentional consciousness is necessarily and inherently selective[536] - and therefore temporal. Conscious engagement with the world is on occasion described by Sartre as essentially "disruptive," by which he means it constitutes a limitation or constraining by negation of the totality. At the same time, however, he recognises that the very act of contextualisation by consciousness is crucially an implicit and largely unacknowledged admission and acceptance of the referential totality itself. Otherwise put, "disruption" as Sartre employs the term here indicates an evanescent, temporal event of consciousness, insofar as what is illuminated or disclosed unceasingly lapses back into darkness or undifferentiated being-in-itself, and *vice versa*. Fell helpfully captures the sense here:

> "All that remains constant is the path or way of the light (consciousness) and the absent-presence of what is in darkness (being-in-itself). This continuous light is *not* what it illuminates but is simply the self-effacing condition of things appearing."[537]

We cannot in the present study engage in the vexed question of whether Sartre's allegiance lies primarily with a form of idealism or realism. We will, however, make the single observation that, taking due account of the view expressed in certain recent commentary that Sartre arguably tends toward a form of transcendental idealism,[538] it seems we would be clearly justified in claiming that, at the least, he evidently understands empirical reality as experienced to be necessarily subsidised and construed by an *a priori* contribution of subjectivity.[539] The decompressive engagement of

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[535] Fell 1979: 74.

[536] See our discussion of disclosedness as a process of contextualisation in chapter 3.

[537] Fell 1979: 74.

[538] e.g. Gardner 2009: 74.

[539] See Gardner 2009: 73-75.

consciousness with the amorphous, undifferentiated fabric of "reality" must imply, we would suggest, an interrogative and "interventionist" negative relation. If this reading is correct, it would follow that, for Sartre, the possibility of what we have referred to as a "self-constitution" within, and articulating, the event of disclosedness itself, correlates unambiguously with the revealing of a differentiated, intelligibly structured world.

For Sartre, meaningful appearance occurs exclusively in terms of the fundamentally negative and nihilating nature of consciousness. The determination and disclosure of objects, relations and states of affairs is envisaged as the activity of consciousness understood as a negative presence (or, perhaps more precisely, an absence/presence - but see on) and as a "self-induced" lack of being, necessarily differentiating itself, by disclosing (negatively) what it is not. In complete contrast to the sheer self-coincidence of being-in-itself, the for-itself, which is "…as far removed as possible from a substance and from the in-itself,"[540] is conceived as its own nihilation. Crucially, therefore, it is the *very relation* of for-itself to in-itself which constitutes the "…being that enters into that relation."[541] This does not mean that in traditionally idealist terms consciousness in any sense is creating or constructing the in-itself, but rather that, in the very act of "throwing into relief" or unconcealing being (in-itself), the for-itself can be understood as an ever recurrent possibility of self-constitution. Sartre is quite unequivocal: "The for-itself…produces itself from the very beginning on the foundation of a relation to the in-itself."[542] It is important we are clear about the reference to "relation" in this context. The term appears to indicate the disclosive engagement of consciousness toward and within the world, insofar as consciousness is fundamentally a pure intentionality. On this basis, Sartre claims, it can only be through whatever it is consciousness of that consciousness can distinguish itself, or, as he says, "…be a consciousness (of) self."[543]

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[540] BN: 245.

[541] BN: 245.

[542] BN: 245.

[543] BN: 246.

Conceived as self-identical, being-in-itself can never by itself be or constitute a *presence to*_____, and "being-present" in this relational sense is only possible as an ecstatic mode of the for-itself. The structure of "presence" for consciousness is essentially "not-being," insofar as presence involves a radical negation, i.e. it is always and inevitably a presence to something consciousness is not: "…what is present to me is not me."[544] Thus, it is *via* the for-itself that negation (as an event of disclosure) comes into the world, although not in the apophantic form of a judgemental or propositional denial of identity between consciousness and its object, but rather in the sense that the for-itself is forever constituting itself, through "…original negation…,"[545] i.e. as *not being* its object. At the same time, disclosedness does not describe a "relation" which somehow connects two detached, substantial entities, nor as some kind of quality or property attaching to human-reality. Rather, in foundational terms, disclosedness so understood articulates the for-itself's very being, in that "…the for-itself has its being to be, in making itself not be a specific being to which it is present."[546] In his complex analysis of the reflective structures of consciousness, Sartre clearly wants us to see that the for-itself can "exist" only in the mode of a reflection that gets reflected as not being a specific being.[547] As he says:

> "The reflected becomes qualified outside, alongside some specific being, as *not being* that
>
> being…that is precisely what 'to be conscious *of* something' means."[548]

Sartre's conception of consciousness as a "no-thing-ness," which has a central role in *Being & Nothingness*, is pre-figured in some of his earlier philosophic works. For instance, in *The Transcendence of the Ego* he suggests that:

> "The transcendental field, purified of all egological structure…in one sense…is a nothing,
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> since all physical, psycho-physical and psychical objects, all truths, and all values are

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[544] BN: 246.

[545] BN: 248.

[546] BN: 248.

[547] c.f. BN: 248.

[548] BN: 249.

outside it, since the *me* has, for its part, ceased to be part of it. But this nothing is everything

because it is the consciousness of all these objects."[549]

Such views are transferred into *Being & Nothingness*, where Sartre characterises the structures of consciousness ("self-conscious being") as, in the final analysis, a kind of "non-being."[550] In the latter work the for-itself presented as a "no-thing-ness" becomes precisely an ontological determination:

"Nothingness is the putting into question of being by being: that precisely is consciousness, or the for-itself. It is an absolute event that is brought to being through being, and which - without having any being - is constantly maintained by being."[551]

It is only possible for an object, relation or state of affairs (a "*this*") to be intelligibly disclosed (for it to purposefully make sense) within an intra-referential field or horizon of significance and sense comprising all of being. Thus, in order for *this* to be disclosed as an affirmable and singular presence, always within this horizon of potentiality, being-for-itself must already be, as it were, a necessarily "actualising presence" toward and for its given object. The implication seems to be that it is the co-givenness and simultaneity of disclosedness and disclosive self-presence which "bestows," for Sartre always by negation, meaning on the world. Although, but also because, the totality of being (the world) is encountered as a matrix of ontological relations, the differentiation and revealing of this plurality, of the whole, is only possible in terms of a focused, "contextualising" apprehension of *this*. As Sartre puts it, the presence of consciousness to the world can only be actualised through its synchronous presence to discrete objects, relations or states of affairs, conceived as comprising categorial structures, relations and combinations. Conversely, the presence of consciousness to the particular thing "…can be actualised only against the ground of a presence to the world."[552] In these terms, the projectively and meaningfully disclosed world represents a

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[549] TE: 43.

[550] Aquila 1977: 167-186.

[551] BN: 129.

[552] BN: 256.

ground of possibility for each singular, discriminative awareness, and hence it can only be against this ground that, as presence to the world in the foregoing sense, individual perception becomes possible and may be articulated at all.

It is no surprise that aspects of Sartre's account of being-for-itself interpreted as an event of self and world disclosure are in the literature more often than not considered problematic. For example, it appears to trouble some commentators that the disclosure of an *all* results, according to Sartre, in a manifold of differentiated *thises*. We have already noted Sartre's claim that consciousness, conceived as a single, intentional movement, is always constituting itself as "…*everything* that is not being…being stands before it as *everything* that it is not."[553] In experiential terms, the world is constituted for us *as* world because, as Sartre expresses it, consciousness conceived as a "de-totalised" totality - i.e. as an intrinsic unity which is in itself the whole of negation - construes (by negation) the world as an intelligible totality. For Sartre, consciousness of the world as a totality implies that the for-itself is necessarily aware of itself, but as a "de-totalised totality" - and it is this movement in consciousness that reveals the world (or "being") as in itself a whole. "Totality" in the sense used here refers to an amalgam of *thises* which consciousness must, as it were, surpass (or, perhaps more precisely, "ignore") in order to apprehend the very totality itself. In simpler terms, it is exclusively through conscious experience that an intelligible world is disclosed, and it is through the for-itself "…that the meaning of being appears."[554] Sartre emphasises that the process or event he describes as the "totalising of being" (of the world), "adds nothing to being" but merely represents the possibility of a revealing of being as such. The intentional, horizonal disclosure of being does not affect or condition being in any way "…any more than my act of counting *two* cups on the table impinges on either cup in its existence or in its nature."[555] In the same way, neither does disclosure so envisaged imply any modification of consciousness itself. For Sartre, it is through the

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[553] BN: 256.

[554] BN: 257.

[555] BN: 257.

no-thing-ness we are, through our inherently nihilating and negative engagements, that the world becomes world. Put another way, consciousness as a decompressive event disrupts and "unravels" the non-relational density of being-in-itself, and so "brings to light" the intelligibility of *this*, over against, yet always in relation to, *that*. Sartre claims that this dynamic structure can only mean that: "…this nothingness is *not* anything, other than human-reality grasping itself as excluded from being and as constantly beyond being, in commerce with nothing."[556]

The unconcealment of *this* implies that our focus on this specific disclosive negation brings with it, as part of the same movement, a recession and "reabsorption" (perhaps, a diminishment) of other possible negations. Sartre is suggesting here that there is consequently a momentary suppression of all extraneous, possible projective disclosures, back into the undifferentiated ground of being-in-itself. The "withdrawal," or perhaps we might say with Heidegger, the "concealment,"[557] of other as yet "unrealised" and un-differentiated, *thises* "…into the ground of the world…" constitutes, so Sartre would claim, *the* essential condition for the potential disclosure of *this* as *this*. Thus, insofar as the determination of *this* is a self-negation,[558] then the being that I presently *am not*,

> "…insofar as it appears against the ground of the totality of being, is the *this*. *This* - i.e. what presently I am not, insofar as I have nothing in being to be - is what is disclosed against the undifferentiated ground of being, in order to acquaint me with the concrete negation that I have to be, against the totalising ground of my negations."[559]

In short, for Sartre consciousness forever determines itself *via* the concrete, disclosive negation of "*this*." In a very particular sense, therefore, this "negation of negation"[560] is, finally, *what I am*.

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[556] BN: 257, my italics.

[557] See chapter 4.

[558] c.f. BN: 258.

[559] BN: 258.

[560] BN: 259.

5.7 The *Me*

As we shall shortly consider, Sartre's account of the reflexive structures of consciousness now allows for, and is found to be grounded in, an inherently disclosive "ipseity," a personalised dimension of being-for-itself, which as Sartre himself admits implies that it now becomes possible to conceive of the for-itself as an "instantiation" of selfhood.[561] Before directly addressing this interpretation of subjectivity or "self-ness," however, we must first briefly examine Sartre's account of the phenomenon of the so-called psycho-physical, empirical ego, or "*me*," which in his *The Transcendence of the Ego* is characterised as exclusively a product of (and for) reflective consciousness.

In Sartre's earliest philosophical works pre-reflective and reflective consciousness are determined as two distinct dimensions or structural levels of consciousness. In *Being & Nothingness*, however, they are construed in increasingly relational terms, and are given as alternate forms of one and the same reflexive relation.[562] As we have previously observed, Sartre is concerned to clarify the complex, correlative relation between pre-reflective, non-positional self-consciousness, and reflective consciousness. The single sub-structure which grounds his analysis of this relationality is none other than pre-reflective self-consciousness itself conceived as a non-thetic, non-objectifying consciousness *of* positional consciousness. The dynamics of reflexivity so presented, however, quite naturally prompt us to ask what bearing this interplay between the various layers or "tiers" of reflection might have, in strictly phenomenological terms, on the question of "self-hood" itself - particularly in view of Sartre's earlier conclusions in *The Transcendence of the Ego* regarding the seemingly self-sufficient cohesion and unity of an "ego-less" consciousness.[563] His analysis of reflexivity establishes that pre-reflective self-consciousness, as a primal, non-positional consciousness of objectual consciousness, and in this sense a "*self*-consciousness," is in

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[561] BN: 161.

[562] Gardner 2009: 90.

[563] See chapter 2.

actuality ego-less. An ego, or an "*I*," breaks surface only on those occasions when we distance ourselves from, or objectify, experience, for example when we engage in reflection. The result is not "*I*-consciousness" as such in any formal, or even a colloquial sense, but rather simply reflective consciousness of "*me*." The ego which thus emerges is not the subject of reflection, but in fact its object. For Sartre, there is no act of reflective consciousness which does not in some sense betoken the objectual apparition of an empirical, psycho-physical ego - a "*me*" - within the field of reflected consciousness.[564] In anticipation of his demonstration that an ego, as a supposed ground of possibility for experiential unity and coherence, is not present within consciousness either formally or materially[565] he marks out a distinction between the ego conceived as "*I*" (what is not formally in consciousness) and as "*me*" (what is not materially in consciousness). Sartre's (formal) *I* appears to occupy a logical space more or less equivalent to Kant's transcendental unity of apperception,[566] conceived in analogous terms as a condition of possibility for experience and as a synthetic presence or activity behind or within consciousness, around which all experience coheres as "mine." Given the superfluity of a transcendental *I* in precisely this sense, Sartre suggests it is instead the psycho-physical sense of "*me*," that we all share, which we unquestioningly believe to "stand behind" or "ground," and thus unify, conscious experience.[567] Hence, basic pre-reflective consciousness is in itself utterly impersonal, and as such cannot support a transcendental *self* - or indeed, in any sense, an "it-*self*."

Sartre claims that the ego, or the "*me*," although the product of reflective activity, nevertheless appears to and for consciousness as a seemingly transcendent thing-in-itself. The "*me*," which is positionally apprehended as an object by and for reflective consciousness, *appears* to us to be a substantial, durable and "dimensional" presence, despite its fundamental dependency and contingency. In the former sense it shows itself as an "immanence," around which experience

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[564] c.f. Moati 2016: 456.

[565] See TE: 1.

[566] See Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant 1998).

[567] Sherman 2008: 167.

becomes possible and meaningfully coheres. As constituted by, and therefore an object for, reflective consciousness, however, the ego does not share in the translucent nature of consciousness, but rather comprises the opacity and "density" of being-in-itself. As expressed by Sartre:

> "…by hypostasising the for-itself's reflected-being into an in-itself, we freeze and destroy the movement of reflection on the self…the relation of reflection has been transformed into a simple centripetal relation whose centre, moreover, is an opaque node."[568]

The distinction in *Being & Nothingness* between pre-reflective "self-hood" understood as a totality and the ego as a reflected construct is crucial. As Sartre says, the presence in reflection of a psycho-physical "*me*" is in any event "only the *sign* of a personality,"[569] and as such does not confer personal existence on human being. Rather, it is as a "reflected construct" the provisional, contingent "*I*" we present to ourselves and the world, and which in an everyday sense navigate the world in terms of. As Catalano puts it: "This ego *cannot be* consciousness because it is present to consciousness *as an object to be studied* and does not have the perfect translucency of consciousness."[570]

From the perspective of our everyday experience Sartre is in no doubt that the ego is "real."[571] A clue as to what he means by the "reality" of the ego in this context may be found in the latter sections of his *Transcendence of the Ego*, where we encounter his description, often overlooked in the commentary, of the constitution and "maintenance" of the psycho-physical "*me*" by and for reflective consciousness, specifically in terms of its relation to our psychic states, actions and qualities.[572] On the basis of typically unchallenged assumptions fundamental to main-stream psychological theory, the structure and dynamics of our so-called "inner life" are mapped and explained largely in terms of an imposed coherence. Such compartmentalisation and ordering of our recurring patterns and persistent tendencies grants a provisionally intelligible form to the complex

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[568] BN: 160.

[569] BN: 160.

[570] Catalano 1980: 109, my italics.

[571] c.f. Barnes 1992: 29.

[572] Webber 2009: 23.

"rhythms" of behaviour which we normally apprehend - reflectively - within the ebb and flow of experience. In this way all past experience and conscious activity, conceived as cyclical patterns and responses, becomes, as it were, transmuted into psychological categories which are normally "…thought to emanate from the ever-flowing spring of the ego…,"[573] and as such are believed to have their source in, and therefore to instantiate, the ego.[574] They are not, however, seen as identical with, but rather as given *in* and *by* - and therefore to extend beyond - the instantaneous consciousness we have of them.[575] Thus, the "ego" is recognised as primary and originary, i.e. it is believed to constitute the substantive and causal source of our personality and character, of our overall "self-ness." In other words, the ego is the apparent "…source of states, instantiated in particular activities."[576] Sartre argues that this commonplace understanding in fact "…presents conscious experience *the wrong way round*…,"[577] by reversing the directional arrow of production. On his view, both our everyday understanding and psychological theory are prone to what amounts to the same "metaphysical illusion": both interpret the so-called "inner dynamic" of production incorrectly. It is assumed I come to *know* my various states and qualities (my personality) *via* consciousness, and that these states and qualities consequently determine my consciousness at it is. Sartre explains:

> "…the Ego is an object apprehended but also *constituted* by reflective knowledge. It is a virtual locus of unity, and consciousness constitutes it as going in *completely the reverse direction* from that followed by real production; what is *really* first is consciousness, through which are constituted states, then, through these, the Ego. But, as the order is reversed by a consciousness that imprisons itself in the World in order to flee from itself, consciousnesses are given as emanating from states, and states as produced by the Ego."[578]

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[573] Hatzimoysis 2011: 37.

[574] Hatzimoysis 2011: 37.

[575] c.f. Gardner 2009: 16.

[576] Hatzimoysis 2011: 37.

[577] Hatzimoysis 2011: 37.

[578] TE: 34-35.

The so-called common sense *and* the psychological model of production maintain their traction so effectively and consistently, Gardner suggests, because they each provide a means of convincingly explaining, analysing and elucidating our behaviours, our traits, responses and so forth (i.e., our "personality") as determined by, and as expressive of, a self conceived as a cause and a "… substratum of qualities."[579] In fact, for Sartre, there is nothing, no "*I*" of reflection, in which - as subject - states and qualities might inhere.[580]

5.8 The Circuit of Ipseity

The question of self-hood is addressed by Sartre in a more fundamental and nuanced way in *Being & Nothingness*. We have already noted that, in a development of the position he had previously adopted in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre now seeks in the former work to "personalise" the reflexive structures of consciousness by arguing that these very structures exemplify what he comes to refer to as an "instantiation" of "self-ness." Following his preliminary investigation into the origins of negation and lack in our disclosive experience of the world, Sartre now addresses the phenomenon of the "self-presence" of the for-itself, and to do so re-opens[581] the question of the structure and nature of pre-reflective self-consciousness. He reminds us that, inherent in "…the law of the pre-reflective *cogito*,"[582] every conscious relation to an object can be seen, as it were, to "turn back on itself," i.e. a consciousness of *X* necessarily signifies a consciousness of consciousness of *X*. To the extent that we are conscious of *X* determinately (not merely abstractly or theoretically) we are conscious of *X* in a *given mode* - for example, we are conscious of *X* in or with, say, fear, or conscious of *X* as an object of, say, hatred or belief, recalling from the introduction to *Being & Nothingness* that, "…every knowing consciousness can only be knowledge of its object."[583] What

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[579] See Gardner 2009: 16.

[580] Gardner 2009: 17.

[581] At BN: 123-129.

[582] BN: 116.

[583] BN: 10.

Sartre is attempting to establish is a phenomenologically reliable exposition of the basic structures and dynamics of consciousness *from its own perspective*, or, as he says, "in its own terms":

> "…the objective existence of the reflection-reflecting structure obliges us…to conceive of a mode of being different from the in-itself: not a unity that contains a duality, not a synthesis that surpasses and raises up the abstract moments of thesis and antithesis, but a duality that *is* a unity, a reflection that *is* its own reflecting."[584]

Sartre goes on to elucidate that structure in terms of which the subject "circles back" to itself across the world of appearances by introducing his idea of the *circuit of ipseity*, which he characterises as a surpassing of the totality of being in order for the subject to (impossibly) attain an identity with itself. This mode of being of the for-itself, understood as the "disclosure of possibility" and as a projective and disclosive engagement with the world, is what in fact constitutes the circuit of ipseity:[585]

> "I am a pure consciousness *of* things, and the things, caught within the circuit of my ipseity, offer me their potentialities as a response to my non-thetic consciousness (of) my own possibilities."[586]

The eventual culmination of Sartre's analysis of the selfness of consciousness, which has led him to this point, expressed in terms which often reflect Heidegger's recognition of the inherent correlation between Dasein and disclosedness, is that without ipseity (without selfness) there would be no world, and that without the world there would be no ipseity.[587] This relation of the for-itself with the possible (i.e. for Sartre, the selfness) *which it is* is in itself only possible through, and yet fundamentally grounds, the disclosure of an intelligible world - a relation which, as Sartre puts it, has the form of a circling back, i.e. a *circuit* of selfness. This entire structure, as we shall see, entails

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[584] BN: 125.

[585] Baiasu 2011: 262n27.

[586] BN: 355.

[587] c.f. BN:161.

a profound dependence between being-for-itself and the world *as meaningfully disclosed*. It is in this very reciprocity that reality itself is ultimately grounded:

> "The world (is) mine because it is haunted by possibles, of which the possible [acts of] consciousness (of) self that *I am* are conscious, and it is these possibles as such that give the world its unity and its meaning as a world."[588]

Sartre prefaces his account of the circuit of ipseity[589] with a reminder of his earlier thesis that consciousness, in the absence of a transcendental ego, is nevertheless entirely coherent and unitary. As the so-called "unifying pole" of conscious experience, the empirical, psycho-physical ego - as discussed above - appears as either object ("*me*"), in the world "like any other object," and as such accessible for study, or as subject ("*I*") of my reflective consciousness. Given that consciousness, for Sartre, is a pure emptiness and translucency it cannot contain, nor in any sense constitute, the sheer "opacity" of being-in-itself. Thus, a central thesis of *The Transcendence of the Ego* is that pre-reflective self-consciousness, although non-thetically always self-aware, remains impersonal - or more precisely, and perhaps in anticipation of later developments, "pre-personal."[590] In *Being & Nothingness* Sartre argues that a transcendental ego could not be "of the nature of consciousness" (in the mode of being of the "*I*") in so far as the opacity of a "self" conceived in these terms as being-in-itself could only critically compromise and subvert the unmitigated translucency of consciousness.[591] As we noted, the "*I*" is not somehow "brought into existence" by our becoming conscious of it; rather, the "*I*" is always given as "…*having been* there first."[592] It therefore appears, convincingly yet misleadingly, as an apparently dimensional entity which might only be comprehensively disclosed, if ever, over time. In that the ego actually only appears to consciousness as an object out in the world, it is in this sense transcendent, as all objects of consciousness must be.

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[588] BN: 161.

[589] BN: 159.

[590] TE: 5.

[591] See Flynn 2014: 193.

[592] BN: 159.

Adjusting his earlier conclusions, Sartre now argues that it would, however, be fundamentally mistaken to conclude that thereby consciousness remains an irreversibly "impersonal contemplation."

We should recall in this context that the non-relational complete self-identity of being-in-itself prevents us from affirming, in any sense, that "it is *it-self*."[593] For the same reasons, we cannot say of the "*I*" (which as being-in-itself is not, formally or otherwise, a component or content of consciousness) that it is its "own self," or even that it is an it-*self*: it is merely the constituted, contingent, objectual "*me*" of reflective consciousness. Because of our tendency to hypostasise what he refers to as the for-itself's "reflected-being" into an in-itself, Sartre observes, we therefore "freeze and destroy" the movement of reflection on the self. In this sense consciousness comes to recognise the ego as its own self, although in reality the ego "…no longer refer[s] to anything…,"[594] insofar as reflexivity so understood has become a "centripetal relation" - the centre of which is pure opacity. Given, therefore, that in this sense no self or "it-self" "inhabits" consciousness, Sartre urges us to see that consciousness - from the moment of its "arising" - is in fact always and inevitably *making itself* personal, "…through the pure nihilating movement of reflection."[595]

In order to advance his brief yet dense analysis of the nature of ipseity, Sartre re-visits his earlier thesis that consciousness is in a sense determined by the *possible*, by its projected possibilities and purposes. The possible that, in this very specific sense, "I am" (in a manner very close to Heidegger's account of understanding as fundamentally projective[596]) is characterised somewhat paradoxically by Sartre as a "presence-absence," insofar as the possible (that I am) is *not* a presence for consciousness, in the way, say, reflection is in relation to reflecting. In direct contrast to the idea of a first or primary aspect of the person, understood as a pure presence to itself, Sartre now opens

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[593] BN: 160.

[594] BN: 160.

[595] BN: 160.

[596] See chapter 6.

up the possibility of a "second aspect" of the person, specifically characterised by him in the foregoing sense in terms of "lack" or "absence." Indeed, this proposed "second aspect" of the person, Onof suggests, is evidently intended to correspond in particular "…with Heidegger's… notion [that] 'selfness' essentially involves the world."[597] Thus, specifically in light of Heidegger's account of Dasein as "being-in-the-world," Sartre's more lateral approach, expressed in terms of the "second aspect" of the person, involves the idea that "selfness," envisaged as essentially the projective disclosure - by negation and absence - of a significant world, is self-disclosive *precisely in terms of that relationship*. The "possible," understood as "consciousness-reflected-on," determines consciousness as a lack,[598] in contrast to the immediacy and self-presence of pre-reflective consciousness. It is in this sense that the possible which "I am" is not "…pure presence to the for-itself…but is a *presence-absence*."[599] The point here appears to be that "selfness" itself consists in my relation to this ideal entity, insofar as, in Gardner's terms, "…it is present to me as absent, an absent-presence."[600] Consequently, the subject appears to be always, as it were, dislocated - in a constant state of being "referred on" (*renvoyé*), beyond its immediate grasp of itself. Consequently this structure suggests that "…the existence of referral [is] the structure of the for-itself's being."[601] As Sartre expresses it, the for-itself is in a sense always "over there," beyond its own grasp, somewhere in the "distance of possibilities." Hence, the essential "opening up" and clarifying of the notion of ipseity and person-hood enables us to see that what the subject *is* actually "lies over there" - as a fundamental lack, or negation, or, perhaps more exactly, a "not yet."

Sartre's conception of subjectivity as essentially a disclosive projection, toward an "ideal self" *via* disclosure of a meaningful world *in these terms*, is central to our primary thesis. Accordingly, in the next chapter we shall critically assess what we maintain are moments of significant convergence between Sartre's analysis of the subjective field in *Being & Nothingness*

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[597] Onof 2013: 41.

[598] See our discussion of disclosure as negation, above.

[599] BN: 160.

[600] Gardner 2009: 96.

[601] BN: 160.

and the notion of the disclosedness of Dasein as encountered in Heidegger's *Being & Time*. As we shall see, Sartre's account of the structural dynamics underlying the realisation of the fundamental ipseity of consciousness not only appears to significantly reflect aspects of Heidegger's characterisation of Dasein as, in itself, a projective disclosedness, but also significantly augments , form a strictly phenomenological perspective, our understanding of the subjective field so conceived. We must not overlook, however, that as Catalano reminds us, although in this context "ideal self" is taken to refer to how pre-reflective awareness involves an awareness of ourselves as "…an 'ideal' or 'total' self … this 'total' self is neither an ideal to be accomplished nor an object to be studied."[602] In this regard, toward the conclusion of his account of ipseity, Sartre writes:

> "As for the world - i.e. the totality of beings as they exist within the circuit of ipseity - it cannot be anything but what human-reality surpasses towards itself or, to borrow Heidegger's definition: 'That on the basis of which human-reality becomes acquainted with what it is.'"[603]

The concept of "self-hood," for Sartre, depends crucially on the idea of disclosive projection within and toward the world. He implies that, in fact, this is what the world is: "…it is because of this projection that there *is* a world, and that this world is in some measure 'my' world."[604] Searching for a satisfactory means of articulating the idea that "the world" in itself constitutes the intra-referential totality which human-reality is always "surpassing toward itself," Sartre significantly falls back on Heidegger's terminology: the world as disclosed is "…that on the basis of which human-reality [Dasein] becomes acquainted with what it is."[605] The implication here is that "my possible" represents a "possible for-itself," and as such is present to being-in-itself as consciousness *of* the in-itself. This possible is not present to consciousness as an object of positional consciousness: if so, it would be reflected. Rather, it is, as we have learnt, non-thetically present-

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[602] Catalano 1980: 109, my italics.

[603] BN: 161.

[604] Gardner 2009: 96.

[605] BN: 161.

absent, or present as a meaningful absence to my current consciousness, and as such constitutes a thetic consciousness of the world. Hence, as Sartre puts it, the world is "mine" insofar as it is the in-itself "correlative of nothingness."[606]

Sartre concludes his account of the circuit of ipseity by attempting to show that in essence *I am a projection* - in the sense of a constantly recurrent, self-constituting, disclosive "movement" toward a metaphysically ideal, but finally unachievable, "self-ness." He suggests that that this aspirational "self-projection," this disclosive and purposeful "traversal of the world," as he puts it, both depends on and yet simultaneously brings about the unconcealment of an intelligible world - always in terms of my possibilities, purposes and projections. On Sartre's interpretation, therefore, it would seem that the projection "*I am*" is to be understood as "co-given" with the disclosing of a world, and that this self-constituting and disclosive projection is *at the same time* the possibility of meaning. Such is the structure in terms of which I seek to "…loop back to myself across the world, traversing the totality of being in order to achieve identity with myself…"[607] and which, as we have seen, Sartre refers to as the *le circuit d'ipséité*.

5.9 Concluding Comments

Throughout *Being & Nothingness* Sartre is anxious to avoid the view that it is consciousness understood as primarily detached, dis-interested, and passively observational that represents the original status of being-for-itself:

"…our descriptions have led us, in fact, to emphasise the *thing in the world*, and we might

be tempted by this to believe that the world and the thing are disclosed in some kind of

contemplative intuition: only subsequently would objects be placed in relation to each

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[606] BN: 161.

[607] Gardner 2009: 96.

other…We can avoid such a mistake if we bear fully in mind that *the world appears within the circuit of ipseity*."[608]

Essentially for Sartre, "self-ness" (*ipseity*) is envisaged as arising or "emerging" always contiguously, always in terms of our world disclosure. As discussed above, this self-constituting event of world and self construal is characterised as a kind of "decompressive" and negative relation amidst the seemingly infinite density of being-in-itself. In other words, as Sartre expresses it, self and world arise spontaneously and synthetically. We have learnt that the idea of ipseity is designed to basically encapsulate the "event" or "space," explained as a kind of "presence-absence" (see above), in terms of which the for-itself is forever projectively determining itself, by negation. We should recall that over against the self-identity and opacity of being-in-itself, consciousness in its translucent insubstantiality is seen as a fundamental *self*-negation, and is cast by Sartre in the role of a negative "*self*-constitution" - not as "creating" or constituting being in any kind of idealist sense.

Sartre's meticulous exploration of the reflecting-reflected structures of consciousness has revealed that the for-itself "founds its own nothingness," and that in these terms it is only possible to conceive of reflection - envisaged simultaneously as a "something" to be reflected on and as a reflective "negation" - provided "…it becomes qualified by something other than itself or [alternatively]…if it is reflected as a relation to an 'outside' that it is not."[609] He attempts to condense the entire process by suggesting: "What is present to me is not me."[610] The implication here seems to be that negation so understood necessarily represents the *apriori* foundation of all conscious experience: "…in advance of any comparison, or any construction, a thing has to be present to consciousness as *not being* consciousness."[611] Sartre is encouraging us to see here that negation and nihilation, as it were, underwrite the decompressive, disclosive correlation of

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[608] BN: 277-278, my italics.

[609] BN: 247.

[610] BN: 247.

[611] BN: 248.

consciousness and being-in-itself, and that consequently negation itself, so understood, actually grounds the possibility of the for-itself - always negatively, as *not being* the thing. Accordingly, Sartre adjusts his earlier definition in this respect. He now proposes:

> "The for-itself is a being for whom its being is in question in its being insofar as this being is essentially a specific way of *not being* a being that it posits at the same time as other than itself."[612]

Disclosure is not envisaged here in a kind of naïve, relational sense as the eventual cognitive achievement of an external correspondence between knower and known, or subject and object, understood as two "primitively isolated substances."[613] Rather, it seems to us, the intrinsic disclosiveness of consciousness is most appropriately grasped as a "mode of being."[614] In short, "existence" for the for-itself lies in reflection - a reflection that is reflected as not being its object. What is actually reflected is, in a sense, a pure and original negation, i.e. a "something" which, as Sartre puts it, has to be qualified as lying outside, alongside the object of consciousness, as *not being* that object. The original relationality of the for-itself and the in-itself is not construed as an external relation, but rather the for-itself "comes-to-be" explicitly on the basis that pre-reflective awareness discloses it is not the object of consciousness.[615] This correlation is therefore addressed as a kind of "synthetic totality," i.e. in a highly specific sense both phenomena and consciousness are, as it were, equivalent, inter-woven articulations of the same, single reality[616] In precisely these terms, the for-itself is interpreted as a "self-negating, self-constituting" event - a negative relationality disclosive of intelligibility and meaning.

During the course of *Being & Nothingness*, Sartre reformulates the conjunction of being-for-itself and being-in-itself as a kind of dependence: "…[the for-itself] can found itself only on the

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[612] BN: 248.

[613] BN: 244.

[614] BN: 248.

[615] See Catalano 1980: 133.

[616] c.f. BN: 245.

basis of, and against, the in-itself."[617] The for-itself constitutes itself as a *lack* of being (-in-itself), and it is this apparent lack or absence which underlies and conditions what Sartre refers to as "possibilities." In this regard, Onof observes that,[618] "…human reality is its own surpassing toward what it misses; it surpasses itself toward the particular being that it would be if it were what it is."[619] The being which, in Sartre's terminology, "haunts the for-itself"[620] is not simply being-in-itself, but rather the finally unrealisable, "impossible" synthesis of for-itself and in-itself, whereby the former becomes "…its own foundation…" - not as a nothingness but rather as being, striving to somehow combine and weave together the translucency of consciousness with the self-identical opacity of being-in-itself. As Sartre says, the constantly absent being "…which haunts the for-itself…" is, in fact, itself… but "…frozen into in-itself."[621] In precisely these terms the for-itself is envisaged as a recurrent, disclosive movement toward this finally unachievable equivalence or synthesis:

> "In short, this being will be exactly the *itself*, whose existence - as we have shown - can only be a constantly evanescent relation, but it will be that 'itself' as a substantial being."[622]

For Sartre it is the manifesting of negativity, absence, lack, and so on that always grounds and configures our possibilities and potentialities and their disclosive projection toward and within the world. Hence, the world is meaningful and mine insofar as "…it is the in-itself correlative of nothingness."[623] It is this very structure that underlies and determines "the self," which is ultimately "…the result of this circuit that connects my desiring consciousness to a satisfied one. This defines

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[617] BN: 137.

[618] Onof 2013: 40.

[619] BN: 142.

[620] Onof 2013: 40.

[621] BN: 142.

[622] BN: 143.

[623] BN: 161.

the self in terms of what Sartre calls a *circuit of ipseity*."[624] For Sartre, self-ness is envisaged as "…

an ipseity which spontaneously motivates itself,"[625] and - as he finally realises - it is…

> "…*only because of this ipseity that being is structured as a world*, that things are
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> articulated as foreground or background, or that there is a distinction between the possible
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> and the real."[626]

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[624] Onof 2013: 41, and c.f. BN: 161.

[625] BN: 422.

[626] Breeur 2014: 421, my italics.

Chapter 6

Heidegger and Sartre: Disclosure and the Self

6.1 Opening Remarks

In this chapter I propose to draw together and integrate certain key threads of our enquiry so far. Our central purpose will be to identify and elucidate, on the basis of the material with which we have been engaged, a coherent and significant affinity between Heidegger's and Sartre's accounts of subjectivity. To this end I aim to demonstrate that, despite their clearly divergent and larger agendas, both thinkers conceive the subjective field in an arguably "minimal" form to consist in, and arise from, an essentially disclosive correlation of Dasein, or being-for-itself, and a meaningful, intelligible world. The foregoing chapters have necessarily been devoted, at least in part, to an exegetical account of these respective approaches - each of which address, in their own terms, the question of subjectivity in light of the disclosive nature of human being. In the present chapter I intend to focus our attention on not only integratively combining and assessing these alternative approaches - highlighting specific areas not only of convergence but also divergence - but will additionally, from my own perspective, expand on and clarify the significance of the affinity I have

claimed and defended throughout. In view of the numerous potentially relevant topics we might usefully focus on in order to explore the affinity we argue for between Heidegger and Sartre, I propose to positively restrict our attention to, and thematise, four key areas: (i) being-in-the-world; (ii) self-hood and the care structure; (iii) the event of disclosure understood (a) as contextualisation, and (b) as negation.

I will open by briefly considering certain possible reasons why the affinity I am claiming has been largely ignored or dismissed, or at best marginalised, in the secondary literature, and why for some considerable time there has been surprisingly little serious, comparative study of the work of Heidegger and Sartre directly in combination. Thereafter, as our subsequent discussion progresses, I will seek to make explicit what I have maintained throughout our enquiry is a direct equivalence between the two thinkers in relation to a conception of self-hood as a disclosedness in the world, and will identify - in terms of the areas we specifically consider - key moments of convergence which I believe underpin and support these contentions. Creatively contrasting relevant aspects of the work of Heidegger and Sartre in this way will hopefully bring to the fore a convincing, phenomenological account of subjectivity envisaged as a disclosive "coming to be" of self-understanding. I propose to highlight along the way the significance of the idea that, in a fundamental sense, it is crucially *via* the exploration and analysis of disclosedness itself that the structure and status of the subjective field may more effectively be brought to light. At the same time, I will suggest that, sympathetically approached, a recognition of the differences between Heidegger and Sartre in these areas may usefully clarify and consolidate our appreciation of an underlying, essential affinity.

In our concluding section I shall address the question of what bearing the affinity we are proposing might have on how subjectivity tends to be envisaged across more recent phenomenologically-based research, particularly those projects which are adaptive to the findings of, for example, current neuroscience and theoretical psychology. I shall specifically assess the potential impact the affinity I argue for here may have on our reading of the influential

phenomenological research we reviewed in chapter two. Interrogating this research will be especially pertinent, insofar as it openly seeks an unconditional consensus amongst leading "classic" phenomenologists in support of the contention that so-called "minimal self-hood" definitively comprises the qualitative, experiential structures - the first-personal givenness - of phenomenal aspects of self-consciousness.

6.2 Comparative Studies

It seems that a sustained, comparative study of aspects of the work Heidegger and Sartre - particularly in relation to the the nature of the subjective field - is unavailable in the recent secondary literature, although it is my belief that a congruity of purpose which ignores certain merely cosmetic disparities between them evidently warrants further investigation. The last explicitly comparative study of the work of Heidegger and Sartre was an insightful work by Joseph Fell published in 1979, *Heidegger and Sartre: An Essay on Being and Place*.[627] Since that time only a regrettably small amount of substantial published research has brought these two thinkers together in any sort of convincing or creative fashion. This remains the case despite the fact that: (i) both Heidegger and Sartre may justifiably be categorised broadly as phenomenological thinkers; (ii) Sartre's earlier work is overtly indebted to, and influenced by, Heidegger; (iii) each thinker was not only originally motivated by, yet also subsequently and importantly reacted against, the earlier innovative phenomenological research of Husserl; and, of course, (iv) perhaps in part due to the undeniable equivalence of some of their central concerns, each was incisively critical of the other.

In the literature the two typically tend to be discussed in relative isolation from each other, with the exception of occasional, oblique references to, or superficial comparisons of, particular features of the others work. From a historical perspective, it seems to me that one central reason for this regrettable reluctance to constructively analyse their work in combination is that Heidegger

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[627] See Fell 1979.

scholarship - at least in certain sectors - appears to somewhat dogmatically promote the view that Sartre is simply not worth the bother - that he does not qualify as a serious philosopher, let alone a committed and insightful phenomenological researcher, and that accordingly he misappropriated and poorly interpreted much of Heidegger's work. In any event, so it is supposed, his thinking was so decisively derided by Heidegger that comparative research is consequently just a waste of time insofar as it would merely involve reiterating and expanding on Heidegger's original critique. In fact, it is argued by some commentators[628] that the central concerns of Heidegger and Sartre are in such conflict, and so critically diverse, that there is little hope of convincingly bringing them together in a coherent, let alone mutually illuminating, way. On the other hand, a tendency to be found in certain commentaries on Sartre[629] is to reference Heidegger's work in a background sense as a kind of touchstone - against which the coherence and validity of Sartre's own philosophic endeavours may be gauged, as it were, and accordingly judged as either successful or inadequate. In our own study, however, I trust we have demonstrated that over against these tendencies the lack of sympathetic yet rigorous and integrative study implies a marked and unfortunate fragmentation and dissolution of potentially valuable aspects of phenomenological research. In short, it remains an opportunity lost. My own view is that once we manage to get beyond the divergent terminologies and agendas, Heidegger and Sartre can be argued to unambiguously not only share specific philosophical concerns, but to grapple with these in broadly similar, if not identical, ways. As I have maintained throughout, central amongst these shared preoccupations is the nature and status of the subjective field itself - which both Heidegger and Sartre seek to understand in terms of our fundamentally disclosive nature. It is precisely here we must look, I believe, for the most important and telling convergences in their thinking, and in terms of which we may, from a distinctly phenomenological perspective, potentially gain much.

Another possible reason for the absence of serious comparative study, again from a historical perspective, is that a criticism often levied against Sartre is his apparent mis-appropriation

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[628] See, for one example, Hoy 2009: 280-287.

[629] See, for example, Lévy 2003.

of Heidegger's *Being & Time*, which has been construed by some as one dominant feature of the post-war transition of phenomenology from Germany to France[630]. It is suggested that a uniquely French interpretation of Heidegger (and Husserl) was, at least initially, partially moderated by Sartre himself, although ironically as a result Sartre's philosophic status in France was to some extent displaced and diminished with the arrival of Heidegger in the original. This situation is exacerbated by Heidegger's influential "*Letter on Humanism*" (1947) in which, in addition to claiming that Sartre had deeply misrepresented him, Heidegger distances his own "pure" phenomenology from the allegedly "anthropological" existentialist phenomenology of Sartre. Amongst other criticisms, Sartre is accused of retrogressively dividing existence or "being," and of developing what amounts to a disturbingly dualistic ontology (see chapter five), in terms of which the apparently incommensurable distinction between being-in-itself (non-conscious being) and being-for-itself (conscious being or subjectivity) bespeaks a foundational split separating self and world, consciousness and being, and so on. However, some recent, rather more constructive, commentary[631] emphasises that rather than, as alleged, mis-interpret key features of Heidegger's existential analytic of Dasein, in actuality Sartre throughout *Being & Nothingness* evidently sustains a balanced, often deeply critical, view of Heidegger's earlier phenomenological work, and in certain respects is ready to critique and radically disagree with him.[632] To take just one example out of many, Sartre often challenges Heidegger's determined and almost exclusive rejection of any and all conceptuality and terminology directly relating to consciousness, mind, the subject, self-hood, etc., especially throughout *Being & Time*. As Sartre says,

> "If Dasein is stripped from the outset of its dimension of consciousness, it can never win it
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> back. Heidegger endows human-reality with a self-understanding…but how could we
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> conceive of an understanding that is not, in itself, conscious (of) being an understanding?

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[630] See, e.g., Kaufmann 1975.

[631]See, for example, Gardner 2009, and Catalano 1980.

[632] Rajan 2002.

This ecstatic character of human-reality…must collapse back into a blind and thing-like in-itself."[633].

Overall, however, the ascendancy of Heidegger on the continent has done little to enhance the reputation of Sartre, and much of Sartre's critical appropriation of Heidegger's work has been in more recent times either avoided or at best marginalised.

In addition to certain historical reasons for this marked reluctance to positively bring Heidegger and Sartre together, however, is a concern of more immediate relevance to our enquiry. It has been claimed that certain fundamental disparities in their respective methodologies and overall philosophic intent - which result in barely surmountable incongruities in relation to questions concerning human experience and subjectivity - equally restrict any possibility of authentic research. In order to clarify this point, I shall briefly consider one salient example, i.e. the problem of overcoming what is sometimes perceived as a dissonance between their background assumptions concerning the status of the subject.[634] As I have argued throughout, their thinking is profoundly inter-woven and correlative in certain fundamental respects - specifically regarding a close relation that both see between subjectivity and disclosedness. A rift potentially appears, however, insofar as Sartre is often accused of attempting to belatedly re-establish and rely on certain traditional, metaphysical presuppositions which lie in the background of his analysis of subjectivity. It is claimed he finds himself bound by an adherence to his Cartesian legacy, and in view of this overriding commitment his perspective on the question of subjectivity and the structures of consciousness will inevitably be grounded in the Cartesian *cogito* itself.[635] His approach to the question of human reality is as a result heavily conditioned by the relation of experience to non-conscious being interpreted accordingly. Heidegger, as we have seen, sustains a rigorous antagonism toward all talk of consciousness, reflexivity, subjectivity, and so on. He explains himself

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[633] BN: 122.

[634] See, e.g., Frie 1997: 46-56.

[635] Frie 1997: 48.

to be - in very general terms - liberating philosophic enquiry from its historical obligation to analyse the structures of human being in orthodox, metaphysical terms - central amongst which, of course, is the Cartesian *cogito*, i.e. the subject articulated as a self-sufficient, substantial entity, especially - as Heidegger sees it - removed by several degrees from a potentially knowable world.

It is surely due to Heidegger's formative influence on the early Sartre that as a matter of course various uniquely Heideggerian themes break surface and are critically addressed in *Being & Nothingness*. In Sartre's hands such issues are often subject to revision and re-adjustment, and - as we have previously noted - occasionally reversed. Heidegger's existential analytic of Dasein in *Being & Time* is already primed to challenge and de-structure the framework of assumptions and general categories of traditional metaphysics, principally in order to pave the way for what Heidegger refers to as "unadulterated" structures of understanding, which dispense with, for example, the dichotomous relationship of subject and object, knower and known, thought and being, etc. In a seemingly contrasting sense, Sartre appears to be committed to building upwards, as it were, from the established foundations of the tradition - particularly in relation to the *cogito*, which significantly remains central to his thinking. It is by these means that Sartre seeks to re-situate and develop an alternative Cartesianism.[636]

Sartre accepts Heidegger's existential analytic of Dasein as an insightful and innovative, yet at the same time, in certain respects, crucially deficient and flawed, phenomenological account of the structures of human being in the world. For example, he opens the second part of *Being & Nothingness*, which is devoted to an analysis of the immediate reflexive structures of consciousness, by drawing attention to Heidegger's barely explicable refusal (as Sartre reads him) to sufficiently acknowledge the one definitive, constitutive dimension of human-reality:

> "Heidegger, who wanted to avoid […] descriptive phenomenalism…embarks on the existential analytic directly, without going through the *cogito*."[637]

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[636] For more discussion, see Gardner 2009: 228.

[637] BN: 122.

Sartre here highlights what he believes is arguably the most deep seated incongruity between himself and Heidegger. In light of his allegiance to his Cartesian roots, the ontological structure of human-reality that Sartre painstakingly explores in *Being & Nothingness* enables him to essentially re-translate and re-envision the *cogito*, although certainly not uncritically. This is evident from the fact that it is the pre-reflective *cogito* which now unambiguously constitutes his point of departure. Heidegger's resolve to avoid all the implications and problematics of Cartesianism - specifically in relation to the question of subjectivity - Sartre reads as fundamentally misguided: for him, the existential analytic of Dasein does not, and cannot, exhaust the *cogito*. In fact, as Sartre tells it, if consciousness does not ground or constitute the critically ecstatic nature of human-reality it can only "collapse back" into the thing-like state of being-in-itself - an echo surely of Heidegger's own rejection of any conception of the subject as being "present-at-hand" or "occurrent" (see below). From Sartre's point of view Heidegger becomes so focused on the need to circumvent the potential difficulties he believes are inherent in Husserl's questionable characterisation of the subject (the "I think") as central to a quasi-Kantian epistemic relation between consciousness and the world, that Heidegger, so Sartre suggests, attempts to "…avoid any recourse to consciousness in his description of Dasein."[638]

It should come as no surprise that this particular distinction between the grounding assumptions of Sartre and Heidegger specifically in relation to addressing the issue of subjectivity is considered by some to unnecessarily complicate any potentially useful or illuminating dialogue between them, or to investigatively consolidate and compare their views. I trust, however, that in what follows we shall at least dispel the idea that their methods and intentions in this respect are so diverse that they cannot be sensibly brought together.

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[638] BN: 136.

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6.3 The Affinity Claim

As we considered in chapter two, Husserl believes that the subject is, in one sense, a thing among things. Nevertheless, as we noted, from the perspective of the "natural attitude" he suggests that, in an alternative sense, the actual nature and status of the subjective field conceived not as a thing but rather as the transcendental condition or "possibility" whereby the world and self-hood itself are meaningfully "given," is largely hidden. Over against the view that, in terms of the natural attitude, the self is experienced as a psycho-physical thing within the world, amidst a seemingly endless multitude of other "things," Husserl promotes from *Ideas I* onward an understanding of the self as the foundational and transcendental ground of possibility for meaningful experience of the world. It is in reaction against what he perceives as a lingering, deeply problematic dualism at the core of Husserl's account that Heidegger grounds his own evolving conception of the subjective field in terms of an "openness" within the world, sometimes expressed, as we have seen, in metaphorical terms as a forest clearing - i.e. as a space, or perhaps an event, of unconcealment and disclosure. Envisaged in these terms Dasein represents a disclosive relationality entirely "in-the-world," rather than either the "thing-hood" and seeming substantiality of an empirical, psycho-physical ego, or a transcendental source of meaning-bestowal. Indeed, as we observed in chapter three, for Heidegger Dasein is unambiguously "…itself the clearing."[639] Sartre approaches these questions from a radically alternative perspective, as was shown in chapter five. Remaining true to his Cartesian roots, as mentioned above, his starting point is therefore naturally the *cogito*, but appropriated and interpreted now as pre-reflective, non-positional self-awareness, similarly also fundamentally transcended.

I suggest that our findings support the view, despite the modification of many of Husserl's founding insights, that not only do both Heidegger and Sartre remain clearly indebted to Husserl's earlier phenomenological intentions, but also that their concerns markedly converge over the

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[639] BT: 171.

question of subjectivity - whether envisaged as Dasein or as being-for-itself - in its relation to the appearing world. We have seen that both conceive the correlation of subject and world as essentially a disclosure, and as a possibility of intelligibility and meaning. I have argued that both Heidegger and Sartre, in their admittedly contrasting ways, seek in precisely these terms to unearth the implications of this correlation of a horizonal context of sense and individual acts of interpretive contextualisation. Disclosedness so understood conceptually articulates not only the way in which the world meaningfully "opens" or "unfolds" for us, but at the same time captures what is arguably *the* essential dimension of human being, i.e. our opening up of the world.[640] We saw in chapter three how this structure is conceived by Heidegger, in terms of Dasein envisaged as itself a clearing or openness amidst inevitable and ubiquitous concealment or "hiddenness." As he says in *Being & Time*,

> "The world is at any given time not only *disclosed*, in letting something be encountered in concern, in its meaningfulness as the oriented wherein of the being of Dasein, but Dasein is itself there relative to its in-being, *itself there for itself*....Dasein in its being-there-with...is itself discovered in a certain sense."[641]

Sartre likewise speaks of an endless, restless decompression and "opening up" of being-in-itself (as saw in chapter five), and of the for-itself's disclosure and differentiation of being, which he elucidates in terms of an inherent negativity in all its forms configuring and "en-forming" our experience of ourselves and the world. As Sartre reminds us toward the conclusion of *Being & Nothingness*,

> "In the case of the for-itself-in-itself internal negation...the relation is not reciprocal and I am at the same time one of the terms in the relation and the relation itself. I apprehend being, and I *am* an apprehension of being; I am *only* an apprehension of being."[642]

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[640] Kim 2021: 231-235.

[641] HCT: 253.

[642] BN: 807.

I maintain that these attempts to interpret this event of disclosure and the unfolding of intelligibility and meaning demonstrate from a phenomenological perspective an unambiguously close correspondence between Heidegger and Sartre. Although their respective underlying agendas do differ quite markedly - relevant aspects of which I have endeavoured to map in the foregoing chapters - both *Being & Time* and *Being & Nothingness* are unquestioningly committed, in their own distinctive ways, to destructuring the traditional oppositions of subject/object and thought/being - and in so doing, to look beyond.

6.4 Being in the World

Heidegger's characterisation of Dasein in terms of the unitary phenomenon "being-in-the-world" is a conceptual frame of reference Sartre willingly endorses. In fact, it would be fair to say that Sartre's account of the for-itself's disclosive nature corresponds more or less unambiguously with, and positively reflects, key features of Heidegger's structural analysis in *Being & Time*[643] of the being of Dasein as "being-in-the-world" - where in this context "world" is understood to refer to the "synthetic totality," of which both consciousness and the phenomenon constitute mere moments.[644] At the same time, Sartre reminds us, this "totalisation," in a sense, "…adds nothing to being."[645] Indeed, as we have seen, both Sartre and Heidegger reject any suggestion of "subjective modification," or the idea that being becomes, in a purely idealist sense, subjectively "fashioned" or "constituted" as a world. On the contrary, as Hartmann suggests, certainly for Sartre there is only the possibility of subjectivity at all insofar as this is made possible by the nothingness whereby, from an ontological perspective, there is being in the first place.[646]

For Heidegger and Sartre, human-reality envisaged as "being-in-the-world" represents a fundamental subversion and displacement of the orthodox, epistemic - yet surprisingly still

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[643] c.f. Hatzimoysis 2013: 148.

[644] BN: 34.

[645] BN: 257.

[646] See Hartmann 1966: 103.

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prevalent - idea of the isolation and "self-sufficiency" of a substantial subject confronting a world conceived of as entirely independent of our contextualising engagement and awareness. They each in their own distinctive ways, as we have seen, convey an understanding of the subject as "being-in-the-midst-of-the-world"[647] - or as self-hood emerging synchronously with the differentiation and disclosure of a world:

> "World-understanding as Dasein-understanding is self-understanding. Self and world belong together in the single entity, the Dasein....Self and world are the basic determination of the Dasein itself in the unity of the structure of being-in-the-world."[648]

Similarly, referencing Heidegger, Sartre claims that "…to use an expression from Heidegger - it is on the world's basis that human reality becomes acquainted with what it is."[649] For Heidegger, as for Sartre, in our experience entities are given in the first place as "meaning-objects" or "meaning-relations" rather than just random streams of sense-data in endless, meaningless combination. As Keane expresses it: "To be human means to be the discloser and sustainer of such meaningfulness, yet with such meaningfulness having a life of its own beyond the disclosing."[650] It seems to me there is no doubt that the views of Heidegger and Sartre significantly converge in this respect, in that each interpret subjectivity as always and necessarily constituting itself around and in terms of the projective construal of a world. The beleaguered question of whether, or to what extent, such an interpretation tends more toward realism or idealism, or toward neither, is largely irrelevant, both would be likely to argue, and will not trouble us here. We might say, however, recalling our critical assessment of Heidegger's account of the dynamics and "mechanics" of disclosedness in chapter three, that for Sartre likewise disclosedness may usefully be explained as an event of "contextualisation" by consciousness - or better still, as Ellis suggests,[651] for Sartre the "work" of

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[647] For one equivalent interpretation, see Overgaard 2013: 448.

[648] BP: 297.

[649] BN: 278.

[650] Keane 2022.

[651] See Ellis 2000.

consciousness is not that of *construction*, but rather of *construal*. That which appears *is* "reality," for Sartre, rather than just an indication of reality that actually conceals the way things truly are.[652] In an alternative formulation, we might say it is consciousness, not being, that is contingent - i.e. being is not *necessarily* disclosed or "revealed," but consciousness can *be* only insofar as it is *necessarily* disclosive of being.[653] For Sartre, as for Heidegger,[654] self-hood is always "outside" *in* the world, and as such is self-constituting in the sense that *it can only exist* as an event of disclosive relationality within and for being. Rather than somehow constitute being in some kind of an idealist sense, consciousness - for Sartre, understood as a negative relation - *must* constitute itself.

In *Being & Time* and other earlier works Heidegger's analysis of experience centres on re-establishing what we might describe as the "event-like" or affective nature of our disclosive experience of the world, focusing on "…the meaningful interconnectedness that exists between things and our openness toward this meaningfulness…"[655] Such an interpretation is clearly echoed in the language Heidegger employs across the earlier works, perhaps at times in an almost experimental vein, in order to characterise the event of world disclosure: for example, discoveredness (*Entdecktheit*), uncoveredness (*Unverdecktheit*), disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*), unveiledness (*Enthülltheit*), dis - or un - concealedness (*Entborgenheit*), and so on.[656] Sartre's somewhat idiosyncratic terminology - so often at odds with Heidegger's neologistic means of expression - is similarly often designed to capture a sense of disclosedness in equivalent terms, for example: "The phenomenon of being, like any basic phenomenon, is disclosed immediately to consciousness,"[657] or again, "…if I expect a disclosure of being, it is because I am prepared at the same time for the disclosure of non-being."[658] In both *Being & Time* and *Being & Nothingness* the

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[652] c.f. Cox 2008: 159.

[653] c.f. Barnes 1974: 33.

[654] See chapter 4.

[655] Keane 2020: 269.

[656] See Wrathall 2011: 17n.

[657] BN: 24.

[658] BN: 39.

phenomenon of world is, we might say, given intelligible shape and configured purely in terms of the sheer existentiality or "presencing" of Dasein or being-for-itself. This can only be so, however, insofar as the significance and affirmability of entities we "uncover" and with which we are engaged in the world is necessarily reliant on the disclosure of a horizon - a context - of sense-making relationality. In spite of the suspicion voiced from time to time in the literature, as mentioned above neither Heidegger nor Sartre believe themselves to succumb to any kind of naïve, idealist explanation of the achievement of an intelligible world. For them both it is rather that a significant world arises from, and is configured by, the totality of disclosed and contextualised encounters which comprise, we might say, our affective realities as revealed by our particular mode of being. Human understanding, on this account, is a *projective* weaving-together of self and world - a patterning, as it were, of the contextuality of meanings which exceeds it.

The characterisation of Dasein as "being-in-the-world," Heidegger believes, goes beyond - but at the same time resolves - the polarisation of subjectivity and objectivity inherent in not only (as he sees it) Husserl's fragmented vision of reality, but also Sartre's "peculiar" phenomenological ontology, which from Heidegger's perspective represents a mere abstraction that, as deeply and unnecessarily traditional, must artificially confuse and problematise the actual sense of "being-in-the-world." For Heidegger, what is lost in Husserl's account of transcendental consciousness constituting and compartmentalising reality is the (for Heidegger, undeniable) co-givenness of world and self, underwritten by Dasein's openness toward sense and meaning. Indeed, as I have sought to make clear, in *Being & Time* Heidegger emphasises that things in the world do not achieve intelligibility for us merely by having meaning and sense bestowed or imposed on them in this Husserlian sense, but rather that Dasein "in-the-world" is always disclosively unfolding and construing the "referential context" within our experience.[659] In fact, experience itself is not detached, nor in any sense separable from, actuality - from the fundamental "factuality" of the

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[659] See BT: 99, 121.

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world - but depends absolutely on it. Mind cannot be severed from the world - rather, it *is* being-in-the-world.

I believe that Sartre's own appreciation of the idea of being-in-the-world as characteristic of human-reality is far from naïve or unrealistic. This becomes clearer when considering certain claims he makes in *Being & Nothingness*. For example:

> "We know that for Heidegger the being of human-reality is defined as 'being-in-the-world.' The world is a synthetic complex of instrumental realities inasmuch as they point one to another in ever widening circles, and inasmuch as man makes himself known in terms of this complex *which he is*."[660]

In fact, the compound term "being-in-the-world," which in its unitary sense implies that human-reality cannot be understood separately or apart from its immersion in, and disclosure of, the world, is more or less taken for granted in *Being & Nothingness*. Approaching the question of subjectivity initially entails - in keeping with Sartre's unwavering commitment to the role of the Cartesian *cogito*, as discussed above - an intense focus on the reflexive structures of consciousness itself. In these exact terms, subjectivity may satisfactorily be addressed - together with "…its objects and its modalities, and these ultimately yield a fully rounded description of the being of human beings as what Heidegger called being-in-the-world."[661]

Sartre's claim that, as intentional, all consciousness is consciousness of something is far from trivial. As he says in one of his earliest works, "…consciousness and the world are given at one stroke."[662] In *Being & Nothingness* he repeatedly affirms it is not the case that, on the one hand, we have the for-itself, and on the other we have the world, comprising as it were "…two closed wholes…,"[663] and leaving the correlation between them undetermined. In complete concordance with Heidegger, he claims the for-itself can only be understood as *in the world*, but adds that

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[660] BN (Barnes Translation): 17, my italics.

[661] Morris 2008: 61.

[662] I: 4.

[663] BN: 413

bearing in mind the for-itself characteristically denies it is being (i.e. that it is not what it is disclosively conscious of), it makes it the case that there is, in fact, a world.[664] The subjective field does not, however, constitute an impartial, non-perspectival or neutral awareness passively confronting and objectifying a world envisaged as a seemingly infinite manifold of objects, states of affairs and relations. Rather, "For me, this glass is to the left of the carafe, and slightly behind it; for Pierre it is to the right, and slightly in front."[665] Sartre needs us to see that a fusion of perspectives would entail, as he puts it, a complete dissolution of *thises* - that the absence of human disclosure would mean that being (in-itself) "…would return to its indifferent identity."[666] In other words, as Sartre tells it, the world would cease to be, insofar as the world cannot exist without a "…univocal relation to me."

For both Heidegger and Sartre, then, there is no world without human awareness - and *vice versa*. Simply put, we are being invited to accept that it can only be *via* a disclosive relation to the thing - *it is only as disclosedness* - that "I" can be. As Sartre says:

> "The arising of my being, in unfolding distances from the starting-point of a centre, determines, through the very act of this unfolding, an object which is itself insofar as it is indicated by the world, and which however cannot be intuited by me as an object because I am it; it is me, in my presence to myself as the being that is its own nothingness. In this way my being-in-the-world, solely by virtue of its actualising a world, is indicated to itself as a being-in-the-midst-of-the-world by the world that it actualises - and it could not be otherwise."[667]

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[664] See BN: 413.

[665] BN: 413.

[666] BN: 413.

[667] BN: 427.

6.5 Selfhood and the Care-Structure

In order to gain a more nuanced appreciation of these areas of apparent shared understanding, it is important to keep in mind common understandings of selfhood against which both Heidegger and Sartre in their own distinctive ways react. In §64 of *Being and Time* Heidegger enumerates various conceptions of self-hood which he believes are intrinsic to modern philosophy. In this section, entitled *Care and Selfhood*,[668] Heidegger lays out sequentially certain conceptions of subjectivity drawn from key moments in the development of modern philosophy since Descartes. One possible way of reading these is to recognise that in developmental terms each corresponds roughly to the positions of Descartes, Kant, Husserl, and finally Heidegger himself, although with the exception of Kant the others are not specifically identified.[669] In any event, it is largely by means of differentiating between, on the one hand, essential features of the existentiality of Dasein as envisaged by Heidegger in *Being & Time*, and on the other hand the self (the "I") analysed by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a transcendental unity of apperception, that enables Heidegger to throw into relief the extent of, and the reasons for, his own departure from what he regards as unsettled, misleading approaches to the question of self-hood. Heidegger believes that the seemingly unbridgeable division imposed by modern philosophy between world and self rests on the assumption that the objective as such signifies a factual dimension or level entirely independent of the subjective or of a subject conceived as entirely self-sufficient. Within this frame of reference self-hood becomes identified primarily as an objective presence - as a "present-at-hand" or "occurrent" entity, underpinning its various faculties and properties:

> "…the fact that Dasein is in each case mine [*die Jemeinigkeit*]…[has] already indicated that in the analytic of this entity we are facing a peculiar phenomenal domain. Dasein does not have the kind of Being which belongs to something merely present-at-hand within the world, nor does it ever have it. Neither is it to be presented thematically or objectively as

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[668] See BT: 364-370.

[669] See Stapleton 1983: 111-112.

something we come across in the same way as we come across what is present-at-hand."[670] Heidegger maintains that objectivism in whatever form leads unavoidably to a "blurred" and less-than adequate ontology, and accordingly *Being & Time* seeks to address the question of the meaning of being without indulging at any stage in bifurcated conceptions of reality, in the traditional oppositions of subject and object, appearance and reality, and so on. I believe that in radical opposition to a conception of self-hood in substantial terms along the foregoing lines both Heidegger's existential analytic of Dasein and Sartre's conception of subjectivity as a circuit of ipseity,[671] are designed to show us that without the projective disclosure of a significant world understood as an intra-referential contextuality for our projects and purposes, there can, in the end, be no self. However we might finally attempt to fix and settle Dasein's overall structural or logical form, phenomenological investigation shows us "self-hood" grounded exclusively in an understanding of our disclosive relation to a world:[672] As Heidegger puts it, "Saying I means the being that I always am as 'I-am-in-a-world.'"[673]

A significant portion of §64 is devoted to an overview of Kant's "Paralogisms of the Soul,"[674] by which means Heidegger interrogates what he refers to as the "subjectivity of the subject" in terms of "care" (*Sorge*). He is thus enabled to demonstrate - so he argues - a more profound and refined account of the self than the obviously limited, solipsistic understanding of self-hood we owe to Descartes. Throughout much of *Being & Time* it is Dasein's disclosive immersion in the world characterised as "care" that grounds and importantly unifies Heidegger's multi-layered structural account of the existential dimensionality of Dasein conceived as "being-in-the-world," the various elements or levels of which are thus combined into what comes to be referred to as Dasein's "care-structure." This structure itself is in turn grounded in, and seen to arise from, an understanding of Dasein as a "having-to-be-open" - in the *apriori* sense of Dasein's

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[670] BT: 68-69.

[671] See chapter 5.

[672] For a further insightful elaboration of these themes, see Johnson 2012: 160-162.

[673] BT: 295.

[674] See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*.

existential, constitutional capacity to take the world *as*, to disclosively and interpretively engage with the world in terms of the *as-structure* of our understanding (see chapter three). The sheer existentiality of Dasein, envisaged thus by Heidegger, is a unitary phenomenon which he refers to on different occasions as either disclosedness or care.[675] As he says,

> "The formal existential totality of Dasein's ontological structural whole must therefore be grasped in the following structure: the being of Dasein means ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-the-world as Being-alongside (entities encountered within the world). This Being fills in the signification of the term '*care*' (*Sorge*), which is used in a purely ontologico-existential manner."[676]

In these terms, therefore, and as Dahlstrom neatly puts it: "…care is disclosive."[677] What is key here, I believe, is that Heidegger appears to suggest that the projective care structure of being-in-the-world depends fundamentally on the distinctive, unique shape of our disclosedness, rather than approaching the question of subjectivity in terms of the Kantian self-determining "I think," conceived as a unifying, consolidating transcendental unity of apperception,[678] which grants the self and its experiencing meaningful coherence. As stated above, Heidegger sees that historically the self has so often been determined, through the ever present lens of objectification, in substantial terms as *present-at-hand*. According to Kant, the transcendental unity of apperception - the transcendental subject as such - constitutes a "binding together" or unifying of the manifold of intuition, the incessant flood of sensory data, in combination with the *apriori* conceptuality of the understanding, and in these terms represents a necessary condition of possibility for coherent, intelligible experience of the world, and consequently underlying, integrative self-hood. Intuition and the conceptuality of understanding together constitute the unity of experience, and in this respect (perhaps in a tenuous anticipation of Heidegger) Kant implicitly brings the world and the

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[675] See Wheeler: 2005.

[676] BT: 237.

[677] Dahlstrom 2001:135.

[678] For further discussion, see Crowell 2013: p. 192.

self together. In that both the self and the world are conceived as present-at-hand entities, Heidegger observes, this apparent Kantian interconnectedness or "inter-weaving" of a self-sufficient self and finally unknowable world as it is in itself remains an external state - entirely accidental and contingent. As I have stressed throughout our enquiry, for Heidegger Dasein is not to be conceived in traditional terms as a world-less, isolable subjectivity, albeit present in a world, but rather essentially constituting and constituted by, and therefore intricately enmeshed with, its *world*.[679] In *Being & Time*, the layered existential aspects and corresponding comportments of Dasein in the world, alongside the understandings these are grounded in, are explored in detail. Hence Heidegger's introduction of the unifying idea of a "care-structure," which overall characterises our concernful being-in-the-world, and which allows Heidegger to gather coherently together Dasein's multi-faceted actuality and its manifold involvements, projections and engagements. Indeed, Heidegger clearly intends us to see that all these variously inter-related facets of Dasein's being are ultimately in themselves aspects of the care-structure itself. Consequently, it seems the notion of "care" - which explains and conditions our projected purposes and possibilities grounded in the disclosedness of Dasein (see chapter three) - articulates the sense and meaning we give to our being-in-the-world, conceived as an integrative whole. Rather than the world representing a detached externality, it is actually constitutive of Dasein: self and world, in this sense, are a unity.

In *Being & Nothingness* Sartre frequently and positively references Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world. In Sartrean terms, consciousness and its object form a synthetic unity - a totality which is greater than the sum of its conceptually distinct moments or parts. In analogy with the Aristotelean account of the relationship between "form" and "matter," "human-being" in combination with "world" may admittedly be considered separately from each other, yet at the same time cannot exist apart from each other.[680] In this respect, in line with Heidegger, Sartre believes that together they constitute a unitary phenomenon. Sartre also argues, however, that it is in view of the unwarranted and mistaken rejection of the dimension of consciousness from his analysis of

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[679] c.f. Frede 2006:.63.

[680] See Catalano 1974: 53-54.

Dasein that Heidegger finds it necessary to show Dasein rather in terms of "care" - a way of being Sartre nevertheless accepts and characterises positively as Dasein's "escaping from itself" in terms of its projective nature.[681] The care structure so understood, on Sartre's argument, consequently enables Heidegger, who as we know carefully avoids the language of "consciousness," to determine human-reality rather as being "revealing-revealed." Whilst not in principle at odds with Heidegger's account of the being of Dasein in terms of care and projection, Sartre also believes that Heidegger's reasoning, at least as it stands, must encounter certain difficulties. As we noted above, we cannot eliminate "…the dimension of consciousness first, not even if we then re-establish it later."[682] These problems may, however, be reduced or at least pacified, Sartre claims, provided we are willing to recognise *from the outset* that the structures in question - i.e. Dasein disclosively orientated in the world in terms of care, concern and projective understanding - are grounded in the *cogito* itself. Dasein's navigation of the world in terms of its purposeful projection of possibilities is, for Heidegger, an intrinsic aspect of Dasein's care structure, but as Sartre observes, self-consciousness cannot arise from what is not conscious already, and draws attention to the problems which follow in the event that the for-itself is (impossibly) deprived of a consciousness it can never recover. The "self-understanding" (see below) Heidegger sometimes refers to in the context of his account of Dasein as being-in-the-world, is read by Sartre as unrelated to the question of self-consciousness, and he claims makes little sense in the absence of any reference to consciousness. This attempt to achieve a phenomenologically reliable and dimensional account of Dasein's understanding, deprived of an analysis of the structures of consciousness, will (for Sartre, *can only*) fail. Sartre notes that Dasein is characterised by Heidegger early on in *Being & Time* as (i) in each case mine, and (ii) that being as an issue for it.[683] Sartre confidently endorses these conditions - but his modification of (ii) is important and clearly emblematic of the distance between him and Heidegger in this specific respect:

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[681] See BN: 136.

[682] BN: 136.

[683] Collier 2005: 103.

"…we could apply to consciousness the definition which Heidegger reserves for Dasein and say that it is a being such that in its being, its being is in question. But it would be necessary to complete the definition and formulate it more like this: *consciousness is a being such that in its being, its being is in question insofar as this being implies a being other that itself.*"[684]

As we have considered in some detail, in his earlier *Transcendence of the Ego* Sartre's account of consciousness is strictly impersonal: it is rather the ego-less intentionality of consciousness which may here be envisaged as connecting consciousness to the world in terms of "person-hood" or "self-ness."[685] This structure is not, however, located *within* consciousness but actually remains only a product of reflective consciousness - it is in fact an ephemeral, passing "incarnation" of that consciousness,[686] although this conception of the potentially "personalised" nature of consciousness develops, as we have seen, under the influence of Heidegger. Given that for Heidegger Dasein is not situated beyond, nor stands at a distance "over against" the world, the very being of Dasein is said to be itself "in-the-world" (*in der Welt*), and in this light Sartre comes to emphasise, yet importantly re-adjusts, the ontological status of the *cogito* by re-locating it. In uniquely Sartrean terms, the emptiness of consciousness "…is no longer suspended *above* the world, but is now situated *in* the world, [in other words]…empty consciousness now becomes a 'hole' (*trou*) in being…"[687] The provisional connection between intentional consciousness and the world now becomes conceptualised as horizonal (i.e. *in* or *of* the world).

Although Sartre occasionally implies that in ontological terms being-in-itself might be said to have an apparent precedence, or even priority, over being-for-itself, he nevertheless recognises in *Being & Nothingness* the essentially unifying dimension of this synthetic relationality of human being-in-the-world: "Being-in-the-world is, for human-reality, radically to lose itself within the

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[684] BN: 18.

[685] See Fretz 1992: 79.

[686] c.f. Fretz 1992: 79.

[687] For further discussion in this specific respect, see Fretz 1992: 78-80.

world through the very disclosure that makes it the case that there is a world."[688] Some commentary, however, perceives a deep-seated contradiction in Sartre's attempt to constructively absorb and follow Heidegger's analysis of Dasein in these terms. It is alleged that consciousness and world, given the apparent ambivalence in Sartre's background ontology throughout *Being & Nothingness*, cannot justifiably be brought together or conceived as co-given and equiprimordial in Heidegger's sense. The unitary nature of Heidegger's "being-in-the-world" it is claimed becomes self-contradictory if imported intact into what is seen to be Sartre's entrenched ontological duality, interpreted as distinct and dichotomous regions of being in opposition. As we considered in detail in chapter five, however, Sartre's account of the circuit of ipseity - so often overlooked or side-lined in the commentary - unequivocally demonstrates nothing less than a foundational and intrinsic correlation of subject and world. Again in tandem with Heidegger, for Sartre the world emerges as meaningful and intelligible entirely and only in terms of the for-itself's projected purposes and possibilities. Sartre concludes his analysis of the circuit of ipseity by presenting us with an account of self-ness which unambiguously illustrates a mutuality and inextricable, co-dependent arising of self and world.

6.6 Disclosure as Contextualisation

I believe the path we have taken in our earlier chapters demonstrates a distinct unanimity between Heidegger and Sartre in relation to a shared conception of subjectivity as inherently "open to" - perhaps even "unsheltered from" - the world. We have noted how, for Heidegger, our disclosive nature conditions, and yet is conditioned by, our basic existential modality - for example, our attunement and our projective understanding. In a strikingly parallel account, Sartre's analysis of "self-ness" understood as a circuit of ipseity describes our "disclosive traversal" of the world, in terms of which our projected "possibles" (our projects and purposes) are reflectively cast back, as it were, onto the various modalities of consciousness, and as such define us - in Sartre's terms, as

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[688] BN: 281.

what we are.[689] Provided we carefully navigate the terminological diversity, I would suggest it becomes evident that for both the subjective field is here conceived as fundamentally founded on our disclosive nature and its contextuality within our ever-present horizon of sense and meaning. It seems to me that implicit in these distinctive approaches is the premise that disclosedness envisaged as a process of contextualisation (see chapter three) means that the horizonal awareness in terms of which sense and meaning are, as it were, "bestowed" on my experience of the world is in itself the ground of possibility for a potential "self-ness."

For Heidegger, Dasein understood as an uncovering or a "revealing" of beings brings its intentional objects, relations or states of affairs to light in varying degrees of categorial complexity *via* a disclosive process of differentiation, interrogation, discrimination, and so on:

> "…disclosedness is that basic character of Dasein according to which it *is* its 'there.' Disclosedness is constituted by state-of-mind, understanding and discourse, and pertains equiprimordially to the world, to Being-in, and to the Self."[690]

For Sartre, informing his understanding of this process is the view that every positional, thetic consciousness of an object is *simultaneously* a non-positional, non-thetic awareness of the objects's horizons and background.[691] It should be clear that both Sartre and Heidegger take from Husserl the crucial insight that each and every apprehension of an object, relation or state of affairs occurs against - actually, *can only* occur in terms of - the disclosure of a "…zone of background intuitions."[692] In his earliest research Husserl emphasised that from a phenomenological perspective the intentional object cannot be separated, or as it were "dislodged," from its horizon and background. The overriding significance of this fundamental insight is recognised by Heidegger and Sartre - which they each develop in their own ways. For both, the disclosure of a horizon of sense and significance, in terms of which we experience and bring to intelligibility the object of

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[689] BN: 160.

[690] BT: 263.

[691] Morris 2008: 63.

[692] Husserl, Ideas 1: §35.

consciousness, is the presence of a context. As Heidegger puts it, the "total environment" crucially constitutes a ground of possibility for the meaningful "uncovering"[693] of the intentional object, relation or state of affairs in the world, without itself being that object. In a similar - though not identical - vein Sartre speaks of the meaningful emergence of *this* from, and its recurrent reabsorption into, an ever present contextual background or horizon of potential intelligibility.

We noted in chapter three, in our discussion regarding disclosedness interpreted as a process of contextualisation, that within his analysis of the "mechanics" of disclosure Heidegger importantly distinguishes between (i) the "discovery" or "uncoveredness" of discrete, singular, foreground objects, relations or states of affairs within an already significant world, which are synchronously (ii) rendered intelligible by the disclosure of a contextual background or horizon of sense. As Heidegger says: "What is *primarily* given…even if not in explicit and express consciousness…is a thing-*contexture*."[694] I have attempted to demonstrate that similarly, relying to some extent (though not un-critically) on the structures of Gestaltian theories of perception, Sartre also accounts for the disclosure of entities - of the "*this*" - in terms of a foreground figure revealed (always *via negativa*) as intelligible and coherent against, and in terms of, a contextual or horizonal background. The marked influence of Gestalt theory on Sartre's account of disclosure, which I reviewed in chapter five, suggests that further investigation is clearly warranted regarding the relation between his account of the disclosive event in precisely these terms and Heidegger's distinction between the uncovering or discovery of foreground entities, made possible only by the co-disclosure of a horizonal background. In *Being & Nothingness* Sartre marks out what he considers to be an important correlation between (i) the Gestaltian model of intelligible apprehension, whereby the appearance of *this* becomes possible only in terms of the disclosure of its relation to its horizonal background, and (ii) the arising or "dawning" of "my own concrete negation," or no-thing-ness, against and yet always in terms of a syncretic field or background of the radical negation of the "whole of being." In Sartre's terms, it is the self-negating and negative

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[693] See chapter 4.

[694] BP: 163, my italics.

presence of consciousness to *this* which transforms and commutes being into a world, into a significant totality. The reflective engagement of consciousness with the world is at the same time conditioned by its presence to - *by its not being* - its object. Sartre's innovation here, which we shall consider further below, is that the appearance of *this*, contextually apprehended within a ground of relationality, is possible only and exclusively in terms of the for-itself's self-negation or no-thing-ness. As he expresses it, the immediacy of the for-itself's engagement with being (in-itself) involves an "overflow," as it were, of the particular, disclosive negation it momentarily instantiates. As we have seen, the *this* comprises the object, relation or state of affairs, the being, which "I" - disclosively - am presently *not*, and it is in these terms that *this* is whatever is momentarily disclosed *via* the undifferentiated ground of the whole of being. For Sartre, on this reasoning,

> "…if human-reality was purely conscious (of) being one syncretic, undifferentiated
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> negation, it would not be able to determine itself and could not therefore be the concrete
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> totality - albeit detotalised - of its determinations."[695]

I have attempted to show that for Heidegger and Sartre disclosure may be said to comprise a three level structure. This is fairly explicit in Heidegger, less so in Sartre. Simply put, the uncovering or discovery of the entity is only initially possible in terms of an underlying pre-understanding of the immediate sense-giving context, which in turn is only possible terms of the disclosure of a meaningful horizonal context. In basic terms - and as Heidegger himself might say - we have the uncovering of a tool, within the "con-texture" of, say, a workshop - in terms of which the tool *as a tool* makes sense. This is only possible given the disclosure of a horizon of potential significance in terms of which the tool, within the immediacy of its contextuality, becomes intelligible. I drew attention to certain implications of this structure in our account of disclosure as an event of contextualisation, in chapter three. I suggest our enquiry has entered new ground in this respect by opening up the possibility of a comparative analysis of these structures specifically in terms of (i)

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[695] BN: 258.

Heidegger's account of human subjectivity understood as the openness and lighting of a clearing amidst prior concealment, and (ii) Sartre's depiction of the subjective field as a nihilating and self-negating decompressive unravelling of otherwise undifferentiated, *and therefore concealed*, being.

As discussed above, Dasein or being-for-itself is characterised perhaps most fundamentally in terms of the unitary phenomenon "being-in-the-world," which both thinkers take to be expressive of the synchronous possibility of self and world no longer envisaged as separate realities, but as co-constituting a meaningful mutuality. I have endeavoured to show that at bottom Heidegger believes Dasein as being-in-the-world to be a primordial unity that is not only prior to, but also grounds, the fundamental distinction between subject and object. As we observed in our introduction, for Husserl phenomenology works from the premise that at "ground level" the subject and the world are co-originary and inseparably related. True to Husserl's founding insights, for both Heidegger and Sartre, by means of our understanding - which is essentially projective - the world is revealed as inherently and inevitably meaningful *for us*. In Heidegger's terms, this process is enabled and configured by my so-called "self-understanding," my attunement or state of mind, insofar as Dasein's existential medium is always and necessarily possibility rather than actuality.[696] As he says:

> "In every case Dasein, as essentially having a state of mind, has already got itself into
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> definite possibilities….as the potentiality-for-Being which it is…"[697]

6.7 Disclosure as Negation

In perhaps the broadest of senses, the idea of "negation" or "nothingness," for both Heidegger and Sartre, is fundamental to human experience. As our enquiry has developed, I have drawn attention to the role and significance of the concepts of negativity and nothingness, especially as these are encountered in Sartre's complex analysis of the structures of reflexive consciousness. Needless to

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[696] See Mulhall 2013: 82.

[697] BT: 183.

say, Sartre's thinking in this respect is subject to a number of material influences - not least Hegel's inaugural account at the outset of his *Science of Logic* concerning the conceptual transition from being to nothing, to becoming and beyond. Similarly, of particular interest for the early Sartre is Heidegger's intriguing approach to the question of nothingness, perhaps most intriguingly in his 1929 essay "*What is Metaphysics?*"[698] In this work, which also draws on Hegel's analysis of the relation and identity between being and non-being, Heidegger explores and reconsiders the status of nothingness as an ontological category, to which end he considers how the concept of being itself appears to be inherently bound up with and implied by the notion of nothingness. His method of approach to these issues, however, tends to set him apart from Sartre, who as we have seen positions lack, absence and negation in all their forms at the heart of his analysis of being-for-itself, whereas Heidegger's overriding concern is ontological - and as such is underwritten by the interrogation of the meaning of being itself. Broadly speaking, Heidegger may be interpreted in this context as conceiving being as the appearance or presencing of things, as the way in which things "appear," and not as the entirety of existing entities in combination. Individual objects, relations or states of affairs are disclosed - more precisely, they are "uncovered" - in their being "*as*" this, or "*as*" that, always in terms of our attunement and our purposeful, concernful comportment toward them. This shared focus on characterising and elucidating the structures of our disclosive experiencing by means of drawing on the ideas of negation and no-thing-ness, and what this might signify when it comes to determining what is meant by the subject's uncovering of meaning, is emblematic of the extent to which both Heidegger and Sartre have substantially distanced themselves from more traditional, mainstream, and primarily analytic approaches to the problem of the subjective field. The "thing-like-ness" and self-sufficiency of self-hood envisaged in these more familiar terms tends to fragment and crumble when confronted by what we might refer to in current terminology as appropriately "deconstructive" phenomenological strategies. The result, it seems, is

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[698] Heidegger 1977a.

that the traditional oppositions of self and world, subject and object, thought and being, etc., now become recognised as articulations of a single, dimensional yet synthetic, reality.

It is my belief that in this respect what Sartre makes explicit, primarily through his radical analysis (see our discussion in chapter five) of the differentiation and disclosure of world and self *via* negation, is in Heidegger largely implicit, although perhaps also partially suppressed. For Sartre, the decompressive "upsurge" of the for-itself within the world constitutes an opening-up and unravelling, as it were, of the unmitigated density and positivity of being (in-itself). It is in terms of this event of unconcealment - a movement, as Heidegger expresses it, from hiddenness or concealment to the possibility of intelligibility - that an understanding of the nature and status of subjectivity itself arises. Staying in the main true to Husserl's original methodology, in their own unique ways Sartre and Heidegger are committed to the phenomenological exploration of conscious experience apart from the everyday or theoretical ontological commitments and pre-suppositions which characterise and typically inform the natural attitude, as we considered in chapter two. Suitably unencumbered, they each seek to investigate from a phenomenological perspective the appearance to us of objects, relations and states of affairs as these are given in the world. It is Sartre, however, who chooses to address most directly and incisively the idea that it is from or through the fundamental non-being or no-thing-ness of consciousness that distance, absence, lack, negativity in all its manifestations, configures and grounds - gives intelligible form to - our disclosure of the world and of ourselves.

We must nevertheless bear in mind that, as noted above, Sartre originally drew on - though he substantially modified - Heidegger's own analysis of the question of nothingness and negation conceived as constitutive of Dasein's experience.[699] It might therefore be worth briefly reviewing the development of this particular aspect of Heidegger's thinking. In contrast to Husserl, Heidegger develops an account of self-constitution which it is possible to read as essentially pragmatic, although in a very specific sense.[700] We constitute and configure the meaning and sense of the

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[699] See an elaboration on this theme in Barnes 1973: 7.

[700] See chapter 4.

objects of our world, according to Heidegger, "…through our practical engagements,"[701] and it is through such involvements so understood that we disclose, in the sense of significantly "make present," the things of the world. Dasein is an entity for whom, in contrast to things in the world, its own being is "an issue" for it, and as such it is for ever determining or configuring itself as it navigates the world, projectively and disclosively. As such, given that human "self-hood" evidently cannot be thought just in terms of the categorial structures by means of which we conceptualise and articulate "thing-hood" or "things," Dasein's being is most appropriately seen as fundamentally, and necessarily, *projective*. Envisaged thus, in terms of its projected possibilities and purposes, we can say with some justification that Dasein *is* what it presently *is not*.[702] The affinity between self-hood conceived in this way as the *negative* outcome of projective possibility, and Sartre's elaborate analysis of self-hood in similar terms throughout *Being & Nothingness* is unmistakable. The for-itself, as Sartre constantly asserts, is not what it is, *and yet* is what it is not.[703] In less paradoxical terms he explains that in its "traversal" of the world, human-reality…

> "…arises as such, in the presence of its own totality or its own itself, as the lack of this totality…[it] suffers in its being because it arises in being as constantly haunted by a totality that it is, without being able to be it, just because it could never attain the in-itself without losing itself as for-itself."[704]

Distinctly echoing Heidegger's interpretation of the being of Dasein as always "…ahead of itself,"[705] in that I am, as it were, detached from - in the sense of "beyond" - myself, I am always and inevitably projectively "ahead of myself," and so for Sartre I am not what I presently am. In fact, what "I am" is perhaps most decidedly an articulation of "disclosive projection," in the basic, concrete sense of being "what I am not." What "I am," on this understanding, is a purposeful movement into or toward meaning, a projection of unique purpose and possibility by means of

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[701] Mensch 2018: 35.

[702] Cooper 2012.

[703] BN: 143.

[704] BN: 143.

[705] BT: 236.

which an intelligible world unfolds for and to me *as* world: "…the projection is the way in which I *am* the possibility; it is the way in which I freely exist."[706]

As *Being & Time* progresses Heidegger increasingly brings his focus to bear on the notion of "no-thing-ness" as a means of characterising the very core of Dasein's being. A necessary structural element of Dasein's being, on this account, is to be constantly "in anticipation" or "ahead of itself." Thus, conceived in ontological terms, as Heidegger puts it, as a "thrown basis," Dasein can be said to always "lag behind" its possibilities - in the sense that Dasein is not, as it were, existent prior to or before its basis, but only, as Heidegger says, "…*from* it and *as this* basis."[707] This "not" can be taken to signify that, as projective being, as "ahead of itself," Dasein is strictly "no-thing" - and conceived as a "nullity" along these lines it is *not* either present-at-hand (*vorhanden*) nor ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*). Rather, "…what one has in view here is rather a 'not' which is constitutive for the Being of Dasein."[708] Dasein is "not," as a self, the basis of its own being, insofar as this basis arises exclusively from and in terms of its projective nature: "…as projection it is itself essentially null."[709] As Cooper expresses it, for neither Heidegger nor for Sartre, is there first a "self" or subject which then "projects" itself, "…rather, to be a self or subject *is* to be a 'projection.'"[710]

Throughout our study we have given due attention to the significance of Sartre's account of the subjective field conceived as a fundamental lack or absence, always in relation to the unremitting positivity and compression of being (in-itself). My approach in this respect has been largely governed by a need to bring to the fore Sartre's understanding of the for-itself's relation with the world as in itself disclosive, yet primarily negatively so. Certainly for Sartre, selfhood may be envisaged - in the paradoxical terms he tends to indulge rather than avoid - as the "self-constituting" result of projective disclosure which, understood as the achievement *by negation* of an intelligible world, reveals a dimensional and, we might say, aspirational self-within-the-world:

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[706] BP: 277.

[707] BT: 330.

[708] BT: 330.

[709] BT: 331.

[710] Cooper 1999: 202.

"A being that constitutes itself as a lack can only determine in relation to *that* thing, over

there, what it lacks and *what it is* - by means, in short, of constantly separating itself from

itself towards the itself that it has to be."[711]

The subject accordingly comes to be understood as ever-recurrent "self-constitution" - arising

through a nihilating, disclosive engagement with, and a decompression of, the sheer inert-ness of

being (in-itself). This encounter, for Sartre, represents the disclosive negation of what is, a revealing

and recognition of self-ness envisaged in terms of lack or absence.[712] As an undiluted, pure

transparency consciousness is not in itself inherently or meaningfully structured, beyond its innate

reflexivity, and thus meaningfulness can derive only from "self-ness" (ipseity) recognised as the

projective and affirmative disclosure of a world.[713]

It may help to recall that, in elaborating the phenomenological distinction between subject

and object, experience can be said to occur for the subject in terms, as Sartre would say, of *what the*

object is not, and that self-consciousness understood as consciousness of consciousness can

therefore be justifiably characterised as a form of consciousness of objects. Specifically, self-

consciousness, in the sense of consciousness *of* subjectivity, does not occur in the event the subject

itself is, as it were, an object of experience. Instead, it arises as and when the subject is conscious of

itself as conscious of its intentional object.[714] In these terms, consciousness as *non*-reflective

consequently avoids any possibility of self-objectification. Of course, self-consciousness, in the

sense of consciousness non-positionally conscious of itself, is in addition to being non-reflective,

also non-*reflexive*. Consciousness of myself as "subject" is non-reflective, so the argument goes,

because it does not objectify the subject, and yet is also non-reflexive in that it is an intentional

comportment, i.e. a movement toward what the subject is not. In these terms, self-consciousness

involves "two dynamics" which together characterise the constitutive openness of the subjective

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[711] BN: 278.

[712] Guillaume 2011: 9-10.

[713] For further discussion along these lines, see Cutting 2001: 136-137.

[714] Legrand 2012: 302.

field to the world as disclosed. This Sartrean position clearly contrasts with the view that all experience involves a basic ontological duality between interiority and externality, i.e. between subjectivity and that which transcends it, or, as we considered in our review of recent research in chapter one, between what is described as a dative and a genitive of manifestation.

The foregoing considerations seem to suggest that Sartre's analysis of "self-ness" (*ipseity*), conceived as the culmination of projective disclosure, in some key respects mirrors Heidegger's own hermeneutic approach to the question of subjectivity. Our findings have revealed, I believe, that Sartre's account of the so-called "circuit of ipseity,"[715] wherein he achieves an impressive and frankly welcome clarity of exposition, not only endorses but in certain respects *re-casts* Heidegger's account. As we observed in chapter five, the circuit of ipseity is identified by Sartre as that structure in terms of which the for-itself is understood to, in a sense, "circle back" on itself - disclosively, not reflectively - in its traversal of the world of appearances, compelled by the never-ending yet futile attempt to attain an identity with itself. For Sartre, it is this disclosive mode of being of the for-itself, envisaged as a recurrent movement of projective possibility, which is constitutive of ipseity itself.[716] Sartre clarifies:

> "I am a pure consciousness *of* things, and the things, caught within the circuit of my ipseity,
> offer me their potentialities as a response to my non-thetic consciousness (of) my own
> possibilities."[717]

The culmination of Sartre's reasoning is the view (following Heidegger) that without ipseity, without the "possibility of selfness,"[718] there would simply be no world, and without the unconcealment of an intelligible world there would be no ipseity.[719] The relation of the for-itself with the possible *which it is* (or, as Sartre occasionally expresses it, the being "present as absent" of

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[715] See chapter 5.

[716] Baiasu 2011: 262n27.

[717] BN: 355.

[718] BN: 161.

[719] c.f. BN:161.

self-ness) is realised *via* the disclosure of a world, which Sartre envisages in dynamic terms as a "circuit" - as it were, a "circling back" from world to self.

Sartre vividly construes the subjective field as positively disclosive and projective, and yet *as such* explicitly grounded in the "no-thing-ness" and "negativity" of self-ness. Whereas Heidegger sees modes of disclosure as non-objectifying, and evocative of the immediacy of Dasein's being-in-the-world rather than the result of reflection *upon* the world, for Sartre it is fundamentally in terms of our pre-reflective awareness of positional consciousness that the world (and self-ness) are disclosed. In terms which Sartre could only wholeheartedly endorse, however, Heidegger claims that the disclosure of the world,

> "…is also Dasein's *self*-disclosure, but no longer in the idealist sense of the objectification of infinite spirit or in Husserl's implied sense of the life-world as disclosive of the constitutive accomplishments of the transcendental ego. Rather, Dasein comes upon itself as radically finite and temporal 'being-in-the-world'…"[720]

It is in the reciprocity and correlation of consciousness understood as a decompressive, "negating" upsurge amidst the density of being-in-itself, that human-reality itself is ultimately grounded:

> "The world (is) mine because it is haunted by possibles, of which the possible [acts of] consciousness (of) self that *I am* are conscious, and it is these possibles as such that give the world its unity and its meaning as a world."[721]

We have attempted to show that for both Sartre and Heidegger it is our projective understanding of the possibilities "I am" that grounds the disclosure of a world. In these terms, a "possibility" as such pre-supposes that consciousness transcends itself, that it is not merely captivated by or immersed in something which lies outside itself.[722] Self-transcendence so understood is only possible insofar as consciousness - which, as we are aware, Sartre claims is always pre-reflectively and non-positionally conscious of itself - is self-determining always in relation to what is not-self, to what it

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[720] Linge 2008: xlvi.

[721] BN: 161.

[722] Breeur 2003: 425.

is not, and it is *in this sense* that there is the possibility of self-ness. I suggest that Heidegger's account of Dasein as the clearing, as disclosive "being-in-the-world" - when viewed in light of the idea that subjectivity is negatively self-constituting - is positively reinforced and enlarged. As we saw in chapter five, for Sartre it is the decompressive relation of the for-itself, conceived as a "presence/absence" or as a "self-induced lack of being," to being (in-itself) that fundamentally constitutes the "…being that enters into that relation."[723] I believe that, rather than consciousness in any idealist sense constituting or constructing the world, the disclosure or "lighting up" of being means that Dasein or the for-itself is inevitably and consistently *constituting itself*. Sartre himself is specific: "The for-itself…produces itself from the very beginning on the foundation of a relation to the in-itself."[724] As pure intentionality, consciousness can only distinguish itself, or "…be a consciousness (of) self…,"[725] through and in terms of whatever it is consciousness of, or more precisely - for Sartre - in terms of whatever it is conscious of not being. Thus, presence to_____ is "not-being" in the precise sense that presence involves a radical negation - it is always a presence to something we are not: "…what is present to me *is not me*."[726] The pure translucency of consciousness constitutes a mode of being which is absolutely distinct from that of the objects of which it is intentionally conscious, and thus can only "choose itself as" or "be constituted as" something essentially *other than* its object, i.e., as a "no-thing." In Heidegger's terms, Dasein is fundamentally neither present-at-hand nor ready-to-hand - it is in essence an "opening" or "openness" in the sense of an unconcealing or a clearing - wherein being itself is "lit up." Consciousness so conceived is the foundation of its own nothingness, and it seems to me that in its self-arising as something that is not a thing consciousness, as it were, in Sartre's terms *becomes* for-itself. We may say, therefore, that for both Heidegger and Sartre disclosure of a world conceived in these terms is an event of "self-disclosure," or - for Sartre - a movement whereby

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[723] BN: 245.

[724] BN: 245.

[725] BN: 246.

[726] BN: 246.

"self-ness" represents the ideal, forever projected and anticipated, "in-itself-for-itself," always beyond reach, that "…I am in the form of 'having it to be'."[727] As he puts it, the world is meaningful and mine insofar as "…it is the in-itself correlative of nothingness."[728] I believe that the foregoing considerations accurately and convincingly capture a shared sense of the structural dynamics of "selfness" itself, portrayed by Sartre as the consummation of the "circuit" that meaningfully connects my disclosive consciousness with the world, and by Heidegger as "being-in-the-world" essentially representing the mutuality and the "co-arising" of Dasein and its world. In so-called "minimal" terms, the subject comes to represent, as Sartre puts it, "…an ipseity which spontaneously motivates itself."[729] In other words, it is only because of self-hood thus envisaged that being is structured as a world - that things are articulated as foreground or background, and that, in the final analysis, there can be a distinction between the possible and the real.[730]

6.8 Other Research

With a view to appropriately positioning our own enquiry in relation to other recent and relevant research, in chapter one we summarily outlined certain currently influential research which attempts to track an apparent consensus amongst leading "classic" phenomenologists regarding a so-called "minimal" conception of selfhood, reduced to its allegedly most basic features.[731] Our enquiry has challenged key features of such an approach - specifically its reliance on a strictly first-personal conception of qualitative, reflexive, "minimal self-hood."[732] Our alternate route has been to thematise and explore implications of the equation Heidegger makes in *Being & Time* between Dasein and disclosedness, and by thus positively restricting and directing the terms of our enquiry

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[727] BN: 161.

[728] BN: 161.

[729] BN: 422.

[730] c.f Breeur 2014: 421.

[731] See chapter 1.

[732] As explained in our introduction.

have aimed to arrive at a more reliable, authentically phenomenological account of subjectivity interpreted as a singular, dynamic event of "openness," and as the ground and possibility of disclosedness.

In our review of this research we focused our attention on the prestigious work of Dan Zahavi and his allies, who are committed to exploring the relations between the experiential structures of consciousness and the subject. Zahavi attempts to demonstrate that most of the classic phenomenological thinkers (including Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre) concur that "…the experiential dimension is characterised by a tacit self-consciousness,"[733] and on this basis proposes a phenomenological theory that the self, in itself an "experiential dimension," is none other than *the first-personal givenness of phenomena as experienced*. The self on this account is constituted by the phenomenal modality of our immediate experience, i.e. the qualitative "mineness" or "for-me-ness" (perhaps, the "*qualia*") of all conscious experience. It is this integral aspect of our conscious reality which Zahavi affirms "…deserves to be called the *minimal self* or *core self*."[734] He maintains that conscious experience in the phenomenal, uniquely "for-me" or "what it is like" sense is for experience to be an unconditional first-personal givenness, and that this structure consequently constitutes the "core" or "minimal" self.

I believe the results of our own enquiry bring into question certain core features of these proposals, perhaps most centrally to what extent this research and its findings are strictly phenomenological, in even a broad sense. From what we have gathered so far I would suggest, despite Zahavi's somewhat tenuous claims regarding an alleged consensus amongst classic phenomenologists in this respect, that at least both Heidegger and Sartre would clearly be at odds with an approach to the question of subjectivity in such decidedly phenomenal terms. Of course, we may certainly allow that, on the one hand, our sources - including Heidegger - reveal that the fundamental intentionality of consciousness conceived as a "directional-relatedness" or "comportment" toward the world tends to imply, in some form or other, a reflexivity or self-

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[733] Zahavi 2006: 11.

[734] Zahavi 2006: 106.

relatedness which may arguably be construed as pre-reflective.[735] On the other hand, a striking diversity of views within the field of phenomenological study is regrettably lost to, or at best displaced by, Zahavi's intense focus on the strictly internal structures of phenomenal consciousness. Schear's warning in this regard is timely: he suggests that, as we have seen, for both Heidegger and Sartre the dimensionality and diversity of the subjective field, phenomenologically interpreted, is in fact largely overlooked if it is…

> "…cast primarily as a phenomenal quality of conscious experience rather than, at the most basic level, a kind of ongoing existential task - almost as if being a subject, as opposed to being merely an object, is to be able to fail."[736]

As I argue in chapter five, consciousness grasped primarily *via* the phenomenality of the qualitative features of the internal structures of experience (as proposed by Zahavi) crucially lacks any realistic perspective on consciousness understood as fundamentally disclosive - i.e. as a ground or "event" of differentiation and contextualisation. That said, in fairness neither does Zahavi explain self-awareness as knowledge of a world-less, isolated immanence or "self," and neither does he imply that self-awareness is only possible provided we reflectively turn our gaze "inward" toward a "Cartesian-style mental residuum,"[737] wherein we encounter some kind of apparently self-sufficient interiority. As he puts it:

> "An effective way to capture this basic point is to replace the traditional phrase 'subject of experience' with the phrase 'subjectivity of experience.'"[738]

The latter phrasing, Zahavi maintains, helps avoid the pitfalls he believes attach to more traditional formulations, i.e. that the self exists apart from or beyond experience, and thus might feasibly be encountered separately from experience. For Zahavi, the experiential "minimal" self rests entirely on self-experience, and simply requires, as he puts it, "…an episode of pre-reflective self-

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[735] c.f. Schear 2009: 100.

[736] Schear 2009: 104.

[737] Zahavi 2005: 110-112, 129-130.

[738] Zahavi 2005: 126.

awareness."[739] To what extent, however, many of Zahavi's difficulties are reducible merely by "changing the language" is of course, and must remain, an open question. Heidegger suggests that "...the self is always there for Dasein...before all reflection...",[740] a point Zahavi seeks to exploit. However, are we expected to take Heidegger, as Zahavi maintains we should, to be claiming here (and elsewhere) that we are unconditionally always self-conscious in relation to our own conscious experience? It seems not, as I trust we have shown. That said, my concern in this context is that in Zahavi's anxiety to demonstrate unquestioningly that classic phenomenology concurs with and supports his central claims regarding the status of subjectivity, vital and illuminating differences within the phenomenological tradition are regrettably neglected or simply avoided.

With regard to the question concerning the determination of the subject as a so-called "dative of manifestation," conceptually underlying and grounding the idea of a minimal self-hood, I believe our enquiry demonstrates that conceiving the subject as (and only as) the locus for the manifestation or appearance of the world insinuates and consolidates an intrinsic separation of subject and world. It seems that a conception of subjectivity along these lines revivifies a whole host of implicit (and unnecessary) problematics that at the very least Heidegger and Sartre clearly aim to have gone beyond. Of course, to explain self-hood merely as a dative of appearing may indeed be to define the subject in terms of the world, but actually only insofar as the subject remains outside, or separate from, what we may refer to as the "genitive of manifestation," i.e. the world itself. Crucially, if the subject is determined as "the place" where the world is manifest - this can only mean that as subject it is not a dimension or aspect of that world.[741]

In chapter five we examined Sartre's account in *Being & Nothingness* of human "self-ness" conceived as a structural moment in the process he articulates as the "circuit of ipseity." We must briefly draw attention here to the manner in which Zahavi appears to appropriate the Sartrean notion of "ipseity" (self-ness) in order to determine - emblematically of his entire project - the "self" in

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[739] Zahavi 2005: 126.

[740] See Zahavi 2006: 83.

[741] c.f. Overgaard 2004: 137.

what he claims are minimal terms. It seems that Zahavi's use of the term "ipseity," however, marks a significant departure from the sense of the term as employed by Sartre. As stated above, central to Zahavi's project is to bring together, in what he claims are authentically phenomenological terms, the idea of a "minimal" self together with a hybridised version of Sartre's account of "ground-level" consciousness understood as pre-reflective self-presence. He does so regardless of the fact that Sartre himself comes to recognise the limitations of relying on this very specific reflexive structure to capture or explain the "individuation," or the "personalisation," of consciousness. As Zahavi says, for example, in one representative passage:

> " Contrary to what some of the self-skeptics are claiming, one does not need to conceive of the self as something standing apart from or above experiences…the idea is to link an experiential sense of self to the particular first-person givenness that characterises our experiential life; it is this first-personal givenness that constitutes the *mineness* or *ipseity* of experience. Thus, the self is not something that stands opposed to the stream of consciousness, but is, rather, immersed in conscious life; it is an integral part of its structure.[742]"

The idea of the qualitative "mineness" of first-personal experience is here identified as, and is seemingly interchangeable with, the "ipseity" of experience. Zahavi is significantly willing to acknowledge that the contention between egological and non-egological accounts of subjectivity[743] is, as he often remarks, philosophically limiting. Nevertheless, as Kruger points out, his resolve to identify certain "invariant" structures of our experience means that:

> "…the ipseity of the first-personal experiential dimension…[is] coupled with…[Zahavi's] argument that these structures qualify as a minimal form of selfhood."[744]

[742] Zahavi 2005: 125, but see also Janzen 2007: 1-5.

[743] For an early, but insightful, example see Gurwitsch 1941.

[744] Kruger 2011: 49.

In view of Kruger's observation, it should in any event be noted (as Gusman does[745]) that Zahavi generally tends to equate the first-personal quality of pre-reflective self-consciousness directly with the notion of ipseity - although he more frequently tends to rely on the anglicised transliteration, "self-ness." Either way, it seems to me that despite the prominence given by Zahavi to a Sartrean account of reflexive structure, Zahavi does appear to confuse what for Sartre are two distinct notions. Indeed, as Sartre expresses it: "Ipseity represents a degree of nihilation that goes further than the pure self-presence of the pre-reflective cogito."[746]

> In his later *Self and Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy and Shame*, Zahavi attempts to clarify his claims regarding "ipseity" as a distinctly Sartrean phenomenon:

> "In a subsequent move, Sartre then argues that consciousness, precisely because of its ubiquitous pre-reflective self-consciousness, must be said to possess a basic dimension of selfhood, which Sartre terms *ipseity* (from the Latin term for self, *ipse*). When Sartre speaks of the self, he is consequently referring to something very basic, something characterising (phenomenal) consciousness as such."[747]

It is of particular interest that in this passage Zahavi is referencing *Being & Nothingness*[748] in support of his interpretation of Sartre. It seems, however, that the only passage he could possibly be pointing towards lies toward the conclusion of Sartre's analysis of the for-itself in terms of "the being of possibles," where he is preparing the ground for his forthcoming investigation of the "circuit of ipseity." It is important to avoid any potential misreading here, and we will therefore quote Sartre at length:

> "What we must note is that the for-itself is separated from the self-presence that is missing from it and which is its own possibility; it is separated, in one sense, by *nothing* and, in another sense, by the totality of the existent in the world, insofar as the missing for-itself or

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[745] See Gusman: 2015: 334.

[746] BN: 160.

[747] Zahavi 2014: 12.

[748] BN: 158.

possible is for-itself in the form of *presence* to a specific worldly state. In this sense, the being beyond which the for-itself projects its coincidence with itself is the world…beyond which man will be reunited with his possible. Let us call the for-itself's relation to the possible that it is the '*circuit of ipseity*' - and the totality of being, insofar as it is traversed by the circuit of ipseity, the '*world*.'"[749]

According to Sartre "ipseity" arises exclusively in terms of being-for-itself's disclosive "traversal" of the world, in a movement toward *the possible*, (i.e. as he goes on to explain, toward the finally unachievable state of "in-itself-for-itself"), but always underwritten negatively - by lack or absence - in which, as we discussed above, the entire process is grounded.[750] What is problematic insofar as Zahavi's reliance on the term is concerned is that he seems to directly attribute an apparently reduced, insufficiently clarified conception of "self-ness" to Sartre. Importantly, what seems to be overlooked or ignored is that "ipseity" comes to represent for Sartre the "event" by means of which the personalised nature of being-for-itself arises within and through the projective, and therefore complex, event of world disclosure.

A central criticism of Zahavi's project might be his apparently insufficient clarification and defence of his notion of first-personal givenness as characteristic of the so-called minimal self. Although it may feasibly be possible to accept that, in a rather nebulous sense, the idea that consciousness of an object involves, on occasion but perhaps not necessarily, an apparent first-personal "familiarity" or "acquaintance" within the experiencing itself, nevertheless the significance of this structure in relation to an understanding of self-hood at its most minimal level remains very much unexplained or convincingly demonstrated. In any event, Zahavi's conclusion from such reasoning that there are two distinct kinds of self-consciousness, i.e. a non-objectifying or pre-reflective self-consciousness and an objectifying or reflective self-consciousness, is not only unlikely but is in any event not argued for in any detail. The claim that *exclusively and necessarily* all our experiencing inevitably

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[749] BN: 158.

[750] Again, see chapter 5.

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involves an underlying sense of "mine" or "for-me" does not, it seems to me, guarantee - in the sense of the qualitative nature of the experience of an experience or consciousness of a "feeling" - any obvious implications of a so-called *self*-consciousness in relation to my experiencing.

It certainly appears that Zahavi's style and method of phenomenological analysis represents quite a departure from the intense, hermeneutic investigation of the nature of the subjective field we have been following on the part of Heidegger and Sartre - despite, of course, Zahavi's attempt to demonstrate a consensus within classic phenomenology regarding his claims. At the very least, any attempt to extract a convincing account of subjectivity from an interpretation of the phenomenality of experience as a qualitative, first-personal givenness sits at some distance from the methods and aims of "classic" phenomenological enquiry - certainly as we have encountered them.

It should be evident from what we have discovered that Heidegger and Sartre are each struggling to radically re-vision the very essence of human-being. Heidegger, as we have noted, does *not* aim to distance himself from or simply reject the categorial structures and forms traditional metaphysics have historically depended on, but rather he seeks to actively interrogate and re-formulate those very structures. This strategy enables him to gradually erode the more traditional conceptions of human essence as fundamentally a-historic and substantial, and bring to the fore an understanding of essence conceived as historically conditioned, fluid, and "de-centred." It surely follows, therefore, that what we might call "ek-sistent disclosedness" (i.e. standing outside of ourselves, in the open, exposed to and disclosively engaged with beings) constitutes a ground of possibility for self-ness. Such an understanding of subjectivity clearly calls into question - and actively undermines - any kind of approach to the question of self-hood reliant on an interpretation of the subject constituted by the qualitative features of immediate experience.

Concluding Remarks

"Dasein has always stepped out from itself: it is always in the world. We are immediately involved with the world. My experience of myself is a worldly experience, for I cannot escape the world. As Heidegger claims, the disclosure of the self entails a co-disclosure of the world in its meaningfulness. Disclosing the world is always already self-disclosure and self-finding. What we really come across is the co-givenness of self and world."[751]

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[751] Escudero 2014: 10, my italics.

In our introduction I highlighted Charles Taylor's claim that any philosophical approach to the question of the subjective field or "self" which avoids or circumvents those predominant strands of contemporary investigation that have become enshrined, as it were, in mainstream theoretical psychology or cognitive neuroscience tend to be generally dismissed or at best marginalised. Although the self can naturally be an object of study in these terms, like any other object, nevertheless, as Taylor reminds us, there are "certain things" which are typically held to be true of objects of scientific study (in the broadest sense) which he suggests do not hold for the self.[752] As we stated previously, these conceptual obstacles may be grouped into four categories: (i) an object of study is "to be taken absolutely," i.e., as it is independently of us, and not in its meaning for any subject; (ii) the object is what it is entirely independently of subjective interpretation; (iii) the object can in principle be captured in explicit description; (iv) the object can - in principle - be described without reference to its surroundings.[753] I maintain that our enquiry has - albeit often implicitly - separately addressed and challenged each of these obstacles, perhaps most significantly and suggestively by adopting what we may describe as a generally hermeneutic approach to the various questions we have raised. These concluding comments, therefore, will be devoted to showing that in this respect we have chosen to mirror the tactics and methods of Heidegger and Sartre themselves, insofar as their approach to the question of subjectivity and self-hood may most appropriately and usefully be characterised as in itself hermeneutic.

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[752] Taylor 1989: 34.

[753] Taylor 1989: 33.

Heidegger claims that Dasein is inherently and fundamentally interpretive, and insofar as disclosedness conceived as an event of contextualisation[754] should not be understood as comprising but rather preceding and constituting a ground of possibility for interpretation, I have accordingly referenced in the foregoing chapters Heidegger's development of what he refers to as the hermeneutical *as-structure* - i.e., the seeing of something *as* something. The "uncovering" or discovery of singular entities in these terms is possible only as projective understanding: the categories "as which" objects are apprehended (*as* X, *as* Y, etc.) are embedded and latent in Dasein's deeply historical, projective facticity. In other words, the "uncovering" of individual objects, relations or states of affairs in the world is grounded in, and only possible in terms of, the disclosing of a context - the revealing of meaning, understood as an intra-referential environment of sense and significance. Given that unconcealment conceived in these terms represents the appearance - for us - of an intelligible world, it would arguably follow that this process *presupposes* the prior disclosure of the historical, normative and existential context in terms of which "self-hood" (*ipseity*) may arise as a structural moment. As we have endeavoured to show, subjectivity envisaged in these terms is "…the farthest thing from a metaphysical-substance view…"[755] Rather, although the subject can be interpreted as a necessary structural dimension of our experiencing, it is not to be explained as an underlying substance of whatever form that, as it were, constitutes the world by means of reducing it to its representations.[756]

Central to *Being & Time*, as we have observed, is Heidegger's claim that the subject-object distinction, constituting as it does a foundational structure of traditional epistemology, represents a "methodological individualism."[757] A blinkered concern with perception as the private experience of an isolated and detached subject, however, suggests solipsism - and critically misrepresents (or, so Heidegger suggests, actually perverts) any attempt to realistically analyse human experience as it

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[754] See our introduction.

[755] Carr 1999: 134.

[756] See Carr 199: 134-135 for a more detailed consideration of these issues.

[757] Weaver 2006: 38.

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occurs in the midst of the world. Indeed, any attempt to explain conscious experience in these traditional terms will inevitably provoke, Heidegger warns us, a proliferation of philosophical "pseudo-problems."[758] In *Being & Time* his hermeneutic approach to the investigation of human experience is designed to undermine this orthodox, and consequently for him mistaken, opposition of subject and object. Kisiel characterises this hermeneutical approach as underlying, and giving form to, an understanding of self-hood intrinsic to experience, i.e. an arising or emergence of "self-ness" within and through the process of disclosure itself.[759] If the unreflective and immediate encounter of understanding is initially a moment of "existing" before it is a moment of "cognition" (i.e. "…more an understanding that we *are* rather than *have*…"[760]) then perhaps this understanding in itself constitutes the definition of human existence.[761] In their examination of Heidegger's interpretation of human reality as conditioned by and yet conditioning its own environment, McWhorter and Stenstad similarly open up this sense of self-disclosure which they also believe Heidegger intends:

> "Already in *Being & Time* Heidegger emphasised that the 'being' - the *Sein* - of Dasein is the ['here' or "there'] (*Da*), which is none other than *openness*. What does that say? This 'there' is not so much a locational here or there, but is our situation in the dynamic nets of disclosive relationality. When Heidegger says that 'Dasein is its disclosedness,' this is not the narrow self-disclosure of a modern subject, but evokes the entire context of disclosing and concealing."[762]

I would like to suggest, in light of these considerations, that "being-in-the-world" is primarily an articulation in these relational terms, and that it therefore follows that our everyday encounter with "the thing" fundamentally constitutes, in a profound and nuanced sense, an encounter with ourselves. It is precisely in these terms, I would contend, that it becomes possible to better

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[758] See Lafont 2005: 266.

[759] Kisiel 2002: 194.

[760] Kisiel 2002: 195.

[761] Kisiel 2002: 194.

[762] McWhorter 2009: 221.

appreciate that "the thing" and "the self" are, in a sense, *given or arise together* and are simultaneously "…part of one system of interrelation…,"[763] rather than merely a "bare encounter" between a detached subject and a "de-worlded" object.

In the early *Ontology - the Hermeneutics of Facticity*[764] (1923) Heidegger anticipates and prefigures his hermeneutical analysis of the everydayness of Dasein - a strategy which will inform much of *Being & Time*. In the former work we find him already beginning to explore, in innovative yet concrete terms, implications of what he refers to as the purely factical being-there of Dasein and its world,

> "…by hermeneutically explicating 'at a particular time' (*jeweils*) and in a 'historical situation' the 'categories' or 'existentials' in which factical life, as an open-ended and incalculable 'being-possible,' exists (for a while and at a particular time) and addresses or interprets its being and that of the world."[765]

Facticity in this sense represents that dimension of the being of Dasein in terms of which it is already disclosively "given over to things." The implication of course is that our being is consequently always "being *there*," in the sense of always already *in* the world.[766] Toward the conclusion of this work Heidegger spells out certain ramifications, as he sees them, that appear to follow directly from an understanding of the disclosedness of Dasein. He notes that his analysis hitherto has remained largely at the level of "mere things," but that nevertheless his intention has been to show that in the dealings of everyday-ness which are closest to us, it is the case that the "environing world," as disclosed, "…is always there also as a with-world and a *self-world*…[t]hese terms *do not demarcate regions over against each other*, but rather are definite modes of the world's

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763 Malpas 2007: 122.

764 Heidegger 1999b. OHF hereafter.

765 OHF, translator's epilogue: 91.

766 See: Malpas 2007: 120.

being-encountered."[767] As he expresses it subsequently in the *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*,[768] the self, i.e. Dasein,

> "…never finds itself otherwise than in the things themselves…it finds itself primarily and constantly *in things* because, tending them, distressed by them, it always in some way or other rests in things.…The Dasein finds itself primarily in things. The Dasein does not need to conduct a sort of espionage on the ego in order to have the self; rather, as the Dasein gives itself over immediately and passionately to the world itself, its own self is reflected to it from things."[769]

Heidegger's purpose here, so he tells us, is to describe a specific *apriori*, elementary *fact* of existence "…which must be seen prior to all talk, no matter how acute, about the subject-object relation."[770]

Likewise, in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*[771] Heidegger claims that for Dasein "being-already-by-things" belongs to existence - by which he means that Dasein, as existent, exists by way of this being-by-things, "…and is disclosed in and for being-by-things."[772] Later in the same work he goes on to suggest that being-by-things, in this sense, is essentially - not occasionally - disclosive, and as characteristic of existence is thus, as he puts it, the genuine sense of "being-true."[773] In this regard, the self is not an act, or a result, of self-reflection or of some kind of noumenal activity. In fact, the self cannot be understood as any single thing, activity, or locus.[774] Thus, disclosedness does not, particularly in any conventional sense, have a "foundation in a self,"[775] as if in some nebulous way a barely identifiable "self" underlies, as an apparently causal

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[767] OHF: 79, my italics.

[768] Heidegger 1982, hereafter BP.

[769] BP: 159.

[770] BP: 159.

[771] Heidegger 1984, hereafter MFL.

[772] MFL: 127.

[773] MFL: 127.

[774] Käufer 2013: 353.

[775] Käufer 2013: 353.

condition, the activity of disclosure itself. Rather, it seems to me, the existential analytic shows us that selfhood must be seen as an existential structure that is *already implicit in disclosedness* - that is, a selfhood comprising a circumspective ability-to-be, a "being-already-by-things."

The notoriously treacherous notion of "self-understanding" in this context is clearly *not* meant to imply in any familiar or indeed orthodox sense, for either Heidegger or Sartre, a kind of coming to "self-knowledge," or "self-discovery" - in the sense of the recognition and acknowledgment of a subject or ego, located at one remove from the world. For both Heidegger and Sartre, disclosedness synthesises concurrently Dasein *and* the world, in combination, as the space or moment of unconcealment - i.e. as a unitary event such that Dasein's or the for-itself's being in, and disclosure of, the world, "…is thus not distinct from its understanding itself, but is at the same time an interpretation of itself."[776] In fact, rather than comprising a seemingly endless collation and systematisation of contingently related facts about "ourselves and the world," hermeneutic understanding represents insight into how these facts are possible.

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[776] Hoy 2006: 184.

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