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HEIDEGGER’S
BEING AND TIME

Critical Essays

Edited by
Richard Polt

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Being and Time in Retrospect: Heidegger’s Self-Critique

Dieter Thomä

In 1941 Martin Heidegger explained, “I think I myself know something about the fact that this book [Being and Time] has its flaws. It’s like climbing an unascended mountain. Because it is both steep and unknown, whoever travels here sometimes falls. The wayfarer suddenly loses his way. At times he even falls down without the reader noticing.”¹ If we follow this saying, there turn out to be four tasks involved in interpreting Heidegger’s “self-critique.”²

First, one must find the passages in Being and Time where, according to the author’s later assessment, he undertook “false paths”(GA 66, 411), “detours and retreats,”³ or even fell down. These falls need not, of course, be fatal; the later Heidegger believes that in Being and Time he pulled himself back to his feet every time, and partially conquered the rest of the ascent. Nevertheless, at the end of his work on Being and Time, that is, at the end of his “half attempts,”⁴ he lost his way. As is well known, this work remained unfinished; in particular, the third division of Part One, which, according to Heidegger’s report in 1928, was supposed to describe a “turn” (Kehre),⁵ is missing. “The attempt failed along the way,” Heidegger remarks.⁶ He did not, however, attribute this failure to the fundamental direction of Being and Time itself, but rather to the still insufficient circumspection of the author (or the mountain climber). For the author could not go any further—not, however, because there had not been any path at all, but rather because he did not see it and in a certain way he was “walking blind.”

The second point forms a counterpoint to the first. As a contrasting figure to that mountain climber who is afflicted by setbacks, one can imagine someone
who knows how to avoid headlong falls and is on the right path. Heidegger thinks he is able to find such a figure in the course of carrying out an “immanent critique” in the form of a “purifying” ofBeing and Time.7 The genuinely correct path, “the one track” (GA 66, 411), should be elaborated fromBeing and Time. The question is how exactly this direttissima should have developed from the point of view of the late Heidegger.

This question leads immediately to the third problem that lies hidden in the citation given at the beginning. Imagine that ideal path Heidegger traces in retrospect as an isolated line in space. Whether it is in fact a philosophical “royal road” depends on the region over which it is supposed to pass. For example, it would be inappropriate to make hairpin turns on a level plain. The pressing question is what sort of “mountain” Heidegger later attributes (or imputes) to the expedition ofBeing and Time. It is only if this “mountain” in fact corresponds to the target he had set for himself at that time that what he later deplores as a false path or a headlong fall can be rightly seen as a shortcoming, according to the inner logic ofBeing and Time. In turn, it is possible that what seemed to Heidegger according to his later revision to be a purified movement through the region appeared from his own earlier viewpoint as a path in another landscape which leads to a dead end, or where one loses the ground beneath one’s feet or meets with granite. In this third point the question, generally speaking, is whether what Heidegger says in retrospect about Being and Time may be valid as “immanent critique” or whether he addresses his early major work from a foreign perspective and paints a distorted picture. The problem is that there are two perspectives—an early and a late—whose relation must first be clarified.

Fourth, along with his internal attempts at clarification and delimitation, there is the issue of Heidegger’s efforts to defendBeing and Time from external attacks, or as he puts it, against a “confusion of misinterpretation.”8 His own self-critique is joined by the rebuttal of external critiques and certain interpretations which, from his point of view, conceive of Being and Time in misleading ways. To stay within the framework of our metaphors, then, these misleading ways set the author of Being and Time on a track which does not appeal to him.

With these four points the course is laid out which I want to travel along in the following four sections. As a preliminary note, one remark is in order: there may be a decisive answer to the question of whether Heidegger’s late texts in comparison withBeing and Time should be seen as the purified, freer unfolding of his thinking or as a step backwards. But the concern of this commentary is not to deliver such an answer. Here it is rather a question of giving, on the basis of Heidegger’s “self-critique,” the clearest possible description of the relationship betweenBeing and Time and his later writings.

What Heidegger in hindsight finds “awkward”9 are first and foremost the titles under which he placed his early enterprise. He considers it unavoidable that at first he had to think “in the tracks” from which he frees himself. Thus he uses concepts like “phenomenology,” “metaphysics of Dasein” (in the Kant book), and “fundamental ontology” (GA 49, 28). Accordingly a weakness inBeing and Time is that the garment in which his philosophy was clothed at the time consisted of old fabric. On the one hand, Being and Time was “metaphysically articulated and presented,” and on the other hand, it was “nonetheless thought otherwise” (GA 66, 321). In this distinction lies the thesis that what is traditional remained external to the thinking of Being and Time—and it can thus be shaken off—so that the “other thinking” comes to the fore all the more purely. That he still had difficulty at the beginning establishes the authenticity with which he labored under the burden of the past, which was not so easily cast off.10

But why did Heidegger reject the titles under which he placed his early enterprise? He explains this in the most detail in regard to “fundamental ontology,” which now appears to him as something “provisional.”11 His reference point is here a sentence from the introduction to Being and Time: “Therefore fundamental ontology . . . must be sought in the existential analytic of Dasein” (SZ 13).12 The later Heidegger rejects the idea that it is through such an existential analytic that “the foundation for ontology itself which is still lacking, is to be built upon that foundation” can be erected.13 This idea appears to him as misleading because he sees Being itself already engaged in that analytic—so there is nothing left that would still have to be built on the foundation. Accordingly the analytic of the inner constitution of Dasein does not precede ontology; rather it should already be nothing other than the thinking of Being. In a marginal note from his own copy of Being and Time Heidegger thus finds fault with the fact that his earlier presentation remains “misleading, above all in relation to the role of Dasein” (SZ 439).14 To the extent that “Dasein’s horizon of understanding” is itself already indebted to Being, this horizon cannot “endure”—as it is now put—“any construction thereupon” that would thematize for the first time theBeing of beings as understood by Dasein; the horizon does not serve as Being’s “condition” or “foundation.”15 On account of this, in a later marginal note Heidegger strives for the “overcoming of the horizon as such” (SZ 440) and "forbids" himself without hesitation to use this word.16 The early definition of “horizon” is bound to that which projects itself and looks out upon something, and not to that which makes possible this regard in some way. Therefore he later says, “That temporality which was termed in Being and Time ecstatic-horizonal is in no way the sought for most unique characteristic of time that corresponds to the question of Being.”17
Heidegger sees himself in Being and Time as searching for a bridge between two questions: the question about the temporality of Dasein and the question about truth. To the extent, namely, that Dasein "endures" its temporal constitution or is able to "displace" itself into it (cf. SZ 325, 445), beings should be accessible in their unconcealment, in other words in their "truth"; they become "clarified." It is exactly this transition from temporality to truth that to Heidegger, as he explains in retrospect, "suspected, but did not master" in Being and Time.19

According to the intention Heidegger attributes to himself in hindsight, the self-discovery of Dasein in Being and Time should proceed with the opening or clearing (Lichtung) of a world in which beings in their Being come to appearance for Dasein. Indeed Dasein itself "belongs to the world" (SZ 65) or even, as is clarified in a marginal note, "obeys and listens to the world" (SZ 441). But this connection was not adequately expressed at first, if we follow the later self-critique. Heidegger sees the reason for this, in a word, in a subjectivistic contamination of Being and Time. He confirms this analysis through different examples, and three of these critical points will be treated here briefly: they have to do with space, language, and the I. In the first example we will discuss space.

As Heidegger remarks concisely in 1962, "The attempt in Being and Time, section 70, to derive human spatiality from temporality is untenable."20 This self-critique—rarely as candid as here—is directed against the thesis from Being and Time according to which time has a "founding function for spatiality" (SZ 368, translation modified). At that point it was said that "something such as place" and thus "space," first arises out of the temporally conceived Dasein, the "self-directive discovery," thus "on the basis of its ecstatico-horizontal temporality" (SZ 368f.). But what Heidegger cannot delete in these earlier views is precisely the authentic action of Dasein, to whom a unique temporal dimension belongs. What is interesting in this self-critique at this point is that even the later Heidegger is not concerned with strictly separating space from time. According to his later positions, furthermore, it falls to time to "make room, that is, provide ... the self-extending, the opening up, of future, past, and present."21 Thus space is also here derived from time. Time is of course no longer assigned to Dasein as "thrown projection," but it makes its appearance rather as the successor to that "Temporality [Temporalität] of Being" of which Heidegger had spoken in Being and Time and also in the lectures from summer semester 1927.22 Previously it was declared that this "Temporality" was a (merely "turned around") aspect of the temporality (Zeitlichkeit) of Dasein. The failure of this conjunction is now attested to indirectly in that Heidegger in his later self-critique repudiates the derivation of space from the temporality of Dasein and instead ascribes it to time as a movement in the "event of appropriation" or "owning" (Ereignis). He thereby breaks apart the temporality of Dasein and the Temporality of Being—contrary to the program of Being and Time. The failure to unite these two sides is nothing other than the failure of the completion of Being and Time.

The persistent self-sufficiency of Dasein is also noticeable in relation to a second critical point: the concept of language, which in Being and Time is introduced in connection with the concept of "involvement" (B ewandtnis). There it is said that the "Being of innerworldly beings" with which Dasein is concerned consists in their "involvement" for Dasein, more precisely in the "towards-which" of serviceability and the "for-which" of usability (SZ 84). Along with this "involvement" goes the "signification" that an entity has. Dasein is "familiar" with the world as "significance" (Bedeutsamkeit), and the significations that are thereby opened up to Dasein "found," says Heidegger, "in turn the [possible] Being of word and language" (SZ 86f.). He notes at this point in the margin of his personal copy: "Untrue. Language is not imposed, but is the primordial essence of truth as there [Daz]" (SZ 442). The interweaving into pragmatic relations that marked Heidegger's analysis of the world displaces, according to Heidegger's later judgment, the primordiality of language, which precedes all doing and letting. (Moreover, the question of whether this primordiality is conceived as fidelity to the soil or structural priority opens up the entire spectrum of Heidegger interpretations from "the Black Forest" to Michel Foucault.) That interweaving of language with actions was, however, an expression of the self-sufficiency of Dasein, which is later rejected as residual subjectivism.

Heidegger now sees the very same residual subjectivism—this is the third critical point—at work in the talk of the "I" itself. The procedure by which Dasein itself came to itself was described in Being and Time as a running toward death, by which it was thrown back upon itself and was first put into the position to be itself. "Saying I" belonged to this Being-one's self: "With the 'I', this entity has itself in view" (SZ 318). Indeed Heidegger already proceeded cautiously in these statements, with quotation marks. Nevertheless, later this "I" had to appear to him as a deviation from that "self" which "refers not to the self as an entity [das seierende Selbst] but rather to Being and the relation to Being" (GA 49, 39). In 1934 he says, "It is precisely the bursting of I-ness and of subjectivity through temporality that conveys Dasein as it were away from itself and dedicates it to Being, compelling it in this way to Being-one's self.23 In a marginal note to Being and Time there is a warning: "clarify more precisely: saying-I and being a self" (SZ 445).

According to Heidegger's summary, "the attempt and the path [in Being and Time] ... confront the danger of unwillingly becoming merely another entrenchment of subjectivity ... the attempt itself hinders the decisive steps; that is, hinders an adequate exposition of them in their essential execution."24
In retrospect he sees his earlier conception in danger of a "fall ... into a merely modified subjectivism." Heidegger may have recognized parts of *Being and Time* that rendered difficult the overcoming of subjectivity, the task he had made his own. These are the "false paths" or "falls" of which he speaks in retrospect. At the same time he vehemently defends himself against the interpretation according to which his early major work should be considered a direct contribution to the theory of subjectivity. This self-defense is carried out so apodictically that it appears as a defiant reaction to his own critique of the residual subjectivism of his early major work when he declares in 1941, "In *Being and Time* the essence of the selfhood of man is not determined by 'I'-hood, not as personality and not at all as the 'subjectivity' of a 'subject'" (GA 49, 60). More generally he says in 1949: "It"—namely the substance of *Being and Time"—"remains valid." But wherein consists this substance? Or more precisely, what is later defined as the substance which may remain valid as an improved, purified version of *Being and Time*? With subtle conceptual displacements Heidegger attempts to liberate what he sees as its essential content from deficiencies and to guard it against misunderstandings.

In the center of these displacements there stands nothing other than the principal concept of *Being and Time*, "Dasein": "Because Being-in-the-world belongs essentially to Dasein, its Being towards the world is essentially concern" (SZ 57). In a marginal note to this sentence Heidegger writes: "being-human here equated with being-here [Da-sein]" (SZ 441, translation modified), and this comment is nothing but a self-approach. This reproach presses itself upon Heidegger in the course of his self-critique because he wants to overcome the active self-will of Dasein as man. In contrast to the equation of Dasein and man Heidegger considers in a subsequent marginal note the formulation "being-here, wherein man essentially happens [welt]" (SZ 442, translation modified). The reinterpretation implied here—and in the end the abolition of the concept of Dasein—proceeds in several steps.

The first step occurs at the end of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* with the talk of the "Dasein in man." Here Dasein changes from an apparently constitutive condition of man into a condition to which man is related. This difference is sharpened in a second step in the middle of the 1930s. Now it is man who, insofar as he allows himself into his Dasein, enters at the same time into the world as the play of Being. Heidegger claims that in
this last step toward the "event" and the "fourfold," in which man is already involved.

Despite these incisive redescriptions Heidegger insists that he remains faithful to his first undertaking, Being and Time—except for the contaminations discussed above in the first section. The question in the following section will be whether his retrospective interpretation remains immanent, that is, whether the task that he retroactively assigns to Being and Time coincides with what he had first attempted. If we follow the metaphor which Heidegger himself used for his undertaking, the question now becomes: is the "mountain" that he climbed in Being and Time in fact the same mountain that he ascribes to his retrospectively described path?

3

Heidegger's self-critique of Being and Time pursues a double strategy: he excludes certain subjectivistic errors (see above, section 1) in order to blaze a path through this work that leads directly to the late thought (see above, section 2). This of course raises the question of whether he does justice to his early main work with this separation of disruptive externals and a positive core. For the sake of intelligibility I would like to discuss this question starting from a single short passage, which runs: "That Present which is held in authentic temporality and which thus is authentic itself, we call the 'moment of vision' [Augenblick]. This term must be understood in the active sense as an ecstasy. It means the resolute rapture with which Dasein is carried away to whatever possibilities and circumstances are encountered in the Situation as possible objects of concern, but a rapture which is held in resoluteness" (SZ 338).

First of all I will briefly explain the context of this passage in Being and Time. The "moment of vision" was introduced there as "authentic present." The "present" on the other hand was assigned in general to "falling" as one of the structural forms of "disclosedness" (SZ 334f. and 346). This "falling" attains the "authentic" form of the "moment of vision" insofar as the present does not render itself independent at the expense of the other temporal dimensions of that which will come and that which has been. It is precisely for this reason that the "rapture" should be held in "resoluteness" (see above), and thus remain related to the temporal totality of Dasein (cf. SZ 298 and 305).

Despite the danger of being fastidious, I would now like to pursue the interpretations to which the above cited passage, as a "test case" from Being and Time, is subjected in the course of Heidegger's further development. I restrict myself thereby above all to the idioms of the "rapture of Dasein which is held in resoluteness" and ask what happens to the two concepts that are juxtaposed in it.

The first explanations of rapture are found in the lecture course of summer 1928. According to this course it means a "stepping out [from] itself," the "upswing" (Überschwingung), the "ecstasy," to which the "transcendence" of Dasein is linked.39 Rapture as ecstasy is clarified as what is characteristic of "Ek-sistenz." But rapture's standing-outside has already been conceived at this point—so Heidegger says in 1941—in the orbit of the questioning of Being and Time as "standing-in" or "insistence" (GA 49, 59f. and 76). This reversal of perspective is summarized in 1949: "The stasis of the ecstatic consists—strange as it may sound—in standing in the 'out' and 'there' of unceasefulness, which prevails as the essence of Being itself. What is meant by 'existence'... could be most felicitously designated by the word 'insistence.'"40 Summing up this terminological interplay, we find that the concept that we first discussed, namely, "rapture," turns out to be insistence—this is so not on the basis of a subsequent revision, but rather as an allegedly faithful exposition of Being and Time.

And what happens to the second concept, that of resoluteness? Notwithstanding its martial undertone Heidegger wants to show precisely with this concept the consistency of his work. The new spelling as resolute openness (Ent-schlossenheit)41 makes it clear that it is supposed to be a matter of an unlocking (Aufschliessen) of oneself, and thus a "self-opening" or "keeping-open." As an idiom opposed to inauthenticity this was understood in Being and Time as a being-open for oneself, for one's own Being; what also belonged entirely to this "resoluteness towards [Dasein] itself" (SZ 298) were energy and zest for action, as is made clear in Being and Time and the texts from around 1933. In the following years Heidegger opposes "resoluteness" to the "decided action of a subject" and interprets it as "the opening up of Dasein out of its captivity in beings toward the openness of Being."42 "Resoluteness" is indeed defined as "will",43 to will oneself is, however, nothing but an affirmation of that which one is, and because one's own Being is already embedded in the world, when man wills himself he really wills nothing but Being.44 "Resoluteness" then becomes explicitly identified with "insistence," into which, as we saw, "rapture" had already changed: "What is essential to resoluteness lies... in the... openness to the truth of Being as such... It is the insistence in the exposure to the here [Da]: Being-here."45 In this way the talk in the Contributions to Philosophy of the "will to enowning [Ereignis]" and of "the insistence in enowning"46 can amount to the same thing. The second concept to be discussed here, "resoluteness," also turns out at the end of Heidegger's explication to be insistence.

If we now allow ourselves to be led back from this late insight to the passage which I cited at the beginning of this section as a "test case," then something troubling results. If in Being and Time what he means by "moment of vision" is "the resolute rapture... but a rapture which is held in resoluteness" (SZ 338), then on the basis of Heidegger's later interpretation there now arises the thesis
that the moment of vision is "the insistent insistence, but the insistence which is held in the insistence of Dasein." This is unfortunately rather nonsensical. Whereas in *Being and Time* the opposition between resoluteness (to one's own self) and rapture (toward the world) is expressed by the "but," this opposition now collapses with the general expansion of "insistence"—and the sense of that statement thereby breaks down.

One may find the opposition between resoluteness and rapture in *Being and Time* questionable or not—that is irrelevant here. What is decisive is that Heidegger expressly makes the claim to have remained faithful to the genuine concern of *Being and Time* in his later interpretations; but according to my "test case" this claim is untenable. When it comes to the statement discussed here, the strategy to overcome contaminations and sustain a true core fails. Heidegger does not do justice to what is treated in *Being and Time*. He attempts rather to polish it up in such a way that it fits into his later thought. Contrary to his own testimony he does not practice an "immanent critique" of *Being and Time* (see my introduction), but rather he steps out of the immanence of that work.

What is lost in the later mistaken interpretation of *Being and Time* is the independent dimension in which Dasein had to deal with itself. In this dimension man was summoned to an engagement with himself. As late as in the lectures of summer 1928 we can read the following: "Existing is precisely this being towards oneself." Accordingly the "concept of subjectivity and of the subjective [ought to be]...fundamentally transform[ed]," thus retained in another form. This subjectivity is anchored more deeply in *Being and Time* than Heidegger later wants to believe—so deeply that it cannot be eliminated as a contamination.

The revisionary reading, according to which in *Being and Time* the subject has indeed already been "overcome," gains a certain plausibility if one starts from a concept of the subject as it is laid out in Heidegger's own critique of metaphysics. According to this critique the subject is driven by the tendency to posit itself and to dominate the world. The Dasein of *Being and Time* does not of course succumb to this power fantasy, despite all of its "control" over beings: it exists on a ground which it itself has not posited. This encourages the late Heidegger to declare that at bottom, Dasein was actually already far from the subject. Thus the later question of whether the Dasein of *Being and Time* is still to be attributed to the philosophy of the subject functions purely rhetorically: "How should something ever be 'subjective' which precisely does not arise from a subjectivity?" (GA 49, 50).

The problem is only that this question is not at all rhetorical, but misleading. Of course that which is "subjective" need not also "arise from a subjectivity." It belongs rather to the fundamental structure of subjectivity to experience itself in a self-relation about whose origin there is no sufficient information. When this subject does not make itself into its own origin, it surely does not cease to be a subject. A common problem in the history of modern philosophy—from Descartes and Montaigne to Kant, Rousseau, and Schelling—is that the subject has encountered its self-referential nature and self-determination in ever-recurring ways. This is in no way something that the subject makes "arise" from itself. One may submit this structure of subjectivity to critique; Heidegger prefers, however, to provide a caricature of self-control, and so it becomes easy for him to exclude the Dasein of *Being and Time* from this caricature. This Dasein belongs, nonetheless, together with the problem of self-relation, in the framework of a theory of subjectivity which retains its validity while keeping its distance from the idea of the power-obsessed subject. This problem, which in Heidegger's later reading remains unnoticed, cannot be conceived as a mere contamination of *Being and Time*. Rather it belongs to the independent systematic core of this book, which becomes recognizable in his revisionary attempt to arrange the early main work in such a way that it appears as a still clumsy ascent on the "mountain" of Being. For this reason Heidegger's conjunction, according to which one can only "gain access" to the later thought starting out from *Being and Time* and *Being and Time* must be understood as "contains" in the later thought, is untenable. A fitting statement at this point is one originally aimed at Karl Marx: "Such fundamental and flagrant contradictions rarely occur in second-rate writers; in the work of the great authors they lead into the very center of their work." 45

The opposition in *Being and Time* between "resoluteness" and "rapture" thematizes a gulf between self and world, the Being of Dasein and Being as such—a separation which prevented Heidegger from completing within the logic of *Being and Time* the self-enclosed movement within the "same" that he later titles "the turn." 46 After the completion of *Being and Time* failed, Heidegger first had to make the gulf between self and world disappear in order to prepare for the "turn" from a new, simulated starting point. But with this, *Being and Time* as a factual starting point is lost and Heidegger's work breaks apart. It does not make available the reference points which could be related to each other strictly under the title "turn." This concept causes confusion because it presupposes the immanence and closedness of a movement that turns itself to itself and comes back to itself, whereas there never really was any such movement.

In view of the difficulties with this "turn," the passage from *Being and Time* by which I let myself be guided in this section as a "test case" is enlightening in two respects. First, as we saw, the passage gives evidence that *Being and Time* still provided for a "relation" of man that was not a direct relation to "Being," but related on the one hand to one's own Being-oneself and on the other hand to the world. Second, as we will show, the passage gives evidence that that to which man relates himself is conceived in *Being and Time* otherwise than in the later work.
Dasein was “enraptured” by “whatever possibilities and circumstances are encountered in the situation as possible objects of concern” (SZ 338). This pragmatic transition to the “object of possible concern” would have a strange effect if one tried to transfer it to “insistence” in the later context. In the background of this difficulty there is a concept that now—like its conceptual pair, Dasein (see above, section 2)—is subject to reinterpretations: namely, the “world.” Just as Dasein as “resolute” in Being and Time became capable of acting, so too the world by which it was “enraptured” had pragmatic features; how Dasein was conceived there was mirrored in the world. Thus later on, at the same time as Dasein, its “world” must also be held at bayance. Therefore, Heidegger writes that the “analyses of the environment” in sections 14–24 of Being and Time are “on the whole and with respect to the guiding goal of secondary signification.” On the other hand he introduces the new concept of “earth” as that into which “Dasein, as historical, is already thrown,” in Being and Time precisely this would still have been the “world,” but Heidegger gives no more precise information about the change of concepts effected here.

When one takes a step back and compares the late to the early Heidegger, the following alternatives open up. If one turns to Being and Time, then one confronts the problem of how a Dasein entangled in its concerns comes to itself in such a way that it enters into a free relationship to the world, in other words, in such a way that the world opens itself to it. However, Being and Time obviously lacks a satisfactory solution to this problem. The widely divergent interpretations which find in Heidegger on the one hand the decisionist, and on the other hand the contextualist, are merely a symptom of this problem. If to the contrary one concentrates on the later texts, then one brings that problem brusquely to a standstill: “resoluteness” on the one hand and “rapture” on the other become transformed into the very same “insistence.”

How one should decide this question in view of these alternatives is not this commentary’s business. But in neither way can Being and Time be accommodated under the roof of a “proper and singular question” that slowly purifies and clarifies itself. Heidegger’s claim, on the one hand, merely to purify (see section 1) and on the other hand, merely to interpret his early masterwork (see section 2) is misleading; in the course of his interpretation he turns away from it.

Heidegger’s attempt to extract from Being and Time the core which contains the seed for his further thought is accompanied by efforts to defend his early masterwork from interpretations which retain, instead of this core, merely the husks, that is, the externals. His self-critique is therefore accompanied by a defense against external critique, and if necessary, even against false friends (as is perhaps the case with Jaspers, whose Existenzphilosophie is stigmatized as the “emptiest leveling” of his thought: GA 69, 9). Heidegger takes up and tackles two misunderstandings above all: the first leads to the anthropologizing and the second to the ethicizing of Being and Time. I would like briefly to deal with both these points.

It is obvious from Heidegger’s point of view that the “differentiation from every kind of philosophical anthropology” (GA 49, 33) is decisive for the correct understanding of Being and Time: with Dasein’s Being-in-the-world the specialized treatment of man, in which his essential traits are investigated, is disposed of. In his view, precisely this isolation is fateful. If Heidegger had to distinguish himself from an anthropology of Arnold Gehlen’s sort, he would say: human life is not already endowed with characteristics which determine its ambitions in relation to the environment into which it then falls. If he had to distinguish himself from a pragmatism of John Dewey’s sort (at the basis of which there is an anthropology implicitly directed against Gehlen), he would say: the world is not utterly exhausted in the experiences that human life has in its dealings with it.

Heidegger’s reservation with respect to anthropology can easily be retracted: for him what is ultimately in question is not man at all—or at most, it is man only insofar as man is opened for Being. Of course this remains unclear in Being and Time because the “world” in which Dasein is involved does not yet possess the independence which is granted to it later in the leeside of the “earth,” when man is conceived as one of the players, so to speak, in a “fourfold of the world,” a “world play.” So Heidegger’s critique of the anthropologizing of Being and Time contains something irritating. He indeed defends himself against a separate treatment of man, but this does not hinder him from making assertions about man in the framework which he constructs: about the structures of his everyday life, about the constitution of his Being-in-the-world, etc. One could say that the critique of the isolated treatment of human peculiarities itself contains an anthropological assertion about the worldliness or contextuality of human life.

Heidegger now defends this assertion in a second step directed against an ethicizing interpretation. The decisive key word in his interpretations after 1927 is that of the “neutrality” of the analytic of Dasein. Accordingly the priorities and tendencies in it, and how they are connected to the ethical questions of obligation and will, play no more of a role than “prophesying and heralding world-views.” In the background of this aversion to morals and ethics, found already in Heidegger’s earliest texts, there stands a critique inspired by Nietzsche of “values” that are distant from life.
In his later writings Heidegger follows the second of the above mentioned variants. On the basis of his now strictly drawn distinction between Dasein and man he sees the latter exposed to an “errancy” which can be put to an end only through its “transformation.” In 1946 he repeats his critique of “ethics” as a baseless construction. Nevertheless at the same time he clarifies that a “peremptory directive” as to how man “ought to live” is to be found in an “original ethics” which “ponders the abode of the human being,” how man “determines himself from the…” belongingness to Being.

From this there should arise “directives,” “law and rule” in a new sense. The question about the good life is here replaced by the question about life in accordance with Being—and this is a fundamental characteristic of his thought, which is in fact already found in Heidegger’s earliest texts onward.

In his interpretation of Being and Time Heidegger wants to claim for himself such uniformity throughout. Nonetheless, our overview of his “self-critique” has shown that the attempt to present Being and Time as the first and still unsure step on a path that later was trodden farther brings with it distortions and confusion. This is of course not surprising; it is well-known that authors are not predestined to be their own most competent interpreters.

Heidegger was occasionally pained by the deficiencies which appeared in Being and Time when his later standards were applied to it. In view of the misunderstandings which he considered resolved by these later standards which corrected Being and Time, he arrived at the conclusion that it “would be good if one were to let Being and Time, the book and the matter, finally repose for an indeterminate future” (GA 49, 34). But insofar as this conclusion implies the recommendation that one now abide only by the less “misleading” later thought of Heidegger, one should not follow it.

—translated by Daniel J. Dwyer

Notes

1. GA 49, Die Metaphysik des deutschen Idealismus, 27. [Translator’s note: “GA” will refer to volumes of Heidegger’s Gesamtausgabe, published in Frankfurt am Main by Vittorio Klostermann. Where existing English translations are available, they will be cited first, followed by the corresponding volume and pagination of GA or another specified German edition. Subsequent references to untranslated GA volumes will be parenthetical. All references to Sein und Zeit will be indicated parenthetically by “SZ” and the German pagination of the seventh and later editions (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1953—). Unless otherwise indicated, the English translation of this text is Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).]


4. On Time and Being, 44 = Zur Sache des Denkens, 47.


7. On Time and Being, 55 = Zur Sache des Denkens, 61; Contributions to Philosophy (From Exodus), trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 154 = GA 65, Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis), 221.

8. GA 69, Die Geschichte des Seins, 9.


10. Cf. On Time and Being, 30 = Zur Sache des Denkens, 32; Contributions to Philosophy, 246 = GA 65, 351.

11. Contributions to Philosophy, 215 = GA 65, 305.


14. In Sein und Zeit (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1977), 439. [Translator's note: all subsequent parenthetical references to Heidegger's marginal notes will be to this German edition's pagination and the translations will be those found in Being and Time, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996).]


17. Letter to Richardson, in Richardson, Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought, xii.


19. GA 69; cf. GA 66, 300; Contributions to Philosophy, 246 = GA 65, 351.


28. GA 49, 60; cf. GA 66, 144f. [Translator's note: "insistence" will translate Inständigkeit, which means standing steadfastly in the truth of Being. This is not to be confused with Insistenz as Heidegger uses it in 1930 to mean "hold[ing] fast to what is offered by beings, as if they were open of and in themselves": "On the Essence of Truth," in Pathmarks, 150.]


34. Pathmarks, 284, translation modified = Wegmarken, 203.

35. Pathmarks, 151f. = Wegmarken, 93f.


40. *Contributions to Philosophy*, 40 and 50, translation modified = GA 65, 58 and 72.


43. *Off the Beaten Track*, 76 = Holzege, 104 and Pathmarks, 249 = Wegmarken, 159; GA 49, 50 and 60.

44. Heidegger’s caricature has several disagreeable consequences. Those who start from Heidegger and think further along deconstructionist lines take over his late critique of the subject all too lightly and fall thereby into the misleading schema depicted above. Then there are those who, under a reversal of these premises but still beholden to this schema, blame Heidegger for eliminating the subject in its autonomy and rationality. They thereby overlook the intrinsic difficulties with which this subject must still struggle. A further problematic consequence of Heidegger’s caricature of the subject manifests itself in the interpretation of his engagement with National Socialism: it is in retrospect interpreted as an errant path in which subjectivism as the “bad side” of *Being and Time* has rendered itself independent. Yet Heidegger’s Nazi engagement, as a version of the “will to enowning” (see above), stands quite close to his own counterpart to the so-called subject. Thus, the context of Heidegger’s encounter with *Being and Time* also includes his confused interpretation of National Socialism.


48. Pathmarks, 121, translation modified = Wegmarken, 52.


50. Pathmarks, 287 = Wegmarken, 207.


