IV Owned Disclosedness: Resolute Being toward Death

The most pervasive and basic of Heidegger's "existentialist" concepts is that of ownedness (Eigentlichkeit). The usual translation of "eigentlich" is "real" or "authentic" (as opposed, for instance, to fake or counterfeit). But Heidegger explicitly warns that he has chosen his expressions "Eigentlichkeit" and its opposite "Uneigentlichkeit" in "the strict senses of the words" (SZ, 43)—which I take to mean their etymological senses. The root word "eigen" is broadly equivalent to (and cognate with) the English word "own" (as in "a room of one's own"). This suggests that Heidegger's terms (neither of which is an ordinary German word) might better be translated "ownedness" and "unownedness"—and that's how I will translate them (and correspondingly for the adjectives and adverbs). But the ultimate justification for this must be philosophical.

The first clue to a proper understanding is Heidegger's further remark (in the same passage) that ownedness and unownedness are both grounded in the fact that Dasein at all is defined by in-each-case-mineness (gemeinigkeit). The point here is that each person's life belongs to the person whose life it is: each person can say "this is my life," "my decision," "my responsibility," and so on. It is not Dasein as such that is "mine" (or can say "my..." ); rather, Dasein in each case is (respectively) "mine." Dasein as such is defined by this fact that in each respective case it is "mine." Ownedness and unownedness are modes of Dasein's being; and they are both grounded in that fact about Dasein as such, that it is in each case mine.

Thus, ownedness and unownedness are alternative ways in which Dasein, in any given case, can be respectively "its own" ("mine"). Dasein is invariably its own (mine) in each case. But it may or may not be owned—ownedness is something over and above mineness that varies from case to case. (I think Heidegger should also have said that ownedness varies in degree from case to case, and that, in any given case, its degree can differ in different respects; but he did not.) Unownedness is, so to speak, the default: in the first place and usually, Dasein is unowned. Ownedness, by contrast, is distinctive and special. But the possibility of ownedness is universal (implicit in mineness), and is moreover, as we shall see, essential to Dasein as the entity that comports itself toward entities as entities.
The difference between ownedness and unownedness is a difference in modes of disclosedness. Unowned disclosedness (the default) is called publicness; owned disclosedness (Dasein’s distinctive possibility) is called resoluteness. But, given the way Heidegger uses the word “existential”, it can also be called existential disclosedness. Thus, we will understand what this is all about—what it has to do with the transcendental question concerning the possibility of ontical truth—when we understand resoluteness. It is in Heidegger’s lengthy explication of resoluteness that all of the notorious existentialist notions—falling, anxiety, individuality, death, conscience, and being-responsible (“guilt”)—come to the fore.

Falling is the basic characteristic of Dasein that, in each case, it inevitably tends toward unownedness—specifically, unowned disclosedness (publicness). This is why publicness is the default. In the special case of scientific Dasein, fallenness (unownedness) is exactly what Kuhn calls normality (as in: normal science). So falling is a generalization of the tendency toward normality in science. Kuhn has a lovely explanation for why a dogged, even sometimes dogmatic, tendency toward normality is essential to science. Heidegger, too, says that falling is not a derogatory concept, and that it is essential to Dasein; but he lacks Kuhn’s developed explanation of why. Given this essential tendency toward unownedness or normality (what Heidegger also calls everydayness), there must also be some push in the opposite direction, if there is ever to be anything else. Kuhn’s and Heidegger’s accounts of this opposing push likewise have much in common, the former’s being richer in historical example, the latter’s more general and more worked out philosophically.

Resoluteness, as a mode of disclosedness, has the same basic structure that we’ve already seen: a sofinding and telling understanding. Each of these three moments has an owned (existential) mode that belongs to resoluteness as owned disclosedness.

The owned sofindingness that belongs to resoluteness is readiness-for-anxiety. Anxiety is a mood that manifests a profound breakdown in an individual’s way of life. Nothing makes any sense or means anything anymore—nothing matters except the overwhelming fact that nothing (else) matters. (Thus, anxiety is analogous to Kuhn’s sense of crisis). Heidegger says that anxiety individualizes Dasein. This does
not mean that Dasein is not, in each case, already an individual, but rather that, in anxiety, a person's individuality is "brought home" to him or her in an utterly unmistakable and undeniable way. Falling back into public life (normality) is a way of escaping anxiety, and the public culture encourages this. Indeed, the culture offers "common-sense" interpretations that tend to minimize anxiety itself—turn it into (confuse it with) some weak-kneed or adolescent self-indulgence. Thus, the very possibility of genuine anxiety is publicly confused and covered up—disguised and forgotten.

Readiness-for-anxiety is not the same as anxiety, but it does run directly counter to this public (falling) tendency to disguise and forget anxiety. Readiness-for-anxiety is an individualized mode of so-findingness in which anxiety is held open as a constant possibility—a possibility that currently matters to that very individual. This does not mean that the person is hoping or striving for anxiety—far from it—but only that he or she is determined not to hide or run away from it. (If we were to invent a Kuhnian analog for this, it would be openness to the possibility of scientific crisis).

The owned telling that belongs to resoluteness is conscience—or, rather, that reticence (muting the public babble) in which conscience can be "listened for" and "heard." According to the common public interpretation, conscience is an "inner voice" that mainly warns and reproves—tells you when you would be or have been naughty. (A so-called "good" conscience merely reassures you that you haven't been naughty). But, as with anxiety, Heidegger claims that this fallen interpretation disguises and forgets what conscience really articulates, which must be (Heidegger is not explicit here) the difference between one's whole life "working" and its breaking down or failing to "work"—the very difference that matters in readiness-for-anxiety.

What Heidegger is explicit about is that (in articulating this distinction) conscience calls upon Dasein in each case to take over responsibility for its whole life—a call that the public interpretation likewise disguises and forgets. This is not the same as what I earlier termed ontological responsibility, which is perfectly intelligible in terms of public norms and expectations, and which concerns only particular events. Rather, the responsibility that existential con-
science gives Dasein in each case to understand—namely, existential responsibility—is responsibility for its own self as a whole, for who it is. Thus conscience, like anxiety, individualizes.

Heidegger’s formulation of this point takes advantage of some relationships among German word-senses that can’t be reproduced exactly in English. The term that I am translating as “responsible” is “schuldig”. The two most common senses of this word are guilty/at-fault/culpable and obliged/indebted/liable. “Responsible”, in English, is not as specific as either of these senses, but is broad enough to cover them both. Clearly, the common theme is how one ought and ought not to behave. (It is helpful to remember that “schuld” is cognate with “should”). Thus, Heidegger can say that, according to common sense, conscience mainly tells us that we are schuldig—guilty or obliged. But he can then go on to say that guilt and obligation are merely fallen public interpretations of being schuldig—interpretations that track only public norms and statuses, keeping score on everyone’s credits and debits, points and infractions. As fallen, however, these “normal” interpretations are but forgetful disguises of a more originary self-responsibility—one that cannot be public but can only be taken over by an individual. Conscience, understood existentially, calls upon Dasein in each case to take over and own this responsibility.

The owned, existential understanding that belongs to resoluteness is projecting oneself onto being-responsible. Thus, being responsible, like anything onto which Dasein projects itself, is a possibility for how it can live—an ability-to-be. Heidegger calls it Dasein’s ownmost (egeneste) possibility or ability-to-be. Now, Dasein, as that entity that comports itself toward entities as entities, is always in each case responsible. (Irresponsibility is just a deficient mode of responsibility). This was shown already in the second stage of the grounding. So the being-responsible (onto which owned Dasein projects itself, and which conscience gives it to understand) must be something over and above that invariable responsibility that always characterizes Dasein—something that is a possibility for it, but not necessary.

An individual’s being responsible is its taking over responsibility for its whole self. But, what does that mean? Here we have “existentialism”
in its full flower. Yet, according to the passage I quoted in my prologue, Heidegger does not want to preach an existentialist philosophy, but rather to renew the question of being. Does that mean that being-responsible has something to do with the question of being? Yes, of course! Ultimately *everything* in *Being and Time* has to do with the question of being—and, with it, truth. The existential concepts are introduced for this reason and this reason only. Our task as readers is to understand how.

That task will take us through the most remarkable of detours—or, rather, what at first *seems* to be a detour—Heidegger’s doctrine of death. As with anxiety, conscience and guilt/responsibility, Heidegger claims that the understandings of death handed down to us by our culture are mostly fallen and forgetful disguises. He singles out two versions of these popular conceptions for particular attention, so as to contrast them with his own, and thus to set them aside. The first of these he calls *perishing*. This is the ubiquitous and all-too-familiar biological phenomenon that is the cessation of systematic biological function in an organism (and, typically, the onset of organic decay). All organisms eventually perish: plants, animals, fungi, and what have you, including all specimens of Homo sapiens. But *Dasein* never perishes—not because it is immortal or everlasting, but because it is not a living organism in the biological sense at all.

The second popular conception of death Heidegger calls *demise*. Unlike perishing, demise is not a biological phenomenon, but pertains exclusively to Dasein. It is instead a social-cultural phenomenon. Roughly speaking, demise is that social event upon which you cease to be countable in the census, your spouse becomes a widow or widower, your property ceases to be yours and passes to your heirs, criminal charges against you automatically become moot, and so on. Although demise typically coincides with the perishing of an organism, these are not at all the same. The relationship between demise and perishing is loosely analogous to that between marriage and mating (which likewise are not at all the same).

What is important about these is only that neither is to be identified with death, *existentially* conceived. Without attempting a full account, I will relate a few of the most salient and significant things
that Heidegger says about death (as opposed to perishing and/or demise).

- Death is *not an event*: it is not something that happens—ever (SZ, 240, 250, 257).
- Death "is" only in *being toward* death; that is, death is intelligible only as a certain sort of being-toward (SZ, 234, 245, 259).
- Death is a *way to be* (Dasein is *constantly* dying); in other words, death is a way of life (SZ, 245, 251, 259).
- Death is Dasein's *ownmost possibility*—a possibility that it is called upon to *take over* in each case, and so one that *individualizes* Dasein (SZ, 250, 263f.).
- More specifically, death is the *possibility of the impossibility* of Dasein's existence at all—that is, of any comportment toward entities as entities—and is thus the possibility of giving itself up (SZ, 250, 262, 264).
- In its being toward death, Dasein *decides or chooses to choose* itself (SZ, 259, 264, 384; and see also 188, 268, 287f.).
- Death is Dasein’s *finitude and ability-to-be-whole*, that is, in being toward death, Dasein exists *finitely* and as a *whole* (SZ, 264, 309, 329f., 384–386).

It is clear from the wording of several of these (especially the fourth) that death is related to resoluteness. But Heidegger makes the connection explicit and even stronger. On the one hand, at the conclusion of his existential interpretation of death (SZ, 266), he acknowledges that, as so far described, being toward death remains a "fantastic exaction," and that it has not been shown how Dasein is *capable* of it. On the other hand, following his initial account of resoluteness, he suggests (SZ, 302f.) that it has not yet been "thought through to its end." The solution is that each discussion fills the lacuna in the other: thought through to its end, resoluteness must be resoluteness *toward death*, and it is as thus resolute that Dasein is *able to be* toward death.

Accordingly, he offers (SZ, 62) a further elaboration of resoluteness. As resolute, Dasein projects itself onto its ownmost being-
responsible—that is, understands itself as responsible for its whole life by owning that responsibility and "taking it over." Owning responsibility, however, means taking it over not as something occasional or incidental, but rather as constant and essential; that is, it projects itself onto being-responsible as a whole. To put it another way, it understands itself as responsible no matter what. But, as finite, Dasein simply cannot project itself "no matter what." The "whole" as which it projects itself must be a finite whole—which is to say, the projection must be in some way limited, and must project itself as thus limited. (Resolute Dasein does not hide or run away from its finitude). As Heidegger puts it, resolute Dasein projects itself as self-responsible "right to its end" (SZ, 305).

Such whole-but-finite resolution means resolution toward death. Death—which is intelligible only as being toward death—is Dasein's ability-to-be-whole and its finitude. Conscience and anxiety exact this resolute responsibility of Dasein (SZ, 307f.); so, while indeed an "exaction," being toward death is not "fantastic."

The word "resolute" means firmly and unwaveringly determined or decisive. Heidegger expresses as much by saying that resoluteness resolves to "repeat itself"—that is, to keep at it or stick to it by, as it were, constantly "re-resolving." But he makes this point in the context of making another: resoluteness cannot become rigidly set in its ways about its situation, but rather must be held open and free for whatever its current possibility is. In particular, it must hold itself free for a possible—and, in each case, necessary—taking it back. Taking a resolution back means retracting or withdrawing it—that is, giving up on it. These two points are made together and as belonging together (SZ, 307f., 391). Resoluteness as such resolves to repeat itself (stick to it) while also holding itself constantly free for the possibility of taking it back (giving it up). Clearly (and as Heidegger immediately makes explicit), the possibility of "taking it back" refers to death. This is what is meant by saying that resoluteness is resolute being toward death.

But building this into the structure of resoluteness as such—as something it "holds itself free for"—sounds incoherent. Sticking to it is, of course, a possibility onto which Dasein projects itself—which just means that it rules out the contrary, not sticking to it, as unac-
ceptable to itself. But this seems flatly incompatible with holding itself free for the possibility of taking it back. Including them both in the definition makes being “resolute” sound like making a promise with your fingers crossed—which is not to make a promise at all.

So we have to ask: how can resoluteness be resolute if, as such, it must be resolute toward death? What kind of responsibility could that be? And, in the meantime, what can it have to do with the question of being and the grounding of ontical truth?

V Truth and Finitude

We are not, after all, unprepared for a connection between resoluteness and the questions of being and truth. Resoluteness is a mode—the owned, existential mode—of disclosedness. Disclosing is at once a disclosing of the being of entities and a disclosing of Dasein itself. We have seen how these can be described separately, but also how they are essentially united. As thus unitary, disclosedness is the condition of the possibility of comportment toward entities as entities—hence of ontical truth. That was the substance of the first two stages of the grounding. Resoluteness, as a mode of disclosedness, is likewise at once a disclosing of being and of Dasein. What we have focused on so far is resoluteness as the owned disclosing of Dasein. Therefore, in order to complete the story, we must see how, as the owned disclosing of Dasein, resoluteness is essentially also an owned disclosing of being.

In Being and Time as we have it, Heidegger does not fully work out this crucial chapter of the account. But it is implied in everything that we do have. So the omission cannot be mere negligence, nor can it be that he thought it unimportant. I conjecture, therefore, that it is one of the topics to have been addressed in the never published third division of part one. (The main topic to have been addressed in that division is temporality as the “sense of being,” which might have amounted to a fourth stage in the grounding of ontical truth.) Accordingly, I propose to sketch out in the remainder of my chapter how resoluteness is an owned disclosing of being. That will complete the third—and for now final—stage in the grounding of ontical truth.
A moment's reflection shows that the possibilities onto which entities are projected—hence, their being—is cultural and historical. Physicists learn the theory and practice of physics at school and from their peers, as part of their cultural heritage; and what they learn today is not what they learned a hundred or a thousand years ago. After all, except in times of crisis, the standards for scientific investigation and getting the entities right are established by normal science; and what is normal is cultural and historical. Though less dramatically obvious, the same is true for the possibilities and being of ordinary, everyday entities.

Heidegger emphasizes that Dasein is essentially historical (geschichtlich), not merely in the sense that it always "has" a history, but rather, and more basically, in the sense that its being (existence) is constituted by historicalness (SZ, 382). Accordingly, insofar as Dasein is owned, it is owned as historical. This means, among other things, that resolute Dasein discloses its current possibilities from out of a heritage that it takes over—that is, takes responsibility for (SZ, 383). In responsibly handing possibilities down to itself from out of its heritage, it explicitly chooses them for itself (chooses to choose them) and this explicit handing down is repetition—the repetition that belongs by definition to resoluteness (SZ, 384f.). (Heidegger adds that this repetition of an inherited possibility is not mere reiteration but also makes a “reciprocal rejoinder.”)

As we saw in the second stage of the grounding, since Dasein's basic makeup is being-in-the-world, its self-disclosing is inseparable from its disclosing of the being of the entities toward which it comports itself. Therefore, resolute Dasein, in handing down possibilities to itself from out of its heritage, is handing down at once the possibilities onto which it projects itself and the possibilities onto which it projects those entities. Though the wording is peculiar, the point is easy to see: physicists, in becoming physicists, inherit both the possibilities for working as physicists and the possibilities for the physical entities with which they work. Neither makes sense without the other. In other words, the being of the physical is just as historical as the practice of physics. And a resolute physicist takes responsibility for both.
How can a physicist take responsibility for the being of the physical? Heidegger, unfortunately, declines to say. After briefly discussing the scientific projection of entities (especially in mathematical physics), and concluding with a quick invocation of resoluteness, he remarks: "The origin of science from out of owned existence will not be pursued further here" (SZ. 363). Whether he intended to pursue it further later is not made clear. Be that as it may, I think we can pursue it further now, and moreover we must if we are to complete the grounding of ontical truth that is so strikingly and thoroughly prepared in the text we have.

Resoluteness not only repeats itself, but also holds itself free for the possibility of taking it back. But this freedom is not irresponsible license—precisely not. It is the freedom of responsible decision. To what is this free decision responsible? Cryptically, yet not incorrectly, we can say that it is responsible to itself. Less compressed, this says: it is responsible to that very disclosing of self and being that, as a resolute decisiveness, resoluteness as such is. How that can be will come into focus if we think again about disclosedness and responsibility.

In the first stage of the grounding, disclosing the being of entities makes intelligible a nonarbitrary distinction between appearance and reality via the entailed refusal to accept apparent impossibilities in entities as discovered. That refusal stands behind all the double checking, and so on, that ferrets out which apparent discoveries are wrong and so vindicates those that are right. In the second stage, in which that same disclosing is seen instead from the side of self-disclosing, that same responsive refusal manifests itself as ontological responsibility—that is, responsibility for ontical truth. For unowned Dasein, that's as far as responsibility for the truth goes.

There is, however, and can be no antecedent guarantee that all that double checking and whatnot, no matter how assiduous, will ever actually succeed. That is, no matter how hard the relevant individuals and community try, they may not find a way to reconcile their apparent discoveries with what they know to be possible. What then? Well, of course, there can be appeals to magic, miracles, and mysticism. There can be denial, disinterest, and decline. And, in the
meantime, everybody's busy; if the impossibility is remote or arcane, maybe the best thing is to ignore it and see if it goes away.

But, what is the responsible response? Notice that this question cannot be about ontological responsibility. What that responsibility requires—the double checking and ensuing corrections—has already been exhausted. So we're looking for another and further responsibility—"further" because it only comes up after whole-hearted ontological responsibility has exhausted itself. This further responsibility too must take the form of a refusal to accept any discovered impossibilities. ("Accepting" them is simply irresponsible.) A discovered impossibility rests on two factors: what is in fact discovered and what is ruled out by the projection onto possibilities. The careful and persistent double checking has eliminated the discoveries as the culprit. That leaves the possibilities—in other words, the being of the entities discovered. So, our further responsibility must be responsibility for the projection onto those possibilities, which is to say, for the disclosing of that being.

Taking responsibility for something is not only taking it as something that matters, but also not taking it for granted. Taking the disclosure of being for granted—whether explicitly or tacitly—is characteristic of fallen Dasein and normal science. Owned Dasein, as taking over responsibility for its ontological heritage, no longer takes it for granted. It reawakens the question of being—as its ownmost and sometimes most urgent question. In other words, it holds itself free for taking it back. That doesn't mean it does take it back, still less that it does so easily or casually. The freedom to take it back is not a liberty or a privilege but rather a burden—the most onerous of burdens. That's why everyday Dasein runs away and hides from it, and even denies that there is any such freedom. Hence, conscience and anxiety must extract it of Dasein, and resolute Dasein must hold itself free.

Giving up on a disclosing of being is not a matter to be taken lightly; and the reason is not hard to see. Heidegger, like the early Kuhn, concentrates on extreme cases—maybe even more so (it's hard to be sure, since, unlike Kuhn, he does not offer examples). An extreme case is one in which a disclosing is given up more or less wholesale, or, as is sometimes said, radically. The trouble with giving
up the roots is that you forfeit also the branches. Put less figuratively, the point is that the means of discovering entities—what Heidegger calls "modes of access" and Kuhn calls "experimental procedures" and "puzzle-solving techniques"—themselves depend on the disclosure of the being of those entities.

The design of scientific instruments and experiments and the interpretation of their results depend essentially on the very laws and theories they sometimes test. Without a great deal of accepted physics, for instance, no cloud-chamber image or statistical pattern from a cyclotron could so much as make sense, let alone reveal anything. But this means that, if intransigent discovered impossibilities undermine a disclosure of being, they pull the rug out from under themselves as well—and along with them, any other discoveries and abilities to discover in that region. The disclosure, the discoveries, and the abilities to discover all stand or fall together—as a whole. So, giving up on a disclosing of being is, in effect, giving up on everything—including the self-disclosing that makes possible that way of life.

This is why Heidegger speaks of death—or, rather, of resolute being toward death. Taking responsibility resolutely means living in a way that explicitly has everything at stake. Heidegger's way of saying this is: Dasein is the entity for which, in its being, that very being is an issue (SZ, 12, 191, 240, 263). This is the most basic definition of Dasein; all the others follow from it. It follows, for instance, that Dasein's basic makeup is being-in-the-world, because its being couldn't be an issue for it if its life were not essentially at risk, and this risk presupposes the potential intransigence of intraworldly entities. And it follows that Dasein is the entity that discloses entities in their being, since entities could never be intransigent if they were not projected onto possibilities, nor if impossibilities weren't unacceptable. Existence, in Heidegger's proprietary sense, is the being of Dasein; hence, it means all of these.

Fallen, everyday Dasein runs away and hides from the issue of its being (though it can never escape it); resolute Dasein faces up to it by taking over responsibility for itself—that is, by resolving to repeat itself, while holding itself free for taking it back. "Refusing to accept" intransigent impossibilities has a double meaning. One way of
refusing to accept is bullheadedly refusing even to see—blinding oneself. Existentially, that kind of refusal—running away and hiding—is irresponsible. Thus, holding itself free for taking it back belongs just as essentially to existential responsibility as does sticking to it as long as one reasonably (responsibly) can. The existential understanding that belongs to resoluteness—self-projection onto being—responsible—just is perseverant being toward death.  

It is crucial, therefore, not to lose sight in this context of the other clause in the formula for resoluteness as a responsible way of life: it resolves to repeat itself—that is, to stick to it. Since most apparently discovered impossibilities are merely apparent, it would be wavering and irresponsible (“irresolute”) to give up too soon—that is, so long as there is any way that it might responsibly be avoided. Thus, double checking and ontological responsibility are entailed by resoluteness. Resolute Dasein too is responsible for getting the entities right—indeed, as we shall soon see, all the more so.  

What differentiates owned from unowned disclosedness is its holding itself free for the possibility, in extremis, of taking it back. In so doing, it takes over responsibility not only for ontical truth itself but also for that disclosedness that is the condition of its possibility. Since this disclosedness is the projection of those entities onto the possibilities that determine their being, we can, in parallel with the phrase “ontical truth”, call it ontological truth. Heidegger himself calls disclosedness originary truth; and he calls the owned mode of disclosedness (that is, resoluteness) owned truth and the truth of existence (SZ, 220f., 297–299, 307, 397). Thus, in these terms, resolute Dasein takes responsibility not only for ontical but also for ontological truth. But, in what sense can disclosedness be called a sort of truth at all? What could be counterposed to it as a sort of “falsehood,” and what are the feasible and nonarbitrary responses that tell them apart?  

Falsehood is a failure of truth, a fault of it, not merely in the sense of an error (waywardness) but more in the sense of a breach or lack. So the “opposite” of ontological truth would be a failure, breach, or lack of disclosedness. That is exactly the sort of breakdown that manifests itself in anxiety, is told by conscience, and onto the responsibility for facing up to which owned understanding projects itself. Therefore, resoluteness, as both resolving to repeat
itself and holding itself free for the possibility of taking it back, takes responsibility—*existential* responsibility—for the difference between *ontological* truth and falsehood, while undertaking to stay on the side of the former.

Ontical truth and the responsibility for it presuppose a disclosing of the being of entities, because the need for responsible double-checking arises only in the face of apparent impossibilities, and only so are ontical comportments feasibly and nonarbitrarily beholden to entities. But there can be no comparable account for *ontological* truth and the responsibility for it, because there is no "meta-disclosedness" for them to presuppose. The possibilities for entities are not themselves projected onto "meta-possibilities" in terms of which there could be apparent "meta-impossibilities." How, then, and to what is ontological truth *beholden*?

Ontological truth is beholden to *entities*—the very same entities that ontical truth is beholden to, and via the very same means of discovery. The difference lies in the character of the potential failure and the required response. A failure of ontical truth is a misdiscovery of an entity, such as a factual mistake. With more or less work, it can be identified and corrected; and life goes on. A failure of ontological truth is a systematic breakdown that undermines everything—which just means a breakdown that *cannot* be "fixed up with a bit of work." So the only responsible response (eventually) is to take it all back; which means that life, *that* life, does *not* "go on." But this response too is a response to discovered entities, and only to them—a refusal to accept what we might paradoxically call "real" impossibilities among them. Intransigent impossibilities can *only* show up among entities as ostensibly discovered. To be sure, they may turn out in the end not to have been discovered entities after all; but that eventuality *presupposes* ostensibly discoveries of entities.

This is an important result, for it means that ontological truth, though historical, is not arbitrary. Therefore, Heidegger's (and Kuhn's) "historicism" about being does not imply relativism. Discovery of entities *does* indeed presuppose—hence is "relative" to—Dasein's disclosure of their being (or a "paradigm"), which is historical. But whether a way of life with its ontical comportments
works or not is not ultimately up to Dasein, either individually or historically. So that disclosure itself, in turn, is beholden for its "success" to those very entities as discovered—entities that are independent of it in the concrete and inescapable sense that they are out of control. And that beholden disclosure is binding on Dasein in that its very life depends on it. Resolute Dasein takes over that beholden bindingness—binds itself—in existential responsibility. Therefore, resolute being toward death is the condition of the possibility of ontological truth.

The first and second stages of the grounding showed in a preliminary way how ontical truth is feasible and nonarbitrary, and how, as such, it is beholden to entities and binding on Dasein. Those demonstrations were only preliminary, however, because the status of the presupposed possibilities for those entities was left out of account. If those possibilities themselves (the disclosed being of the entities) were to remain arbitrary, and therefore neither beholden nor binding, then the achievement of the first two stages would be hollow at best—even ontical truth would not be a sort of truth after all. The demonstration that ontological truth (disclosedness) is itself feasibly nonarbitrary and, as resolute, also bound and beholden, closes that gap. It constitutes, therefore, the third and most fundamental stage in the grounding of ontical truth. The existential conception of finitude—death—that is its crux is accordingly transcendental.

Kant understands human knowledge as essentially finite. Only in terms of this finitude does a transcendental grounding of its objectivity so much as make sense. But the finitude of knowledge is itself grasped only in contrast to and as falling short of infinite knowing. The relationship between any knowing and what is known in it can never be merely arbitrary. Infinite (divine) knowledge is perfect-in-itself in that it is not in any way limited by what it knows. Infinite just means unlimited: unbounded and unbound. Such knowledge is therefore originary or creative; that's how the relationship to what it knows is nonarbitrary (in effect, what is known is bounded and bound by the knowing of it).

Finite human knowledge, by contrast, is not perfect-in-itself. Since it is not originary, it can only be knowledge insofar as it is bounded and bound by what it knows. But that means that whatever it knows
must stand over against it as an object (Gegenstand). So, finite knowledge can only (at best) be objective—it falls short of being creative. In order to be objective (bounded and bound), it must be responsive to objects, which means it needs a passive faculty of receptivity. But since mere passivity does not suffice for objectivity (it suffices for boundedness, but not for bindingness), finite knowledge also needs an active faculty of spontaneity—a faculty that can somehow bind itself to what is accessible in receptivity. The entire problem of the transcendental analytic is to delineate the conditions under which this self-binding is possible—an issue that arises only because human knowledge is only finite.

Heidegger calls his analysis of Dasein and disclosedness an existential analytic, not because the grounding of ontical truth is not transcendental, but because it can be transcendental only as existential. Death, as Dasein's finitude, plays, as we have seen, a starring role in this drama—not, however, as the antagonist who makes the dramatic resolution necessary, but rather as the protagonist who makes it possible.
If we take it for granted, then his appeals to community can have no philosophical significance. From that point of view, they are merely anthropological. But Heidegger means to ask us what licenses our assurance that there is a specifically philosophical point of view in the first place. Nothing I've said in this paper shows that there is no such standpoint. But it should be clear that Being and Time aims to replace a philosophical problem about individual and community/universal with an existential one. Dreyfus recognizes this fact, but does not appear adequately to appreciate its radicality.

35. GM, 59.

36. Ibid.

37. GM, 60.

38. According to GM, it is primarily this sense of indebtedness that we tend to conceive in terms of a moralized notion of guilt.

Chapter 3: Truth and Finitude: Heidegger's Transcendental Existentialism


2. This implies, of course, that animals do not have genuine intentionality—a thesis that I, like Heidegger, endorse (but will not argue here).

3. Since these relationships concern what is possible and impossible, the actuality of an entity of one determinate kind can be seen as enabling, requiring, or precluding the actuality of another, in accord with their respective physical determinations; hence, physical actuality can also be explicated in terms of (a physical species of) causal efficacy and affectability.

4. It is illuminating to consider how so-called "functional explanations"—say, of how mechanisms or organisms work—are another special case, partaking of elements from each of the foregoing examples; but that cannot be pursued here.

5. In his summer 1927 lectures, Heidegger identifies and examines a deeper form of ontological articulation: the distinction, in the being of any entity (of whatever sort), between its that-it-is (existence or actuality, for instance) and its what-it-is (essence or reality, for instance). Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975), an edited transcript of lectures delivered in 1927, 10–12. Translated as The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982). Elsewhere he occasionally also includes a third member in this articulated set, corresponding to what the medievals called accidental-being. See, for instance, Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik. Welt-Endlichkeit-Einsamkeit (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), an edited transcript of lectures delivered in 1929–30, 476–481. Translated as The Fundamental Concepts of
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Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). He calls these distinctions the articulation of \textit{being}. And the question he always asks is: why is being articulated in just this way? But, so far as I know, he never succeeds in answering that question.

6. With this survey of the three moments of disclosedness we are in a better position to see some of the ways in which it differs from Kant's transcendental apperception. Most conspicuously, the architectonic is different. For Kant, there are two distinct faculties that jointly make knowledge possible: sensibility and understanding. The first is the capacity to be affected by objects, and the second is the capacity to make judgments that are about them and bound by them. But apperception is associated exclusively with the latter. For Heidegger, by contrast, there is only disclosedness. The closest thing to a "partner" for disclosedness, in the way that sensibility is the partner of understanding, would be the world itself. But even that isn't quite right, because disclosedness is the same as being-in such as the "middle" element in the triune structure of being-in-the-world. Disclosedness is "between" the self and the world.

But that implies a more particular—and particularly striking—difference. If disclosedness is "between" the self and the world in the structure of being-in-the-world, then it is no more to be identified with the self than with the world. Yet Kant explicitly identifies transcendental apperception with the "I that thinks" and the "transcendental self."

Closely related to this difference is a third. If understanding is basically skillful know-how, then, like comportment toward entities in general, it is not exclusively, or even primarily, \textit{mental} (let alone, intellectual). Rather, it is primarily a moment of skillful worldly activities—and the same goes for telling and sofinding. Hence: "Being-attuned [in a mood] is not related in the first place to the psychical, and is not itself an inner state." SZ 137). Clearly, disclosedness cannot be equated with consciousness (or the mind) in any familiar sense.

Finally, on my (controversial) reading, disclosedness is not even primarily private or individual. Rather, in the first place and usually, it is cultural and historical, hence \textit{public}. Indeed, Heidegger's specific term for \textit{unsounded} disclosedness is \textit{öffentlichkeit} (SZ, 167). To be sure, particular instances of know-how, articulation, and responsiveness are found in individual people. But that's like pointing out that particular scientific experiments and speech acts are performed by individuals. Nevertheless, science and language themselves are clearly cultural/historical \textit{public} phenomena; and that's the way I believe we should understand disclosedness. Needless to say, Kantian apperception is not public in this way.

7. Without putting it in the same way, what this paragraph describes (and so promises to explicate) is what Heidegger calls the three "priorities" of \textit{Dasein}. SZ, 12f.

8. The basic point is that, if scientists were not \textit{tenuous} in their efforts to solve even highly recalcitrant puzzles (that is, in preference to giving up on their paradigm), then hard but solvable puzzles would seldom get solved. Yet it is precisely these solutions that are often the most valuable achievements of science. Moreover, if and when a paradigm shift does become inevitable, it will be largely driven and guided by those very intransigent puzzles which could only have been identified as such through persistent efforts to solve them, and which, once so identified, can prove particularly revealing. See Thomas S. Kuhn, \textit{The Structure of Scientific Revolutions} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962; second enlarged edition, 1970), 64f., 151f.
9. In other words, owned Dasein faces up to and takes over the ultimate richness of its life as a whole—it lives resolutely as and only as ultimately vulnerable. According to this interpretation, then, it is ironic (to say the least) that the character of Religiousness B that Dreyfus and Rubin specifically identify as omitted from ownedness is risk and vulnerability. Being-in-the-World, 298, 335f. Their concluding critical observation that the position they attribute to Heidegger “makes no sense” strikes me as telling.

Chapter 4: Philosophy and Authenticity: Heidegger’s Search for a Ground for Philosophizing

1. Sein und Zeit (SZ), 437.

2. Heidegger’s marginalia are included in the Gesamtausgabe edition of Sein und Zeit, and are included in Joan Stambaugh’s translation of Being and Time (Albany: State University of New York, 1996).

3. Karl Löwith, for example, describes Heidegger as a magician “who knew how to cast a spell insofar as he could make disappear what he had a moment before presented.” His lecture technique, according to Löwith, “consisted in building up an edifice of ideas which he then proceeded to tear down, presenting the spellbound listeners with a riddle and then leaving them empty-handed.” Cited from Karl Löwith, Men Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933 (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1986), 43, by Richard Wolin, “Hannah and the Magician,” New Republic 9 (October 1995): 50. For the English version, see Löwith, My Life in Germany Before and After 1933 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 45.


6. Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis), GA vol. 65 (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1989), 15–14. I am indebted to Richard Polt for calling my attention to this and the previous passage.


