

Nicolai Hartmann

ONTOLOGY: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

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Nicolai Hartmann
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Preface

The four investigations collected in the volume before you—concerning “being *qua* being,” *Dasein* and *Sosein*, the givenness of reality, and ideal being—form the prelude to an ontology that I have been working on for two decades, and whose further developments lie ready in outline and should follow in the near future.

The whole ontology as outlined forms the fundamental philosophical background to my previously published systematic works—the *Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, the *Ethics*, and the *Problem des geistigen Seins*—and has of course also frequently made itself obvious in the structure of those works.¹ Completing it was a task that could only slowly come to fruition. It belongs to the nature of a major work that it conforms to another law of development than the treatment of more peripheral subjects; it achieves its definitive form later because the field of the given in which its points of departure lie extends beyond the special subjects, and all philosophical experience is first acquired from the latter. Aristotle’s law that the path of all cognition proceeds from what is prior for us to what is prior and more fundamental in itself holds true here. The direction of this path cannot be reversed if philosophy is not to degrade into speculation. The impatience driving the speculative urge would prefer it were otherwise. It is ready anytime to anticipate the whole, to deduce conclusions from it, and to present them as principles. It has to remain silent, however, when it comes to actual understanding.

It cannot be the intention of contemporary efforts to bring back the era of the old, *a priori*-deductive ontology. Of course, many of the old themes will return in a new guise; problems naturally do not stand or fall with the methods that are used to investigate them. But the ways of dealing with them have been transformed. The philosophical achievement of the current century, the school of critical thought, has left its mark. A new, critical ontology has become possible. The task is to make it a reality. Its methods cannot be spelled out in advance since it does not line up with any of the simple methodological models inherited from the past. It will be revealed and can be justified only in its progress on its objects. The four investigations in this volume do not in any way suffice for an overview on the basis of which we might judge it conclusively. [vi]

¹ Hartmann is referring to his *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, first published in 1921 with a second expanded edition in 1925 (Hartmann 1949); his *Das Problem des geistigen Seins* published in 1933 (Hartmann 1962); and his *Ethik*, published in 1926, and translated in 1932 by Stanton Coit (Hartmann 2002; Hartmann 2003; Hartmann 2004). TR.

These investigations do not make the claim to form a closed whole; they are only the first links in a natural series of problems from whose progressive sequence they first receive their significance. It would perhaps be risky to present them in isolation if the great mass of the total interconnection of problems did not imperiously prescribe for us a preliminary set of limits. Practically speaking, it is not even possible to summarize the enormous range of investigations demanded by the broad theme of ontology in a single book.—

All the same, I make a start here at repaying an old debt. Ontological presuppositions were not absent in my earlier works, which I had to make without being able to ground them sufficiently. I have sought to rectify this lack through a series of shorter essays (“How is Critical Ontology Possible?” and “*Kategoriale Gesetze*,” among others).² This could not be satisfactory for the long term since we are dealing with laying the foundations for the whole, and not merely with the clarification of related peripheral questions. The fragmentary nature of such a treatment would itself conjure up further misunderstandings. Such misunderstandings have not been absent in the judgments of my peers. It seemed pointless to me to counter them in detail without myself presenting something complete. But the completed whole could not be forced.

Moreover, I believe myself to be accountable for the fact that some people (on their own initiative) have drawn from my works consequences of a general systematic kind. This has led, for example, to a dissertation that appeared a few years ago about my “ontology,” from which I learned to my great surprise that the as-yet-unwritten and not even fully formed work in my mind was already for some time finished in the mind of a cleverer colleague, stamped with an “-ism,” and refuted point for point in the most sober fashion.

This should not be taken as a bad joke. The short piece was not so bad; what it refuted is justifiably refuted. But it refuted some other ontology, not mine. This is also not a completely isolated case. I encounter arbitrary additions to my views in most of my critics. These additions always move along the same tracks as one or another of the traditional types of system. They are not based only on mere fabrications, they operate with blindly accepted concepts and habits of thinking, and regularly even with those which I have discarded as fallacious.

To admonish imaginative interpreters is of little avail. It was also not a sufficient bulwark against misinterpretations that I myself explicitly dismissed the conclusions that might follow from it for articulating a worldview. Mere defense is not convincing; we may protest as much as we like, nobody believes it. Everyone senses something implicit and thinks they have a right to make it explicit

² See Hartmann 2012. These two essays are reprinted in Hartung and Wunsch 2014, 67–176. TR.

based on their own better judgment without any further [vii] investigation. The experience of systematic investigation teaches us something completely different: before every comprehension and every achievement the gods have placed the sweat of labor. It is labor that must first be accomplished here as everywhere, in reading as in independent thinking. Without it, all philosophy becomes speculation.—

Now, what I present here in the meantime is, as far as I am concerned, a piece of work that does not settle for fragments, but begins from the bottom up, even if it does not at the same time provide a rounding off at the top. It is the foundational part of ontology and includes discussion of the indispensable preliminary questions concerning all further research into the structure of the existing world. In that sense, it rightfully belongs under the inclusive heading “ontology” more so than anything more specialized, since it deals only with being in general and thematically tackles the subject-matter of the old doctrine of being, “*de ente et essentia*” [on being and essence]. The name is not that important, and in any case the subject-matter itself must first fill it with new content. I would have preferred the name “*philosophia prima*” [first philosophy] coined by Aristotle if there were any prospect of making it part of current vernacular again. It does not seem to me that the prospect exists.

We have heard a lot of things about “ontology” in recent decades. The works of Hedwig Conrad-Martius and Günther Jacoby should be included here, but also not just what goes by the name “ontology.” Meinong’s theory of objects, Scheler’s metaphysical rudiments, and Heidegger’s *Being and Time* should be mentioned as well, and likewise many projects that have received less attention. The rise of this tendency goes hand in hand with the reawakening of metaphysics, which for its part arose as a reaction to the emptiness of the Neo-Kantianism, Positivism, and Psychologism that were in decline at the start of our century. A general invigoration of the philosophical spirit becomes visible here, and it would likely have been more consequential if the climax of historicism had not fallen right in the middle of this period, which formed a skeptically inhibiting and disintegrating counterweight to the ontological problematic through its relativization of the concept of truth.

Wherever I look in these rudimentary projects I only find an announcement of the coming ontology, but nowhere is there an attempt to actually work it out. In part, they linger with preliminary investigations that concern the relation between cognition and being—wherein the ontologically unclarified concept of cognition makes everything else *a limine* illusory; in part they confuse the ontological question with the question of givenness, or even confuse “what is as such” with the subject-relative “object.” In part they seek, in a Cartesian manner, the overall starting point in the subject—whether this is interpreted as human

being, person, or “*Dasein*”—wherein the indifference of “what is” to any manner of cognition and relation to the subject is falsified in advance. [viii]

It must be said that on the whole we are left with the announcement, but the ontology itself has not followed. Its central theme was not really even proposed, let alone taken up—not because these writers did not want to take it seriously, but because they did not know how to fully comprehend it. It is not possible to comprehend it by following the tracks of conventional theories, nor by means of merely destroying them; the attempt by Jacoby vividly proves the first, Heidegger’s the latter.

In contrast, Hans Pichler occupies a special place. He was one of the first to move things forward with his small but important book *Über die Erkennbarkeit der Gegenstände* (1909), a work that is oriented far more ontologically than epistemologically (despite its title) and has most likely been too little appreciated for just this reason. Of course, even Pichler is far from providing a completed ontology. Nevertheless, he performed the great service of being the only one to have actually dealt with the problem of ontology; his explicit relation to Wolff’s doctrine of the *ratio sufficiens*, as well as his later text on *Christian Wolffs Ontologie* (1910), shows his orientation to the decisive historical sources.³

It was Pichler’s method that at the time strengthened my conviction that he was on the right track. At the same time, he confirmed that I was right in my high estimation of Wolff, in which I saw myself as good as alone then as well as now. This estimation by no means considers Wolff to be a pioneering philosopher. Without doubt, Wolff had only collated that which truly leading minds already worked out, and he also definitely watered down many things by doing so. However, even this collation is an achievement of great value given the highly ramified problematic of being, its long pre-history, and its confusing fragmentation into the minuscule labors of Scholastic disputations. Its value significantly increases even more when we consider that Wolff’s *Philosophia prima sive ontologia* (1730) has remained the sole compendium of the entire ontological problematic. Neither Johannes Clauberg before him nor Hegel after him achieved this. The former achieved neither the depth nor the comprehensiveness in terms of the questions addressed; the latter placed everything—at a distinctly higher level of thinking—in the service of his dialectical idealism of reason and interrupted all research into the genuine modes of being.

I view the service provided by the Hegelian *Logic*, which is an ontology in its first two parts and was admittedly designated as such by Hegel himself, in a

³ Where Hartmann writes “Wolf,” the customary spelling of Wolff’s name has been substituted throughout. TR.

completely different way. It struck a new path into the specification of “what is” and so paved the way for categorial multiplicity, and even for the intrinsic identity of ontology and the theory of categories. It is the greatest categorial analysis in our possession ever carried out, and it has remained the only one that has achieved anything sweeping in this field. To this day we have not nearly succeeded [ix] in exhausting it philosophically. However, understood as an ontology, it remains in the same half-baked state shared by all speculative systems, insofar as they ultimately deal with the justification of metaphysical theses. The assessment of the Hegelian *Logic* is a task for the special theory of categories, not one for the ontology of first foundations.—

The vantage point from Wolff leads into the past as well. Setting aside the central place of the Leibnizian *principium rationis sufficientis* [principle of sufficient reason] in his ontology, the whole series of his themes is drawn entirely from medieval metaphysics. Just as Leibniz himself borrowed from Suarez, Wolff skimmed from St. Thomas, Duns Scotus, Occam, and even Anselm and Abelard. We are transported back into the centuries of the great dispute over universals. This dispute was an ontological issue from the very beginning. It concerned the place of the essences (*essentiae*), but the mode of being of things, the world, human being, and spirit also depended on them, the lower no less than the highest levels of being.

The deeper significance of the dispute over universals is that it is not even remotely reducible to the antagonism between the medieval schools. It stems from the classical philosophy of the Greeks and already has its first high point in Plato and Aristotle. In Scholasticism its meaning had immediately been obscured through a series of unfortunate pseudo-problems that perpetually accompany it and over time govern it more and more. Think here of the sophistries it brought into the at first completely serious (i.e., oriented to actual phenomena) problem of individuation, such as the worry over the being of “angels.”

As far as I know, there does not yet exist a rigorous problem-historical assessment of the ontological achievements for which we have to thank the masters of conceptual realism and their opponents. It is also not to be expected from a generation that has lost the original sense of the ontological problem and does not even recognize ontology as a philosophical discipline. In the context of my task here, I cannot cast light on the history of the dispute over universals. This is a task for the historians. I can only furnish the systematic basis with reference to which the problematic core of this vigorous struggle could again come alive for the historian and become present for him.

The dispute over universals has not been done away with; it is not an issue of the distant past that we have happily outgrown. It is, I would claim, still a relevant issue today. That which allows us to almost intentionally look past it as if it

were an atavism that we may laugh at is the characteristic ignorance about ontological problems in our era. We should not forget that the universal is the form in which the leading thinkers, from Aristotle to Leibniz, have sought the principal and enduring features of the world. And the dispute is immensely instructive for contemporary thinkers because the problem of the most general ontological [x] categories—the basic problem of *philosophia prima*—evolved to a certain definitive stage on its soil.

Is it not the case that today the same equivocation (brought out at that time by the disputed question of universals) still adheres to the concept of a “category”? Whether categories are modes of human interpretation or are elementary features of the objects existing independent of all interpretation is still today the fundamental ontological question for the theory of categories. With what was the controversy between Roscellin and Anselm, Thomists and Occamists concerned? It was just the question whether the most essential fundamental features of everything predictable existed merely *in mente* [in the mind] or also *in rebus* [in the thing] (or even *ante res* [prior to things]). Now, if we set aside its most extreme forms, then we see that the basic question is still the same, and that the old opposition between Nominalism and Realism constitutes a cardinal problem that still persists today.

The Scholastic theories conceived the problem far more generally and generated a larger multiplicity of interpretations than would appear to be on offer for contemporary thought. Current thinkers may be subject to a self-deception on this point. The problem may in fact be rediscovered in their own special domains to almost the same extent. They just lack the ability to recognize the old in a new guise. What does it mean when today the exact sciences speak of “laws of nature,” on whose own account it remains highly questionable to what extent they are actually laws of existing natural interconnections, or to what extent they are merely laws of scientific thinking? It is no secret that contemporary Positivism is infected by this ambiguity deep in its roots, that there are those among its representatives who, without suspecting it, are oriented by explicitly nominalistic inferences. Nevertheless, I do not find this conclusion drawn anywhere. Of course, we are not dealing with the ontically fundamental essences in such cases, but with far more specific ones. Even this is instructive, however. The problem is only pushed back a step in light of the particular content; in principle, it is the old problem whether that which we abstract as essential features of the known and express in judgments has a being *in rebus* or exists merely *post rem* [after the things], i.e., in abstraction.—

The sweeping historical arc of the ontological problem still clearly and evidently comes to light even though it is repeatedly interrupted, obscured, and overgrown. Neither skeptical nor critical philosophy was able to derail it. If we

follow it back to its source then we run into Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. The title of this work, understood in the current sense of the word, is misleading, and does not come from its creator. Perhaps with the exception of Book 12, it is not a metaphysics at all, but a theory of being. Aristotle called it "first philosophy" and defined this as "the science of what is, insofar as it is." The two fundamental pairs of categories that [xi] govern the whole—form and matter, potency and act—do not allow any substantial dispute about this.

This "metaphysics"—itself already a late product of the Greek spirit that arose in conscious confrontation with Plato and the old masters, the Presocratics—has remained the basic work of ontology for all time. Even today every new attempt still has to come to terms with it. Any attempt has to do so all the more, the more it strays from the paths opened up by the book, which have endured for two millennia. The methodological rigor of the Aristotelian mode of investigation, as well as the wealth of its aporias, completely justify this. We do not need to become Aristotelians because of this, just as little as we have to become Wolffians by studying Christian Wolff. Aristotelian ontology is as little possible today as Wolffian. As sources of problems and points of reference, however, the one as the other cannot be done without. Problems, once discovered, have their own law in history. As long as they are not solved once and for all, they do not age, no matter how far the principal focus of interest in them may stray. The large class of problems involving "being *qua* being" is far from being resolved once and for all, then as now.

The problem of ontology is such that we have to seek our predecessors from a considerable historical distance. This is a consequence of the almost two-hundred year slumber in which ontology has lain. To reawaken it requires going far afield. The attempts of the recent past mentioned above have not managed it. This is the reason why they have not attained a genuine ontological beginning.

Thus, the task, apart from all constructive work, is a double one: to retrieve this stock of problems from ancient ontology and at the same time to achieve a distance from it. The latter is in order since it was encumbered from the very beginning with speculative-metaphysical problems that have obscured the existence of the ontological question in its purity. What separates us from it for all time is the Kantian reformulation of epistemology. The *Critique of Pure Reason* of course—insofar as it was concerned with ontology at all—directed itself only against its deductive-*a priori* character; but even so it bore on many of the principal presuppositions that had been made for so long. Moreover, it showed that there are epistemological conditions whose clarification is unavoidable for the ontological problem. It did not realize, however, that for its part it also made ontological presuppositions—necessary presuppositions, of course, but not at all secure and critically balanced. This is why Kant did not take

into account the fact that he too, to a large extent, operated with the categories of the old ontology.

What the *Critique* was lacking was precisely the scaffolding of a new, critically oriented ontology. Kantians and Neo-Kantians felt the lack, [xii] but did not acknowledge it. They sought to remedy the lack through an exaggerated form of Idealism, but in this way only enlarged the lack. The converse was required. The demand grew and ultimately generated a sudden reversal, the return to the problem of ontology.

We stand in the midst of this return today. The announcement of a new ontology, which has remained unfulfilled for so long, stems from it. It is high time we finally make an attempt to fulfill it.

Berlin, September 1934

Preface to the Third Edition

As I released *Laying the Foundations* in a second edition in 1941, two other volumes were already published: *Possibility and Actuality* (1938) and *Der Aufbau der realen Welt* (1940).¹ The fact that these works belonged together seemed so self-evident that any words to that effect seemed unnecessary. Today, with the appearance of the third edition, things are different. These three volumes on ontology have shared the fate of many other books in recent years, i.e., they were sold out quickly and since then could not be republished. Therefore, they have been absent from the book market until now. Of course, they have also been missing from academic study, for which they should have served above all else, and absent even from the libraries of contemporary thinkers, as numerous requests in recent years have proven. The new edition should put an end to this situation.

Meanwhile, my work on ontology has not stood still. In the years 1941–43 the fourth volume was written, as was planned from the very beginning, and to which the first three volumes in many places already refer. It contains the “special theory of categories,” as far as they pertain to the lower strata of the real world, the realm of nature. Even this work has been sitting now for five years awaiting publication. It made no sense to me to let it appear in isolation as long as the first three volumes were absent from the bookstores. Therefore, I withheld it until they could again be published.

With it, the perspective that *Laying the Foundations* opens expands. In its re-appearance it may be regarded as a prolegomenon to a greater whole, not a closed totality to be sure, and one that probably cannot be closed in light of the contemporary problematic, and it is nevertheless expanded in an essential way. From the very beginning—i.e., since its first outlines, which today remain more than three decades behind us—it was oriented toward the special theory of categories, and each of the four volumes was outlined in course of time with an eye toward their cohesiveness with it. In this connection, it is self-evident that the whole abundance of viewpoints and [xiii] arguments produced cannot be restated anew in every part, and that those developed in one part are also valid for the others.

Given the predominantly analytic manner of proceeding adhered to, this is to be understood just as much backwards as forwards: the genuine cognitive grounds of what precedes often enough lie just as much in what follows, as do the grounds of what follows lie in what precedes them. The course of the presentation is not identical with the structure of the matter at hand. And it cannot

¹ Hartmann 2013; Hartmann 1940. TR.

be so for intrinsic reasons. Typical of these, among other things, is that giving an account of the methodology has a place among the themes in this whole. The pattern that was customary in the major works of the nineteenth century, i.e., placing the methodological orientation at the start, has been shown to be unrealizable in the changed problematic. A method can only be exhibited in a meaningful way where thinking has had its experiences among contents and objects and has come to be at home there. Otherwise, all reflection on method remains abstract. Therefore, I have published the necessary account of methodological presuppositions at the conclusion of the third volume (*Der Aufbau der realen Welt*) and am still of the opinion that they have their proper place there at the earliest. This is why I am not inserting them into this new edition of *Laying the Foundations*, where one might expect them to be, but leave them in their current place unmodified.

This example shows best how the four works depend on one another, together form one whole and, if torn free from one another, hang in midair. I am fully aware of the high demands that I place on the reader, since now I present the series enlarged by one volume, but I see no possibility of shortening the reader's path to independent judgment and evaluation. The risk entailed by such a demand remains—but I trust in the high degree of receptivity and readiness to learn characteristic of those interested in philosophy today, in particular the academic youth, whose genuine inquisitive philosophical disposition is familiar to me from years of experience. I assume that it will not readily occur to anyone to hastily jury-rig a worldview from the introductory investigations in *Laying the Foundations* or even to adapt it to a worldview they bring along. I am indebted to the seriousness and practical objectivity of my fellow Germans for their restraint. This holds for all those who have grasped that, in the midst of an overabundance of reckless constructions and cognitive games, a worldview is not something that one brings into philosophical research, but something that we can only hope to obtain from it.

Göttingen, October 1948

Nicolai Hartmann

Introduction

1 Habits of Thinking and Bondage to Traditional Forms of Thought

Why should we really return to ontology at all? Wasn't the foundation of the whole of philosophy at one time ontology? And hasn't this foundation crumbled beneath it, leading everything that depended on it to a state of utter collapse along with it?

It was not skepticism alone that undermined ontology. Critical philosophy from Descartes to Kant was not skeptically oriented; and yet it is they who gradually forced the question about "being *qua* being" into retreat and ultimately discarded it as scandalous. The question "how can we know anything about being-in-itself?" is reduced to the question "how can we meaningfully speak about it" or even "think" it. In speaking and thinking it is already something "posited," it is something "for us" and not existing in itself. The Kantian schools at the beginning as well as at the end of the nineteenth century expressed this as bluntly as can be, and substantiated it through reflections which, with the downfall of the idealistic theories, did not automatically lapse completely.

We should certainly not take this antagonism toward ontology lightly, even if it no longer has the upper hand in contemporary philosophy. The forms in which our thinking still moves are nevertheless precisely the same, and the concepts we use are those created by them. It has become an antagonistic discourse that imposes itself on us from the inside because it enters into the character of our deliberations. To deal with it means revising our concepts from the ground up, transforming them, and learning to work with the transformed concepts. But it is difficult to steer ourselves out of the well-worn tracks of our own thinking and learn to safely travel the newly laid tracks.

The task of ontology is nothing less than this for contemporary thought. Opposed to it is nothing less than the compulsion of an at least one hundred and fifty year old habit of thought fixed by tradition. The opponents of the question of being today are not genuine idealists, but the legacy of the idealist mode of thinking lives on in all of them. Precisely because they do not acknowledge this anymore, this traditional conceptual hereditary material holds them like a lead weight and has determined the development of their thinking.

Here we are chiefly talking about epistemological concepts and presuppositions. Everyone brings such things with them whether they know it or not. However, since epistemology developed almost exclusively on idealist soil, these are for the most part [2] idealistic concepts down to their very substructure. One of

the tasks we will take up in what follows is the investigation of these epistemological concepts as to their load-bearing capacity, and, as far as is necessary, deconstruct them.

Now, if the task is this enormous and difficult, and if, with its very first steps, it delves into the hidden presuppositions of philosophical thinking, why do we have to undertake it at all? Shouldn't we leave it to the probing and tentative course of current research as it labors along its multiple tracks, instead of risking, like the metaphysics of ancient times, a questionable grasp of first principles, in which conclusive results are ultimately still hard to discern? Why should we then—and we have to ask seriously—return to ontology at all?

2 Paucity of Problems, Problem Fatigue, and Relativism

The aim of this Introduction is to provide the answers to these questions. We could anticipate the answers and simply explain that we have to return to ontology because the basic metaphysical questions in every domain of research in which philosophical thought operates are of an ontological nature, and because these questions are not simply to be expunged from the world by “critically” ignoring them or deliberately detouring around them. We might point out further that their substantive content is not an arbitrary product of the human desire to question, nor is it merely a ballast for human thought as it has historically developed. This content is rooted in the eternal mysteriousness of the world itself and its constitution. It naturally follows that humankind is perpetually and unavoidably set face to face with it. Indeed, we could even finally invoke Kant here, who in the first lines of the Preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason* takes account of this state of affairs.

However, none of this is enough for contemporary thought. It has become too accustomed to passing over uncomfortable questions. It has become a matter of course to conflate the existence of problems with the posing of problems; the latter is child's play, since we can modify or reject them as needed. It is by no means common knowledge today that there is something unavoidable about major philosophical problematics that humankind has no power to change. This fact has to be brought before contemporary consciousness and substantiated once more. Since it is not familiar with anything other than its own current range of problems, we have to prove this point with reference to these very problems; i.e., we must prove to it that it already contains major unavoidable problems and just lacks knowledge of them.

Otherwise, even invoking historical authorities here will be of no avail. What Kant took to be a universal fate of reason did not include the whole range of met-

aphysical problems, [3] not to mention their fundamental ontological stratum. Kant simply remained with the three major domains of speculative philosophy—cosmos, soul, divinity—but did not see that looming metaphysical problems are contained in the most proximate and most self-evident things, no less than in the domains already mentioned, and are much more urgent than them.

To top it all off, there is a certain kind of problem fatigue in contemporary philosophical thought. Relativism, running deep—best known in Germany in the form of historicism—has effected a slackening of thought. In order to see problems clearly, and to be able to take hold of them, we have to appreciate the meaning of the terms true and untrue; for all probing labor aims at reaching the truth. But how is this possible if everything that conforms to the historical cultural disposition of a specific era counts as true? The struggle for truth will itself be illusory because the meaning of what one is searching for appears to dissolve. Then there cannot any longer be an enduring reserve of problems that could require anything of us by their imposition. They seem to be subjected to the same relativity as are the partial results of the cognition to which they attach.

Thus, we no longer believe in problems. We take them just as lightly as we do the truth at which one aims by means of them. In this way we undermine the meaning of research—and simultaneously undermine the meaning of the position we take as we do so. It is the self-negation of philosophical thought.

3 The Problem of Being in Idealist Systems

Thinking that has really become free of problems is also likely not to be teachable. But we have not yet gotten to that point. Despite all tendencies to the contrary, every era has its enduring reserve of problems that no form of relativism can simply sweep away. In our era, we need to be awakened only to the metaphysical problems in the background. The spontaneous awakening of the sensibility for metaphysical questions, although hindered by relativism, has responded to those that have made themselves known since the beginning of the century.

Why has theoretical idealism survived? It was at one time the bearer and creator of a truly groundbreaking philosophy of spirit, and the wealth of problems which it exposed at its height from Kant to Hegel is still not exhausted today. Even idealism has an ontological side—we know it as idealist epistemology—and this came more and more to the foreground after passing its zenith. This side was evident right from the start with the debate over the “thing in itself,” and was sharply intensified in Neo-Kantianism. [4]

Even today we encounter the viewpoint that a consistent idealism does not need to pose the question about “being as such,” or the view that it has never even posed the question at all. But if this is so, how should we understand the concern of these theories, in all their forms, to prove the “ideality of being”? Should we then say that such an undertaking does not deal with the question of being, and is not a theory of being?

Kant gave validity to the “empirical reality” of things, but he explained them as mere appearance, as “transcendentally ideal.” Fichte saw empirical reality as a production of the Ego; since the Ego takes the empirical world to be real in everyday life, it cannot know anything about this production. Schelling explicitly called this “unconscious production.” This is a theory that seems artificial, and it did not last historically either. However much its outcomes may be worth thinking about, there can be no doubt that it is a theory of being and of reality. Reality is explained here as mere appearance, to be sure, but even this explanation is an explanation of what pertains to the phenomenon of reality and its givenness. Thus, it is a theory of being as such, just as much as is any realistic explanation. The question of being is itself the same, and is indeed based on the same phenomena. It is only answered differently.

The same thing goes for the forms of logical idealism in Neo-Kantianism. We can even begin with the predicative being in judgment instead of with the functions of the Ego, and lead all reality back to logical validity. This may be rather arbitrary, but it is nevertheless an explanation of its way of being.

We find that even those theories we would have most expected to have completely avoided ontological questions have not completely avoided them. Even the most extreme subjectivism cannot avoid explaining at least the “mere appearance” of being in some way. In this case, it finds that it is no easier to explain mere appearance than it is to explain being itself. This is why systems of this kind appear to be so contrived. They strain themselves, as it were, while lifting the weight of the question of being, and have to pay the price of this pretension with internal damage.

It is the same even with skepticism, only in the opposite sense. It too cannot avoid dealing with the real, and indeed, precisely by the fact that it shows it to be questionable. The *έποχή* [suspension of judgment], with which it renouncingly contents itself, is above all engaged with the way of being of objects. With skepticism in its purest form we can appreciate why this is so and why it has to be so. Any form of theoretical thinking that is not at bottom ontological does not exist and is impossible. It is evidently of the nature of thinking that it can only think “something,” but not “nothing.” Parmenides already made this claim. But this “something” comes forward with a claim to being every time, and evokes the question of being. [5]

4 Ontological Background of Relativism

The same can be shown, *mutatis mutandis*, of all theories that relativize the concept of truth, whether they are supported by pragmatic or historicist arguments.

It has often been shown how such theories cancel themselves out, in that although they take true and untrue in the strict sense to be fundamentally impossible, they rely on these terms to explain their own position. Stated positively, this means that actually they only relativize the validity of these terms to the convictions of the age, and do not relativize “being-true” as such. This is a modest result that no one would dispute with much of a fanfare. It is not the same for something to “be” true and for something to “count as” true. Errors can also count as truth for a long span of generations, and the true can be concealed from or be incomprehensible to our thinking; where the truth is stated, it can be denounced as error.

This is a simple consideration. It completely suffices to explain the phenomenon of the historical relativity of validity that these theories have in mind. To be sure, behind the confusion between truth and validity is hidden a much more hazardous one: the confusion between truth and the criterion of the true. This is epistemological and extends more deeply into the foundations of our knowledge about “what is.” If truth were a tangible characteristic of the contents of knowledge, then the untrue would make itself known in consciousness every time—whether as a discrepancy or in some other way—and no error could be maintained in consciousness. The law of error is precisely that it is canceled out as soon as it is recognized as such. Truth would then in fact be “the measure of both itself and of the false.”¹ But it does not appear to be this way in the domestic economy of human knowing. Error and knowledge exist mixed undifferentiatedly together in all spheres of life and knowledge; all advances of insight are the result of a progressive correction of errors, and the critique of error must always be achieved first to a large extent. This is the reason for the apparent relativity of the true, of both the private truth in one’s personal perspective as well as the objective-historical truth in changing eras.

To the extent that historical relativism touches on the problem of being, however, it commits a much more serious mistake. This extension of the theory lies close at hand, since being-true simply means applicability to “what is.” Even the reality of the world is accordingly understood to be relative to the spirit of the age. We would mean by this not only the self-evident fact that there is change in the real world itself, but the mutability of one and the same unique occurrence in

¹ This is most likely a reference to a well-known passage from Spinoza’s *Ethics*. TR.

the world relative to the historical spiritual formation that makes the event into its object.

We will not waste words on the flamboyance of such arguments. It is instructive, however, that the theory, thanks to its consistency [6], is subject to a corrective that destroys it. The change in the spiritual formation is assumed to be a real one, and only under such a presupposition can it induce that “mutability.” But then it belongs to the same real world whose relativity to the spiritual formation was inferred. Thus, either this reality or its relativity is canceled. In the first case, the transformation of the spirit is not an actual one, and so it cannot induce any relativity of being; in the second case it is justified, but “what is” cannot be relative to it.

Put in such a way, this sounds quite contrived. But the artificiality lies in the theory, not in its refutation. The plain positive result of these considerations is the insight that even extreme relativism still presupposes an ontological foundation. We may therefore conclude from this that it is impossible for any theory to get by without such a foundation.

5 Metaphysical Background of Natural Science

Meanwhile, what is more important than the testimonial of theories and systems is the substantive philosophical labor already oriented toward the enduring reserve of problems.² If we can dwell on this favorite theme of contemporary speculation (relativity) a bit longer, we can begin with the philosophy of nature. It is no longer the way it was in Schelling’s era, since no one thinks that they can understand nature on analogy with spirit any more. The methodology of the exact sciences is also no longer satisfying, however. The latter has still been very constructive in its narrow domains of application.

The exactness of the positive sciences is rooted in the mathematical dimension. The latter, however, does not as such constitute cosmic relations. Every quantitatively determined thing is a quantity “of something.” Substrates of quantity are thus presupposed in all mathematical determination. These substrates remain, as such, identical in terms of quantitative multiplicity, whether we are dealing with mass, pressure, work, weight, duration, or spatial extension, and we already have to know them in another way when we want to understand

² A more specific, comprehensive account of metaphysics in our era can be found in my contribution to the collection edited by H. Schwarz, *Deutsche Systematische Philosophie nach ihren Gestaltern* (Berlin, 1931), pp. 283 ff; 3rd Ed., reprinted 1935. [Schwarz 1931. TR.]

what the mathematical formulas by which science grasps their specific relations mean. Behind them is arrayed a series of basic categorial factors that have an evident substrate-character and that withdraw from all quantitative formulation because they are the presupposition of real quantitative relations. Space and [7] time are above all of this sort, and matter, motion, force, energy, and causal process are no less presupposed along with them, among many other categorial factors.

There have been debates over these categories of nature since ancient times. Even today the theses of the theory of relativity bear on them. The metaphysical element of this theory consists in the attempt to reduce the factor of substrate to space, time, matter, etc. Taking off from the quantitative, it reaches toward the essence of the nonquantitative ontic foundations. It begins in the sphere of measurement and runs up against the limits of unambiguous measurability; but instead of recognizing the limits of the quantitative aspect of nature, it draws the opposite conclusion by relativizing the substrate of possible relational measurements. Instead of asking “what limitation on the mathematically formulable is appropriate for the nature of space and time?” It asks “what limitation on the nature of space and time is appropriate for the mathematical formulas?”

In this way, its implications move from an ontologically secondary realm into the ontologically primary domain. The substrates of relation are dissolved into relations. It goes unnoticed that in this way we are driven into the *cul de sac* of empty relationalism.

We easily learn the lesson here that the methodological violation of categorial boundaries in mathematical thinking directly proves its own limitation in the domain of nature’s objects, i.e., the opposite of what it intended to prove. What is here demonstrated to be quite relative is the definiteness of mathematical relations. But this relativity is just a special case of the universal dependence of cognition on the forms and categories of conceptual consciousness.

The categorial problem that becomes palpable in this situation is evidently ontological. No exact natural science can say what space, time, matter, or motion themselves actually are, not to mention what causality and being-caused are. They always already presuppose all of these categories, and do so without worrying about grounding or justifying what has been presupposed. The problem concealed in these presuppositions calls for a completely different procedure, even just to grasp it correctly in phenomenological terms. The task that arises here is an entirely metaphysical one. Only a rigorous categorial analysis makes it possible to properly tease out the unsolvable components of the pertinent problems so that we may make the solvable components accessible to being resolved.

6 The Metaphysics of Organic Life

In the field of biological problems, the metaphysical element induces complete perplexity right from the very first stages of analysis. The teleological interpretation of living things [8] has prevailed since ancient times in the philosophy of organic life. The vital processes seem all too clearly to run their course purposively. We should not be surprised that humankind, whose conduct in life is completely purposive, interprets this purposiveness as teleological activity and real goal-directedness. Only comparatively recently have we been able to detect the anthropomorphism that is implied in this interpretation. Indeed, the notion that an interpretation is present here at all hardly would have seriously occurred to anyone before Kant's *Critique of Teleological Judgment*.³

The mechanistic interpretation, in contrast, often preferred by materialism and taken up seriously by Darwin and his followers, suffers from the difficulty that processes at the organic level of complexity cannot even be understood in their totality as causal ones. Only partial processes and partial dependencies are demonstrable in causal terms, and this will always be the case. We cannot get beyond the bare thesis "that" there ought to be causally arranged processes here.

Both teleology and mechanism taken together point to the fact that we do not know the actual determinative relation embodied in living processes. This relation is something that, despite its conspicuous reality, still remains inaccessible to us, a nonrational phenomenon, the remainder of a metaphysical problem, unavoidable and irresolvable at once, one pertaining to the core of vital processes.

The mode of givenness of the organic also makes this situation completely understandable. It is a double mode of givenness, an inner and an outer, and the two are substantively separated by a deep crevasse. There is an immediate consciousness of one's own lived vitality and its states, and there is an objective or physical consciousness of another's life. The latter recognizes and knows the organism in its partial appearances, but does not grasp it as a whole; the former, in contrast, experiences it as a whole, but does not know anything about how it functions. We should not minimize the fact that both kinds of givenness reciprocally supplement one another. But this is only sufficient for the practical conduct of life, and not for understanding life's essence. They do not interface with one another, nor do they entirely correspond. The patient and the doctor have a very different awareness of one and the same condition. The patient only feels that

³ Hartmann refers to the second half of Kant's third *Critique*, the *Critique of Judgment*. TR.

something is “off” with him, and what it is he does not know; the doctor knows it, not on the basis of his vital feeling, but on the basis of external symptoms.

The two spheres of givenness are first contrasted with one another in theoretical reflection. The inner mode of givenness constantly misleads us into giving a teleological interpretation of life, the external just as persistently leads us to the causal interpretation. Both tendencies of the understanding are evidently one-sided, and both make judgments with reference to categories that are obviously not characteristic of organic life. The category of causality is borrowed from the domain of the inorganic, and the category of purpose from that of the psyche, and applied to the organism. [9]

This borrowing from one field to the other is quite understandable. How could humankind proceed otherwise than by moving from the given to what is not given? Now, both the external world of things and the inner world of the psyche are given with a certain immediacy, but the intermediate domain of the living is not. Its mode of givenness is instead distributed, as it were, to these two “worlds.” The problem is that these two “worlds” are insufficient as ways to acquire knowledge of the organic.

We are familiar with both causal connections and teleological connections. However, neither of the two adequately applies to the process of life. There is a huge gap in our knowledge here, since we simply do not know the genuine type of determination at work in living processes. This is the reason why, in our consciousness of living things, either causal or finalistic representations constantly obtrude themselves and obscure the fact that what is unique about living processes remains a metaphysical enigma.

7 The Metaphysical in Mental Life

The situation in the domain of psychological research is not as challenging as this. The sphere of what is given is clear and coherent in itself. Yet here too there lurks a background of metaphysical problems that in recent times reveals itself ever more palpably. This background is even more significant since the psychology of the nineteenth century was never able to grasp it and gave itself over to the deceptive certainty that it is a pure science of facts that has overcome all systematic difficulties. Its apparent superiority to other philosophical disciplines rests on this deception, as does its pretension to replace them.

The deception and pretension of psychologism have lapsed. The metaphysical side of the fundamental problem of psychologism remains. This is the problem of the way of being of psychical reality, and is from the start an ontological problem.

As long as we looked at reality as a peculiar property of the so-called external world—the world of things, the physical—psychology could consider itself to be metaphysically unburdened. This view does not at all correspond, however, to the way that we experience the mental. Everyone deals with the dispositions of his fellow human beings in everyday life as with something completely actual, something that determines events; everyone knows his own states, feelings, aversions, sympathies, wishes, longings, anxieties as something weighty, always present even without his knowledge, determining him from the darkest depths of his own self, assailing him, and indeed occasionally completely surprising him. There is evidently a real mental life running its course independently of the degree to which it is known, and this is not identical with consciousness. It runs its course in the same real time in which physical occurrences run theirs, changes and develops in the same clearly irreversible successive relations, [10] shows the same mode of coming to be and passing away; indeed, it stands in many-sided reciprocal dependence with external occurrences. Only its nonspatial character distinguishes it from them.

If we hold that spatiality, along with the materiality that is closely bound together with it, are essential properties of the real as such, then we naturally cannot grasp the reality of psychical acts. We have excluded the acts from reality by means of a false definition—a false ontological formulation of real being. If we make room for the wealth of phenomena implied, we can no longer hold to this definition. The mental world is then revealed to be just as real as the physical world. In this case, however, a series of further problems arises for psychology. Not only does it encounter the ontological question about how this psychical reality is to be grasped at all; the prospect also opens on a diverse field of unexperienced and unconscious states and acts that is apparently far richer in content than what is immediately lived and demonstrable.

Contemporary psychology has known about this situation for a long time. The time of the pure psychology of lived experience—which nearly identified the act and lived-act—is over. It is the phenomenology of acts, which takes up the given in a far more rigorous way than other methods, that has brought some clarity here. Today we no longer build consciousness up out of elements. These very elements have nowhere been proven to be demonstrable in their purity. There are always interconnections and wholes actually given in experience. However, everywhere they clearly refer us back to what has not been experienced.

We could call this transformation in psychology the inception of a critique of psychological reason. We are the more justified in calling it this the more this critique has in fact led to the distinction between appearance and in-itself within the inner world, in the same way that the Kantian critique led to the distinction

between appearance and in-itself in the external world. What is metaphysical in the problem of the mental has thus become ripe for discussion. It is the simple problem of the mode of being of the mental, provided by inner experience itself, in contrast to the old metaphysics of the soul—rational psychology.

8 The Metaphysical in Objective Spirit

To the present era, it is no surprise that the world of spirit constitutes yet another sphere of being beyond that of mental life, and it views spirit itself primarily historically. Mental life is bound to the individual, it arises and passes away with it. Spiritual life is never a matter of the individual, no matter how much the individual, as person, may be a unified and unique kind of being. What the person is does not derive merely from itself. In its maturing, it acquires what it is from the spiritual sphere into which it grows. The spiritual sphere is a shared one, a differentiated whole of intuitions [11], convictions, evaluations, tendencies, judgments and prejudices, knowledge and errors, forms of life and expression; in every case, it is a sphere of unity and wholeness, but is nevertheless fluid, developing, competing over goods, purposes, and ideas—a life of the spirit that proceeds in historical steps. The spirit, understood as a totality in this sense, is that which unites humankind in every age, where consciousness and personality separate humanity.

The human sciences deal with spirit in this sense. They never deal merely with the peculiarities of individuals, not even where such peculiarity should be grasped idiographically. For the individual is not to be understood from itself alone, it can only be understood with reference to its respective historical spirit. This historical spirit, with its changes, its tendencies, its development, is something real that comes to be and passes away in time, even when it outlives the individual; it is one of a kind, never to recur, a form no less individual than the person. It is that which Hegel called “objective spirit.”

We are able to conceive and describe the life and destiny of the objective spirit just as we can conceive and describe everything real, as long as it comes to appearance. To that extent there is nothing concealed or mysterious in it as a phenomenon. In contrast, its way of being remains a riddle. It does not suffice to claim that it is a mode of spiritual reality. It does not have the form of personal spirit with which we are familiar. It is not a subject and not consciousness. It is not reducible substantively or temporally to the consciousness of the individual human being. However, we are not acquainted with any consciousness other than individual consciousness.

It is this puzzling mode of being that leads us inadvertently to metaphysical theses. Hegel, who was the first to grasp objective spirit philosophically, understood it as the unity of a substance in which individual persons are only accidental manifestations. This outcome is understandable as an expression of its overwhelmingly puzzling nature; but its untenability was recognized early and there can be no doubt about it. There is no phenomenon that corresponds to it. Nevertheless, the issue is not settled by denying its substantiality. Its kind of unity and wholeness, its vitality, its capacity to progress, in short, the way of being of objective spirit, still remains uncomprehended. When we consider that it deals with the mode of being of very familiar and important objects—language, law, morality, *ethos*, art, religion, science—then the necessity clearly arises to get to the bottom of it.

To get to the bottom of a way of being is patently an issue for ontological investigation. It is a special case of the general project of understanding “being as such.” In its currently undeveloped state, ontology is not in the position to fulfill this task; what we can accomplish today is more like [12] a phenomenological preparation, a description of the typical processes and relations in the life of the objective spirit. But the task remains. When we approach the basic universal questions of ontology it is important to have this task firmly in view from the start.

9 The Metaphysical in the Logical Sphere

In this connection, it is apparent that the realm of thought—purely in itself, understood without any speculative interest—displays a metaphysical side. Logic, which deals with this realm, conceals this fact; since the ancient period, logic has been regarded as an immanent discipline free of metaphysics. Precisely this aspect of the tradition is philosophically open to question.

What mode of being does a judgment have? Its mode of being is apparently not exhausted by the fact that it is an accomplishment of someone’s act of thinking. It is taken up by another consciousness, understood, reaffirmed, becomes the shared property of many people, of a whole contemporary cohort, and outlives them historically. It is raised, as soon as it has been pronounced and formulated, into an objectivity that makes it independent of the mental act that originated it. Its meaning, its validity transcends the limits of consciousness, it “drifts” from person to person, from era to era, and it does not change in the course of its peregrination. It belongs to another sphere than that of material and mental reality.

Now, if we call this sphere the “logical sphere,” then the question arises as to what kind of sphere this is, what mode of being it has. It is not identical with the ideal sphere of being; for untrue judgments, which do not correspond to what is, also belong to it. Errors too “roam about” in conventional forms of judgment. It also does not belong to the level of being of objective spirit, for objective spirit abandons judgments, rejects them, substantively modifies them; it has temporal being, historical reality. The meaning of judgment as such, however, has neither temporality nor reality. It does not change. Only its being-acknowledged, only its validity in the opinions of humankind changes. This validity is not the logical meaning of the judgment, however.

The same goes for whole interconnected sequences and series of judgments, for what logic calls “arguments.” So-called “logical consistency,” the inner correctness in the serial relations between premisses and conclusion, apparently also legitimately exists when it is not realized or fulfilled. Finally, this mode of being is attributed to concepts of the most complex type, which have been constructed on the basis of a whole series of judgments and arguments. The “features” of a concept are precisely those predicates which have been joined to it through judgments. Now, if we suggest that concepts, judgments, and arguments are the structural elements by means of which science establishes its content at any given time, then the question about the [13] mode of being of the logical sphere comes down to science itself. The fundamental question about the nature of science is no less ontological than that concerning the real, nature, the living, the mental, and spirit. Here too we are just dealing with a fundamentally different mode of being.

There is a second point to be made here that concerns logical lawfulness. If this were of a “merely” logical sort, then it could not guarantee the truth of judgments that are deduced from true premisses. Everywhere we are concerned about the truth of what is deduced, in science as in life. Without it, the whole conjunction of logical connections in our thinking would have no cognitive value and—more importantly—no vital value.

What is presupposed in the truth that is the result of logical inference? Laws, like those of noncontradiction and excluded middle, laws of subsumption, the table of judgments, figures and modes of syllogism, could indeed merely be laws of thought, without any analogue in the real world in relation to which a conclusion is true or untrue. In this case, logical consistency would be worthless. Only if a set of consistent ontological relations corresponds to it in the real—i.e., if in the real world too contradictrories do not coexist, of contradictory members only one necessarily exists, the universal necessarily applies to a specific case—does logical consistency obtain any cognitive value.

If this is the case, then logical laws would have to be at the same time universal ontological laws. They would reign throughout the world in which inference occurs, and in which what is logically inferred can make a claim to truth. If we admit this much, then the question about the laws of logic is at bottom an ontological problem. A fruitful treatment of logic will become possible when we take on this problem. In fact, this idea was already contained in the old debate over universals. The idealistic and methodological logic of the nineteenth century is to blame for the fact that this fundamental ontological problem has been forgotten.

10 The Downfall of the Problem of Knowledge

This situation is even more conspicuous in epistemology. Neo-Kantian criticism took for granted that the critique of cognition could replace metaphysics. It understood this critique as a purely immanent discipline that could get by on its own without metaphysical presuppositions; indeed, it believed it could claim Kant as principal witness for this position. The result was not only the completely un-Kantian rejection of metaphysical problems—if they were acknowledged at all—but the complete flattening and misconception of the problem of cognition itself.

Kant's opinion was completely different. Critique should not make metaphysics impossible, but is what makes metaphysics possible in the first place. He even imagined critique itself to be a thoroughly [14] metaphysical kind of investigation. How else could the thing-in-itself have played its role as a fundamental critical concept? The famous question about the possibility of “synthetic *a priori* judgments” goes even deeper. Kant decided the outcome of this question in the formula of his “supreme principle,” in that the categories of “experience” have to be at the same time categories of the “objects” of experience, and only within the scope of this identity spanning subject and object do the categories have “objective validity.” This decision is not in any way idealist of itself. It precisely exhibits a fundamental metaphysical condition—if not of all knowledge, then at least of the *a priori* component in it; a decision, in any case, which exists independently of the distinction between idealist and realist presuppositions.⁴

The case is similar for the other “root” of cognition, the *a posteriori*. Here Kant led everything back to the affection of the senses by the thing-in-itself. To be sure, he did not follow through on the aporias contained in this interpre-

⁴ See Hartmann 1924, section 4, for the full argument briefly outlined here. TR.

tation; indeed, the transcendental aesthetic also only pertains to the *a priori* component in sensibility. This much is clear: he saw the transcendental relation in sensible givenness distinctly and took it seriously.

Later theories did not do this any longer. This led to the downfall of the problem of cognition, which has led to psychologism on one hand and to logicism on the other. All interpretations that assimilate cognition with judgment can be counted among the latter, however much they are different in other respects. Minds as otherwise different as Natorp, Cassirer, Rickert, Husserl, and Heidegger have succumbed to the same mistake. The psychologism they struggled against shared with the logical theories a misconception of the relation of transcendence in the phenomenon of cognition. In both (psychological and logical) theories they could lull themselves into a false sense of security before the feared metaphysics the less they tried to grasp the fundamental ontological problem in judgment as much as in mental acts.

Another thought is concealed behind this misconception of the problem that is much older, one which the *Critique of Pure Reason* discussed masterfully as a source of error with prodigious consequences. We can call it the “correlativistic” argument. According to this argument, there is no object of cognition without a subject of cognition; we cannot separate the object from consciousness, it is only an object at all “for” consciousness. We must, when we maintain this, accept the existence of a subject, even for things that exist independently of our interpretation; this assumption approaches the old image of an *intellectus infinitus* or *divinus*. In fact, in Kant as well as in the later thinkers we find the most varied expressions of this concept. They represent a kind of transposition of the correlativistic argument into the absolute and clearly display the metaphysical background of epistemological idealism. [15]

However, the consequence of the argument is that the genuine meaning of the cognitive relation is eliminated. Cognition can then no longer be a “grasping” of something. The whole distinction between an object’s being known and being unknown collapses; such a concept of cognition leads, moreover, to the conclusion that the world counts as existing only to the extent that it is known, for the unknown would simply not exist for the subject. What is even worse, the opposition between “true and untrue” is sacrificed; in its place only correspondence or noncorrespondence between concepts, judgments, and representations remains. Then the question whether the whole content of consciousness pertains, with complete internal consistency, to its total object or not (the existing world), is entirely lost sight of.

Whether this content pertains or does not pertain to the world is the genuine meaning of truth and falsity. Since, on the correlativist view, knowledge exists only in the case of its applicability, and since consciousness is also capable of

inapplicable formations of content—whether it be in terms of representation, imagination, thinking, or mistaken judgment—the very distinction on which everything in the problem of cognition is based drops out: the distinction between mere representing, thinking, opining, and judging, on the one hand, and the actual grasp of the subject-matter on the other hand. In this manner, we arrive at the paradox of a “theory of knowledge” in which the genuine problem of cognition no longer even appears.

11 Phenomenology and Metaphysics of Knowledge

The distinctive feature of this historical state of affairs is that the correlativistic argument upon which it rests is fallacious. It is supported by a prejudice for which the traditional concept of an “object” is to blame. “Object” (*objectum*)—i.e., “something thrown over against” us—can naturally only be something “for” someone, “to whom” it is thrown up against. The German word “object” (*Gegenstand*)—i.e., “that which stands against” (*das “Gegenstehende”*)—exhibits the same relation. Thus, these terminological formulations are already coined on the basis of a correlational relationship to the subject. If we preserve them, then our correlativistic prejudice is always simply reinforced.

However, in the problem of cognition we are not dealing with the analysis of a word or a concept, but with phenomenological analysis. The “phenomenon” of cognition looks completely different. The central issue, put briefly, is this: in cognition, in contrast to representing, thinking, or imagining, the most essential thing is that its object is not reducible to its being an object for consciousness. That to which cognition is actually directed, that which it seeks to grasp and to probe ever further, has a transobjective “being.” It is what it is independently of whether a consciousness makes it into an object [16] or not; and independently of how much or how little of it is made into an object. In general, its being-an-object is something secondary about it. Everything that is, if it is made into an object at all, is only secondarily made into an object. There is no entity to whose essence it originally belongs to be an object for a consciousness. It is first brought into the relation of “standing over against” due to the emergence of a cognizing subject in the world, and precisely to the extent that the subject is mentally in the position to “objectify” it on the basis of its categories. Cognition is precisely objectification.

The proof that this is the genuine nature of the cognitive relation can already be adduced with reference to the naïve consciousness of objects by a knower. No one imagines that the thing he sees first comes to exist through the fact that he sees it; we would not even call a kind of perception that would produce its very

object “perception,” but at best “representation.” In general terms, cognition that does not grasp a thing in itself should not even be called cognition. It could be thinking, judging, or imagining. But anything can be thought, provided it is not self-contradictory, the most incorrect judgments can be made, and the imagination is fully autonomous relative to being and nonbeing. Cognition is something completely different. There is cognition of that which first of all “is”—and “is” independently of whether it is cognized or not.

To be sure, here too there is a strict correlation between subject and object. It is just the case that the cognitive relation is not reducible to it. It is only a relation of a subject to that entity which it has made into its object. The entity that stands there to be known is indeed not reducible to its being an object. It is indifferent to its objectification by a subject; its becoming an object as such is extrinsic to it. It changes nothing in it. Only something in the subject is changed by the objectification of the object. An image of the entity arises in it, a representation, a concept, a learning about it. The image changes further with the advance of cognition. All of this modification and all advance plays itself out solely in consciousness; the entity that is progressively objectified in this process remains untouched by it.

Even Kant did not see this point very clearly. He thought that only the appearance became known while the entity in itself was unknowable. The exact opposite is the case. What is cognized—if there is cognition at all—is only the entity in itself. The appearance, in contrast, is nothing other than the process of cognition itself—only viewed from the side of the object. “I know something” and “it appears to me” are two expressions for one and the same relation: the objectification of an entity in a subject. It is thus completely true that I know an entity only insofar as it appears to me. It is a tautological proposition, however. Additionally, it becomes false when we turn it into its negative form: the [17] entity in itself is not cognizable. Instead, it is precisely the case that the entity in itself is the appearing thing in the appearance. Otherwise, the phenomenon would indeed be mere illusion. That is not what Kant intended.

It was a mistake common to theories of consciousness—Neo-Kantian, positivistic, and phenomenological too—that they confused object and existing entity in the problem of cognition. Everything that exists can certainly become an object—at least in principle, for it does not resist objectification—but that does not mean that it has to necessarily become an object, let alone already be an object in itself. It is a mistake to think that every entity is an object, and that only that which is an object has an ontological character. The world, understood as the sum total of entities, is without a doubt only partially an object of knowledge; perhaps even only the smallest part of it is. The incessant disclosure of

novel domains of objects in the advance of knowledge teaches us this convincingly.

With the insight that cognition is the becoming-object of an entity—its objectification by the subject—the genuine problem of cognition again becomes accessible at its core. It first shows its true face here again, i. e., the face of a metaphysical problem. Now, we are dealing with the question about how it is possible for a subject to grasp an entity transcendent to it; or, what is the same thing, how an entity can become an object for a subject. It is necessary to bridge the relation of transcendence. In the treatment of this question, every mere phenomenology of cognition reaches its limit and becomes a metaphysics of cognition.

Reclaiming this core problem is the decisive step not only for epistemology, but also for ontology. “What is as such” is by this means yanked from its apparent distance, as it were, and brought into closest proximity and tangibility. If all cognition is related to an entity in itself as such, then the ontological problem does not first begin with the ultimate foundations of the world, but begins right in the midst of everyday life. It concerns everything known and knowable no less than the unknown and unknowable. It attaches to everything given, all things, all human relations, to the smallest as to the largest. Indeed, it includes the cognitive relation itself. Not only is the object of cognition an entity in itself, the subject is as well. The whole relation is an ontological relation. Epistemology is transformed into ontology as a direct consequence of its own problematic. To the extent that epistemology needs ontology and stimulates it, it takes on a key position in the ontological problematic.

12 The Metaphysics of *Ethos* and of Freedom

Nevertheless, the metaphysical aspect of epistemology is not the most significant. The problem of knowledge is just a preliminary one among the problem domains of spiritual being. [18] It does not yet touch on the nature of the person. We deal with the nature of the person as soon as we treat of life with its changing situations, demands, needs, and tasks. Here we arrive at the problem of *ethos* and of freedom.

That which all living beings have in common is their standing in the midst of the flux of events, constantly internally wrenched and affected by whatever comes their way. This flux never stands still, and the process of being faced with ever new situations that must somehow be mastered never lets up for even a moment. There is a fundamental difference between the way the animal behaves amidst this pressure of life and the way human beings do, however. The animal simply stands under the laws of its species, it simply does what it has to

do. It certainly does a diverse number of things depending on the situation, but nevertheless always acts on the basis of a necessity in which the elements of its species difference, norms of reaction, instincts, and of its external situation, together constitute the determining factors.

It is otherwise for humankind. Humans too stand in the stream of events, situations assail them as well; they do not choose them, they run headlong into them—even where they see them coming and co-determine them through intervention or avoidance; for they still always happen otherwise than they wanted them to. Once they are there, they cannot avoid them, they must get through them, they have to act. The difference is just that the situation does not tell them “how” they have to act, it leaves them leeway to act this way or that. Just as little does their own nature definitively show them the right way to go. A power in opposition to the drives exists in them, one that holds goals, tasks, and values before their eyes, powers of a unique kind and significance. Even their own essence leaves them leeway to act. This means that the direction in which they snap into action depends on their freedom.

We should not misunderstand the nature of this freedom. Human beings do not have freedom because they do or do not want to act in a given situation; for even omission is an act and can, if it was not the right thing, come back to them as guilt. A person is of course always compelled to act. He only has freedom regarding “how” he acts. The how depends on his decision. Because just this decision is the enactment of his freedom, we can also say that he is compelled to make a free decision. Or also conversely: in being compelled to make a decision he is free.

His freedom is thus neither the mere negation of leeway—whether it is the internal or external variety—nor is it liberty in face of the stream of world events. This stream, rather, viewed as a chain of situations, compels a decision from him, but the leeway is only the condition of possible decision. The “how” of the decision remains his own affair. He is left on his own with it. And this “being left own your own” is freedom. [19]

What we call a “person” in everyday life is in this sense a free being. It is that being to whom we attribute deeds, who bears responsibility and has guilt and merit; the being who, according to its inclination or disposition, decides on its own, is “good or evil.” It is that being that is never compelled to do good or evil, but is compelled to decide between good and evil. For there is no freedom for the good alone; he who is also in principle capable of doing evil is capable of doing good in the moral sense. If humankind was not capable of doing evil, it would be subject to the law of the good in the same way a thing is subject to natural laws. Then its goodness would not be moral goodness, and not moral value.

Thus, we could also say that the person is that being that is capable of moral good and evil, the bearer of moral value and disvalue. It is the meaning of moral value that it is based on liberty. The riddle of the person is not at all resolved this way, but is first of all recognized to be impenetrable. It is precisely freedom that is the central metaphysical puzzle of the person. How is it possible that a being who depends upon an incomprehensible variety of factors in the stream of world events, and is conditioned down to the depths of its sensibility, should nevertheless be free in its decision making? Granting that this could even be shown, how is it possible that, in addition, it should have freedom in face of the demand of the morally good, the only thing that could constitute a counterweight to those forces in him?

The incomprehensible thing about the essence of freedom is precisely this: that it has two faces, it is freedom in face of ontological laws and simultaneously freedom in face of moral laws. This means that the person must bear in itself yet another source of self-determination next to the double determination by the stream of events and by the moral law. Precisely this is the riddle. The solution of the Kantian antinomy of causality is at best sufficient for only one side of the problem. The other side, the moral antinomy, has to be regarded as yet completely unresolved. Only an ontological clarification—carried out from the bottom up—of the nature of humankind, person, and spirit, on the one hand, and of the ought, moral law, and value, on the other hand, can provide us any counsel here.

13 Metaphysics of Values

In all of this, however, the essence of “the good” as such is assumed to be known. This assumption cannot be maintained either. The plurality of moral values already proves it. Since Nietzsche, it has been shown more and more clearly that we are not dealing with a unitary principle at all—as Kant still believed—but with a plurality of values that is only gradually disclosed in the history of humankind. [20]

Thus far, of course, the problem of values is not a metaphysical one. Even the real world is only gradually disclosed to human understanding. The problem becomes metaphysical when we are concerned with the mode of being of values. In ancient ethics this question is obscured by the lack of a concept of value. With the ancients, the “Idea” takes the place of value (the idea of justice, the idea of courage, of the good in general); but the genuine value character comes to the fore only in its contents, and it is not negated by the evidently different mode of being of ontic principles (such as unity, opposition, form, matter). Kant, in contrast, very neatly and definitively raised the moral law above the principles

of objects (e.g., the categories) through the concept of the ought. He situated the source of the ought in reason, however, and because of this a new difficulty arose. For reason—understood as practical—is the very same faculty that makes free decisions for or against the moral law. Therefore, it must, on the one hand, prescribe the law to itself, but on the other, still have room to maneuver in face of this very law. If reason did not have this leeway, then it would stand under it “as under a law of nature;” it would then indeed be unerring in deed, but this unerring quality would not be its moral value.

Thus, Kant unified two heterogeneous forms of autonomy in practical reason, that of the moral law, and that of the decision in face of the law—which is obviously untenable. Since it is impossible to seek freedom in anything other than the willing subject (the person), the error has to lie in the subjective origin of the ought. If we strike this out, then the aporia in the mode of being of the ought once more comes immediately into the foreground. It deals with the objective root of the ought. Such a thing, however, first of all requires a clarification of its mode of being. It has to be of another kind than the mode of being of ontological principles.

This aporia constitutes the unresolved—and in the current state of research—entirely insoluble core of the problem of value. It is not at all a merely ethical problem. It recurs in all other domains of value, in that of goods values, vital values, and aesthetic values, etc.; it is not ameliorated by taking these domains of value to be autonomous. The very comprehension of autonomy depends entirely on the comprehension of its mode of being.

The problem is this. That which is withdrawn from the personal opinion of the subject exists “in itself.” It does not need to be considered real for this reason. Reality should not even be considered as a mode of being of values. They indeed exist apparently independently of whether and to what extent they are realized in the world; and only in this manner is it possible that moral values have an ought-character and appear to humankind as demands. Thus, we have to ascribe [21] to values a different mode of being. Of course, they do not have to just stand there in isolation. There are plenty of lawful regularities and essences that have a merely “ideal being;” since Plato, mathematical relations have been invoked to demonstrate this fact. However, what mode of being these relations have is neither explained—even today the debate over them is lively—nor can their mode of being be completely identical with that of values. Evidently, they do not have an ought-character and they govern the real unopposed, as far as they relate to it, like laws of nature. Mathematical natural lawfulness, however limited it may be, would otherwise be impossible. The ideal being of values must have another sort of being that is neither borne by the subject nor identical with that of the other essences.

Now, we might accept the existence of such a thing, but we are not able to directly demonstrate it or more closely characterize it. It currently forms an open problem—a problem that, when first discovered, is not only temporarily irresolvable, but is still hardly even conceived in its full breadth. The task of a metaphysics of values is bound up with it. This task exists regardless of how much of the substantive multiplicity of values has been revealed and can be phenomenologically described.

The seriousness of this task can best be illustrated by the fact that the great dispute over the absoluteness or relativity of values depends on its solution. There is no other mode of givenness of values than the consciousness of value, and this takes the form of value-feeling. Historically, of course, value-feeling is mutable. Historical relativism seizes on this fact and claims that values themselves are liable to historical change; whence it is concluded that they are dependent on value consciousness. The other interpretation is opposed to this value relativism, and according to it the value realm exists inalterably in itself, but the consciousness of value of each period only grasps fragments of it. Value-feeling would relate to the sphere of values just as cognition relates to entities in general, for even cognition does not grasp the whole existing world in one fell swoop. It only gradually discloses it in its advance, and its world pictures are superseded historically, just like the substantively value-diverse moralities of peoples and eras.

Since the first interpretation contests the being of values absent a subject, and the second takes it as a presupposition, the decision about whether value relativism is justified or not depends ultimately on the basic ontological question. It makes no sense at all to wish to settle this question through speculative presumptions. This way we only burden it with more unverifiable assumptions. This does not clarify the issue, it only obscures it. Only steady labor on the ontological foundation is able to promise actual clarification. This labor is only in its early stages today. [22]

14 Metaphysics of Art and of the Beautiful

The realm of the beautiful cannot be compared with that of *ethos* and freedom in terms of overall significance, but it can be in terms of its metaphysical subtleness and nonrationality. We could probably live without being touched by the problem of art, but we cannot philosophize without being seized by it. This is why its problematic belongs to the circle of questions in which the ontological problem is rooted.

The realm of the beautiful is not another world next to the real world. Nature, humankind, and life with its unbidden comedy and tragedy, that is, everything that can be an object of cognition can also be an object of aesthetic contemplation and appreciation. What appears to this kind of contemplation, however, is not the same thing that appears to cognition. The geographical landscape is not same as the one aesthetically contemplated. The former exists in itself even without observers, while the latter is only there “for” the observer, is what it is only as seen, only from a determinate location; the particular perspective, its depth of visual field, its particular kind of illumination are essential to it.

Even such a simple example shows that the mode of being of aesthetic objects is of a unique kind, fundamentally different from that of theoretical objects. And yet they are not merely reducible to their being “for” the observer. Without the real presence of an actual stretch of land the aesthetic landscape would not appear. The whole object is thus a layered composite made of a real component which forms the foundation, and of an unreal, only phenomenal component that arises on top of it. Yet both are intertwined in one another such that it is definitely only one single object.

This relation is even more palpable in the work of art. In the painted landscape, the region represented is—if such a region even exists—not at all given; instead, another real thing is given, the layer of the canvas with its distribution of colors. What the onlooker sees is nevertheless far more than this: the spatial depth with its contents, its illumination, its “mood.” All of this is not really there, but it “appears” in a real thing. Moreover, the whole thing is an indissoluble unity: the landscape only appears in looking at the canvas, but the latter with its flecks of color is only a picture to the extent that the landscape appears upon it.

The aesthetic object is a stratified one in all domains of artistic creation. In sculpturally formed stone the mobile figure appears, as does force, life, and grace. In the poetically formed word appear shapes out of flesh and blood, sufferings, scenes, and destinies. In an acoustic series of sounds, which proceeds temporally and is not collected into any single moment, a musical whole appears, a structure that is only fully formed when that temporal sequence is completed. Everywhere, an unreal layer appears in a real one, clearly distinct from it [23], and yet indissolubly bound to its givenness. A spiritual kind of observation constantly supervenes on sensible seeing or hearing; the work of art is always a dual entity composed of two different modes of being, and is nevertheless a genuine unity. It never exists in itself, separated from the observer; for that which appears exists only for him. That which appears, however, also never appears without the real formed entity as its substrate. Moreover, the latter is only a work of art to the extent that it conveys what appears to the observer.

So far, the relation is explicable and corresponds to the bare facts. The question how such a thing is possible follows on its heels. It may appear to be understandable how the artist conjures up something in front of us that is not actual. The formed artwork, of course, is not the artist. In viewing the work of art we have nothing at all to do with the artist. The work alone is given. The magic of appearance issues from it.

The problem is simply how a real entity, sensibly given like other things, can allow a heterogeneous content, completely different from it and its mode of being, to “appear.” Here we cannot refer to the act of the artist; for the latter is not repeated. Moreover, the observer engages in his own act, not arbitrarily but firmly determined by the visible artwork. It also does not help to appeal to the marvel of the “artistic form.” It is precisely this form that already contains the whole phenomenal relation. As artistic, it is precisely the formation of a real entity that conjures up the appearance of another, nonactual one, in its complete determinacy and concreteness.

This problem clearly represents the point at which aesthetics becomes a metaphysics of the beautiful. Insofar as we are dealing with a relational unity of two modes of being in this stratification, it is clear that the problem is an ontological one.

15 Metaphysics of History

All spiritual being is in flux. It has a history. History is of course not the history of spirit alone, but is always “also” the history of spirit. Without the coefficient of spirit it cannot be distinguished in principle from natural occurrences.

Objective spirit is the kind of spirit we are talking about here. The individual person is only in a very limited sense a bearer of history. The great events belong to individuals only indirectly. The duration of their lives does not accommodate the great advancements. What actually shifts, transforms, and develops historically are the self-produced spiritual forms of peoples: law, politics, morality, language, knowledge, etc. They are always the forms of a community, but they do not themselves have the form of a community. These forms are not made up [24] of individuals, like the community, but made up of a substantive multiplicity that is common to the individuals.

Now, the old questions *whence* and *whither* cling to the process of history. These are not merely questions of historical content, especially when it comes to the “whither.” We do not just deal with the question to what end we are developing, but more so with the question whether people are moving in some ostensible direction toward a goal at all, or are without such a goal and are at the

mercy of “chance” and the chain of causality. This question is an eminently metaphysical one. It is known as the problem of historical teleology. It is significant, not merely in itself, but due to the question of meaning that stands behind it. If historical process is at the mercy of the contingency of some series of connections, then it is not led toward some meaning; but if there is goal-directedness in it, then the goal itself must be one that bestows meaning. In the latter case, because the historical process is the actualization of a goal, it is a process that imbues meaning.

This is why the question concerning the mode of historical determination (whether it is causally or teleologically determined) is of the greatest urgency. Above all, humankind searches for the meaning of life; and without a meaning for history it seems that the life of the individual cannot be meaningful either. Humankind tolerates nothing more poorly than the meaninglessness of its own life. Suffering and misfortune do not impact us as deeply as the senselessness of the notion that “it’s all in vain.” Where we are unable to discover a meaning within our own existence, we are compelled to seek it outside of our own existence—in what lies ahead of us.

This question of meaning is no longer simply ontological. Since it clings to the problem of teleology, however, it is rooted in an ontological question and is at least an ontologically conditioned question. Since the time of German Idealism, it has constituted the genuine content of the philosophy of history, or as we should say more correctly, the metaphysics of history.

At the same time, we face this question with further distinctions to draw. What the determining forces are in the kind of determination belonging to the historical process is evidently decisive. If they are physico-material, vital, economic forces, then the course of events, including the transformations of spirit, is determined “from the bottom up,” and is subject to causal dependency; everything that happens is then the effect of that which has come to be, and there is no room for ideal factors. If they are spiritual forces, then the spiritual form of determination has to prevail in the historical process, and that is teleology. The process is then determined “from above” and follows a teleological order that is oriented on the basis of the end. In this case it is guided by a meaning, but then there is no room for factors of an economic sort.

In this way, historical materialism and historical idealism stand starkly opposed to one another, both being well-known from the opposition between Marx and [25] Hegel. It is not really necessary to juxtapose them in such an exaggerated way. The historical process is stratified in itself, it contains the physical and economic life of peoples as much as their spiritual life. It stands to reason that we should see these bidirectional forces—determination “from below” and “from above”—as unified in it, intertwining and complementary, as it were. Then new

difficulties arise, however, chief among them that causal and teleological determination run diametrically opposed to one another and do not quite seem to automatically mesh with one another in a harmonious way.

Thus, there are three levels of problems in the historical process that come down to metaphysical questions. All three can only be dealt with in a principled way when we clarify the stratification of the powers and factors that constitute historical being from the ground up. Answering the question raised above regarding the mode of being of objective spirit, and of its relation to the lower ontological strata that bear it, belongs to this clarification. The categorial analysis of the causal nexus and finalistic nexus is also included here, since the cases concerning both of them still remain open even today. Finally, the major question whether and to what extent pure factors of meaning and value are involved in a complexly conditioned real process, and whether they can determine it as powers shaping reality, must be considered.

There can be no doubt that these are ontological questions, the likes of which traditional philosophy of history usually decided in advance through speculative theorizing. Here, if anywhere, we have to be thorough. This labor can only begin when the universal fundamental questions are reassessed from the bottom up.

16 The Interlinked Framework of Metaphysical Problems

As long as we understand by “metaphysics” one unified domain of problems among others, delimited in terms of content, we cannot do much with the metaphysical questions highlighted above. They do not seem to properly belong anywhere, are strewn across all domains of inquiry, and show—when we set aside certain fortuitous points of contact—no genuine cohesiveness. What is common to them all is only that they exist everywhere in the background of special philosophical fields and form a kind of remainder with which the special methods of these fields cannot cope.

The old metaphysics had to leave them lying there unattended—partly because they were occupied with their special objects, partly because they were unfamiliar with the ways and means of coping with them. The old metaphysics was a discipline delimited in terms of its content; God, the soul, and the cosmos were its objects. It maintained this self-conception from antiquity to Kant. It was this metaphysics [26] that had to yield to the critique of cognition. Throughout the centuries, its blossoms were never rooted on firm soil; it could never demonstrate the presuppositions that it was compelled to make, and could never bring its conclusions into harmony with the results of the empirical branches

of knowledge. It celebrated its triumphs in the vacuum of speculative space, which was the peculiar terrain of all the major systems erected, and they collapsed as soon as the *Critique* even lightly touched on their foundations. These systems ultimately made the term “metaphysics”—and even the term “philosophy”—equivocal.

This metaphysics is no longer our own. However, metaphysical problems have not died out with it. In fact, the real, perennially unavoidable problems of metaphysics have just now become visible. They no longer lie beyond the world, nor beyond all experience and givenness, but in the closest proximity, tangibly, in the midst of everyday life. They cling to all aspects of experience, and accompany what is cognizable in every domain. This is because the cognizable is everywhere surrounded by the incognizable. Since ontological relations do not coincide with the boundaries of cognition, but transcend them on all sides, unresolved and irresolvable residual questions appear everywhere in the background, and every inquiry, in whatever substantive direction it may go, inadvertently runs into them.

Such problems, unavoidable and undeniable, are the genuine and legitimate metaphysical problems. In this sense, they constitute the background of domains of inquiry because they provide us with a firm connection to the cognizable, but are also ultimately insoluble by way of our limited cognitive means and therefore continue to exist despite all cognitive progress.

The fundamental questions in the different branches of philosophy referred to above are of this kind. They are not arbitrary or artificial meddlesome difficulties; their content is not the work of humankind, and we cannot change them or eliminate them. We can misunderstand them, ignore them, or skirt them. We cannot prevent them, however, from making themselves known to us again and again. There are facts on which they depend, basic facts of our life and of the world in which our lives play themselves out. These questions are nothing other than the perennial mysteries that the world as it is, and our life in it, poses to us. It does not lie in the power of humankind to change the world. Human life in it changes, to be sure, but not in accordance with the problems humanity introduces; instead, the problems that life allots to humankind change to the degree that human life in the world changes.

As soon as we are clear on this issue, Kant’s claims about unavoidable and yet irresolvable problems is vindicated to an extent that neither he nor his contemporaries knew how to appreciate. These problems have been demonstrated to be fundamental questions in every area of human inquiry and investigation. They form an interlinking chain [27] of background problems, a framework, as it were, for all more specialized problematics. There is no doubt that, from the

moment that philosophy recognizes this overall situation, its future fate depends on how it is able to cope with this framework of metaphysical problems.

The time for this recognition has arrived.

17 The Ontological Element in Metaphysical Problems

If the metaphysical content of problems was completely nonrational, then it would be hopeless to tackle these problems philosophically. Nonrationality in the gnoseological sense means incognizability. There is nothing completely incognizable, however, in the domain of identifiable problems. The existence of the problems themselves proves it. In the identification of the problem as such, something about the core issue to which the problem makes reference is always already known. Otherwise, it would be impossible to even distinguish one problem from another. What we understand to be nonrational is thus always only partially nonrational.

This means that there is always a cognizable side to it as well. The comprehensive ontological interconnectedness of the actual world, bridging across all limits of cognition, guarantees it. We always find the unknown to be bound to the known, the unknowable to the knowable. If metaphysical problems do not allow of being completely solved, then they can still be treated with the proper methods. We just have to find the right methods. Their “treatment” simply indicates a progress of cognition by which new sides or partial constituents of a problem lead to a solution, increasingly circumscribing the unknown remainder and thereby making it relatively conceivable.

Obviously, the procedure attends to the cognizable side of the objects. To want to know the unknowable itself would be an unreasonable demand. So, what is this cognizable side of metaphysical problems that we have found to be the problematic background throughout the whole range of domains of philosophical inquiry?

The answer to this question is already contained in the analyses presented above. It has been shown that, across the board, there is an ontological component to all of these problems. They always directly concern either the mode of being, or the type of determination, the structural principle, or the categorial form. This side of the problem is not irresolvable, it is just necessary to tackle it in the appropriate way. To be sure, there may also be impassable limits of cognition here; but these will be exposed only as we make progress on the problem. Ontological constituents of problems are not necessarily nonrational in themselves; as a rule, they are accessible in a certain way, and often even the mere description of what lies before us, provided it proceeds at once rigorously and

[28] comprehensively, can already attain a certain clarification of the issue. Since we are dealing with ultimate fundamental problems, for which each step forward can have consequences of the greatest significance, every shred of clarification we attain is of incalculable philosophical value.

Now, the answer to the question posed at the start of this Introduction can finally be provided, i. e., why should we really return to ontology? We should and we must because the existing philosophical problematic demands it. The ontological component of the fundamental metaphysical questions in every domain of inquiry has been shown to be the manageable aspect of them open to research. We can also put it this way: the questions about mode of being and ontological structure, of modal and categorial structure, are the most nonmetaphysical elements in metaphysical problems, the most rational elements, relatively speaking, in the total constitution of that which contains nonrational residual problems.

Only by carrying out the task can it be demonstrated that this is the case. Nevertheless, it is amply evident from the preceding inventory of problem domains that in fact a viable path opens for us. Even the mere explication of the ontological component in these problems already has a certain persuasive power. We are able to detect tangible handholds for possible treatment of them even where we do not yet substantively grasp them.

At least this much can be said in advance: the fate of the old ontology should not lead us astray. The metaphysics that was based on it has collapsed. This metaphysics had other presuppositions; its weaknesses were a result of them and not of ontology. What is more important, the old ontology was itself designed one-sidedly; it was not yet familiar with the broad range of problems that could have given it a more expanded basis, unlike the multiplicity of entryways and methods which today we can draw from an enriched philosophical experience. Indeed, if ontology nevertheless remained the basis of philosophy for so many centuries, we could instead infer that there must be a reason for it, and that it should justifiably be given a place as a fundamental discipline—far more fundamental than the critique of cognition that historically superseded it—even where it has failed in its task. The task does not exist only when it is successful, and no failure cancels it out.

18 The Idea of a New *philosophia prima*

The fact that the range of metaphysical problems is so extensive and is divided amongst such heterogeneous domains of objects still causes trouble for us. The isolated groups of problems appear to be only contingently conjoined to one an-

other, and they form no perceptible unity. [29] Since their ontological constituents are attached to them, these seem not quite to cohere either. How can we thus hope to achieve the unity of a *philosophia prima* out of this? Something like a *philosophia prima* really is what we talking about here.

The following points should be mentioned prior to any further investigation. They are fundamental to the idea of a new ontology, and result partly from the considerations above, partly from familiar historical experience.

1. Of course, we should not expect a predetermined, well-defined unity of a substantive kind here—according to some schema or based on a principle. This kind of unity could only be the prefabricated unity of a “system.” Artificial systems have played themselves out in philosophy. History has demonstrated their frailty. What has lasted as a durable achievement is not the form of the system (the “-ism”) minted by any thinker in any particular period; instead, it was always insights of a more specific kind, achieved independently of speculative presuppositions, coinages, and artifices—insights that in the majority of cases existed as inconsistencies within the system because they did not fit into it, and often already led the system to implode in the hands of the system builder. This situation is very familiar in contemporary philosophy,⁵ and requires no justification. Evidently, the popular metaphysical need for comprehensive worldviews perpetually resists this idea, and it is therefore always necessary to bear in mind the scientific worthlessness of systems.

2. For the new ontology, this means that a unified totality specifiable in advance is out of the question. Even if such a thing were proffered, we would have to greet it with mistrust and set it aside, at least for the time being, in order not to artificially influence serious labor on the problems. Only the kind of unity that results of its own accord from our immersion in the existing reserve of problems actually matters. If such a unity does not result, then the investigation must cope with the uncertainty that remains as an essential part of the given problematic and sit tight with it.

3. However, the prospect of discovering such a unity is not that remote. We only need to reflect on the following. Metaphysical problems at first show wide divergence, of course; and it is surely thinkable that the divergence, with the advance of knowledge, leads ever further into the stockpile of problems. It is not possible, however, that it continues on *in infinitum*. Somewhere the problematics themselves must converge again, even if it be far beyond what [30] is visible on the basis of the current situation. This is because they are substantive problems

⁵ I sought to demonstrate this programmatically using the example of Kantian philosophy in its era, “*Diesseits von Idealismus und Realismus*,” *Kantstudien* XXIX, 1924. [Hartmann 1924. TR.]

in one and the same world, and only the fragmentation of human inquiry into relatively isolated branches of knowledge makes them seem to be separated to us. The interconnectedness of the world in itself is not even a question. Only its specific form is unknown, and we should not presumptuously fabricate it; we must first obtain it from the structures given in partial phenomena. Although not substantively given, its unity is nevertheless certainly present. In this sense, we may quite well see this unity as given along with the phenomena. It is precisely the task of ontology to tease the mystery of this unity from the world. That cannot happen as long as we impose a postulated schema of unity on it—the artificially conceived unity will never coincide with it—but it will happen as long as we “seek” the naturally present unity in it. This will succeed all the better the more we give up all lofty assumptions and pursue the multiplicity of the given without prejudice, and unerringly follow the divergent tracks of problems to wherever they may lead. It is clear that where unity is contained in the thing itself, we will find it most easily when the search is not hindered by the artificial representations of unity that we smuggle in. It is self-contradictory to want to follow the problems and yet to simultaneously dictate where they should end up.

4. Meanwhile, things are different and more favorable regarding the genuine ontological content of metaphysical problems. A far greater convergence is manifest in advance. The ontological content is simply not identical with the metaphysical character of the problems. It concerns only the modes of being, ontological relations, and ontological forms. These are not only far more accessible than the nonrational problem residua, but are also far more unified and homogeneous. At a cursory glance, they already show a distinct substantive affiliation. It is just these modes, relations and forms that offer us handholds for their possible treatment across the whole range of problems in the metaphysical background. This reflects the historical place of ontology in the period when it flourished: it was arguably always the foundation of metaphysics. This was so even where it was not defined as a specific problem domain, and it even remained so where critical labor disputed metaphysics. Critique, where it arose, always directed itself only against speculative artifices and systems, not against the universal ontological foundations. Instead, it always used ontological principles on its own behalf, silently presupposed, or even taken up consciously into its categories. There has never been a genuine critique of ontological thinking.

5. The unity with which we are dealing here need not take a concentrated form. It does not have to take the form of a “first principle,” an ultimate foundation, or of an absolute at all. It is a widespread but spurious metaphysical need for unity that clings to [31] such representations. The ontological unity of the world can also take other forms, e.g., that of an interconnection, an order, an

internally differentiated lawfulness or dependence, a graduated series or a series of strata. Each of these forms of unity would be completely sufficient to support the idea of a convergence of problems. What we grasp of the world in life and in science speaks very clearly on behalf of the claim that one of these latter forms is the right one.

6. The idea of a new *philosophia prima* has its methodological unity in the fact that it inquires about what is ontologically primary and foundational in every domain. This mode of questioning, as well as the form of the investigation that results from it, constitutes the unity of its object from the start—with all the disparateness of its component parts and in spite of it. The unity of its object, thus understood, is “what is as such.” The specification of its forms or modes of appearance is constituted by the multiplicity of ontological principles or ontological categories. In its execution, therefore, ontology directly and seamlessly becomes the theory of categories.

19 *Philosophia prima* and *philosophia ultima*

Now, if this idea of “first philosophy” could be outlined *a priori* on the basis of a principle, or even from a few that would conduct us along a path of derivation, and of which we could be certain prior to all investigation, then we could give it the form of a system (even as we present it) without having to be afraid that by this means assumptions would be surreptitiously introduced or that we would do violence to the problems. It is already apparent that this is not possible on the basis of the ideas just introduced. We cannot seek after principles when we already proceed on the basis of principles. We have to first find our way to them. That can only happen when we begin with the given, secondary, and dependent—i.e., with those things that stand under the principles and contain them, but which do not make them at all obvious to common sense and the sciences devoted to specialized problems.

The situation here is just the same as with the unity of the world. What is primary, that which is sought, is indeed present in what is, and we do not need to be concerned that we will go astray as long as we actually hold ourselves to the phenomena as they are given. It is still not automatically given along with the phenomena, however; it could be just as much hidden by them, concealed behind them, requiring a certain procedure to draw what is primary from them.

This is the real reason why the old ontology was not able to survive. Its mistake consisted in proceeding deductively, in its claim to outline the ontological framework of the world on the basis of a few of its readily apprehensible principles. Since ancient times, it was characteristic [32] that it proceeded from certain

“self-evident” principles, e.g., from logical laws that were taken in advance as ontological laws. Aristotle already proceeded this way in Book I of the *Metaphysics* with the introduction of the principle of contradiction and of excluded middle; his concepts of potency and act were built on this foundation. Christian Wolff also proceeded in the same way when he sought to deduce the principle of sufficient reason from the principle of contradiction. All of the inconsistencies of his major work depend on this deduction. They are inconsistencies that obscure his actual achievements and imbue the name “ontology” with the animosity toward speculative metaphysics down to our own times.

As we draw the consequences of this methodological situation, the first result is the insight that a new *philosophia prima* cannot arise as the “first” part of a system preceding all further research. Its content cannot be the first in terms of cognition, precisely because it is the first in the order of being. The *ratio cognoscendi*, the natural order in the advance of insight, does not coincide with the *ratio essendi*, the relation of dependence among entities. It runs, for the most part, diametrically opposed to it. The “for us earlier” is the “in itself later.” Knowledge advances from the secondary to the primary. The majority of things that are given, tangible facts and demonstrable phenomena, exist at the level of the ontically secondary.

That is the wisdom of old. Aristotle first articulated it. Neither he nor those who followed in his footsteps, however, drew the ultimate consequences from it for ontology as such. These consequences must be rigorously drawn once and for all. This means that ontology, precisely insofar as it must be *philosophia prima* conceptually, can practically speaking only be *philosophia ultima* in terms of its execution and mode of operation.

The second thing that is to be gleaned from the relation introduced here is that ontology can only be revitalized insofar as all the investigative labor of all other domains of knowledge is presupposed by it. It must proceed from the current results of this labor as from a collective body of findings, place these results at its basis, and then raise a question about the ontological foundations that are common to all of them. It would be a mistake to think that in this way it sacrifices its natural status as fundamental philosophy. It belongs to the nature of what is fundamental that it only becomes visible in retrospect, on the basis of that which rests on it. Therefore, we have to relearn the concept of fundamental philosophy itself. It cannot be the first, it can only be ultimate philosophical knowledge, precisely because it is knowledge of that which is first as such.

The train of thought presented in this Introduction is a faithful reflection of the issues described in it. It has taken the path of presenting the reserve of ontological problems with reference to the specific domains of philosophical research [33] and has only sketched an outline of the proper task for the new on-

tology on the basis of what has been found. The course now to be pursued will keep closely to what has been shown and will have to evaluate what has been covered as it progresses.

20 Division and Delimitation of the Presentation

In the same way that the order in the subject matter does not coincide with knowledge about it, the order of this knowledge cannot coincide with the account of what is known. The course of research is laborious, particularly at its inception when it engages with the full manifoldness of the given, and rises only from it to more uniform groups of problems. It only becomes presentable at all clearly in its more advanced stages.

A presentation must aim at clarity, brevity, and uniformity. It is not necessary that it take away from the reader every opportunity for engagement in thought, and does not need to lead him step by step through the whole regressive path that it has run through based on all of the specific phenomena examined. The account must, in face of this unavoidable laboriousness, keep itself within certain limits, and for the rest count on the fact that the reader will constantly keep in mind that which was said in principle about the path at the start.

Practically, this means that the presentation presupposes the particular insights gleaned from the specific phenomena and takes its point of departure where these are already closely knit into a certain unitary horizon. References to the particulars on which it is based can only be scattered about as a reminder, so to speak, of what was more thoroughly worked out elsewhere. This way, however, the illusion might arise that the method adopted was an *a priori*-deductive one. It begins with the most general considerations and advances to the more particular.

This illusion cannot be completely avoided, and even the most emphatic reference to classes of particular phenomena cannot completely eliminate it. We have to be even more conscious that it is a mere illusion, and of the reasons why it cannot be avoided. If we have to put up with it, we should still not deceive anyone who assesses the problematic as we have described it. It is not the case that the account simply follows the *ratio essendi* and completely conceals the *ratio cognoscendi*. The latter would of course permit sufficient understanding, but it cannot directly specify the orderly arrangement of themes.

The other alternative is that the theory of the special ontological categories would have to be placed first. This way, however, the foundations would remain unclarified. The latter are of course the last in the pure order of cognition, but it [34] is not as if we could simply wait to deal with them until the special problems

are solved; the metaphysical (i.e., the ultimately irresolvable) component in them is far too great. Every incremental insight achieved into the most universal and most fundamental immediately throws light on the particular, and vice versa. Thus, actual research cannot keep itself to a simple, direct path at all. It has to proceed down divergent paths at the same time, and make good use of the complementary findings that result from diverse areas within the total horizon of problems.

Only in this way is it possible to consolidate the universal and fundamental ontological questions into a certain uniform framework. Such a structure is not without gaps, and it does not by any means have the form of a system. We can begin with confidence, however, with the fundamentals, without running the risk of potentially promoting the illusion of detachment from the ramified context of the given.

Thus, the presentation has a certain degree of freedom with respect to the path of cognition, no different than the latter has with respect to the order of being. This freedom is made use of in what follows, even if only within the limits of what is didactically necessary. The fundamental delineation of topics is to be understood in this way; in it, four relatively independent themes are consolidated into a unity within which everything is reciprocally conditioned and conditioning. Each part is, in its own way, the fundamental one. Each just displays what is fundamental from another point of view and by another mode of access to it.

Taken together, they still do not by any means constitute ontology, but only the clarification of the preliminary questions for it. Only when we are done with them can construction begin. Construction will have to begin with an investigation into reality and actuality in order to then advance to stratification and the categorial lawfulness of the real world. The first pertains to the deepest core of ontology, the theory of modality.⁶ In it, decisions about essential possibility and real possibility, essential necessity and real necessity will have to be made, and indirectly decisions about ideality and reality in general, as well as about the relation of determination reigning within the different spheres of being. The second investigation, in contrast, already concerns the specification of “what is” according to its substantive structure, and thereby forms the transition to the theory of categories.⁷

Between these major parts of the project the same relation also reigns. They not only mutually support and carry each other, but also support the investiga-

6 Hartmann is referring to the content of *Possibility and Actuality* (2013). TR.

7 Hartmann is referring to *Aufbau der realen Welt* (2010) here. TR.

tion into the preliminary ontological questions in the following account, just as they are supported and carried by them. The conditioning relation is completely reciprocal. Accordingly, these “parts” cannot be rendered independent, and are subject to appraisal only as a whole. [35]

21 Relation of the New to the Old Ontology

It must be said that the traditional themes of the old ontology are not even adopted as a guideline in outlining this whole, for which the above is only a beginning. Its relation to current problems and contemporary science is far too strong. Nevertheless, a few of the old themes are valid, and are included within a network of questions that are apparently heterogeneous to them. Indeed, even something of their orderly sequence, which was never really securely joined to them, returns of its own accord. This reflects the fact that in them we are dealing with a stockpile of problems that is unalterable and rooted in the basic phenomena, one that is independent of the posing and conception of problems. Their eternal recurrence confirms the law of metaphysical problems: they come to the surface again and again as long as they are not resolved, whether or not humankind recognizes them in their ever new garb. However, only minor, partial questions may be resolved from among these problems.

This is most clearly evident in the first two sections of “preliminary questions” dealt with here. They include the classical themes *“de notione entis”* [the concept of being] and *“de essentia et existentia”* [on essence and existence]; within certain limits, the investigation into *“de singulari et universal”* [the particular and the universal] is also involved. Moreover, the second of these themes dominates the fourth section as well. In contrast, the question of givenness is of contemporary origin and does not coincide with any of the old problems.

The same thing holds for the still pending modal analysis. To it correspond the classical ontological themes *“de possibili et impossibili”* [on possibility and impossibility], *“de necessario et contingente”* [on necessity and contingency], *“de determinato et indeterminato”* [on determinacy and indeterminacy], as well as the Wolffian theme *“de principio rationis sufficientis”* [the principle of sufficient reason]. With the complex of questions regarding categorial structure we begin to diverge from this line. Of course, themes can be distinguished within it, such as *“de principiis”* [on principles], *“de ordine rerum”* [on the order of things], *“de dependentia”* [on dependence], *“de simplici et composito”* [on the simple and the composite], but they only constitute a small fraction of the whole, and also only partially fit the objects dealt with.

It should be evident from what has been said how problems for the new ontology always only partially coincide with those of the old, and have partially outgrown them. The overlap is greatest at the beginning, then appreciably decreases, and disappears almost completely with increasing substantive determination. However, it is completely different when it comes to the treatment and solution of problems. This treatment pursues new paths to a much greater degree, and even where it encounters very old and familiar issues, the relations and arguments show a completely different face. Since isolated theses are abstractions and each stands or falls on the merit of the arguments, this means that in fact even the content of apparently identical theses has been transformed.

Part One: On What Is as Such

Section I: The Concept of What Is and Its Associated Aporias

Chapter 1: The Fundamental Question of Ontology

a) Starting “This Side” of Realism and Idealism

Ontology begins with a certain stance “this side” of the metaphysical contents of problems, as well as “this side” of the oppositions between philosophical standpoints and systems. In order to pose ontological questions it is initially not important whether a “ground of the world” exists, whether it has the form of an intelligence or not, whether the structure of the world is meaningful, and whether its processes are goal-directed or not. Answers to these questions would not change much about the characteristics of “what is” as such. These differences first come to the fore in the further differentiation of problems. Of course, consequences that are decisive for metaphysics will follow from the treatment of the ontological questions. The converse is not the case, however. Before investigating the problem of being, we cannot know anything about the world or the ground of the world that goes beyond the bounds of experience, nor can assumptions about these objects determine the problem of being. The problem of being is, by its very nature, “this sided,” and rooted in the foreground. It clings to phenomena, not to hypotheses.

We might think that this “this side” stance has to be circumscribed by the metaphysical opposition between idealism and realism, at least insofar as this opposition is a purely theoretical one. This opposition pertains to the relation of “what is” to the subject; apparently being is one thing when it exists only “for” a subject, another when it exists independently of it. In that case, being would again be modified depending upon whether it relates to the empirical subject or to a subject at a higher level.

Nevertheless, this is not really the case. The idealism-realism distinction does essentially concern ontology of course, but not so much so that ontology has to take a stance on it *a priori*. Instead, [37] ontology can only gradually make it possible to take a stance on this question as it advances. Ontological phenomena, in contrast, understood purely as such, require no preliminary decision whatsoever on this point. They behave just as indifferently to idealism and realism as they do to theism and pantheism. The best evidence of this is the fact that, in all eras and under all circumstances, idealistic theories have to deal with the same ontological phenomena as do realistic theories. Their concern is just the same as realism’s, i.e., to understand the essence of the so-called “real

world,” together with its mode of reality. When it takes this world to be mere “appearance,” or even as an empty illusion and deception, it is no less an interpretation of the phenomenon, an explanation; it is a theory that tackles the problem of being, and is not a way of eliminating this problem.

Whether idealism is correct or not in its interpretation is of no concern to ontology at the start. Just one thing is crucial here: to grasp adequately first of all the phenomenon that idealism interprets and to delineate it without reference to any further interpretation. It is a mistake to think that by this means alone we already stand on realistic soil and have forestalled all further interpretation. It only looks this way because the phenomenon is an ontological phenomenon, and because we are accustomed to understanding being as being-in-itself.

However, we maintain that there is always the possibility of understanding any being that can be exhibited—even the being of “what is as such”—in terms of its relation to a subject. The question remains open whether this would be a genuine understanding or a misunderstanding. In what follows, a decision concerning this point will be reached in the discussion of the givenness of being. We make no premature decision about it at the start of the investigation.

b) Being and What is: Formal Sense of the Basic Question

We cannot expect too much from ontology at the start. We have to move among generalities and cannot avoid a certain degree of abstraction. Everything concrete that is introduced into it is already a specification of the more general. It is necessary to grasp the strictly universal concept of “what is,” if not in terms of its content, at least formally; and moreover, it is necessary to ascertain what is meant by the “being” of the things that are.

These are not the same thing. “Being” and “what is” differ from each other as much as truth and the true, actuality and the actual, reality and the real. There are many things that are true, but the being-true of these many things is itself one and the same; any talk of “truths” in the plural is philosophically misguided and should be avoided. It is just as misguided to speak of actualities, realities, and so forth. There are many kinds of actual things; their actuality is one, an identical mode of being. [38]

So too with “what is” and “being.” We have to get out of the habit of conflating the two. That is the first condition for any further penetration into the question. The being of beings is one, however manifold the latter may be. All further differentiations of being are only specifications of the mode of being. We will deal with this further below. For the moment, what is shared by beings is up for discussion.

Despite the fact that their language readily provided them with a distinction, the ancients did not clearly distinguish between *ōv* [a being] and *eīvai* [to be] at all, let alone implement it in their investigations. This is already the case with Parmenides, and holds no less for Plato and Aristotle. The middle ages, which followed in their footsteps, did not do any better. It privileged the question about the *ens* [a being] instead of the question about the *esse* [to be], but without correctly distinguishing between them. The conventional jumbling of ontological concepts that makes it hard to pose an unambiguous question today originates here.

Meanwhile, we do not even need to apologize for this jumbling of concepts. Practically, it is impossible to deal with “being” without investigating “what is.” What is needed here is certainly not a dissociation of one from the other. We may comfortably understand the fundamental question about “what is” as the question about “being,” for being is evidently that which is identical throughout the multiplicity of beings. We just need to keep the difference between them in mind. This means that we should not go looking for some unitary “entity” behind the multiplicity of beings—that would again mean the search for a substance, an absolute, or some other unitary ground. This would in turn have some kind of being. Instead, we ought to ask what the simple, ontically understood general character within the multiplicity is. That, however, is “being.”

Therefore, formally understood the fundamental question of ontology is not the question about beings, but the question about their “being.” We should not be astonished by the fact that we must for this very reason begin with beings. The initial statement of a question and its subsequent path are not one and the same.

c) The Aristotelian Conception of the Problem

Aristotle was completely justified, therefore, in understanding *πρωτη φιλοσοφία* [first philosophy] as the science of *ōv ἢ ὄv* [being *qua* being]. If one translates this word for word, the question here is directed not to “being,” but to “what is”—namely, to “what is insofar as it is,” or as we usually say, to “what is as such.”

This classical formula fits our starting point perfectly. It asks about “what is,” of course, and not about “being;” but because it considers what is only insofar as it is, thus, only in its most universal aspect, it indirectly comes across “being” over and above “what is” nonetheless. Being alone is what is common [39] to all beings beyond all their particular content. Therefore, we may simply adopt this formula. It is quite formal but is unsurpassable in its own way.

This is not at all self-evident. This formula provisionally guards against a certain one-sidedness and misunderstanding in posing the problem. In ancient thought the *ōv* was opposed to the *φανόμενον* [phenomenon] on one hand, and to the *γίγνομενον* [that which comes to be] on the other. “What is, insofar as it is” is thus distinguished both from what is as something merely appearing as well as from what is in the process of becoming by using this formula; this way the interpretation that “being” itself could consist in appearing or in the process of becoming is avoided at the same time.

This defense against inappropriate interpretations goes substantially further. We can use the formula just as profitably against contemporary interpretations: “what is insofar as it is” is evidently not what is as posited, intended, or represented; it is not what is as referred to a subject, not what is as object. This means, however, that “being” itself does not consist in being-posed, being-intended, or being-represented; and likewise, is not reducible to a relation to the subject, and thus not to being-an-object for a subject either. If we understand these latter characteristics strictly “this side” of idealism and realism, then they mean that “being” itself, by its very nature, is not conditioned by the subject (even if it seems to be so afterwards with reference to other considerations).

Christian Wolff adopted the Aristotelian definition literally. He defined *philosophia prima* [first philosophy] as *scientia entis in genere seu quatenus ens est* [the science of a being in general, or insofar as a being is a being]. To be sure, in execution he showed that he did not understand *ens* strictly in the sense of “what is;” the meaning approximated, in a scholastic manner, what we would call “object.”¹ The strict ontological meaning of the formula was sacrificed in this way. The subject matter is then, on the one hand, construed too broadly, for an “object” could be purely fictive, represented, or intentional, i.e., something without a genuine type of being; and on the other hand, it is construed too narrowly, for ostensibly there can be many kinds of things “that are” in the world that are not objects—neither objects of representation, nor of thought, nor of cognition.

Therefore, it will be necessary to hold on to the strict ancient meaning of the Aristotelian formula against Wolff too. In his metaphysics, Aristotle limited the problem of being far too quickly to specific secondary questions and reformulated them in terms of determinate categories—as substance, form, matter, potency, and act. Prior to all the specification that first arises in his treatment of the prob-

¹ Hans Pichler has made us aware of this (*Über Christian Wolffs Ontologie*, Leipzig, 1910). I will not venture to decide whether Pichler’s claim about Wolff’s approximation to Meinong’s Theory of Objects is entirely well-founded. Without a doubt, we do find hints in Wolff that lead in this direction. [See Pichler 1910. TR.]

lem—not to mention [40] in the solution—he defined the problem itself in a way that is exemplary and has unexplored potential even today.

Chapter 2: Flawed Approach of one Contemporary Investigation

a) Fallacy in the Modified Question of Being

Martin Heidegger has disputed this. In place of the question about “what is, insofar as it is,” he puts the question concerning the “meaning of being.” He claims that an ontology is blind as long as it does not clarify this question; the old ontology has to undergo destruction, a new beginning must be initiated. It has to be achieved through “*Dasein*,” which in his terms is immediately limited to the existence of human being. Human being has a privilege over other things that are since it is the being who understands its own being. All understanding of being is rooted in it, and ontology must be based on the existential analysis of this “*Dasein*.”

The consequence of this approach is that everything that is is from the start understood as relative to humankind. It is “in each case his own.” All further determinations then result from this relativization to the “I” of human being: the world, in which I exist, is “in each case mine,” and could very well be for each person another world; in the same way truth is “in each case mine.”²

The question about “what is insofar as it is” is eliminated in this way. What is “meant” is only what is as it exists for me, is given to me, is understood by me. The fundamental ontological question has already been answered by a blanket decision, indeed by the mere interpretation of the question. Even if we wanted to agree with the findings for metaphysical reasons, these would still not be the sort of results that arise from ontological analysis, but are the kind introduced by means of a skewed interpretation of the question in order to then draw them from the analysis afterwards as if they were a result.

The situation is not ameliorated by the fact that it is not the epistemological relation, but the life-relation and “*Dasein*”-relation of humankind to the world that is laid at the basis of the analysis. The relativity of what is to human being is and remains the same, irrespective of how we construe the details of its givenness. The real fallacy in the approach is that being and the understand-

² On the above, Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Halle 1927; in particular the Introduction, as well as the beginning of Part 1. [See Heidegger 1962. TR.]

ing of being are brought too close together; being and the givenness of being are virtually conflated. This is why all further distinctions that result from the “existential”-analysis are essentially aspects of givenness, and the whole analysis [41] constitutes an analysis of givenness. However, there would be no objection if, at each stage, the given as such were distinguished from its mode of givenness, and then at least retroactively the question of being would be reclaimed. However, this is exactly what is missing. The modes of givenness are presented as ontological modalities.

Much will be said in what follows in criticism of this position. We could save ourselves the trouble of getting into the critique if the position dealt with the question of being in general. This question is basically bypassed by it, and so it is not even open for discussion. The analysis does not only deal with what is theoretically most universal, however. The Heideggerian existential analysis develops a specific interpretation of spiritual being. What this boils down to is the evisceration and invalidation of all supra-individual spiritual being, all objective spirit, from the ground up, by the one-sidedness of the phenomenological description. The individual and his private resolution alone matter, everything common, conventional, and traditional is excluded as inauthentic and unreal.

This interpretation not only sacrifices the most valuable thing that German philosophy in full bloom (from Kant to Hegel) brought to the table, it makes the highest stratum of being, that of historical spirit, simply inconceivable. Since the characteristics of entities in the world do not sit there in isolation but exist in manifold relationships and can be understood only on the basis of them, the misunderstanding of one ontological stratum also indirectly nullifies comprehension of the others.

b) The Question of Being and the Question of Meaning

Even if we overlook all this metaphysics of “*Dasein*,” it is misleading to understand the fundamental question of ontology to be about the “meaning of being” and to turn the question of being into the question of meaning in this way.

“Meaning” is a polysemic word. “Meaning of being” could denote the meaning of the word “being.” Then the question of meaning is a formal one and leads us to a nominal definition; nothing is gained by that. It could also denote something like the logical meaning of the concept “being.” Then the question of meaning concerns an essential definition; however, it is not possible to obtain such a thing with concepts of the greatest universality. A sober investigation into the matter itself, diving into its details, would have to take its place. Light can only be cast backward on the universal from the particulars. Finally, “mean-

ing” could also have a metaphysical sense and denote the concealed inner characteristics of something, by virtue of which a thing is oriented toward or related to a sense-bestowing anchor (such as a value). In this case, by using the formula “meaning of being” the ontological question would be completely abandoned.

Thus, in the first two cases the question about the meaning of “being itself” is not in fact asked, but is only a question about the meaning of a word [42] or concept, as the case may be. That is certainly quite modest, but too little for the aspirations of ontology. Ontology does not ask about words and concepts, but about “what is insofar as it is.” In the third case, the question touches on “what is,” to be sure, but not insofar as it is, only as it is the bearer of meaning (bearer of determinations) in some metaphysical understanding. The question whether “what is” is a bearer of meaning at all—in any sort of understanding—is not explicitly introduced. This is simply presupposed. However, the presupposition should not even be open to consideration before the discussion of the genuine question of being.

In sum, we can say this much about it: the apparently meaning-clarifying question about the “meaning of being” is, due to its equivocity, thoroughly meaning-muddling. In its innocent meaning it is superfluous, and in its only meaningful sense it is misleading. Three further points should be considered:

1. If it is necessary to ask about the “meaning of being,” then it is all the more necessary to ask about the meaning of “meaning.” What “meaning” is is not at all easier to understand than what “being” is. Then our questioning leads to a regress *in infinitum*. We would never get to the question of being at all.

2. Moreover, every “meaning” of something has to itself be something that is, it must have some mode of being. If it does not, then it is nothing at all. Therefore, we have to at least ask just as much about the “being of meaning” as about the “meaning of being.” Such a question would have a very specific meaning (familiar from more specific questions, such as those about whether there is a meaning of life, in which the terms “there is” or “there is not” betray the presence of the ontological question). This is of course a question about being, but it is not the universal question of being.

3. “Meaning” is, under all circumstances (in all of its meanings), something that exists “for us”—more specifically, for us or for something like us, even if it is only a postulated logical subject. A meaning in itself would be nonsense. Thus, it is even too little to say that “what is insofar as it is” does not necessarily have a meaning in itself. We have to say that it cannot even have a meaning in itself. It can only have a meaning “for someone.” Its having a meaning for someone—if there is such a one—is by no means its “being,” however. The being of entities is indifferent to whatever entities might be “for someone.”

This is the reason why Heidegger's "world" is relative to the individual human being ("in each case mine"). The slippage of the question of being into the question of meaning does not admit of any other outcome.

Chapter 3: Stance of Ontological Cognition

a) The Inability to Conceive or Define Being

This one example of a radical departure from the Aristotelian mode of questioning should suffice to demonstrate that such a departure [43] has dire consequences. The formula "what is insofar as it is" cannot be improved upon. It decides nothing in advance, is neutral with respect to the diversity of standpoints and theories, and is "this side" of all interpretation. The obverse of this superiority, however, is that it is merely formal, a schema that awaits completion. This is justifiable for the beginning of an investigation. If we held to it throughout, however, the formula would become vacuous.

Now, how are we to proceed? How are we to solve the problem expressed in the formula?

Under no circumstances can we reach a solution by somehow finding and introducing one narrower definition after another. Every determination would really be a restriction, it would grasp being not *in genere* but in its particularity. If any narrower definition is already a falsification of the universal, then "what is insofar as it is" must apparently remain undefined. That is, it must be directly grasped in its inconceivability and indefinability purely as such.

Being is an "ultimate" that may be inquired about. Ultimates are never definable. We can only define something with reference to something else that stands behind it. An ultimate, however, is the kind of thing that has nothing behind it. We should not make any misplaced demands here, for if we do, we only succumb to the pressure to generate makeshift definitions where supplying genuine ones is not possible.

There is nothing remarkable about this. This difficulty does not only concern the term "being." In all problem domains there is some ultimate term that cannot be further defined. No one can define what spirit is, what consciousness is, what matter is. We can only delimit it, contrast it with other things, and describe its particularities.

This matter is quite different, and much harder, with "what is insofar as it is"—and consequently more so with "being," in two respects. First, here all delimitation fails. We are dealing with what is absolutely universal for everything. Nothing remains amidst "what is" in contrast with which we could delimit it. At

best, we could delimit it against the determinate in general, i.e., against its own particulars. These are of course conceivable. Their relation to their *genus* is also conceivable. Secondly, however, the definition has nothing to do with the most universal specifiable content, but with the mode of being of all particular contents. However, what can be specified directly in everything that is only concerns the contents in their mode of being, not the mode of being itself. Only by way of a detour through the content can this be determined. However, here we are dealing with the universal mode of being for all modes of being, “being as such,” the being that belongs to everything that is insofar as it is.

b) Elementary Principles for Proceeding

The stakes of this aporia are raised considerably. We might ask if all of this effort is for nothing. Are we not dealing with something [44] absolutely nonrational (understood in the sense of incognizable), that is, with a metaphysical problem that we cannot deal with any further?

In response to this question, we would say that of course there is something nonrational in the nature of “being as such,” something that we cannot entirely unveil. It would be a mistake, however, to think that nothing can be disclosed about it, that “being” is absolutely incognizable. It has been shown above that, in the domain of problems that can be formulated at all, there cannot be anything absolutely incognizable. Ontological interconnections extend across every boundary of cognition and they connect the known and the unknown. Moreover, there is a second consideration to be taken into account here.

Whatever “being” *in genere* is may be as intangible as can be, but in its particularities being is something very familiar indeed, and in certain modes of givenness it is even something totally unmistakable. There are many kinds of ontological givenness, even quite immediate ones; and in all this multiplicity being itself is something definitely co-given, something eminently distinguishable from the purely fictional. It is so not only in reflection or in abstraction from the given, but directly in our naïve relation to it.

There is no reason to be concerned about the irreducibility of the nonrational element in being. There is enough that is cognizable in it. That is what ontology deals with. We should not try to grasp it by way of a logical definition, nor by way of something even more universal, not through a principle, not in the form of characteristics. We have to seek it just where it is: in its particulars. Or is it impossible that a universal is accessible through its particulars? It is quite to the contrary: all inquiry about primary and fundamental things follows this course.

There is no other. It is the authentic and unavoidable path of philosophy. All philosophy seeks what is fundamental.

The consequence for ontology is that it can begin to work on the universal fundamental question, but cannot then move immediately to its solution. Ontology has to intersperse the posing and answering of more specific questions. The answer to the fundamental question, to the extent that it can be answered at all, results of itself to the degree that our inclusive vision advances. This will be shown with increasing clarity in the analysis of *Dasein* and *Sosein*, of the modes of givenness, of the modes of being, and so forth. In a certain sense, the whole of the following investigations is nothing other than ever-advancing labor on a solution to the fundamental question.

c) The Natural and the Reflective Attitude

In this light, we can deal confidently with the aporia of the universality and indeterminacy of “what is insofar as it is.” It is all the more manageable [45] because this aporia is the only one of its kind and brings no others in its train. In general, ontology is not a discipline burdened by specific difficulties. It is rooted in the contents of metaphysical problems, of course, but does not need to deal with them in their full severity. Ontology is deployed more in the foreground; its stance is related to the natural attitude.

We can easily make this clear by attending to its stance. It is definitely not a reflective stance, not the kind that one would have to struggle to achieve in a philosophical manner—as is the case, e.g., with epistemology, logic, or psychology. Ontology stands in quite unique contrast to these, and its stance is best characterized as a return to the natural attitude.

The natural direction of cognition is toward its object. In cognition, the subject knows about what it cognizes, but not about what cognition as such consists in. Epistemology, which asks precisely about what cognition consists in and what its conditions are, must bend back the natural orientation of cognition towards itself, and even against itself, must make itself into its own object. This bending back of the natural orientation is epistemological reflection.³ A long series of aporias crops up in the course of such reflection; they are already deeply implicated in the mere description of the phenomenon of cognition. This is why

³ “Reflection” is to be understood here in the primary and genuine sense of the word; *reflexio* means precisely “bending back.”

to this day epistemology suffers from so many misleading and one-sided descriptions of the phenomenon.

It is well-known that the situation is similar in psychology. The peculiar difficulty of grasping mental acts is not due to their concealment, but to the fact that they do not appear object-like to us, they are not given like objects. We admittedly execute these acts without difficulty, but the execution of the act does not make them into objects for the consciousness executing them. We have to pay specific attention to them first, reflect, and shift our consciousness to them. With the shift of consciousness to them we influence them, and in turn they simultaneously withdraw from our grasp.

Logic certainly encounters a lot of difficulty here. Of course, clarified knowledge moves among concepts and judgments, but the latter are not the objects of knowledge; the objects are the contents grasped through concepts and judgments. Therefore, we must first abstract specifically from the content in order to grasp the logical form. This is yet another—a third—level of reflection. The history of logic shows that it is far more difficult than the first two kinds—this is why logic has almost always slipped from its own level down to another one: sometimes to the psychological, other times to the epistemological, and at other times to the ontological. The last slippage is still the most innocent. It was conventional in classical logic. [46]

d) *Intentio Recta* and *Intentio Obliqua*

In light of this situation, we readily see how it is that ontology, in terms of its overall stance, is far better off than epistemology, psychology, and logic. It does not even need reflection. It does not begin with reflection and does not reverse the natural orientation of cognition; ontology instead follows it and extends it further. It is nothing other than a continuation of the advance in the direction toward the object of cognition. Ontology deals with the universal and fundamental aspects in the object of cognition, and so does not need to look away from it toward some ulterior entity.

For what follows, it is important that this is made clear right from the outset. The natural attitude toward the object—the *intentio recta* as it were, the being-oriented toward that which the subject encounters, what comes-to-the-fore or offers itself, in short, the orientation toward the world in which it lives and part of which it is—this basic attitude is familiar in our everyday lives, and remains so for our whole life long. By means of it we get our bearings in the world, by virtue of it we are cognitively adapted to the demands of everyday life. However, this is the attitude that is nullified in epistemology, logic, and psychology, and is bent

back in a direction oblique to it—an *intentio obliqua*. This is the attitude of reflection.⁴ A philosophy that makes one of these disciplines into a fundamental science—as many have recently done, and as all nineteenth century philosophical theories did—will be driven of its own accord into such a reflective attitude and will have no way to escape from it. This means that it cannot find its way back to the natural relationship to the world; it results in a criticism, logicism, methodologism, or psychologism estranged from the world. [47]

Ontology nullifies the *intentio obliqua* and returns to the *intentio recta*; by this means the whole wealth of problems in the realm of objects, i.e. the world, is restored to it again. It is the restoration of the natural direction of vision.

Strictly speaking, we cannot even say that this is a “restoration.” Ontology does not even partake in that kind of reflection to begin with. It integrates with the natural attitude directly. This is why it is historically older than the reflective disciplines. In our times, of course, we may speak of return and restoration; and the new ontology distinguishes itself from the old in that it first arises through our finding our way back to the *intentio recta*. It has this reflective detour behind it and can draw lessons from the experience of this detour.

⁴ The distinction introduced here between *intentio recta* and *intentio obliqua* has its model in the distinction between *intentio prima* and *secunda*, which was conventional for the Scholastics of the thirteenth century and was probably implemented in its purest form by William of Ockham. But it does not coincide with it. Ockham was not dealing with attitudes and directions of vision, but with a distinction within the *actus intelligendi* [active intellect], depending on whether it referred to a primary or a secondary object. A *terminus primae intentionis* [term of the first intention] is such a *res*, i.e., an *esse subjectivum* [being as subject] (which in the terminology of the time almost had the meaning “being-in-itself”); while a *terminus secundae intentionis* [term of the second intention] is a *signum* [sign] of one that only exists *in mente* [in the mind] and is posited by the *mens* [mind] (for the Nominalists genus and species are convincing examples of such a thing). However, the strict sense of the old distinction is maintained in the new one in one way: in it we are on the one hand dealing with an orientation towards an independently existing being, and on the other towards a secondary entity first produced in consciousness. What Ockham calls a *signum* is not applied to the act, but to the inner object first created by it (the concept, the representation, the form of cognition). In this sense too, the *intentio recta* is an *intentio prima*, and the *intentio obliqua* is an *intentio secunda*. Compare here the remarks in the *Tractatus Logices* I, 11–15. [Hartmann is likely referring to Ockham’s *Summa logicae* here, Part I of which has been translated as *Ockham’s Theory of Terms: Part I of the Summa logicae*. See Ockham 1974. TR.]

Chapter 4: Status and Deep-Rootedness of the Ontological Problem

a) Natural, Scientific, and Ontological Relation to the World

The similarity of the stance in both natural and ontological cognition nevertheless does not yet reveal the full significance of the situation. A third type of cognition is to be included here, oriented as they are, in whose powerful testimony the superiority of the *intentio recta* first becomes palpable. This kind of cognition is scientific.

Obviously, one could subsume psychology under the heading of science, as well as logic and epistemology. However, whenever one draws a boundary line between science in the narrower sense and philosophy, these disciplines are allowed to fall on the side of philosophy. Additionally, we are not concerned with drawing borderlines that would be dependent on the arbitrary choice of a nominal definition. The boundary is in fact stable, it is irremediably established by the opposition in attitude. These three disciplines are excluded not because they are not branches of cognition, but because they are founded upon the *intentio obliqua*.

The great majority of the sciences are unequivocally aligned in terms of the *intentio recta*. Science is just as much oriented by the natural attitude, from which it has arisen, as is ontology. This is immediately evident for the natural sciences. In them the form of outer, thing-like givenness prevails; and even if science engages the given quite differently than naive intuition—many pseudo-things appear, other things are appended that were not given and are only detected through specific methods—this transformation of the given is still never a bending back of the direction of vision, but quite evidently a penetrating advance in the same direction. That is why the object of natural science is merely the expansion of the naively interpreted object. [48]

The same is true for the human sciences. It is a mistake to think that they proceed by means of reflection because their objects are “inner” ones. Spiritual being is not identical with mental being. If the individual were only spirit, then of course the difference would be difficult to discern, although even then the person and his acts would not be exhausted in an inner-directed experience of oneself. The human sciences, however, have nothing to do with persons and their acts, but with supra-individual forms of objective spirit that are common to a multitude of individuals. Its objects are the law, morality, art, poetry, customs and lifestyle, religion, language, culture, etc.; to the extent that all of these regions of the spirit have their history, then the history of spirit is in a special sense the object of the human sciences. These sciences are thus “objective,”

are no less directed towards objects than are the natural sciences, their objects are just of a different sort. Even the human sciences extend the natural attitude of everyday life, because law, morality, existing customs, etc., are already given in everyday life as objective forces in relation to which the individual must find his bearings, just as much as he must find his bearings in relation to the forces of nature.

A significant insight results when we draw the consequences of this. The natural, scientific, and ontological relations to the world are at bottom one and the same. There is a difference between them only in a practical respect and in the depth of penetration, but not in the fundamental attitude toward the whole field of objects, not in the direction of the cognition. The natural attitude is preserved in the scientific and in the ontological orientation. Since it is the last of these that brings this whole relation into consciousness, then conversely it may be said with even greater justification: the natural and the scientific attitude are already by their nature ontological.

Therefore, ontology embodies the stance that is appropriate to it from the start, provided it does not take its point of departure from one-sided philosophical theories but instead takes it directly from life and from the labor of science. It already finds itself on the path of the *intentio recta*. It only needs to extend it further and it can spare itself from taking detours.

b) Common Relation to What Is: Natural Realism

The relation to the world is not only characterized by attitude and orientation, however, but also by the way of being through which the world appears to the subject and is accepted by the subject. The question arises whether this way of being is also the same for these three levels of cognition. This question is even more serious for ontology than that regarding direct or reflective orientation. For ontology is not a theory of objects—not a science of objects in general, but is instead science of “being *qua* [49] being.” The question is whether in cognition’s being-directed toward the object the latter is understood only “as” object or as an entity in itself—i.e., as something that is what it is without being opposed to a subject and is independent of it.

Now, this is the point at which the agreement in their mode of being is first fully confirmed. The really essential point is that the natural, the scientific, and the ontological attitudes, in exactly the same way, understand their object as an independent thing, existing in itself.

Whether they are justified in this, whether the skeptical or idealist epistemology has another thing to tell us on this issue, is not in question for the time

being; that is a concern to be addressed later. That is why ontology still stands “this side” of idealism and realism at its starting point. It is just a fact that science shares the natural realism of the naïve consciousness of the world. It starts with it and remains with it, no matter how much it may step beyond the originally narrow field of objects in terms of content. It is just this natural realism that forms the point of departure for the question about “being *qua* being.”

Natural realism is not a philosophical theory. It belongs to the phenomenon of cognition and is always demonstrable in it. It is identical with the captivating life-long conviction that the sum total of things, persons, occurrences, and relations, in short, the world in which we live and which we make into our object by means of cognizing it, is not first created by our cognizing it, but exists independently of us. Were we released from this conviction even for a moment in life we would no longer take life seriously. There are philosophical theories which sacrifice this conviction, but by this means they devalue life in the world and in fact do not take it seriously anymore. Such a sacrifice is foreign to the natural attitude.

The scientific attitude is just as little acquainted with it. Natural science unwaveringly accepts the cosmos, from electron to solar system, from the moneran to the central nervous system, as real; the human sciences take historical developments, changes, tendencies, and destinies as real in exactly the same way, no matter whether they are of dramatic power or of imponderable subtlety. Only to the extent that it adheres to this principle is it science at all. Where it doubts the reality of that which it investigates, its cognition and research become mere imagining.

Let no one object here that science works with assumptions, hypotheses, and auxiliary concepts in all areas of research. It does not place its assumptions and the objects investigated on the same level; it knows what is hypothetical, it distinguishes its auxiliary concepts from the actual thing that is there to be cognized. Even where conflations occur they are corrected on their own in the advance of science. They become unsustainable. [50]

c) Unity and Differences of Content in the Field of Objects

The objection that the scientific attitude is totally different from the natural attitude, that it modifies the object, displaces it from the level of pure and simple givenness with its concreteness, distinctness and thinghood would be just as mistaken. Such an objection does address an actually existing opposition, indeed a legitimate and indissoluble one. It describes it inaccurately, however, and moreover, does not address the phenomenon of the ontological interpreta-

tion. The way in which science interprets the real is different methodologically, as it is materially, from the naïve attitude. It proceeds from individual cases to the universal, from the things to lawfulness, from the phenomenon to the background. What it sacrifices is only the level of the given and, at most, its concreteness. The same cannot be said for its vividness. Science does not renounce intuition, it only substitutes for the content-limited mode of intuition another, higher form, a kind of vision that surveys more far reaching interconnections and penetrates into the background. This mediated vision is what is called “theory.”⁵ The oft-admonished unclarity of theory is a prejudice of naïve consciousness. The latter does not automatically bring along with it the preconditions of a higher vision; it must first achieve this vision by learning. As long as it does not actually raise itself to a higher vision, its results must appear to naïve consciousness to be conceptual abstractions.

The object itself remains absolutely the same, of course. The phenomena that natural science plumbs are the very same things, the same interconnections of nature, whose outermost aspect is seen by the naïve consciousness. Those phenomena that the sciences of literature, language, and history bring out are the same spiritual currents that those living through them experience immediately and obscurely. It is not the object that alters itself, but the interpretation of the object. The circle of objectification is expanded, but it is the same domain of “what is,” the same world, into which it penetrates.

Now we understand why it is that the scientific consciousness apprehends the same natural reality of the world. The object’s mode of being is not altered by the advance of knowledge. Physics has a critical suspicion that the atom might perhaps be constructed completely differently than the prevailing atomic models depict. However, the obvious presupposition in the hypothetical conception is that whatever the concept of the atom deals with, it is just as real as are other things. The mode of being of reality is not in question, but only its particular form and determinacy. It is precisely this determinacy that should be investigated. [51]

Natural realism, “this side” of all epistemological reflection, is the common basis of both naïve and scientific cognition. Natural realism understands “what is” simply as it is, and not as an appearance or anything else. The claim that naïve and scientific cognition already naturally embody the ontological stance means just this and nothing else.

⁵ We should recall here that the original sense of the word *θεωρία* was in fact “vision.” The term was first introduced by Aristotle in this sense.

d) Neglect of the Given Aspect of What Is

The aporia surrounding “being *qua* being” merely concerned its universality and indefinability. It appeared overwhelming at first glance. Its difficulty is considerably lessened, however, when we see it in the context of the totality of human knowledge of the world in which it is rooted. It appears to be embedded in a context of problems so dense and rich in content that the entryways to it lie wide open. The ontological perspective on “being *qua* being” is already contained in both naïve as well as scientific consciousness of the world, as has been shown. We have to be able to extract this ontological perspective from these two forms of consciousness if we are to succeed in hearkening to their shared essential structure.

This path will be pursued in what follows. It will take the form of an investigation into the mode of givenness of what is, for real as well as ideal entities. The most proximately given aspect is only that of the real. This suffices for the initial orientation. Its expansion to other modes of being can only be made when these modes have come to light as given.

What the aforesaid immediately reveals is the fallaciousness of the attitude into which we are driven as soon as we take some form of the reflective stance—such as the epistemological one—as the basis of our approach, in place of natural and scientific cognition. We can only ever reach “objects” with it, not “what is;” we can ultimately not even make sense of this, since the full ontological value of “what is” is already presupposed in the cognitive relation itself. This is not as paradoxical as it sounds. It simply means that without a firm footing on ontological soil epistemology must miss its own object—cognition. Its unavoidable reflective attitude must become aware of its own reflective nature. Otherwise, it becomes entangled in it and winds up in the dead end of immanence to consciousness. Being aware of its own reflectivity, however, means consciously and unerringly embracing the unreflective attitude and its ontological perspective as a foundation. That is not easy. To hold on to it is easy as long as one simply occupies it; to adhere to it when one has turned back to it out of reflection only demands a little schooling and understanding. However, to hang on to it “in” the midst of reflectivity [52] is a completely different kind of project. It is the project of epistemology.

The aspirations of logic and of psychology are not as high. Nevertheless, all three require a particular kind of methodical practice. Once it is achieved the practice passes over into a fixed habit of thought. To those practiced and schooled in it, it is this habit of thought that prevents a return to the natural attitude and to the ontological perspective on “what is insofar as it is.” This is the reason why entering into ontology appears so hard for us today—an entrance

that stands immediately open to the naïve consciousness of the world. We have a century of schooling in reflective thought behind us, the kind that is not even aware of the manner and presupposition of its reflectivity. This kind of reflection, however, is identical with a basic neglect of the originally given ontological aspect of “what is.”

The phenomenological method has sought to free itself from this web spun by philosophy itself. Its solution was to go “back to the things themselves.” It never made it to the things themselves, however. It arrived only at the phenomena of the things. This is proof that it too has not found its way out of reflectivity. Phenomena are something that is indeed there in the givenness of a thing, but they are not noticed by the natural attitude. They are what in particular must strictly be reflected upon.⁶ The “phenomenon” roughly coincides with givenness. Givenness, however, does not coincide with the thing. Only the stance directed toward the thing is the *intention recta*. The stance oriented toward the given as such is already a reflective stance.

This kind of reflection is different from epistemological reflection, of course; it is the reflection belonging to a theory of consciousness. It is no less a bending back of the natural attitude, however. Therefore, it too, like the former, has neglected the ontological aspect of “what is.” It is on this point that the attempts to develop an ontology on the basis of such reflection founder.

⁶ This reflection is very accurately depicted by Husserl in his *Ideas*: as “putting into parenthesis,” disregarding the given individual case, reduction, “bringing in front of the brackets,” etc. It is the characteristic retreat from the orientation toward what is back toward the appearances.

Section II: Traditional Conceptions of Being

Chapter 5: Naïve and Substantialist Concepts of Being

a) What Is as Thing, the Given, Ground of the World

Every philosophy and every conventional worldview has some kind of interpretation of “that which is.” The multiplicity of worldviews, in which [53] the most conspicuous differences among these interpretations primarily lie, is just as much a multiplicity of interpretations of being. If we suppose that the majority of them will not capture the universality of “being *qua* being,” we nevertheless learn from this lapse what is not universal. This too is valuable in a context of problems where all direct, positive determination fails.

Therefore, we should introduce a few typical conceptions of “what is”—not in order to hold fast to them, but in order to make “what is” conceivable as we advance beyond them.

1. The most naïve interpretation understands “what is” as “thing,” and being as thingliness. It is easy to refute, and already yields to the merest touch of reflection. For instance, organic being is evidently not reducible to thingliness, not to mention mental and spiritual being. Reflection on these, however, is already a later, more advanced step. Things simply have the greatest conspicuousness and urgency; the field of the mental and spiritual appears so weightless, airy, and impalpable in contrast to it that we do not even accept it as something that exists. This opposition belongs to the nature of things and cannot be eliminated. This is why the conception of “what is” as thing is preserved virtually uncontested in everyday consciousness, and even in the background of many theories—and not only the materialist ones. The more recently coined term “reality” (derived from *res*) stems from this interpretation, which from the beginning certainly encompassed far more than literal “thingliness.”

2. The interpretation of “what is” as the given (being = givenness) stands in critical opposition to the first. We already know that things alone do not constitute the world. Their coming to be and passing away already breaches their apparently unified ontological front line. These processes are just as real as the things, and just as given. This view is an old one, and takes two different forms that reflect its double origin. Both historically extend back long before the first emergence of the genuine concept of givenness.

One of them understands “what is” as the testimony of the senses. It remains in the background for the Presocratics—Parmenides and Heraclitus argue against it—but it is retained even in the theses of late sensualism (*esse = percipi*

[to be is to be perceived]). The other grasps “what is” as the present; according to it the past is just as much a non-entity as the future. In Parmenides, it results in the eternalization of “what is” in the “now.” It is a privileging of the given, just as much as is the reference to the testimony of the senses. This is why in being-present (called *παρουσία* by later thinkers) the same motif of self-presentation occurs in terms of “being before the eyes” and “being present-to-hand.”

This intuition lasted until it was discovered that not everything that is is accessible to the senses and not everything is present. There are hidden things that are only disclosed by an insight of a higher order (the *νοεῖν* [thinking, understanding]); and there are past things that communicate very significantly in the present, and future things [54] that irrupt into it. There are ontological ties between what is temporally dispersed. Thus, the identification of being with givenness finally collapses.

3. Whenever we discovered that givenness was bound up with specific ontological features that were not the most fundamental ones, we ran unerringly to the other extreme: the given is in general only superficial, external, but that which genuinely is is the inner of this outer, the hidden, the not given. Now we completely devalue the sensuous—in favor of a supersensuous only graspable by a higher kind of vision.

This idea has taken on various forms. That which is not given has been interpreted as primal substance, ground of the world, element, “Idea” (inner form), and substance. There is no shortage of ontological formulas for it (*έτελη ὄν, ὄντος ὄν, τί ἡν εἶναι* [what truly is, what really is, quiddity]). As varied as the substantive interpretations may be, the basic idea is one and the same. All theories of the “real and apparent world”—from the Ideas to the Kantian doctrine of the thing in itself—show the same ontological profile. Since Aristotle, the concept of substance is predominant in them.

However, they all make the same mistake. Why must only the hidden and inner be “that which is”? Does the appearing and given surface not belong to it? Is the difference between what appears and what does not appear an ontological difference at all? Isn’t “what is as such” indifferent to the boundary of givenness? Contrary to these views, it is clear from the outset that the accessible is no less something existing than the inaccessible. Otherwise the latter—when it becomes accessible—would be transformed into something nonexistent.

b) The Ontological Motif in the Ancient Idea of Substance

1. Another motif is contained in the concept of substance: that which genuinely exists must be self-reliant, independent, a substrate. The outward appearance

that is given is what is secondary and dependent. This motif is also contained in the concepts of ground, essence, “Idea,” and even matter.

Here too its apparent self-evidence rests on a prejudice, however. Obviously, what is supported is no less existent than what supports it, the dependent no less than the independent. Otherwise, the whole relation would not be a genuine supporting relation at all, not a relation of dependence. That which is, understood purely as what is, is evidently indifferent to the difference between primary and secondary, independent and dependent. As fruitful as the principle of substance may be in other ways, it is irrelevant to the basic ontological question.

2. There are even more ontological themes contained in the concept of substance. One of them is the view that “what is” must possess the feature of unity. The multitude of things, and of events to an even greater degree, appears to be [55] a confusing mess; it possesses the incomprehensibility of the ambiguous and multifaceted. Only that which is a unity can be unambiguous. The philosophy of the ancients is completely permeated by this conviction: that there has to be a unity of principle, of first cause, or of final goal is usually considered a settled fact. The Eleatics directly identified *ōv* [being] and *ēv* [one, unity]. Monisms of all kinds, including Pantheism and Neoplatonism, rest on this interpretation.

But is it ontologically tenable? Why should manyness and multiplicity not exist just as much as unity? Could it be just for the sake of intelligibility? But the unintelligible exists no less than the intelligible. Or could it be for clarity’s sake? A one is not clearer than a many, nor is an unambiguous thing more existent than an ambiguous thing. The ontological primacy of unity is at bottom a rationalist prejudice.

3. Another aspect of the principle of substance is even more important than the latter, however: that of persistence. Something that is, we think, cannot be something that becomes, cannot be conceived as coming to be and passing away. Coming to be is the way from nonbeing to being, passing away is the path from being to nonbeing. Both are thus not pure being, but a mixture out of being and nonbeing. And that is contradictory. Only being “is,” nonbeing “is not.” Thus only the persisting is being, and its persistence just is its being.

This familiar argumentation of the Eleatics is motivated by the *pathos* of eternity and the claim that transience is something of little value. The transient appears to be lacking, to be burdened with an ontological limitation. It is sacrificed as something inauthentic in favor of something that exists absolutely. This motif returns transformed in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and many theories of the Scholastics. It expresses an affective and evaluative element in the thought and worldview of most serious people and is constantly maintained in the background of the great systems. It has become an obstacle to ontological thinking precisely by its persistence in the affective background.

The presupposition contained in it, namely, the artificial opposition between being and becoming, is mistaken. This error was also discovered early on by Heraclitus and was already overcome by him. It is contained in the Eleatic interpretation of becoming itself. The kind of becoming that predominates in the actual world is not a coming to be from nothing and passing away into nothing. In this world, a “nothing” can never be found. The things of this world do not come to be from nothing, but always from something, namely, from one another; and they do not pass away into nothing, but transform into one another. The passing away of the one is identical with the coming to be of another. Becoming is not a twofold, but a unitary process. That which is formed and dissolved in this process is just as much existent as the persisting substrate that lies at its basis. [56]

In other words, coming to be and passing away are generally misleading concepts to the extent that they entail nonbeing. They are superseded by the concept of alteration. Only something persisting can alter itself: what changes in it are conditions, forms, and determinations, while it remains self-identical. This change is becoming.

The basic relation is clear in this mature concept of substance—only the Moderns explicitly recognized it. What is essential in it is the opposition between what persists and what becomes. This does not coincide with the ancient opposition between being and becoming. The latter is not even an opposition. What becomes is no less in existence than what persists. Becoming consists in the transition between the ontological states of what persists. Becoming, change, alteration, and transition are themselves forms of being—precisely those that are joined most intimately to persisting. That which is changeable is precisely what persists.

c) What Is as Substrate and as Determinate (Matter and Form)

1. The concept of substance splits into two halves early on. The persisting entity is understood on the one hand as indeterminate substrate, and on the other as determining form. The two are reunified in Aristotelian dualism.

In the ancient principle of matter, the aspects of world-ground, unity and persistence intermingle. To it is added the aspect of indeterminacy (*ἄπειρον*). On cosmological grounds, it is understandable why Anaximander made the indeterminate into a principle; ontologically it is strange at first glance. The reason lies in the multiplicity and mobility of the determinate. Only an indeterminate appears to be able to persist identically. Thus, it must be—prior to all opposition—that which genuinely is.

The idea could not be maintained in this bare ontological form, not even (so it seems) by its originator. Given the deeply-rooted value feeling of the Greeks that saw something positive only in limitation and determination, a sense of abstraction and artificiality arises from the idea of something in itself indeterminate, even if it be a divine indeterminacy. Its positive aspect is still precisely that it is a substrate “of something”—i.e., of determination—but nothing is isolated by itself. Furthermore, since the substrate is an ingredient in the determination, then the latter is evidently something no less existing than it.

2. The counter-thesis is far more profound: “that which is” is the determinate, being is determination, limitation. The indeterminate is ambiguous, it is everything and nothing, at bottom a negativity, is lacking what is genuine (singularity). Determinacy is not only form, measure, beauty, but also what alone is affirmative, it is univocity, conceivability, [57] and intelligibility. Indeed, it is the authentic content of “what is;” if we want to indicate that in which something consists—i.e., what it is—then we have to attend to its being, and this turns out to be the sum total of its determinations. Therefore, the Pythagoreans gave ontological priority to the *πέρας* [limit] as opposed to the *ἄπειρον* [indeterminate].

Plato’s notion that the “Ideas” (i.e., the forms) are the *ὄντος ὁν* [what really is], and Aristotle’s thesis that the “forms” of things are their substance, are rooted in this consideration. In fact, the form maintains its identity in the multiplicity of individual cases. Thus, it fulfills the demands of the principle of substance. This thesis survived almost unchanged in Scholasticism; indeed, one ranked the “reality” of things according to the abundance of its determinations: the more determinate parts it possesses, the more “real” the thing. Along with reality, intelligibility also increases and decreases. For only form is intelligible, matter is alogical.

Here too the rationalistic prejudice in favor of form is revealed. An entity *qua* entity does not need to be intelligible at all. Possessing measure and beauty belongs just as little to its essence. It has even been shown that uniqueness does not unconditionally belong to it. However, form and matter have persistence in common. Further, as has been shown, matter is not something independent and on its own, but exists only as formed, as “its” substrate, thus the same can evidently be said for form. It too does not exist by itself, but only as the form of something; but the something is its substrate. Thus, the matter exists no less than the form. Consequently, form is not simply “being *qua* being” either, but only something belonging to it.

d) The Identification of *ens* and *bonum*

Metaphysically speaking, the intuition that “what is” is the valuable (“good”) is closely bound up with the previous idea. It already resonates in the notions of measure and beauty. It is completely bound up with the ontological aspect of “form.” Plato ascribed to things a tendency toward the perfection of the ideas, and Aristotle understood the *εἶδος* [ideal] as the *τέλος* [end] of every process of becoming. This universal teleologism of form rests on the following identification: form = being, form = value, *ergo* being = value. Then the following is also valid: higher form = higher being = higher value. This is still accepted in the middle ages: *omne ens est bonum* [everything that is is good]; and since ontological determination can increase, then the equation *ens realissimum* = *ens perfectissimum* [the most real being is the most complete being] is valid for the highest being.

This is really just a kind of metaphysical optimism. As such, ontology may be indifferent to it; ultimately, whether being is something good or not has nothing to do with ontology. Things are different, however, when we instead anchor being in value. Precisely this is the secret claim implicit in it: being is effectively nothing other than perfection, value. [58]

It is easy to counter this idea. In the world there exists the imperfect, the bad, what is counter to value, there is evil. It is by no means less actual than the perfect and good. Humankind has to tolerate it and cannot simply interpret the existence of evil out of the world. The problem for theodicy is its quarrel with the divinity about the imperfection of the world. The problem would be meaningless if being were identical with being good. It also does not help to explain evil as nothingness. We do not eliminate its reality by doing this. If we go so far as to reverse the relation and explain that only the good, the perfect, and the beautiful are real—namely, by defining the real as the realization of a valuable thing—then we only take the deception further, without changing anything about the actuality of that which is contrary to value. We have only pushed the concept back one step and now have to introduce another in order to conceive the factuality of the imperfect.

The inactuality of suffering and guilt has arguably never seriously been asserted. Instead, people have always sought the opposite way out, to understand both of them as valuable in the total interconnected context of the world. Then we are led into an even more serious aporia, however, which is of course no longer an ontological one: it is a slap in the face to the univocal meaning of the good and of the valuable. We repudiate not only the primary phenomenon of the consciousness of value, but also the assumption from which we started. If

the good as such is not univocal in itself, then the determination of “that which is” as “good” is also not univocal.

Chapter 6: What Is as Universal and as Singular

a) What Is as Essence (*essentia*)

The whole series of interpretations covered above can be summarized in the thesis that “what is” is essence. Essence is ground, unity, persistence, determination (form), but at the same time, principle of value and inner *τελος* [end] of becoming as well. The *τι ἵντι εἶναι* of Aristotle—whose translation is *essentia*—already summarizes these aspects. What is new in it is the characteristic of the universal. The *εἶδος* [idea] is not just the species, nor the genus, i.e., not the logically higher universal, but in contrast to the individual case the species is a universal. The problem of *essentia* has therefore rightfully resulted in the problem of “universals,” and the controversy over the mode of being of *essentia* has historically played itself out as the debate over universals.

For ontology, the finer distinctions within the realism of universals—whether conceived more Platonically or in a more Aristotelian way, *ante res* [prior to things] or *in rebus* [in things]—are not essential. It is only decisive that the ontological weight of the world is relocated in the universal, and [59] that the singular case with its individuality is thereby suppressed. The world of things is now the realm of contingency, i.e., the realm of that which does not follow from the essence. The realm of essences, on the other hand, is a sphere of ideal being without perishability, temporality, mobility, alteration, and of course without existence, concreteness, and vitality. It is the sphere of perfection, and in extreme versions, a sphere beyond the world of things, where the latter appears to be nothing in contrast with it.

What is positive in this interpretation consists in the insight that the universal does have a kind of being. That is not at all obvious, as the host of claims to the contrary proves. The universal is precisely not given as such, we must first raise ourselves up to it by a particular kind of reflection. To that extent, the insight that essences are a kind of existent is already an achievement of mature ontological thought.

What is negative in it consists in the claim that “only” the essences ought to have genuine being, but not the things. This is not obvious from the perspective of a purely immanent critique. The essence must still be the essence “of something;” but if this something is a nothing, then the essence is itself the essence of a nothingness, and so a non-essence, of course. Some correlate belongs to es-

sentia, and this must have an ontological weight that balances the scales against it.

This is the reason why an extreme realism of universals is not tenable. In Scholasticism, the theories handed down to us that have had genuine staying power in regard to this realism's problematic consequences were those which allowed the individual case its legitimacy. Then another difficulty arises, however. It lies in the question of individuality.

b) Individualization of *Eidos*

Aristotle cut off the differentiation within essence half way. The *ἄτομον εἶδος* [indivisible idea] forms the boundary. Beneath it there is no essential difference. All further differentiation is no longer a matter of form, but of matter, and seen from the point of view of form, a *συμβεβηκός* [accident]. The *eidos* “man” splits only *per accidens* [contingently] further into individuals; Socrates and Kallias are differentiated only by their matter. “Flesh and bones” are different, the being of “man” is the same.¹

It was soon recognized that this position is untenable. There are also mental and spiritual differences between human individuals, and it will not do to deny them essential status. Plotinus drew the conclusion that there must be essential forms for individuals (*τῶν καδ' ἔκαστα εἶδη* [a form for each one]).² Here the differentiation of essences extends [60] further—right down to the individual case; and then the difference between the essential and the accidental determinations has to be sacrificed.

Duns Scotus thought similarly, and took seriously the thought that the form itself is the *principium individuationis* [principle of individuation]. The whole *Sein* of things, their full *quidditas*, has to be composed of determinate parts of the essence. Their individuality consists in their most differentiated essential form, the *haecceitas*. In the same sense, Leibniz championed the “Ideas” of singular things. He discovered the key to this in the principle of combinatorics.

However, in whatever way we understand the individual, it always opens a lacuna in the theory of essence. If it depends on matter, then it depends on an explicitly nonessential factor; if it depends on the differentiation of the *eidos*, then the *essentia* ceases to be universal; it becomes individual, and “being

¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Z, 1034a 5–8, 1038a 15–30, among others.

² Plotinus, *Enneads*, V. 7.

qua being” is no longer the universal. This is why when the *essentia* becomes individual, the species itself ceases to be a species.

c) What Is as What Exists

The feature that distinguishes the single case from the *essentia* is—along with individuality, perishability, and concreteness—existence. If the universal has been shown to be one-sided, and we now seek “what is” in the more complete form of the single case, then we make it equivalent to “that which exists” and understand being itself as existence. This way, we do not need to be concerned about the being of the *essentia*, since that which exists contains the *essentia*.

This is not merely the “thing.” Living beings, persons, communities, everything that has individuality in time, has existence. Naturally, it will not do to understand by existence the synthesis of form and matter, as in the *σύννομον* of Aristotle. In fact, existence is not meant in such a narrow sense. We see this best in the Scholastic problem of God, which deals directly with the proof of God’s existence.

The rejection that Anselm’s argument faced even in an earlier era clearly shows that existence is something other than an aspect of the *essentia*. The latter contains only the *Sosein*, not the *Dasein*. That an entity existing in such-and-such a way has *Dasein* changes nothing about its *Sosein*, however. This is why the universal is indifferent to the number and the occurrence of cases, and is also indifferent to whether any of them occur or not. “Occurring” is existence itself.

Now, it is clear that that which “occurs,” and in occurring, has real *Dasein*, “is” in yet another, more genuine sense than that which does not occur. Thus, it makes good sense to look for “being *qua being*” in that which exists. Nominalism, in most of its forms, has gone down this path. To be sure, it quickly arrived at the extreme thesis that universals do not have their own kind [61] of being at all, and that they appear only *in mente* [in the mind] and rest on a process of abstraction. What lies at the basis of the abstraction, however, is the existence of the single case.

This devaluation of the *essentia* and of the universal—for the essence is now nearly demoted to the inessential—cannot be maintained, however. It can definitely not be maintained in ontology. This is because, by “existence,” we do not even denote the single existing thing purely as such. Existence is itself the same in all existing things. We mean “existence” rather “in” its different formations, in determinacy, in the full individuality of its *Sosein*. Formation is not a matter of *existentialia* however, but of *essentia*. It is composed of innumerable de-

terminations, each of which recurs in a number of individual cases, and is thus universal.

The converse also holds. If we can reach the universal through abstraction from cases—even if this means only having it *in mente* [in the mind]—then it must somehow still be contained in the cases. Since the cases are existing things and have their *Sosein* precisely by existing in themselves, however, the *essentia* in them necessarily has being as well. Thus, the *essentia* in them is no less existing than the *existentia*.

Now, if we consider the two theses of the realism of universals and nominalism together, it turns out that both commit the same ontological mistake. The former isolates the *Sosein*, and then cannot grasp the *Dasein* of individuals; the latter isolates the *Dasein* and cannot then conceive the *Sosein* of the individual. In both cases, the same isolation of the same apparently interdependent ontological factors inhibits their conception of “being *qua* being.” It is simply not sufficient to understand “what is” as determination alone, or as real occurrence alone. Being *qua* being is the unity of both.

This is the reason why the categories *essentia* and *existentia* do not suffice to grasp the problem of being. This is why both camps’ theories of universals have ultimately failed.

Chapter 7: What Is as Component Part and as Whole

a) Individuality and Universality, *Individuum* and Totality

Pure individuality for itself exists just as little as pure universality for itself. Indeed, everything existing is individual (and the converse), and all determination is universal in terms of form. The universal is real only “in” the individual, however, for only this has existence; and the individual only has determination in that which is common to it and to others, i.e., in that which is universal in it in terms of form.

In these propositions that summarize the preceding discussion, two new categories come to the fore: the singular (*individuum*) and the totality [62], or, seen from another angle, the part and the whole. In these categories, a further contrast of ontological interpretations unfolds.

The *individuum*—not only understood as human being, but generally as part, member, element, singular being—is not at all the individual as such. “*Individuum*” is everything singular, that in terms of which individual cases *qua* individual cannot be distinguished. Pure being-*individuum* is thus something completely universal. Conversely, every kind of combination of individuals is something

singular in its own way. It is totality, wholeness. Thus, every totality is an individual totality. It “is” indeed not individuality as such—it is in no way more than the *individuum*—but it “has” individuality, and indeed no less than the *individuum*, which is the component of the totality.

Therefore, the two pairs of opposites, “individuality—universality” and “*individuum*—totality,” do not coincide. They cut across one another. They are also heterogeneous in another way in comparison with one another. The first forms a qualitative opposition, the latter a quantitative one. Universality is homogeneity of the cases, individuality their heterogeneity; the former goes back to identity, the latter to diversity. Totality, on the other hand, is comprehensive unity, consolidation, thus, a sum in terms of form; it is first complete when none of the elements or individuals are missing. The *individuum* is the unit from whose diversity the whole is collected, the part, the member, seen from the perspective of the whole.

This distinction between the two pairs of opposites has been overlooked for the longest time in philosophy. This is partly due to the resonance of the two pairs of terms with one another, but due partly also to the centuries-long domination of formal logic. It was the latter which from the start understood the opposition between the universal and the individual (*universale* and *singulare*) as quantitative—which it is not—and subsumed it in the classification of judgments under “quantity.” Then, for quality, only the opposition between affirmative and negative remained, which is in fact a more elementary one and has nothing to do with a thing’s nature.

According to this interpretation, it is understandable that the quantitative opposition evokes yet another divergence of ontological interpretations that leads to a new one-sidedness and requires its own corrective.

b) What Is as *Individuum*, Component, Member

Since ancient atomism the view has been prevalent that “what is” is the simple element that can be divided no further; it is that from which all higher forms are composed. The strictly conceived “atom” is the concept of element in this sense. The term “*individuum*” is its literal translation. The atomistic view carries its genealogical origin on its sleeve. It arises in the “analysis” of the given: decomposition finds its limit in components that are not further decomposable [63], it runs into a kind of resistance here that it cannot overcome, and this resistance is understood as the indication of “that which is.”

The atomistic mode of thinking is not unique to physics. It returns—in diverse ways of course—in biological, psychological, and sociological domains,

and even reaches into speculative metaphysics. It does not always have to do with the limits of what may be decomposed through analysis, since empirically given units may be understood as components of larger wholes. In this way, we seek to comprehend the organism with reference to its cells, and the vital process on the basis of its component functions. In psychology, “sensations” have played the role of smallest elements for a long time, from which the more complex contents of consciousness would be “explained.” In metaphysics, Leibniz defended the thesis that “what is” are indivisible “monads,” i.e., substances of an immaterial kind, and the actual world is the sum total of these monads.

The most consequential atomistic theses occur in sociology. Here we are dealing with human individuals as elements. Now, if we posit the individuals as genuine beings, real and actual, then in contrast their collective form appears to be something secondary—and indeed not only typologically, but ontologically —i.e., as something not really real, half inactual, in any case something which has no genuine existence. These collective forms include the family, a people, the state. The widespread sensualistic mode of thinking is added to it: it is individuals that are given in all their concreteness and palpability, we live with and run into them every day; the collective as a whole, even when we live in it, is not given in such a dramatic way; it retains a certain intangibility, we have to specifically reflect on its presence and learn to grasp it. This grasp is not of a sensuous kind at any rate. Thus, we approach the view that such wholes also subsist only in thought, in abstraction.

c) Limits of the Atomistic Conception of Being

This extreme conclusion is easy to refute, of course. It stands or falls with the sensualist presupposition, and it is already epistemologically untenable. Moreover, in experience itself the collective entities at times prove to be real powers that are quite palpable. Whoever comes up against the law comes to feel its hardness. In terms of history, it is entirely within these forms that change and becoming are accomplished, and the *individuum* is integrated into the occurrence as into a unified life of a higher order.

Organic and mental life stubbornly resist every attempt to understand them only in terms of whatever components may be brought to light. Indeed, even the cosmos cannot be conceived in this manner. At every scale, the layered types of systems predominant in it [64]—from the electron to the spiral nebula—show specific laws proper to them that are not equivalent among their respective component entities. The existence of each of these systematic orders is not difficult to demonstrate. The ultimate and simple elements are especially hypothetical, for

the most part. It is no different for the widest of all ontological perspectives, the metaphysical. Whether we understand the elements as monads or as something else, the world as a whole always remains a factor that plays a determining role in their relations. Even it must be, properly speaking, a unique, existing individual in the full sense of the word.

The conclusion is that “being *qua* being” is not a part, element, or *individuum*. The *individuum* “is” no more than totality, the part no more than the whole. It is a mistake to graduate being, as if the simpler and lower forms had a higher degree of being than the more complex, multicomponent systems. Being—and certainly reality, *Dasein*, existence—does not come in degrees. It is *one* in everything that is. Only scalar order, formed and self-forming determination, has degrees.

d) What Is as Totality, Wholeness, System

According to the dialectical law of antithesis, it happens that everywhere in history the atomistic mode of thinking avoids holistic thinking, the latter again shoots past its target and claims that only the higher unity, whole, or totality is “what is;” the member, the part, the *individuum* is not independent, is nothing without the whole, and has its being in the whole.

This is not merely to repeat the self-evident claim that the part can only be part of a whole, or that the member can only be a member of a system. It is to claim that 1) there is no independent elementary entity, but solely parts or members to whose nature belongs subsumption into the whole; and 2) that these elementary entities receive their ontological determination from a higher whole. This thesis can be more tellingly demonstrated the higher up in the graduated series of “what is” we go.

The thesis is most questionable in the physical-material sphere. Planets are what they are, of course, only within a solar system; but for stars something analogous can only be suggested, not demonstrated. Whether electrons are essentially different when they are in the organization of the atom than when they are in the so-called free state, we do not know. The consistent application of the thesis claims this, and we cannot deny that at times even the “free state” can be understood as just another kind of organization.

In contrast, it is well-known that the cells in metazoans and metaphytic organisms are not only not independent, but are essentially determined structurally and functionally by their being a component of the system. Even the free-living single-celled organisms are determined by their relation to the [65] environment. In the same way, a single elementary process in the course of men-

tal life is an abstraction when taken on its own; it occurs only in the whole sprawling totality of mental processes and is substantively dependent on them.

The superiority of the whole comes to light even more clearly in the relation of the individual human being to the community. Every *individuum* is already reared in a preexisting community and is formed by it through its enculturation. The totality of individuals exercises a determinative force; the *individuum* cannot change the community's respective laws, requirements, forms of life, but can only live in them, and is compelled to adapt to them. Just as it becomes what it is through acceptance of historically developed communal cultural knowledge, it also enjoys passing it on throughout its life. Just as it is only a member of the totality, it is only a transitional stage in the reproduction of the species.

Indeed, even the individual events of history show a similar lack of independence. The seizure of a castle has its historical being not simply in the success of the conqueror or in the fate of occupation, but in the role it plays in the overall plan of a campaign; the campaign is just as much lacking its own independent being, and finds it in the context of a politics directed by the State. This too is what it is only within a broader interweaving of powers and their interests, which are in turn rooted in the total world situation and its antecedents. This confirms the saying that "the truth is the whole," which Hegel coined in reference to historical being.

Metaphysics affirmed the ontological primacy of the whole in the systematic form of pantheism. Pantheism does not only claim that the whole of the world is divine. It goes further to claim that there is a universal interconnection between all individuals in the world, and that everything individual—whether *individuum*, event, or element—receives its determinacy and its existence from this universal interconnection. If determination and existence (*Sosein* and *Dasein*) constitute the complete being of the individual, then ultimately "what is as such" is the cosmos.

e) The Error in Ontological Holism

We encounter the best tendencies in science and philosophy in this way of thinking, those that are oriented in light of comprehensiveness and actual penetration. Now, we might think that in principle totality has to actually be grasped as an essential constituent of "being *qua* being." We might be involuntarily reminded here of the Eleatic $\epsilon\nu\ kai'\ \pi\alpha\nu$ [one and all], the oldest interpretation of the $\sigma\nu$ [being], and now might also think we have historical confirmation for it.

Nevertheless, this is not the case. It is easy to see why. It is true that in all domains the whole is the higher entity; but it is not true that the higher entity

has a higher mode of being. [66] It is true that the *individuum* exists in thorough-going dependence upon the totality; but it is not true that the dependent has less being than the independent. It is true that component entities and individual events of every kind have their determinacy—that which they genuinely “are”—in the totality of the world as a universal interconnection; but it is not true, therefore, that determinacy is equal to being by any stretch; and it is definitely not true that the determining factor “is” (as real or existing) to a greater degree than the determined.

This requires no new demonstration at this point, since this matter has already been proven above. Thus, the mistake here too is the ancient one: we confuse being with a specific category of being; we identify it unawares with the totality, just as it was identified with unity, determination, subsistence, etc., in the theses previously dealt with. Therefore, the ontological refutation will also take the same form here as it does there: the part “is” no less than the whole, the *individuum* no less than the totality, the component no less than the system. The most negligible speck of dust in the universe “is” no less than the universe.

Section III: Determinations of What Is Based on Modes of Being

Chapter 8: Actuality, Reality, Degrees of Being

a) What Is as *actu ens*

All of the interpretations of “what is” discussed above are limited to individual categories of being. In each case they address one aspect of “what is,” but miss “being *qua* being.” We can of course learn from them what fundamental characteristics belong to being, and thus may in fact come closer to the ungraspable “general” conception of being—from the perspective of particularity, as it were. When we add that these interpretations deal with pairs of opposites, then the significant characteristic that “being *qua* being” must be the encompassing dimension of these opposites comes to light. Just as it is common to both part and whole, it is common to unity and multiplicity, to the persisting and what becomes, to the determinate and indeterminate, dependent and independent, universal and individual.

It is a natural step to add to this positive fundamental factor a characterization of this shared element in terms of modality. Actuality offers itself as one such modality. “What is” is then to be understood as the *actu ens* [actual being] of the Scholastics, the Aristotelian *ἐνεργεία ὁν* [being in actuality]. Not only does the everyday use of language resonate with this (which does not know the term [67] “exists” and simply says “actual”), so does the usual philosophical gradation of ontological modality, according to which the “possible” is not a kind of genuine existence—is only its preliminary staging, as it were—and only the actual is a complete entity.

It is not necessary to understand the actual in this sense as the “effective,” or as bound to a determinate kind of givenness. But its contrast to the concept of potency becomes operative. The *δύναμις* of Aristotle (*potentia*) is not a pure modal concept, and does not strictly coincide with “possibility” (with pure ability-to-be); it is also not to be understood in the current sense of “dynamic” (something like a driving force), since the dynamic aspect in this meaning lies on the side of *ἐνεργεία* [actuality]. The *δύναμις* is the passively acquired “disposition” to do something. In it, there is a teleological orientation to that “something,” the disposition toward which it is. The incompleteness in its mode of being thus ultimately stems from the indeterminacy of the being or nonbeing of this something. *Ἐνεργεία* is the actualization of the latter, and thus determinacy.

In the teleological view of the world it is plausible to grant a primacy of the actual to the possible. This is why Aristotle, in book Θ of the *Metaphysics*, tried to prove this: there is no potency independently existing by itself, it always already clings to an entity *actu* [in act], which precedes it temporally and ontically.

What remains questionable here is just the teleological view itself. It remains absolutely indemonstrable whether every entity really is an actualization of dispositions. This question requires a specific investigation that can only be carried out in a special categorial analysis of the finalist nexus. We may assume here at any rate that such a universal teleology cannot be maintained. This is the reason why new, metaphysically neutral modal concepts have been developed in philosophy.

However, if we substitute the easy-to-grasp modes of possibility and actuality for potency and act, it is not evident why actuality alone should be synonymous with “being.” Whether there is a “merely possible” without actuality or not is not the issue here; this too will be decided only later. This much is already clear before the investigation, however: what is actual must at least be possible, since an impossible actual thing is a contradiction. This means that the being-possible of the actual is a necessary ontological factor in it. It does us no good to exclude it from being. We would also end up excluding the actual itself from being as a result.

b) What Is as Real

If we do not succeed in interpreting being in terms of modalities of being in general, perhaps we might succeed with a particular mode of being. If we understand by “reality” the mode of being of everything that has its place or duration in time, its coming to be and passing away [68], whether thing or person, single process or whole course of world events, then we arrive at the following definition: “what is” in general is the real, being is reality.

This is not the same as “actuality.” In the realm of the real there is also real possibility and real necessity; the real encompasses these modes of being; these modes may also recur in other realms of being when these realms are exhibited. There are, for example, essential possibility and essential necessity, and these are not identical with the corresponding real modes. Insofar as essences also have being—even if it is not real being—then these modes too are likewise modes of being.

If we consider what exactly this difference of modes consists in, then we find that the identification of being and reality has really already been assumed. This identification presupposes that nothing other than the real world “is.” This is ex-

actly what cannot be demonstrated based on the nature of the world. We must at the very least leave open the possibility that there is still another realm of existents. If we assume that there is another realm of existents—it does not matter what we call it, but for now we can call it “ideal being”—then it must also be the case that it is no less existent than the real. Only its way of being would be different. Thus, as their genus “being” would have to encompass reality and ideality. “Being *qua* being” would be neither the real nor the ideal.

We cannot decide here whether there is “ideal being.” An investigation into the corresponding phenomena is needed. For the time being, it will suffice to leave the question open. As long as it is not answered in the negative, we cannot identify reality and being.

What deludes us into making this identification is really nothing other than the fact that in everyday life the real is given to us quite obtrusively. Our very lives belong to the real world and play themselves out entirely within it. In contrast, another kind of being is something to which we are first led by a special kind of reflection. Nothing would be more preposterous, however, than to interpret an opposition within givenness as an opposition between being and nonbeing.

c) Ontological Strata, Ontological Levels, and Degrees of Being

Yet another interpretation of “what is” ought to be considered in this context. Even if the three modes always belong to a way of being (i.e., ideal or real), they still seem to indicate a gradation within it: being actual is “more” than being possible, and being necessary is “more” than merely being actual. This is the conventional view at least. Something similar may be seen in the relation between the ways of being themselves. Let us assume that “ideal being” exists; [69] it might then right off be understood to be the “higher” type of being, e.g., as that transcending temporality and perishability, something everlasting, eternal, divine. It was understood this way by Plato and by all subsequent forms of Platonism. It might also be understood, in contrast, as the lower and incomplete being, precisely because it is lacking the weight of a temporal fate that befalls us since it sits enthroned at a certain distance from the world, imponderable. The majority of those “worldly” thinkers faithful to what is actual have so judged it.

In both cases, we are dealing with gradations or degrees of being. If we accept this common interpretation that permeates most theories, then we may very well think that “being *qua* being” is just that which spreads itself across these levels or degrees.

So far, the substantive levels articulated in the structure and categorial specification of “what is,” those which divide it into strata even for the superficial view of the world, have not yet been covered. The idea of degrees of being does go further, however, and extends to the stratification of the world.

In the Aristotelian theory of levels we get a clear glimpse of something of the kind, even though it is not articulated; naturally, mind (*νοῦς*) possesses the highest degree of being, and matter (*ὕλη*) the lowest. The intermediate levels—thing, living being, soul—are arranged such that the higher always superforms the lower, and the lower achieves its completion in the higher. The higher we go, the fuller and richer their constitution becomes. These differences in structure are understood as degrees of being. We find this clearly articulated again in Neoplatonism, which demoted matter to nonbeing, but understood spirit as pure being, and the divine as beyond being.

The idea is maintained in this form in the great systems of the middle ages: the richer the sum total of determinations of being (of positive essential predicates), the higher the degree of reality. The divine as *ens realissimum* [most real being] caps the graduated series on the high end. Again, in the Hegelian *Logic* we find the basic outline of this idea: the “truth” of the lower levels lies in the higher ones every time. What Hegel calls “truth” is precisely the consummation of being.

Things are fundamentally no different with the reversal of this overall view, which has hardly been developed in the significant images of the world, but which has of course been widespread in the popular thought of all ages. For it, the stratum of “things” is the sole and genuine being in the fullest sense, and materiality constitutes its ontological weight. Events, processes, and vitality appear to be less real to it. Psychic inwardness appears to be even more rarified, airy, and denatured to it. For this mode of thinking, all conceivability and ontological weight disappears with the genuinely spiritual, which is not at all bound to tangible individuals. [70]

d) Critique of Degrees of Being

We do not need to completely reject the conception of degrees of being out of hand, since to some extent it may be implicit in the gradations of modes of being and ways of being. Just how it is to be restricted, and just how the graduated series is to be structured, cannot be decided in advance. This issue will be introduced in another context. At any rate, it is clearly not the case that only one way of being, or only one mode of being, is equivalent to being in gen-

eral. Additionally, an irreducible juxtaposition remains in the gradation, which is not impaired by the intercalation of modes or ways.

It is different with a substantive gradation. Apparently the content is confused with the ontological character here. That which is actually graduated in the ontological strata is structure, determinacy, constitution, the type of unity and wholeness, the kind of system and its internal structure. The entities themselves are from various ontological levels, but their way of being is the same.

This can for the time being only be shown in the real world, because its way of being is a familiar, empirical one. Obviously, an animal organism is an indisputably higher entity than a stone, an atom, or a galaxy. Even vitality is raised above the latter, not to speak of organic structure and the subtle inner equilibrium of these processes with their autonomous self-regulation. However, to claim that for these reasons the organism is an entity “more real” than others does not make any sense. It displays the same perishability, destructibility, individuality and existence as others, is subjected to the same classification into kinds, species, and orders, has just as many essential and contingent particular components in it, is just as embedded in the context of the world and is dependent on it for its being or nonbeing. Indeed, from the outside the organism even bears the same features of thinghood, manifestness, and tangibility as something lifeless. In terms of its way of being as such, there is no evident difference at all, except where we *ex definitione* [by definition] understand “reality” as substantive determination. Then “reality” is just another word for the same thing. We would have to choose another term for the identity of ways of being.

The same thing holds for mental and spiritual entities: for consciousness and act, for persons and dispositions, words and deeds, individuals and communities, law, ethics, science, and historical development. Of course spatiality, materiality, and sensuous tangibility cease to exist here. However, their coming to be and passing away is the same, their temporality, duration, singularity, and individuality is the same. Their integration, dependence, and relative independence is the same. They are simply entities of another kind, and the wholes with which they are conjoined are different. The decision of a human being is something *toto caelo* different from the fall of a stone. The character of the event, however, [71] is in general the same. “That” in general a decision is made displays the same ontological meaning of the “that”—i.e., that of reality—as “that” the stone falls. Here we are only talking about “reality.”

e) The Ontological Unity of the Real World

The peculiar thing about the real world is that items as heterogeneous as things, living beings, conscious beings, and spiritual beings exist together in it, interfere with each other, reciprocally influence, condition, support, disturb, and sometimes struggle with one another. This is because all of them are localized in the same time, follow one another, or coexist. If they existed in different times and possessed different kinds of reality, this would not be possible. No relations of being-supported and being-conditioned, of interfering with one another and conflicting, could exist between things so heterogeneous. The unity of reality is the essential factor in the unity of the world.

It is an unavoidable precondition for the comprehension of “being *qua* being” that we not take levels of “ontological height” as levels of ways of being. Just “how” we understand the gradation in its details, whether we allow it to rise or fall with the ontological height of entities, is inconsequential, since the error is the same. The gradation does not consist in the valuation of ontological strata, nor in the presumable primacy of matter or of spirit. In any case, there may very well be such a primacy in terms of content. This would mean only a dependence of strata, whether we begin with the highest or with the lowest entities. The error lies in that which is common to both interpretations: in the gradation of reality as such, i.e., as a gradation among ways of being.

The corrective we are talking about here concerns the foundation of ontological cognition. What a “way of being” is cannot be directly specified. Only contents are directly specifiable. It is the concern of a specially cultivated way of thinking to conceive ways of being. We can tread no other path here than that of clarifying these issues by orienting our view to what is shared by the ways of being and what differentiates them. It will be possible to engage in a genuine discussion of ways of being only after this has been accomplished.

Chapter 9: Reflective Conceptions of What Is

a) What Is as Object, Phenomenon, and Ready-to-Hand

All of the interpretations of “being *qua* being” discussed above belong to the *intentio recta*. We could limit ourselves to these, since it was shown at the start that ontological determinations stemming from the *intentio obliqua* are not relevant. On the other hand, we should take into account the fact that the latter are maintained in contemporary philosophy with [72] great tenacity—especially the ones

that are rooted in epistemological reflection—and that there has to be a reason for such tenacity. Historical experience teaches us that reasons of this kind always lie in some kind of phenomenon by which reflection is determined. Thus, we must, in order to get to the reasons for these reflective interpretations, discover their phenomenal basis.

1. The basic thesis of all reflective interpretations is that that which is is an “object.” We can understand this thesis in a general way, such that the inner object-correlate of any given act of consciousness is also included under this heading, and where even representing, imagining, and speculative thinking have their objects, just as do wishing, hoping, desiring, etc. At this level of generality, “that which is” would be an “intentional object,” without reference to its reality or irreality.

The mistake here is obvious. This way it becomes impossible to distinguish between “that which is” and contrived or invented entities. However, the most naïve consciousness already makes this distinction. It belongs just as much to the findings of consciousness as does this all-pervasive “intentional objecthood.”

2. The thesis that “what is” is an object of cognition comes closer to the truth. Cognition is distinguished from the types of acts listed above in that it is aware of the being-in-itself of its object and distinguishes it from mere inner intentional objecthood. It would not even be considered knowledge if it did not believe its object to be one that is independent of itself.

In this case, it is inconsistent to think of “that which is” as an object. Its independence of course means just that it “is” what it is without its being cognized; but since being cognized is precisely the objectification of what is, i.e., its becoming an object for a subject (its “coming to stand over against” us), then, on the contrary, it must be the case that what is, understood purely as “what is,” is not at all an “object” on its own. It is first made an object by the cognizing subject, and just by way of the inception of cognition (objectification). The inception of cognition always already presupposes “that which is.” That which is, however, does not presuppose cognition.

3. This situation is no different when we substitute the term “phenomenon” for the equivocal concept “object.” Phenomenology says that we have to deal with the phenomena, that it is necessary to grasp them “in themselves.” By this it means grasping “that which is.” It is no coincidence that on this basis it has reached the point of attempting to develop an ontology of the real. The presupposition here is that a “self-showing” (*φαίνεσθαι*) belongs to everything that is. The phenomena are then those which “show themselves.”

Two mistakes are involved here. First, “showing itself” belongs just as little to the nature of “what is” as does becoming an object. There may very well be

concealed being, the sort of being that does not become a phenomenon. Secondly, it does not belong to the nature of the phenomenon that there must always be an entity that shows itself in it. There are also [73] illusory phenomena, empty semblances, which are not the appearance of anything. Phenomena, understood purely as such, are thus the same as merely intentional objects in which it is also not clear whether something corresponds to them or not. At any rate, “being *qua* being” is not merely “phenomenon.”

4. If we stick with the concept of an object and we use it to get back behind the cognitive relation, then we are driven into a sphere of lived experience in which first this, then that among entities is given as a useful object or an object in the surroundings. Heidegger has coined the term “ready-to-hand” for this kind of being-given. It may now seem that “what is” is an object in the surroundings, something ready-to-hand.

However, being ready-to-hand is only a form of givenness, not an ontological determination, let alone being itself. The objects of human use do not disappear from the world when we are not using them; only the using itself disappears. Thus, they have a being which is not reducible to their being ready-to-hand. This is the same way that objects of cognition have a being that is not reducible to their being an object. The latter, like the former, “are” transobjective. The disadvantage of the milieu relation compared to the cognitive relation is, moreover, obvious. Not everything which “is” can become an object of use, but everything which “is” can, at least in principle, become an object of cognition.

b) What Is as Transobjective and Nonrational

Once we have realized that being is not reducible to being an object, whatever coloring we might give to it, we are prone to draw the opposite conclusion from the fact of its transobjectivity. “What is” now appears to be that which is not an object, not even an object of cognition.

1. In all cognition, there is a consciousness of the fact that the object is always substantively more than what is cognized (objectified) in it at any given time. We know, in other words, that still unknown elements are contained in it. Problem-consciousness is the distinct scientific form of this cognition. Now, if we call what is unknown in this sense the “transobjective” in the total object—i.e., that which lies beyond the limit of objectification at any given time—then we can express the thesis this way: “that which is” is the transobjective.

The thesis has something going for it to the extent that in the “unknown” the character of its independence from the cognitive relation clearly comes to light. It seems that the separation of “what is” from the knower is expressed by this

characterization. Nevertheless, this is in fact not the case. Instead, we have committed the error of turning the limit of objectification into an ontological limit. Is it true that an object “is” something only to the extent that it is not cognized? The cognized portion [74] must still have the same ontological status as the uncognized portion. If we dispute this, then we would of course have to assume that “what is” would be transformed into a nonbeing by the very act of cognizing (objectifying) it. And since, in the progress of cognition, it is objectified ever further, this would mean that it would be gradually absorbed into cognition and would be ontically annihilated. In fact, cognition leaves “what is” completely unaffected. It does not touch it. Cognitive advance does not change anything about the constitution of “what is.”

2. In cognition there is also a second awareness of a limit; it concerns the limit of what is cognizable. Beyond this limit there lies not only what is uncognized, but what is also uncognizable, not only transobjective, but also transintelligible—i.e., gnoseologically nonrational. The latter lies much further from what is objectified, and it seems to have more of a claim to being “what is, insofar as it is.” In this sense, Kant called what is uncognizable in the background of objects of experience the “thing in itself.”

However, here we are presented with exactly the same error as in the case of the transobjective. Here too a cognitive limitation is turned into an ontological limitation. We have forgotten that an entity—purely as such, whatever it may be in its particulars—exists indifferently to whether it is known or not known, whether it is knowable or unknowable. It is not at all clear why something cognizable should be less “in being” than something uncognizable. Nonrationality is not an ontological status, but only a relation to possible cognition. If the uncognizable possesses “being in itself,” then the cognizable also has being in itself.—

Whether we claim that only the transobjective or the nonrational is genuine being, we commit the same error in both cases. The same principle holds for both limits—the limit of objectification at any given time as well as the limit of objectifiability: these are only gnoseological limits within that which is, limits which do not affect its constitution or its being; there are thus no limits of “what is” relative to that which is not.

An even more deeply rooted error can be discovered in this fallacious reinterpretation of cognitive limits as ontological limits. How could we even arrive at this reinterpretation? Are these not the same limits that we validated in the earlier interpretations, but in the opposite way (that which is = object of knowledge)? In that case, it seemed like “what is” ought to be what lies “this side” of the limit; here it ought to be what lies beyond the limit. However, if the

limit is revealed to be indifferent to being, as we now see, then obviously the same basic error exists in the two cases.

The error consists in starting off from gnoseological reflection, making the subject a fundamental point of reference, and maintaining that fixed point of reference even in the negation of objecthood. This way, we transfer all properties of the object—even negated ones, even the cognitive limits of our relation to an object [75]—to “that which is.” As a consequence, the “beyond” of both limits appears to have an ontological status. The transobjective is just as much oriented to the subject as is the objectified; it is the transobjective “for it,” just as the latter is the objectified “for it.” The same thing holds for the nonrational. Thus, the same relativity to the subject that arose in the identification of “what is” with the “object” exists here. This relativity is the basic error. “Being *qua* being” is not only free from it, not only does it exist without any relation to a subject and before all emergence of subjects in the world, but it encompasses the whole cognitive relation, including the subject and its limits. The knowing subject is also something that is, no different in this respect than its objects and what is transobjective for it, and no different than what is uncognizable for it.

c) Subject-based Theories of Being

Of lesser importance are the interpretations that transpose “what is” into the subject. They come under scrutiny in our ontological problematic only due to the fact that the reflective stance reaches a high point in them.

1. In the interpretations just mentioned, “that which is” was shifted beyond the object. We showed that in this way the subject was established as a fixed point of reference. Now, if we reorient the direction of this shift, the point of reference moves into the foreground and makes a claim to being the only being.

The idealistic theories, supported by skeptical arguments, have performed this reorientation: the subject is “that which is,” the objects are only its representations. The *cogito* argument of Descartes, although not applied idealistically by him, was groundbreaking. In post-Kantian idealism, the struggle against the “thing in itself” allowed all ontological weight to fall on the subject. It really is the case that we cannot skeptically dispute the being of the subject in the same manner as the being of the object.

In this form, idealism has had little luck. The subject is left alone by itself in the world—indeed, we cannot even say “in the world,” since the world is, to the extent that it is considered to be more than the subject, negated. Neither can a multiplicity of subjects be maintained; other subjects are just more objects for the subject, and objects are only its representations. In this way it makes not

only the world, but also human relationships, into an illusion. Since the latter are essential for its way of being, however, it becomes an illusion itself.

2. The thesis is not as weak as it seems if we accept that human relations belong essentially to the subject, and understand the subject to be not only a cognizing subject, but a living and acting one. “That which is” may then be understood as ego, person, human being, or spirit [76]; or even as Heidegger has proposed, “*Dasein*.” The world is, on his view, the world as it is related to human beings and relative to their deeds in it. It is for everyone “in each case his own,” and so not a shared, existing world, but the world taken to exist by him in his behavior.

The problem of solipsism may be overcome, but in this way the rigor of the position is also lost. The context of everyday life, human relationships, and the multiplicity of persons is already presupposed as existent. The real world in which human beings exist is also factically presupposed along with them. The human being is not the sole being. The non-I is no less “in being” than the I.

3. We can advance this line of thought even further. A shift similar to that described above concerning being as object can be performed on being as subject. We can shift the essential point beyond the empirical subject in the same way that it was shifted beyond the empirical object, and even in the same two stages: first beyond the limit of cognition, and then beyond the limit of cognizability. Both limits recur in the field of subjectivity. In the first case, it results in an unconscious and unknown background to the empirical subject, in the second a superempirical, absolute or metaphysical subject. Such a background is familiar from Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*. Types of superempirical subject can also be found in non-idealistic systems, as e.g., everywhere an *intellectus divinus*, *intuitivus* or *archetypus* [divine, intuiting, or archetypal intellect] is assumed to exist behind the world.

There is not much to be said for such theories. They transfer being into an ontological ground just as the objectivist theories do. They are subject to the same critique as the latter. That the “ground” is here sought in an extended conception of the subject hardly makes any ontological difference at all. At any rate, the “ground” does not lie “in” consciousness any more. These theories are thus only nominally idealist. The consequence of the line of thought in which they have engaged is the self-cancelation of the reflectivity implied in the nature of the issue itself.

4. Finally, pulling being back from the object-orientation of other views, we could transfer it to a universal (transcendental) epistemological subject or into a logical subject, as has repeatedly been attempted in neo-Kantianism.

By doing so, however, we no longer do justice to the ontological weight of the real. We end up dealing with only a secondary kind of being, being “to a

lower power,” as it were: with being as “positing,” as thought or predicated being. Theories of this type commit themselves to a position of such extreme one-sidedness that they have to deny the most important fundamental phenomena of life. Indeed, they have a remarkably easy time dealing with being as they understand it, but only because they have in principle left genuine “being *qua* being” out of account. [77]

Chapter 10: The Limits of the Stance “This Side” of Idealism and Realism

a) The Phenomenal Basis of Subjectivist Characterizations

The last group of theories is almost insignificant, ontologically speaking. They veer away from “what is” without the least qualm and so simply fail to see the ontological problem. Nevertheless, many remnants of these theories still linger in our own era. When we consider the reason for their tenacity we do find a phenomenon upon which they are based. It is contained in the experiential dimensions of the cognitive context and cannot be explained away. We may call it the “phenomenon of immanence;” it is also known by the title “the principle of consciousness.” It states that consciousness only has its representations but not the objects represented, and so it can never know whether the representations correspond to something real outside consciousness. Consciousness is imprisoned within the immanence of its contents—or we might also say, with the immanence of its intentional objects.

This phenomenon as such cannot be contested, and it has constituted the foundation of all skepticism since the era of Aristippus. If we restrict ourselves to considering only this phenomenon, it is easy to conclude that there is neither an entity outside of consciousness nor knowledge of entities. This only changes when we entertain other aspects of the phenomenon of cognition, e.g., our knowledge of objects’ transcendence of consciousness and of the transobjective constituents of objects, and likewise the phenomena of problem consciousness, cognitive progress, and so on.

The task of assessing these aspects of the total phenomenon ontologically still remains before us. It has to begin with an analysis of the “givenness” of what is, with both real as well as ideal entities. The phenomenon of immanence extends to both ways of being. This investigation is yet to be carried out with precision.

We may say one thing about it in advance. Ontology may take a certain stance “this side” of worldview theories, even of idealism and realism, at the

start of its labor. However, this stance cannot be maintained as the investigation advances. There must be a point at which a decision is made regarding these alternatives. This point has been reached with our current considerations. We stand at the border of the “this side” stance. Our decision depends on the way we come to terms with the phenomenon of immanence. It may be further predicted that if this phenomenon of immanence is not reduced to a mere illusion, that is, if subjective idealism is correct, then all further effort in the field of ontology is pointless.

b) The Correlativist Prejudice

The remaining reflective determinations of “what is” pertain to the concept of the object or the concept of the phenomenon. They do not rest on [78] as slim a phenomenal basis as the subjectivistic theories, but have in common with them an attachment to the subject as a fixed point of reference. It does not suffice to clarify—as has been done above—that “what is” cannot be characterized as an object, that being-an-object is only the “standing against” of an entity (not its being as such), that the being of the subject is already presupposed here, that the latter has no ontological priority at all, and does not even have a central position in the existing world.

None of this suffices because in the basic phenomenon of the cognitive relation the correlativity of subject and object remains intact. To the extent that we take off from the cognitive relation—or even from a more immediate relation of givenness analogous to it—this correlativity remains intact as a basis and cancels the plain ontological status of the object. We have made the *intentio obliqua* the sole perspective and are now imprisoned in it. In this way, we turn a partial phenomenon into a fundamental phenomenon; we create a correlativistic prejudice from the relational character of cognition and attribute to it universal ontological validity.

The wrong-headedness of this prejudice can only be discovered by means of acknowledging its phenomenal basis fully and completely in the first place; only then can its real phenomenal constitution be teased apart from the illusory phenomena in it. The total phenomenon can be summarized in the following way. Cognition consists in the fact that “what is” is made into an object for a subject. If we proceed from this as the fundamental relation, we find “what is” to be something always “standing over against” the subject. What is real in this relation is that all givenness of “what is” has the form of being an object in the domain of cognition. What is illusory here is the conclusion that everything that is, already purely as such, is for this reason an object for a subject.

If we instead grasp clearly that in this relation only cognition makes “what is” into an object, and by doing so already presupposes “what is” as such “this side” of all givenness—i.e., that cognition is very well aware of this presupposition from its most naïve levels upwards and for this reason knows cognition to be distinct from mere representing, thinking, or imagining—then the illusion collapses of its own accord. With it the correlativistic prejudice collapses as well. Then what remains in the cognitive relation is the structure of “standing against,” but simultaneously with it the transobjectivity of the cognitive object, i.e., its being-in-itself always already presupposed in the cognitive relation. “Being-in-itself,” understood as the contrary of mere “being-for-me,” is nothing other than the categorial form in which “being *qua* being” makes itself known in the cognitive relation.

Thus, “being-in-itself” is not a strictly ontological concept. It is only a defensive measure against the notion of merely being-an-object. Epistemology needs this boundary line, it has to draw it for its own [79] sake. For it and its reflective attitude, “what is” as such is first posited when it takes leave of the object-relation. “Being-in-itself” is always a gnoseological concept.

Ontology can do without it. Ontology has returned from the *intentio obliqua* to the *intentio recta*. It does not require this defensive measure, and it does not hold on to the correlativist prejudice. In its concept of “being *qua* being,” being-in-itself is already surpassed.

c) Being of the Phenomenon and of the Cognitive Relation

The situation with the concept of the phenomenon is very similar to that of the concept of the object. Everything that “what is” shows of itself to us is precisely “phenomenon.” This is a tautological proposition. When we transform it into the proposition “everything that is is a phenomenon,” however, then it becomes just as much a prejudice as the proposition “everything that is is an object.” Indeed, it is almost identical to it, for that which becomes an object of cognition “shows” itself precisely to the subject. The error here is twofold. On the one hand, everything that is is not required to show itself (to appear); on the other hand, not everything that appears to us has to be a self-showing entity. This is just as valid for the analogous propositions concerning “standing-against.” Everything that is neither needs to be an object, nor do all objects—for instance, objects of imagination—have to be something that is.

Ontology is just as little phenomenology as it is a theory of objects. Even the most objective interpretation of the concept of a phenomenon does not raise the theory of phenomena to the level of a theory of what is. A hopeless confusion

arises when we cancel the distinction between appearing (self-showing) and being. All criticism of phenomena ceases, all rank order distinctions among what is given cease, and every illusory phenomenon, every skewed description can become widespread.

This should not be understood as a devaluation of phenomena. Phenomena are what is given and as such retain their irreducible significance. Givenness is always the first factor in philosophical investigation, but *only* the first. It is not the final factor, not that which decides about what is true and untrue. Since true and untrue concern conformity with what is, we can also say that givenness is not what decides about being and nonbeing. Between the methodologically first and last is nothing less than the complete course of the investigation, the genuine labor of philosophical penetration. We have to show the “phenomenon” to its appropriate place. It is irreplaceable there. Beyond that it leads us into error.—

At the same time, the distinction between the phenomenon and “being *qua* being” should not be adopted precipitously. It is not a matter of excluding the phenomenon as such from being. [80] Of course, phenomena also have their own kind of being—they precisely “are” something and not at all nothing—they are just not the being of “what” they readily display. There is just as much a being of imaginary representations, of thoughts, of beliefs and prejudices, as there is a being of cognition and a being of its contents.

It is the task of a particular subfield of ontology—the one which deals with spiritual being—to investigate the particular realm of beings in which all of these entities fall, as well as whatever more universal way of being they may have, but it is not the task of this general laying of ontological foundations. Prior to any investigation, only two things should be kept in mind in relation to what has been said. First, the specific kind of being of these spiritual entities is not transferrable to other entities; it cannot be generalized. Secondly, it can already be seen in the essence of these entities themselves that the being which they point to is neither identical with them, nor does it need to share their mode of being. Representation, thought, concept “are” something other than “what” is represented, thought, conceived, and the whole level of entities to which they belong is a different one.

The same thing also goes for phenomena. The being of the phenomenon is fundamentally different from the being of that which “shows itself” in it and whose phenomenon it is. Of course, they are both encompassed by the broad field of what is in general. We can just as little tie being *in genere* to the being of the phenomenon, however, as to any other special mode of being.

**Part Two: The Relation between *Dasein*
and *Sosein***

Section I: The Aporetics of “That” and “What”

Chapter 11: Reality and Existence

a) The Indifference of What Is

The result of this survey of traditional interpretations of “what is”—natural as well as reflective ones—appears to be negative at first glance. We cannot obtain a concept of “what is” by erecting a perimeter to keep out unsuitable interpretations, since it is that which encompasses everything. It will be shown that its unintelligibility is not at all absolute. “That which is” is intelligible by way of its particulars. Just as the essence of the world as a whole is not experienceable, disclosable, or open to conjecture all at once, “what is” becomes accessible from within the world and on the basis of its multiplicity.

The interpretations that have been presented are in fact nothing but specifications of “what is.” Therefore, there must be something positive to be gleaned from them. This is confirmed when we note that fundamental categories are for the most part concealed in these specifications (unity, determination, substance, form, etc.) and that only their generalization to the whole is in error.

What comes to our attention first of all is that “being *qua* being” is completely indifferent to most of the determinations presented above. There are thinglike and non-thinglike entities, given and non-given ones, a foundation of the world as much as the founded world. These forms of indifference genuinely pertain to the ontological character of “what is.” They clearly display its universality in contrast to particular ontological categories. In spite of their formal negativity, these forms nevertheless bring something positive to the fore, namely, the identity of “being” itself in everything that in any way “is.”

This becomes even more impressive the further we run through the list of categories. Being *qua* being is indifferent to substance and accident, to [82] unity and multiplicity, persistence and becoming, determinacy and indeterminacy (substrate), matter and form, value and disvalue. It is no less indifferent to individuality and universality, *individuum* and totality, part and whole, member and system. If possible, it is even more completely indifferent to the reflective determinations: this characteristic ontological status extends without distinction to subject and object, person and thing, human and world, appearance (phenomenon) and what does not appear, objectified (object) and transobjective, rational and nonrational.

The list of these forms of indifference can be extended indefinitely. For example, it also includes indifference to absolute and relative, independent and

dependent, simple and composite, lower and higher formations. These examples should suffice. The same relation is repeated in all of them.

It is therefore conspicuous that two pairs of contraries are not included in the pattern. The first is that of *essentia* (essence) and *existentia*, or more broadly speaking, *Sosein* and *Dasein*. The second is that of the modes of being and ways of being: actuality and possibility, real and ideal. The same sort of indifference is not present in them. “What is” in general is of course still the encompassing dimension in which these opposites move, but its ontological character is not the same in them.

The beginning of a new investigation has been provided with this realization. It is easy to see that it will emphasize the relation between the modes of being. For this reason, we are not going to proceed from modality here, but from the opposition that is more proximate to the categories listed above, the opposition between essence and existence.

What both pairs have in common is the opposition between their ways of being: reality and ideality. Other problematics are also implicated in this opposition, such as the question of the givenness of being. The following investigations will deal with this opposition constantly and with reference to ever-varying perspectives.

b) Inadequacy of the Traditional Concepts

The discussion in which we now engage is already “categorial” in principle. It is just so general that it precedes the differentiation between ways of being. The mutual belonging of *essentia* and *existentia* has always been recognized since the Aristotelian doctrine of the immanence of the essential forms in the world of real objects, even where emphasis was placed on their opposition and a being-for-itself was attributed to the realm of universals. The dualism in the opposition between the sphere of essences and the sphere of things has not eliminated their interrelation. Even if we speculatively shift all ontological significance to one side of the opposition, [83] the other still remains as its correlate. At best, we could exclude it by means of a metaphysical explanation of its nothingness. That, however, would just be a violent, capricious act of the thinker. Neither the extreme realism of universals nor extreme nominalism has gone that far.

If we proceed on the basis of the results attained above (Chapter 6b and c), namely, that “being *qua* being” is neither *essentia* nor *existentia*, then these negations have to be evaluated positively. Essentiality and existentiality have to be genuine ontological characteristics that apply to “what is” over its entire scope,

and which only together constitute “being *qua* being.” This means that everything that is necessarily has an aspect of essentiality and an aspect of existentiality in itself.

The traditional interpretation of the concepts contradicts this. In the old meaning of the term, “existence” can only be attributed to the real. Mathematical existence is of course an old idea too, but this concept never really made it into the main current of the historical problem of universals. It remained external to that history, a signpost indicating an unresolved problem, as it were, only to acquire validity again in modern times. The problem that was contained in it, however, was eminently ontological. This was the problem of ideal being. At the very least, we might have distinguished existence in the narrower sense of real existence from the broader sense. But even this was far from the extreme orientation of the dominant theories. Being was ascribed either to eternal universals or to the temporal-real, and “existence” was reserved for the latter.

Thus, it is no wonder that we historically brought the opposition between ways of being (ideality and reality) into alignment with the opposition between *essentia* and *existentia* and finally made them synonymous. The direct consequence of this would have been that what “exists”—and with it the ontological domain of the real—would have to have no essential determination. Its perishability, individuality, and in most interpretations, its materiality as well, would have to remain contrary to it in principle.

This consequence was never drawn in just this way, however. Its implementation would naturally have led immediately to contradictions. At any rate, the original Platonic conception of the Ideas took as its point of departure the notion that the perishable real somehow contained the essential forms—even if incompletely actualized—and this is why perception of things already reminds us of them.

c) *Essentia* and Ideal Being

The relation between existence and reality has now been clarified to some extent. By unsettling the concepts, we see that there is neither identity nor opposition between them, and that we are instead dealing with homologous contraries belonging to two different pairs of opposites. They partially coincide with one another and partially diverge. More [84] than bare existence belongs to reality, and beyond the real there is existence in a broader sense as well.

It is not as easy to determine the relation between the complementary members: *essentia* and ideal being. It is not simply analogous to the one between reality and existence. The two oppositions do not simply cut across each other,

they also partially overlap. The essences originally appear to have ideal being. They are distinguished from the real, as from the temporal and individual, by their timelessness and universality. But the same thing also holds for ideal being. Thus, it appears that *essentia* and ideal being coincide far more than do existence and reality.

Nevertheless, this cannot be the case. Keeping in mind that the difference between the real and the ideal—always assuming that it can be demonstrated—is not only a difference between ways of being, but also a juxtaposition of whole realms or spheres of being, it follows from what has been said that essence and ideal being cannot coincide. This is not just because there is also ideal existence, but above all because essences do not form a realm of entities existing in themselves. Platonizing theories, which sought to assert such an existence, have never held up in face of the problem of determining the essential structures the real world. How would an ontology be justified that could not give an account of the basic principles of the real? It would have to establish a *chorismos* [separation] and simply exclude the most significant questions—those concerning the “essence” of the world in which we live.

Even adopting the distinction between the essential and inessential (essential and accidental) in the structure of the real cannot prevent us from reaching this conclusion. If we reserve for *essentia* what is “essential,” and we mean by this more than a tautology, we run into even greater difficulties. The accidental seems to belong just as much to structured forms, though it seems to be impossible to burden existence with it (at least as long as we grasp the primary sense of *existentia* as the bare “*that it is*”). We would have to coin another term for it. Additionally, we unavoidably erect a boundary with this distinction, one that can be erected only because an artificial perspective has been brought in from the start and is ontologically completely arbitrary. Are there particular determinations of the real that would not also be essential with respect to the whole interconnected context of the world? For a long time, there has been a great deal of abuse of the oppositions between primary and secondary, necessary and contingent. By “necessity” in this sense we have always only understood essential necessity, not real necessity. In this way, however, we already presuppose precisely the boundary that we would like to erect.

To top it all off, the central issue is this. It is precisely the peculiarity of the real world that the universal essences are not enthroned [85] in some distant world beyond it, but they are contained in it; they prevail throughout it, constituting “its” essence and “its” set of forms. This is why we can also rediscover them in it, gather them from it; this is why it is possible to obtain them from the individual case—whether we portray this process as a bracketing (bringing

before the parentheses) or as an echo of the eternal in the temporal and a recollection of the former.

This is why the essences do not coincide with ideal being. We do not dispute that there is a certain overlap of the domains. It may very well be the case that essences also have ideal being. But they are neither reducible to it, nor is their particular mode of being characterizable solely in terms of it. Conversely, there is a kind of ideal being which does not stand in a relation of essence to the real—as will be shown. This is why there are sciences—such as whole branches of mathematics and logic—which deal exclusively with being *idealiter* [in its ideality] as such, prior to all application, and even before the question of application to the real can arise.

d) Ontology of “That” and “What”: *Quidditas*

If we mean to avoid the ambiguity that both pairs of opposites bring with them, then we must set aside the overburdened concepts *essentia* and *existentia* for now and introduce others in their place. The concepts *Sosein* and *Dasein* offer themselves from among the practicable terminology. They stem from a more logically oriented disciplinary jargon, but in strictly etymological terms match the ontological opposition with which we are dealing here quite exactly. They are well-known in their propositional form in terms of the difference between “that” and “what.”

There is an aspect of *Dasein* in everything that is. By this is to be understood the bare fact “that it is at all.” In everything that is there is an aspect of *Sosein* as well. To *Sosein* belongs everything that constitutes something’s determinacy or particularity, everything it has in common with others, or by which it is distinguished from others, in short, every aspect of “what it is.” In contrast to the “that,” this “what” encompasses its whole content, and even its most individualized differentiation from others. It is the *essentia* expanded to include the *quiditas*, in which everything accidental is also included. We might also say that it is *essentia* “to a lower power,” as it were, brought down from the height of its exclusive universality and ideality into life and the everyday. Its depotentiation implies the rejection of pretentious metaphysical ambitions.

Stepping back from the narrower problem of *essentia* is not meant to be a way of setting the whole thing aside. We are only trying to secure a simpler and more ontologically fundamental problem. The opposition between *Dasein* and *Sosein* has a threefold advantage, aside from its transparency. First, the boundary between universal and [86] individual plays no role in it. A “that” exists just as much for the most universal as a “what” exists for the most individ-

ual. Even with lawful regularities, for example, we are always dealing with whether or not they “are,” i.e., whether they exist and preside over some sphere or not. Secondly, this existence, or the bare “that,” does not coincide with reality, does not coincide with real existence; even ideal being has its own kind of existence that does not coincide with its structured form. Thirdly, the “what” also cannot be made to coincide with ideality. Just as it reaches beyond essentiality and into all degrees of inessentiality, it permeates all levels and specificities of the real world.

Sosein and *Dasein* therefore exist in close relation with one another in every entity that is, and nevertheless have a certain independence from one another. It makes good sense to talk about “what” something is without reference to “whether” it exists at all. Likewise, we can sensibly discuss “whether” something is while it still remains an open question “what” it is. This approach certainly has its limits. However, at first glance it is a certain indifference of *Dasein* and *Sosein* in their relation to one another that strikes our eye.

If we say that this opposition between them consists in the mere duality or two-sidedness of entities, the distinction itself is unobjectionable. It would then belong to the phenomenon of “what is” in general. At the same time, this is why it still remains undecided whether it exists in itself beyond the phenomenon as well, i.e., in the entity itself, beyond all phenomenality. It is no less undecided whether the distinction is an absolute or a relative one that changes depending on perspective, just like the distinction between the essential and the inessential. This means that it is an open question whether *Dasein* and *Sosein* always remain in contrast to one another in entities themselves or merge into one another.

Chapter 12: The Disjunction between *Dasein* and *Sosein*

a) Ontological Sharpening of the Opposition

This distinction is not maintained in such a neutral way, however, on the usual interpretation. When it is recognized at all, it is increasingly sharpened into an opposition, and ultimately taken to be absolute. We partition everything that has a claim to “being” either into *Dasein* or *Sosein*. It finally appears as if the world as a whole, as well as everything that has a place in it, is a combination of two heterogeneous ontological factors, where the combination is visible in each thing and cuts across the whole like a fissure.

That a person exists is their *Dasein*; their age, appearance, comportment, character, and so on, are their *Sosein*. That there exists the magnitude a^0 in the series of exponents is its *Dasein*; that it is $= 1$ is its *Sosein*. Everything can

be divided up in terms of [87] this schema. Indeed, it seems here that no dividing is even required, and that it is already divided on its own into the two component parts of the entity, and quite thoroughly: *Dasein* is never transformed into *Sosein*, and is never to be understood in any way and under any perspective as *Sosein*; *Sosein* is never transformed into *Dasein*, and is in no way reducible to *Dasein*.

In this manner, we make a disjunction out of a distinction, and indeed a radical, ontical, absolute one. *Prima facie* it seems that everything speaks in favor of this disjunction really holding. A whole series of arguments is usually presented to support it. The more important ones are provided in what follows.

1) To every *Sosein* a *Dasein* corresponds. *Sosein* does not hover in midair; it presupposes a substrate “in” which it inheres. Therefore, we understand *Sosein* simply as a property—of course in a broad sense—and *Dasein* as the substrate of properties. *Dasein* is then equivalent to the Aristotelian *οὐσία* [substance] on which the remaining categories depend. The sum total of the latter would correspond to *Sosein*. Properties never transform into their substrate, however, they always remain something “in” it. Substrates, for their part, can never become properties of something, they can only lie at the basis and never appear. Thus, *Dasein* and *Sosein*—for all the closeness of their relation—never mix with one another.

2) The indifference to one another of *Sosein* and *Dasein* mentioned above can without difficulty be transferred from the sphere of propositions to the things themselves. It makes no difference to *Sosein* whether “such and such a thing” exists or not. Even if the something “does not exist,” it still remains constituted “in such a way.” The same goes for *Dasein*: it does not become non-*Dasein* if it is lacking a determinate *Sosein*. *Dasein*, so it appears, is just as “contingent” or external to *Sosein* as the latter is to it. We come back to the old conception: only the essential is necessary, but this essential necessity remains limited exclusively to the side of *essentia*, and it does not concern existence. A difference in modality thus distinguishes *Dasein* and *Sosein*.

3) The modal argument may be taken even further. Seen from the point of view of real existing things, the essences appear to be mere possibility; bare *Sosein* would thus be merely possible being. In contrast, *Dasein* has the character of actuality. Now, if we understand the “possible” in the manner of Scholasticism, as that which can just as well be as not be, and if the actual is that which just is and not what “is not,” then it follows that *Sosein* is already separated from *Dasein* through its mode of being.

b) Logical and Gnoseological Arguments

In addition to the ontological considerations presented here, there are those derived from logic and epistemology. Of course, they bring with them the aporias of the *intention obliqua*, but still make a claim to pertain to “what is.” [88]

1. What can be defined about something is its substantive series of determinations. Their completeness would constitute a total definition. This extends only to *Sosein*. *Dasein* remains excluded from it. *Dasein* is not only the indefinable in something that is given, it also adds nothing to it, even if we would like to conjoin it with its component determinations.

2. The division of judgments into existential judgments and *Sosein*-judgments, i.e., the division into those which say something about content in the form “S is P,” and those that only make an existential claim, is quite familiar. The latter bear the form “S is” or “there is an S,” and as so-called existential judgments they play their own role in metaphysics; for example, the proofs for God’s existence have as their goal a purely existential judgment.

Apparently, these two types of judgment are radically separate. There is no bridge between them. Since the judgment is, in its proper meaning, a pure expression of being, however—as indeed the predicative being, the “is,” amply proves—then we have to assume that an even more radical ontological opposition corresponds to the radical opposition of judgments.

3. Epistemology draws a distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge. It is not necessary to relate this distinction to intuition and thinking in a Kantian manner. Even without it, it cannot be disputed that there is only *a priori* cognition of the *Sosein* of objects, while *a posteriori* cognition extends to *Dasein* and *Sosein*. The side of *Dasein* is thus only knowable at all *a posteriori*. Now, since the object of cognition must have some transobjective being, the opposition between the components of cognition is transferred to this being and allows *Dasein* and *Sosein* to appear to be heterogeneous aspects of being.

4. The question whether the *Dasein* of something in general can be grasped without more precise substantive determination can be set aside for now. Without a doubt, however, there is a type of cognition that extends only to *Sosein*, and leaves the issue of *Dasein* open. All rigorous cognition of the universal, all cognition of laws, is of this kind. For even when an individual case is given as existent, the universal as such encompasses an infinity of further cases in principle whose existence is nevertheless not grasped at the same time. Only an empty placeholder is given for possible real cases in the universal cognized, not the cases themselves. In this way, it comes to seem that the *Sosein* of things—the sum total of their determinations, properties, distinctions, and re-

lations—is not something real in them at all. Then only its *Dasein* remains for what would be considered genuinely real in it.

c) Metaphysical Overstatements

1. Based on a one-sided interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, we could even read something of this sort into the distinction between *Dasein* and *Sosein*. According to Kant, that is, we can very well know about the existence of things in themselves, but not about their “constitution.” The forms of sensibility and understanding do not permit it [89] to be any other way. Only “appearance” can be cognized in time and space under the concepts of the understanding. Now, if we suppose that only “things in themselves” constitute “that which is” in the strict sense, then, according to Kant’s thesis expressed ontologically, only the *Dasein* of what is “in itself” is knowable, but not its *Sosein*. Or, put differently: the *Sosein* of things that we cognize only has being-for-us; its *Dasein* in contrast is being-in-itself.

2. Max Scheler came to a similar conclusion by means of the converse thesis. According to him, only the *Sosein* of things is knowable, but their *Dasein* is as such unknowable. The phenomenological concept of consciousness is behind this claim, which understands by “cognition” a being of the objects in consciousness (Scheler says *in mente* [in the mind]). Since substances with independent existence obviously cannot insert themselves into consciousness, however, the thesis now says: only the side of the *Sosein* of things enters into the *mens* [mind], *Dasein* remains irreducibly *extra mentem* [outside the mind].

According to this interpretation, a “thing” is only an object in the environment for a determinately organized subject. It exists in relation to such a subject. This relationality Scheler calls “existential relativity.” The expression is misleading, however. Since the determinations of environmental objects are dependent on the organization of the subject, the relationality is more like *Soseins*-relativity than it is *Daseins*-relativity. The apprehended *Sosein* of things is precisely not their being-in-itself, it exists only “for us.” That means, strictly speaking, that it exists only *in mente*.

We cannot avoid this conclusion. It can even occasionally be found to be suggested by Scheler himself (without his strictly holding to it of course). If we took it to be valid, then we could simply reformulate it this way: the *Sosein* of things exists *in mente*, their *Dasein* exists *extra mentem*.

The cleavage of the object of cognition by way of these nominalist overstatements is carried out far more radically here than ontological arguments could have achieved. The divisive partition of subjectivity is inserted between the *Da-*

sein and *Sosein* of things. No worldly thing can be something cohesively unified in itself any longer: its existence is something subsisting in itself, but its constitution is merely a matter of representation. Or, to put it another way: as things in themselves they are not permitted to have any determinations or constitution; and as determinately constituted they cannot exist in themselves.

d) Mistaken Interpretation of the Concepts “*in mente*” and “*extra mentem*”

The arguments that have been enumerated here are not simply harmless overstatements that could be accepted pending a few emendations. They hang together far too organically for that. They form different facets of a [90] unified and immoderate one-sided tendency of theories to dissolve the object of ontology and to make ontology itself seem to be pointless.

Therefore, it will not be frivolous to submit these arguments to a test. The first steps of such a test already show that a whole lion’s den of errors is contained in them. The discovery of these mistakes, however, does not happen with one stroke, but only step by step. Since this cannot be carried out without explaining the actual relation between *Dasein* and *Sosein* at the same time, the analysis will proceed without any apparent break into a positive presentation of the issue in question.

We may draw a distinction between crude mistakes and more deeply concealed inconsistencies. It is obvious that the really serious part of the investigation pertains to the latter, while the former can be dealt with relatively easily. In a few cases a *deductio ad absurdum* already results from the lightest touch.¹ These are artificial constructs that do not arise from the internal consistency of the problem, but are built up for the benefit of some standpoint or other. It is obvious that the standpoints must themselves be deconstructed first. In opposing the whole range of arguments enumerated above, the critique will proceed largely in the opposite direction.

1. Above all, we have to reckon with the last of the points introduced above (section c., 2). If *Sosein* ought to exist *in mente*, but *Dasein* exists *extra mentem*, not only are the two divorced, but we cannot even say any longer that both concern one and the same entity. *Sosein* is only permitted to belong to the represen-

¹ *Deductio ad absurdum*: “the indirect progressive proof which develops from non-T consequences which are not impossible in thought, but which are inconsistent with a host of convictions accepted as truths and sufficiently established” (Lotze 1887, Book II, 239–240). The more commonly known “*reductio*” is considered by Lotze to be a subform of this more general category of argument. TR.

tation—the objectified contents of consciousness—while *Dasein* would belong to the object, but not to the intentional object, to the thing in itself. Because being-in-itself, according to the presuppositions of the theory, ought to be constituted differently than the contents of consciousness that represent it, it must have a *Sosein*; otherwise we cannot ever talk about any difference between them. If there is only supposed to be a *Sosein* of things *in mente*, however, then being-in-itself cannot have yet another *Sosein* in addition.

2. If we take the claim seriously that things as they are in themselves have no *Sosein*, then all substantive difference between them disappears. They would all have to be equal to one another, i.e., equally indeterminate. For all determination and all difference is a matter of *Sosein*. What would remain would be their bare *Dasein* without determination, and that is the same for all things. Only for consciousness, i.e., in its representation of things, would the multiplicity exist. But even that would be an error. Making a distinction at all would already be a mistake. The things could not have any differences.

3. The absurdity of these conclusions is so obvious that we automatically look around for the source of these mistakes. We find it in a kind of mishandling of the concepts “*in mente*” and “*extra mentem*.” The two concepts do indeed form an opposition, but not at all a contradiction. They are not mutually exclusive. That which exists independently of the subject may very well recur in consciousness. In addition, that which is represented by consciousness in a particular way can very well also exist in itself with precisely this determinacy. Otherwise the conformity between the representation and the thing itself would be totally impossible. This would in turn mean that cognition would be impossible.

4. Therefore, it may very well be the case that something can appear both *in mente* and *extra mentem* at the same time. This of course goes both for the *Sosein* of something as well as its *Dasein*. It is not true that the *Dasein* of things cannot be cognized. It is not only cognized and very concretely represented, but also distinguished by cognition in the most determinate way from non-*Dasein*. It certainly also appears *in mente*. It is not true that cognized and represented *Sosein* could not also exist in the things as they are in themselves. Representation can certainly be in error, but it can also apparently agree with the thing. It is just this conformity that we call cognition. Thus, *Sosein* also definitely appears *extra mentem*.

5. Nominalism already committed a very similar mistake. It was right in that it admitted a being of the universals *post rem* [after things], for consciousness has them. It was wrong, however, to deny being *in rebus* [in things] to them on that account. Otherwise, consciousness could not abstract them from individual real cases at all. They have to already be in them somehow. This is likely also

the reason for the mistaken conception that “*post rem*” and “*in re*” are mutually exclusive as well.

e) Misapplication of the Kantian Concepts

Hardly less mistaken, but less crude, is the argument that claims to be supported by Kant (c., 1). The constitution of the “thing in itself” is unknowable. This claim stands solidly on Kantian soil. We could also add, if need be, that at best its *Dasein* is knowable. Hence, only a cognitive boundary is drawn between *Dasein* and *Sosein*, not an ontological boundary. The things in themselves also have their determinacy and do not stand there in diffuse indeterminacy, and Kant leaves no doubt about this. He clearly does not conflate being and being cognizable. The idea of unknowable things in themselves shows this unequivocally.

Things begin to go wrong when we shunt all determination to the side of the appearance, and all existence to the side of the thing in itself. Then it looks as if *Sosein* in general and as such would have to be a mere being-for-us, and in contrast *Dasein* would mean being-in-itself. In this manner we draw a dividing line right through the middle of things—both through the empirically real, which is appearance, and through the [92] thing in itself. In regard to both, however, the conclusion is as un-Kantian as can be.

That things in themselves also have a *Sosein* is the implicit but obviously self-evident presupposition of all Kantian language that speaks of the impossibility of knowing them. “What” they are is not conceivable under the forms of our intuition and our understanding. The existence of such a “what” is not even in question, however. It is the same way with their *Dasein*. The latter is not withheld from things in themselves at all. There is also empirical *Dasein* in the appearance. The term “*Dasein*” was even used by Kant precisely to refer to empirical reality. The “*Dasein* of things outside of me” in the “Refutation of Idealism” does not at all refer to the things in themselves. It still refers to something different from the *Sosein* of empirical things, however.

At any rate, we cannot expect Kant’s help when we understand *Dasein* as being-in-itself and *Sosein* as mere being-for-us. It is not unimportant to recognize that such things cannot be thought in terms of Kantian concepts without contradiction. It is even more important, however, to gain some clarity (without reference to historical authorities) about why it is fundamentally impossible, and could come to pass only by sacrificing all reference to traditional concepts.

The mistake, that is to say, lies deeper. It is rooted in an interpretation of *Dasein* that gives it an ontical priority over *Sosein*: only *Dasein* is genuine being-in-itself, existence as such. We allegedly cannot predicate existence of properties of

things. The *Sosein* of things, however, consists in their properties as well as everything that shares the same ontological status with them, such as relations, interconnections, and dependencies of all kinds. This would mean that the *Sosein* of things “is” not only separate from existence but it also does not “have” existence. To be sure, things are attributed existence. This concerns solely the side of *Dasein* in them, however, not the side of *Sosein*.

This evaluation of *Dasein* as the privileged side of beings is precisely the prejudice. It stems from the Scholastic relation between *existentia* and *actualitas*, and it must perish with it. It is not true that the *Sosein* of things does not belong to their real actuality (to them as *actu entia* [being in actuality]). *Sosein* rather itself has a “*Dasein* in things.” We say that properties exist “in” the things, and by this we mean that they are really present in them, not as if they depended on being taken to be such. The *Dasein* of things is the *Dasein* of things existing in such and such a way, not the *Dasein* of an abstract thinghood (existence in general) without determination. We simply could not attribute *Dasein* to the latter. It is the same for all other kinds of entities as it is for things.

Thus, it is not true that *Sosein* has no existence. We could even say that the entity existing in such and such a way is precisely the only existing entity. Likewise, it is just as false that *Dasein* is genuine [93] being-in-itself. *Dasein* has no ontological priority over *Sosein*. Because it is only “what is” that is able to have *Dasein*, we must be able to say with just as much right that its *Sosein* is genuine being-in-itself. The weight of a ball (one component of its *Sosein*) has the same way of being as the ball itself. If the ball has *Dasein*, then its weight also has the same *Dasein*. If it does not have this *Dasein*, then it does not belong to the ball either, i.e., then it is not its weight.

Put in a general way, a *Sosein* that does not belong to the *Dasein* of something is not a *Sosein* of this something at all.

Chapter 13: *Aufhebung* of the Disjunction

a) Cognition of Laws and the Existence of Cases

After taking care of these coarse misunderstandings it is necessary to come to grips with the more serious arguments. Among them, the epistemological ones lie pretty close to the surface.

One of these relates to the cognition of universals, particularly the cognition of laws (Chapter 12b4). Here *Sosein* is grasped as an infinite series of cases, but their *Dasein* is not. Only the placeholder for possible real cases is provided, not

these cases themselves. Now, if *Sosein* can be known without *Dasein*, then it seems to follow that the case actually has no *Dasein*.

A clear distinction is correctly understood in this argument. It is an incontestable—yet highly conspicuous—fact that the lawfulness of something is cognizable within certain limits while the *Dasein* of something remains unknown. We have the tendency, when we have once convinced ourselves of it, to see in this cognitive phenomenon the genuine root of the now conventional separation between *Dasein* and *Sosein*. This is why, since Plato, all theories of Ideas, Forms, and essences have been founded on this phenomenon.

The question is whether the phenomenon has been adequately interpreted ontologically. The mistake is precisely the same error that was discovered in the reflective interpretations of “what is” (Chapter 9b): the limit of cognition is mistakenly taken to be an ontological limit. We think that because the existence of a series of cases running to infinity cannot be known, the cases themselves have no existence; but since their *Sosein* is known at the same time, this *Sosein* does apparently exist. Thus, there is a *Sosein* of what is non-existent.

This argument is a fallacy. The existence of unknown cases can in no way be contested, certainly not for epistemological reasons. Otherwise, it would make no sense at all that the sciences, when they have grasped a law in advance—or also only hypothetically accept it—look around afterwards for real cases. They do not do so to make the complete series empirically accessible of course, [94] for this is out of the question, but only in order to achieve in typical cases the verification of what is still questionable. This is already proof for the fact that it is certain in advance of the existence of such cases. Thus, the sciences do not make an epistemological limit into an ontological one. In this they faithfully adhere to the natural attitude. Only speculative theories reverse the relation.

What is implied in the cognition of laws when it extends the *Sosein* known in the individual case to an infinite series of cases is thus not what the argument claims. The universal *Sosein* of non-existent cases is not what is implied, but the *Sosein* of the existing cases. The fact that the existence of these cases is not confirmed (and as a totality is not confirmable) does not change matters in the slightest. In the same way, it does not change the fact that the majority of these cases belong to the past and the future, are partly no longer actual, and partly not yet existent. We do not at all mean that they must simultaneously exist in the contingency of some determinate “now.” Instead, the past is something that existed in its time, and the future is something that will exist in its time. This having-existed and becoming-existent is the same existence as the presently existing. It is an error to reserve existence for the present alone. Even if we were to make this mistake, we still cannot deny that the past cases

have all had their “now” and have existed in it, and the future cases will also have it and will exist in it.

b) The Gnoseologically Vexing Aspect of *a priori* Cognition

All of this should really be self-evident. Its self-evidence has only been lost because we have lost the natural attitude to the world and it has been suppressed by the reflective attitude. This proves just how much everything depends on reclaiming the *intention recta* for ontology.

What remains vexing, even after rectifying the nature of the cognition of laws, is the exclusive concern with *Sosein*. The epistemological background of the latter depends on the nature of the *a priori*. The problem is thus transferred to a different field of questions (Chapter 12b3). There is only *a posteriori* knowledge of *Dasein*; *a priori* knowledge grasps only *Sosein*.

This too can be accepted as evidence, at least initially. The question is whether it follows from this that *Dasein* and *Sosein* are separable components of “being *qua* being.”

1. What first strikes us is the fact that the discussion of the cognition of laws that we have just completed can be readily generalized to the *a priori* element in all cognition. *A priori* cognition [95], where it is carefully extracted purely as such, where it has been distilled from the whole of the cognitive context as a component, has precisely the form of the universal. It is the cognition of laws, or as ancient interpretations would have it, pure cognition of the Form. It follows that the existence of the infinitely many cases that it allows for is directly presupposed in it. The fact that it does not know these cases in themselves and as such does not change the situation. Unknown *Dasein* is no less *Dasein* than known.

2. In the field of real cognition (cognition of real entities), the *a priori* element does not appear in isolation. Where we do artificially isolate it (as of course happens in certain theories), it ceases to have cognitive status—objective validity—and passes into speculation or the free play of association. Here we have to keep in mind the achievement of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, namely, the principle that every application of “pure concepts of the understanding” can only make a claim to objective validity in the field of “possible experience” and with constant reference to it. It would be otherwise if our understanding were an “intuitive” one. The meaning of this Kantian provision in relation to our problem is precisely this: it would be otherwise if the *a priori* component of our cognition could grasp the existence of things also purely for itself, without the help of experience. The conclusion is striking: there is only *a priori* cognition to the

extent that the existence of cases is accessible to *a posteriori* cognition. It is thus not cognition of non-existing cases at all, but only of existing cases.

3. It is otherwise with the cognition of ideal being. This is only *a priori*. There is no *a posteriori* cognition of ideal being. Cognition *a posteriori* means “cognition on the basis of individual cases,” but ideal being does not have individual instances. That which concerns ideal existence, however—such as mathematical existence—is always already given with *Sosein*, and indeed given *a priori*. This point will have to be justified later on. At any rate, we are not speaking here about any disjunction whatsoever between *Sosein* and *Dasein*.

4. The supposed division between them in the domain of real cognition rests on these two propositions: there is only *a posteriori* cognition of *Dasein*, and only *a priori* cognition grasps *Sosein*. We should note that these two propositions are not convertible. We cannot say that *a posteriori* we may only have cognition of *Dasein*; even a primitive perception of things is rich with substantive determination. Just as little can we say that only *a priori* cognition may grasp the *Sosein* of something. Instead, it is evidently the case that cognition has both modes of access to the *Sosein* of things, but to their *Dasein* only one of them, the *a posteriori*. Therefore, the ontological opposition between *Dasein* and *Sosein* and the gnoseological opposition between *a posteriori* and *a priori* are not parallel to one another, let alone substantively the same. We could not deduce a disjunction in the first pair from the latter pair, even if such a thing were actually to be found in the context of cognition. [96]

5. Finally, the two propositions introduced above do not have unconditional validity, but only conditional validity. Cognition is only pure *Soseins*-cognition *a priori* when it is without detours. Indirectly it extends to everything knowable, and thus to existence as such. What “indirectly” means here is easy to specify: cognition is “indirect” everywhere the *a priori* element of cognition forms the mediator, where, for instance, on the basis of empirical data we gain the insight (“through” the cognition of laws) that something not directly experienceable must exist. In this way, the existence of the companion to Sirius was calculated on the basis of the observed curvilinear motion of the main star. In this manner the doctor knows, on the basis of the symptoms of disease, about the existence of a pathogen. Without a point of departure in the *a posteriori*, nothing at all would be known here; but with it the *Dasein* of something is known *a priori*.

c) The Problematic Criterion of Definability

It is true that the definition of a thing only concerns its *Sosein*; its existence as such is excluded from the definition (Chapter 12b1). Of course, we must add

that the definition always contains only a part of its *Sosein*, roughly the “essential” part or what we take to be essential to it. All the same, it is in principle capable of being extended in many ways, and can even cover its *Sosein* as a whole. Even for the most ideal totality, however, its *Dasein* still remains beyond definition.

At first glance this seems to mean very little. Why should everything in an entity be definable? Who would take it upon themselves to define life’s events, the self-organization of living things, or the moods of the human soul? It is easy to see that the issue is not as simple as that, however. It is one thing if the inconceivability, transience, or complexity of something provides a limit to its definability, and another if the simple, lapidary ontological component of existence does. In the first case, the reason for indefinability is epistemological, or due to the ungainly nature of the conceptual contents; here there is at least the possibility of making progress. In the second case, however, the reason appears to lie on the ontological side; at any rate, the limit is an absolute one.

However, even if the reason for the emergence of a limit is tied to the entity in question, it does not yet follow from this that there is a genuine ontological limit. The case might be analogous to that of the limit of cognizability, which is also not an ontological limit, but only marks off the domain of objectification in the entity while the entity itself remains indifferent to it. Thus, we can say of the limit of definability too—even if it is an absolute one—that it is only the limit of what is logically comprehensible in the entity. Existence is simply something alogical in principle. The difference between the logical and the alogical, however, is not an ontological difference.

There is also a second issue here. It is not the case that every particular kind of existence is logically indeterminate. If we take, for instance, the Kantian [97] example of the 100 talers, then their existence in my understanding may very well be included in their definition. Special modes of existence even approach *Sosein* and may basically be conjoined with it; in this case they consist in “being-mine.” This bears thinking about, especially in a direction contrary to that of the crudely conceived limit phenomenon.

Actually, there is no naked, universal *Dasein* in the world. It is always a determinate kind of *Dasein*, and that means *Dasein* in determinate relations, existence in determinate relations to something. Of course, the existence of the thing to which it stands in relation is also always implied. Under this presupposition the determinate existence of the *definiendum* [thing to be defined] is completely assimilable into the definition. Then universal *Dasein* is also indirectly included.

The conclusion is that the limitation of definability does not only *not* allow us to conclude that there is a disjunction between *Dasein* and *Sosein*, it rather proves that even the boundary of the logical is not absolute. Indeed, it seems

that here a kind of continuous transition between *Sosein* and *Dasein* (and the reverse) can be conceived, which is why the being-mine can be viewed without difficulty as belonging to *Sosein*. It is only a question whether this is merely a logical or an ontical transition. Should it turn out to be ontical, then the situation would be completely transformed. *Sosein* and some particular *Dasein* would be relative to one another in the entity itself, and universal *Dasein* would only form an abstract limiting case.

Chapter 14: The Types of Judgment and their Interconvertability

a) The Special Place of the Existential Judgment and the *esse praedicativum*

The judgment makes room for what the concept does not encompass, namely, bare *Dasein*. The form in which it asserts *Dasein* is the existential judgment of the type “S is.” The fact of this type of judgment—as a second and particular type next to the *Sosein*-judgment “S is P”—is doubtless a major theme in the ontical disjunction between *Dasein* and *Sosein* (cf. Chapter 12b2). What kind of a logical discovery do we really have here?

It is true that all judgments may be divided into these two types. We may even proceed with the division into particular forms of judgments—into differences of quantity, into negative judgments, into hypothetical and disjunctive, into problematic and apodictic. It is not true, however, that there is no transition between judgments of *Sosein* and judgments of *Dasein*; and it is just as false that the formal division between types of judgment corresponds to an ontical disjunction between ontological factors.

At first this sounds unbelievable. The logical tradition stands opposed to it like a brick wall. The special place of existential [98] judgments is confirmed by its special form. How is this form supposed to be eliminated?

This is exactly the point open to question. The logical form is not at all the most crucial element with reference to the ontological content of the judgment. In light of the apparent independence of formal relations, we forget that judgments have an ontological content, indeed, that their assertive character consists precisely in the fact that they assert “it.” It is no coincidence that the linguistic form of the assertion is an ontological form—the “is,” the copula. It is a mistake to treat the copula in the judgment as a secondary matter. Logically, it is the central issue, the sign of the assertion as such, the *signum* of belonging or not belonging (the Aristotelian *ὑπάρχειν* [to belong to]). It is the bearer of the *esse praedicativum* [predicative being].

An abundance of errors in the logical theories can be cleaned up at this point. Only a few examples are provided. It is not true that only the quality and the modality of judgments depends on the copula; quantity and relation are also rooted in it. The difference between “is” and “is not” shows it most directly, likewise the difference between “can be,” “is,” and “must be.” We just need to penetrate a little further into the essence of predicative being—i.e., we need to do what the formal theories avoid doing—in order to see that the disjunctive and hypothetical relation depends on the copula too and that both are transformations of the “is.” In the “is either-or” this can be seen directly; in the “if-then” it is concealed by the linguistic form, but may be extracted from it as soon as we reflect on the special ontological meaning of being dependent. Concerning quantity, nothing could be more mistaken than to locate it in the S. The issue is not whether “all S” are together or only “a few,” but whether they all “are P” or only a few “are P.” When the judgment says that P “belongs” to S, then the quantitative difference evidently lies only in whether the “belonging” itself is universal or particular.

If we proceed by striking out the formalistic errors in the primary sense of the *esse praedicativum*, then the opposition between judgments of *Dasein* and judgments of *Sosein* dissolves. We can be convinced of this by taking into account the following considerations.

b) Conversion of Judgments of *Dasein* into Judgments of *Sosein*

The existential judgment is not merely distinguished from the normal type of *Sosein*-judgment by its linguistic form alone, but also by its logical form. Even the logical form is not identical with the predicative ontological content of the judgment. When we convert “S a P” [all S are P], we get a different judgment in terms of form: “non-P e S” [no S is non-P]. This is why formal logic takes contraposition to be a form of argument. Against this, it has always rightly been objected [99] that nothing new is asserted in the conclusion here, it is only a transformation of the same predicative ontological content. That all S are P means precisely that nothing that is not a P, is S. We do an injustice to the consistency of the forms this way, but in terms of the ontological content the argument is valid.

It is precisely the same concerning the formal difference between *Dasein*-judgments and *Sosein*-judgments. The form “S is,” which predicates existence, may always be converted into the form “S is P” without alteration of the predicated ontological content—exactly as the a-judgment is transformed through contraposition into the equivalent e-judgment above. We only need to decompose the *Dasein*-judgment into its complete ontological content. “S is” does

not amount to an incomplete judgment, one that is as if lacking P; if so, it would not even be a judgment in the first place. It also does not mean that S is some arbitrary, indeterminate “something,” but precisely that it is something very determinate, namely, an entity. What is predicated here is *Dasein*, existence. The fully formed judgment would run “S is in being” or “S is existing.” The P that is not expressed in its elliptical form, but is clearly posited, is existence.

It may or may not be remarkable that existence can be asserted at all, but the fact is that it is asserted, and indeed unequivocally. The form of the judgment is elliptical because of the equivocity of the term “is.” This can designate the copula, but it can also mean existence. In the latter case the copula still appears in the verbal formulation.

If this were not the case, then the copula in “S is P” would have to be synonymous with the predicate in “S is.” Then there would be no difference in terms of predicative being between “is” [in the first] and “is” [in the second]. This contradicts the meaning of both judgments, however. The “is,” as a sign of belonging, is fundamentally different from the “is” as existential predicate.

Dasein-judgments are only different from *Sosein*-judgments in terms of their logical form. In terms of the ontological content asserted, they are reducible without exception to the explicit basic type of judgment. The latter is the *Sosein*-judgment. The label “*Sosein*-judgment” has been shown to be one-sided. Thus, not only is there no reason to conclude from the judgments that there is an ontical boundary between *Sosein* and *Dasein*, but there is not even such a logical limit in the judgments themselves—in their predicative ontological content.

c) Bare and Relational *Dasein*-assertions

What has been said will suffice for the purpose of merely refuting the argument that the forms are disjunctive. The argument rested on a mistaken presupposition, the error was uncovered, and the argument has collapsed. After looking into the matter this far, however, another vista opens up that we did not at first anticipate. We have to follow it a step further. [100]

To be more specific, it appears that the convertibility of types of judgment is reciprocal. Not only can the *Dasein*-judgment be converted into the *Sosein*-judgment, but the latter may also be converted into the *Dasein*-judgment without the predicative ontological content being changed. In fact, this can be shown when we manage to look solely at the being of the assertion and do not allow ourselves to be misled by the breakdown of the linguistic form. Here propositions take on forms which must appear arbitrary and artificial from the point of view of every-

day language. We should not forget that everyday language is meant to satisfy the needs of life, and is not suited to resolve questions of logical principle.

Consider the series of sentences: “the table is square”—“the table has four corners”—“four corners belong to the table”—“four corners are on the table.” The first two propositions display the type of the *Sosein*-judgment, the latter two the type *Dasein*-judgment. In the first the “is” serves as copula, in the latter as existential predicate. Nevertheless, on closer inspection, the propositions are equivalent. No one would object that sentences such as these four would never be used in daily life. That is not the point. After all, the third sentence clearly forms the transitional formulation, and just this is what should give us pause. Only one thing is important here: the content of the ontological predication is the same. What else could the table’s being-square mean but that there are four corners on it, thus that its corners have a *Dasein*?

It cannot be objected here that “*Dasein* in something” is not *Dasein* strictly speaking. Bare *Dasein* appears in the world only as an abstract limit case. All actual *Dasein* is determinate, *Dasein* that arises in certain relations. In all *Dasein*-assertions only just such an existence is posited, even when the relations are not asserted at the same time. Even if there were bare *Dasein*, relational *Dasein* is still the same *Dasein*. Existence is indifferent to all “whereof” and “wherein.”

d) Conversion of Judgments of *Sosein* into Judgments of *Dasein*

If we keep this in mind, we may say that every *Sosein*-judgment asserts the existence of something in something. For example, judgments of perception assert the existence of colors, spatial form, size, solidity, or even the parts of a thing. Thinking that is narrowly objectifying might of course say to this that colors, shape, and hardness do not really have existence. In this way it substantivizes *Dasein*, reserving it for things. This is precisely the error. If the properties of the thing did not have existence in it—existence in the strict sense—then the existing thing would not be so constituted in actuality. Its *Sosein* consists in the existence of the properties in it—their appearance, their subsistence, their presence in it. These expressions are nothing but other ways of saying *Dasein*. [101]

Formally expressed, this means that every judgment “S is P” can be converted into a judgment of the form “there is P in S,” where the “there is” asserts *Dasein*. Thus, every *Sosein*-judgment can take the form of a *Dasein*-judgment. Bearing in mind the conclusion of the previous argument as well, we conclude that both types of judgment are convertible into one another. Their reducibility is reciprocal.

It is no accident that this consideration is really more ontological than logical. The meaning of the judgment and the content of predicative being are essentially ontologically conditioned. An assertion is, in its core meaning, an assertion of being and intends something existing—even when logico-formal reflection looks away from this for its own purposes. The conformity of the judgment to ontological relations is not merely external. Otherwise, every creation of judgments would be an empty game of thought.

Thus, not only does no ontical dividing line between the *Dasein* and *Sosein* of entities result from the clarification of the relations between *Dasein*-judgments and *Sosein*-judgments, but there is not even such a line between types of judgment. Now, if we attend to the mysterious bond that conjoins logical form with “what is”—the same bond that even the now refuted argument made use of—a broader horizon is revealed. Since the judgments transition into one another, we might expect that in “being *qua* being” that which is asserted of them—*Dasein* and *Sosein*—must transition into one another as well. The question is then what sense it really makes to retain the distinction between *Dasein* and *Sosein*.

Section II: Ontically Positive Relation between *Dasein* and *Sosein*

Chapter 15: *Aufhebung* of Ontological Illusion

a) Ontological Misuse of the Category of Substance

Gnoseological and logical arguments belong to the *intentio obliqua*, and are ontologically suspect from the very beginning. Refutation of these arguments has shown that the inner source of the illusion that obscures the relation between *Sosein* and *Dasein* stems from them. Therefore, they first had to be dismantled. The ontological arguments are central for us of course, but the confusion that stems from them is minimal compared to the gnoseological illusion, and this confusion may be easily dissolved when the latter no longer contaminates our vision.

First, there is the argument from substantiality (Chapter 12a1). It conceives the relation between them as a belonging: *Dasein* is the substrate of the properties, and the latter constitute the *Sosein* of the thing. They are something [102] “in” *Dasein*, and the latter is not something “in” them. The two never merge into one another. They are heterogeneous factors in “what is.” The argument in favor of the disjunction between *Dasein* and *Sosein* follows from this.

Several errors are again contained here:

1. Heterogeneous factors may also permeate the unity of a single entity. Shape and color permeate one another in this way in the perception of things. They are heterogeneous and do not flow into one another, yet remain essentially related there. The relation between *Dasein* and *Sosein* could be similar to this.

2. We can of course conceive of *Sosein* as the counterpart to some substrate; it has the character of form, determinacy, and constitution. To relate this to a formless something as bearer is at least meaningful. In the domain of the thing-physical, the concept of “matter” has been coined for this. Everything that belongs to *Sosein* would then “adhere” to such a bearer.

Dasein is not a bearer at all, however. It has neither the character of matter nor that of a substrate. It is not something “that is” side by side another entity, or behind it, or under it. It is also not something “in” which something else could subsist. It is the mode of being of everything that is as a whole, no matter out of what the latter may be constituted. If “what is” actually consists of a substrate with properties attaching to it, then *Dasein* extends as mode of being to the properties just as much as it does to the substrate. The latter is no less something that exists than is the former.

In the argument there are thus two factors standing completely misaligned with one another and they are conflated—both of which are genuine ontical factors: ontological bearerhood and mode of being. Only an analysis of the category of substrate can succeed in clarifying the actual relation between them. That is a much more specific task that must be pursued later. Mode of being, on the other hand, is a fundamental concern of ontology as a whole. We cannot restrict it to a single one of many categories, all of which presuppose it in the same way.

As a mode of being, *Dasein* is divided into real and ideal in accord with the particular way of being in question, and it is conceivable that there are still more such modes of existence. It is obviously meaningless to understand ideality or reality as substrates of possible properties. Instead, they belong to the particular substrates that arise in both spheres of being in the same way as the properties borne by them.

3. One motivation for this confusion lies in the meaning of the word “*Dasein*.” Something in it resonates with the impression of what is material and tangible. But its meaning in everyday language fluctuates. We also speak of human “*Dasein*,” and in this meaning an undertone of substantiality resounds. The ontological meaning of the term is to be strictly distinguished from both of these. This can be achieved most easily when we [103] hold on to the parallel expression “existence” (“*Existenz*”). The tendency toward substantialization in it cannot be completely avoided either, however.

Another motivation lies in the inadequate distinction between “*Dasein*” and “existing entity.” An existing entity can of course also be a substrate; it can be the bearer of properties. We just forget that the properties are equally as much existing properties. Their existential character does not separate the substrate from them, but connects it to them.

b) The Alleged Indifference and Contingency of *Dasein*

The most significant of the ontological arguments for the disjunction between *Dasein* and *Sosein* is without a doubt the argument concerning their indifference (Chapter 12a2). To *Dasein*, it makes no difference whether *Sosein* turns out in one way or another, and to *Sosein* it makes no difference whether something like this exists or not. *Dasein* is not at all necessary in terms of essence—i.e., in terms of the essential components of *Sosein*. It is what is contingent and external to it. Some determinate *Sosein* is just as external and contingent to *Dasein*.

This argument is highly instructive. It deals not with this or that marginal prejudice, but with the foundation on which almost the entire ancient ontology

is constructed. When the foundation crumbles, the structure built on it collapses along with it.

1. The best way to begin here is from the end. In a certain sense of course, *Dasein* is contingent from the side of *Sosein*, namely, for a mode of observation that has already posited determinacy in opposition to existence. Here we always think of a sphere of pure *essentia* that we might also observe detached for itself. Then we have to accept two difficulties along with it. First, in terms of *essentia*, the accidental components of *Sosein* are just as contingent as *Dasein*. The boundary between necessary and contingent does not run between *Dasein* and *Sosein*, but straight through *Sosein* itself. As a result, the cogency of the argument disintegrates. Secondly, if we have already made *essentia* into ideal being, we have equally left existence to the real, and to it alone. Thus, we have simply displaced the opposition. It no longer plays itself out within one and the same entity, but between two spheres of being with different ways of being. The fact that the forms of ideal being reach down into the real and determine it (according to the theory) changes nothing.

2. It is evident from the fact that both are obviously given as factors in one and the same entity (most clearly apparent in the sphere of the real), that we have, in this way, failed to grasp the unique relation between *Dasein* and *Sosein*. If we view them, in contrast to the traditional view, in one real case—in one thing, in one event, in one person—then they are not contingent in relation to one another. They are incorporated into a single real context, by which is conditioned the fact that exactly one existing something [104] has *Dasein* and not some other, or, likewise, that exactly this existing entity here and now is constituted in just such a way. This context is that of real necessity.

3. The error that lies at the basis of all this is the confusion between essential necessity and real necessity. The first belongs to the ideal sphere of being, which is also why it is expressly defined as necessity of *essentia* or as the consequence of it. It is self-evident that the existence of an individual real case does not have essential necessity in this respect. It does not need to be contingent existence in general, on this account, and does not even need to be contingent to the *Sosein* of the real case at all. For a case otherwise constituted would not have been able, in the same real context, to achieve existence at all. Thus, existence is also joined with *Sosein* by means of necessity in the context of the sphere to which it belongs. It is just that it is not so conjoined by essential necessity in the sphere of the real, but by real necessity.

4. Now, if we look more deeply into the source of the error, we see that in the argument concerning contingency the modality of one sphere of being is unwittingly transferred to the other. The other sphere has its own modal relations and modal laws, however. This is the point of departure for a whole series of inves-

tigations that have to do with working out the laws of modality and their differences in the spheres of entities. The error of the old ontology presented here is not the only one that needs to be corrected. It provides only a kind of initial signpost indicating the domain in which the investigation can obtain decisive insights concerning the essence of “what is.”

c) The Meaning of Indifference and its *Aufhebung*

The supposed contingency of *Dasein* depends on the mistaken application of the difference between the spheres of ideality and reality to the relation between *Sosein* and *Dasein*; this much is clear. Since this contingency stands in strict parallel to the indifference about which the argument is really concerned, then it is to be expected that we are dealing with the same error when it comes to the latter.

1. It is of course true that in a certain way the *Sosein* of a thing may be understood to be indifferent to its *Dasein*. Then, however, we have right off assigned it to another sphere of being than that of existence. The indifference only exists when we understand *Sosein* as ideal being and *Dasein* as real being. The ideal subsistence of form—in the sense of pure, detached *essentia*—is in fact indifferent to reality and irreality. In that case we are dealing with another distinction, that between modes of being, ideality and reality. We are not dealing with the meaning of *Sosein* and *Dasein*.

Sosein as such is not ideal being, nor is *Dasein* as such real being. If this were so, the real could not have *Sosein*, and the ideal [105] could not have *Dasein* in its sphere. Indeed, we could not even say that *Sosein* and *Dasein* belonged to one and the same thing any more; they would not only be separated, but also entirely without relation. Even the most audacious arguments on behalf of their disjunction do not go this far, however.

2. It is instead the case that ideal being has its own *Sosein* and *Dasein*. The latter may be as weightless as you like; it nevertheless retains the meaning of subsistence in its sphere. Real being also has its own *Dasein* and *Sosein*. The latter might substantively coincide with a *Sosein* of the ideal sphere, but it is nonetheless *qua* real entity not identical with it. It has real *Dasein* itself in a real existing something, as has been shown.

3. The same thing may be looked at from another perspective. It is true that *Dasein* does not immediately become non-*Dasein* when its *Sosein* changes. Thus, in a certain sense *Dasein* is of course indifferent to *Sosein*. This indifference only subsists when *Dasein* means real being and *Sosein* indicates ideal being, which, for the reasons presented above, is out of the question.

It might be objected that unadorned real being—real *Dasein*—is in fact not altered when the mere constitution of the existing thing is changed, not even when we understand the constitution to be just as real. The expression “unadorned real being” meanwhile only obscures the situation. Where in the world is there an “unadorned” real being without any constitution? Its constitution belongs to its reality, it has the same real *Dasein* as the thing itself. We are not dealing with the offspring of some over-subtle abstraction, but with the real. If we set aside such games, if we take the real *Dasein* of a thing along with the equally as real *Sosein* belonging to it, then the situation is changed. We can no longer claim that *Dasein* does not change when *Sosein* changes. The *Dasein* of a determinate kind of thing very much changes with its properties. When all of the properties disappear and have made room for others, the *Dasein* of the thing has also disappeared. It has become the non-*Dasein* of that determinate thing.

Considered ontologically, this is not a secondary limit case. It is the all-pervasive mode of being of the real in general. It is nothing less than coming to be and passing away as such.

4. Nothing remains of the indifference of *Sosein* and *Dasein* to one another when we see both for what they are, namely, ontological factors of one and the same entity. Both always belong to the same sphere of being and share the same way of being. Real *Dasein* is always that of a real such-and-such, real *Sosein* always that of a real existing thing. The bond between them simply consists in the fact that the first is never the *Dasein* of an indeterminate or arbitrary thing, but always *Dasein* of a very determinate thing. Every illusion of indifference evaporates. Real *Sosein* is just as firmly bound to real *Dasein* as the latter is to the former. [106]

5. Precisely the same thing holds within the ideal sphere of being. In the ideal sphere, we are used to not attending to *Dasein*. But the ideal subsists just as much as the real. There is in the series of exponents the case a^0 , and this is its ideal being. Since a determinate numerical value corresponds to it, it also has ideal *Sosein*. An ideal existing thing is always an ideal such-and-such (and not an arbitrary one); and an ideal such-and-such is always an ideal existing thing. Thus, within ideal being as well, *Dasein* and *Sosein* are indissolubly connected, and any sort of indifference between them is illusory.

6. In sum, we can say that in each sphere of being *Sosein* and *Dasein* are indissolubly linked to one another. In each sphere they are joined by some form of necessity and never appear in isolation. This insight amounts to the *Aufhebung* [dialectical elimination] of the ontological illusion that again and again has led to the *chorismos* [separation] of ontological factors.

There is indifference between these aspects only with regard to different spheres of being. Ideal *Sosein* is indifferent to real *Dasein*. This indifference

has always been observed. Because we have always reserved *Dasein* for real being, and have understood *Sosein* as pure *essentia*, the illusion had to arise that both were contingent and external to one another. That was the mistake.

It is a very understandable mistake. Ideal existence is difficult to grasp. It belongs to the nature of *Sosein* that it is common to both spheres of being across a wide range of content. Furthermore, as soon as we try to grasp it purely conceptually, it seems to bear the stamp of ideality (essence). It is no wonder that we forgot its reality.

Chapter 16: The Error in the Modal Argument

a) Fallacious Arguments Concerning Possibility and Actuality

There is one more ontological argument on behalf of the disjunction between *Sosein* and *Dasein* that we must deal with. It concerns the widespread view that *Sosein* is merely possible being, and that *Dasein* is actual being. If we proceed on the assumption that everything is either possible or actual, but never both at once—in conformity with the Aristotelian tradition—then it follows that *Dasein* and *Sosein* can only exist separately, and indeed, that they even split the unity of an existing entity into a duality of two disconnected factors (Chapter 12a3).

This argument transforms the relation between *Sosein* and *Dasein* into an opposition between modalities. In order to assess this argument, we would have to engage in a whole modal analysis of possibility and actuality. This belongs in another context, however, and cannot be preempted here. In the meantime, a more general consideration will have to suffice. [107]

1. The best known version of this relation derives from the Leibnizian conception of world creation: in principle there are many possible worlds, and only one becomes actual. The possible worlds subsist side by side in God's understanding; God chooses the best from among them in order to actualize it. Each also possesses its *Sosein* without existence, and the latter receives its *Dasein* from a *principium convenientiae* [principle of consistency].—Kant also implied a similar relation in the refutation of the ontological proof for God's existence with his “100 possible talers,” which are not distinguishable from “100 actual talers” in terms of content, thus, they share *Sosein* with them, but lack *Dasein*.

2. In these examples, what does the difference between possible and actual mean? Is a genuine modal distinction intended at all? That is not a simple question to answer. We sense something else as well, namely, that we are not dealing

solely with a modal opposition. Leibniz's "possible worlds" in God's mind prior to the creation of the world are not something really possible at any rate; they lack their major condition of possibility, i.e., a principle of realization. Just as little are Kant's "100 possible talers" something really possible; in order to make their reality possible, a real process of becoming is needed, in this case, procurement or labor. Only through this process is their reality made possible. Thus, with what justification are the "worlds" in the former, the "100 talers" in the latter argument, designated as possible?

3. There can only be one answer to this question: they belong to another sphere which is not the sphere of real being; and in this other sphere there is a completely different kind of possibility, namely, one that is not bound to a long series of conditions. This kind of possibility consists in the fulfillment of one single condition, namely, internal non-contradiction. The imagined "100 talers" and, in the same way, the "worlds" imagined by the divinity, correspond to this condition—and indeed without any regard for the possibility of their realization. They are precisely entities belonging to another sphere, a sphere of what is merely thought. The reason why they lack *Dasein* is precisely because they have a merely conceptual existence.

b) Correction of the Error

It is not necessary to understand the sphere of the "possible," in this sense, as exclusively the sphere of what is thought. We can just as well put in its place the sphere of *essentia* or of ideal being. This applies directly to the Leibnizian example, for the *intellectus divinus* has for a long time been considered the realm of essences. At least nothing is changed if we regard it as ideal being in the Kantian example.

1. It becomes clear that in fact an opposition between modalities is not even intended here, but an opposition between spheres of being and their ways of being. Everything that was said above about the disastrous conflation of the distinction between *Dasein* and *Sosein* [108] with that between reality and ideality then applies here. The possible as merely ideal can not have real actuality; this is why it appears that such-and-such a thing could subsist even without *Dasein*. For we reserve *Dasein* for the real alone. Thus, two mistakes are piled on top of one another here, since ideal *Sosein* also has a kind of *Dasein* in its sphere.

2. Overall, we are dealing with the fact that three pairs of opposites of very different structure and dimension have been conflated with one another and made nearly synonymous: 1. the ontological factors *Dasein* and *Sosein*; 2. the ontological spheres of reality and ideality; and 3. the ontological modes of actuality

and possibility. The spurious argument that *Sosein* is merely possible being and that *Dasein* is actual being rests on this mistake. Making a clean distinction between the first two pairs of opposites already suffices to refute it, since if they are not equivalent the third is not even applicable here.

3. Over and above this, it can also be shown that the third pair of opposites cuts across the first two and overlaps with neither of them. There is a distinct type of real possibility that is far richer than essential possibility; and there is a distinct type of essential actuality that is far poorer than real actuality. However, there is likewise within the real an actuality of both *Sosein* and *Dasein*, possibility of both *Sosein* as well as *Dasein*, and moreover, they are not separate from one another, but always only interpenetrate one another. The same thing holds for essential possibility and essential actuality, and both always apply to ideal *Sosein* as well as ideal *Dasein*, never to one side alone.

4. A disjunction between possibility and actuality, such as the modal argument assumes, runs obliquely to the opposition between spheres: only essential possibility is indifferent here, and only in contrast to real actuality (not to essential actuality). This is unremarkable, however, for it already appears to be just as indifferent towards real possibility. The actual opposition that exists behind the modal relation is an opposition between whole spheres of being.

Metaphysical modal arguments from Aristotle (*Metaphysics* Θ) to the present have missed this point.

c) What is Instructive about the Mistaken Arguments

A far more extensive investigation into the ways and modes of being is required for a more precise demonstration of the above claims. The whole second volume of my ontology will be devoted to this investigation. For the time being, it is sufficient to keep the patently mistaken conflation between pairs of opposites in mind.

The whole series of arguments that attempt to make the exclusive disjunction between *Dasein* and *Sosein* seem plausible has collapsed. Now comes the task of defining the positive relation between these two ontological [109] factors. A few contributions have already been made to this end by the treatment of the mistaken arguments. Above all, it has been shown that the ontological errors may all be traced back to a single source, namely, to their mistaken incorporation of the opposition between real and ideal ontological spheres. This opposition appears to have a certain obtrusiveness in the tradition of ontology that allows to tacitly play a role everywhere behind the scenes. This is understandable when we consider that for centuries ontological thought has employed the im-

precisely grasped and heavily burdened metaphysical categories of *essentia* and *existentia*. We have to be on guard against this obtrusiveness, not by ignoring the opposition of spheres of course, but by clarifying it. The means for doing this will be found in modal analysis.

This opposition should be handled with great care. Nothing is more difficult than to understand the uniqueness of modes of being. Because they play a role in all relations and constitute the innermost aspect of “being *qua* being” in things, the most important explanatory factors lie in these modes of being.

However, if we take a step back and conjoin this conclusion with the consequences that resulted from the critical treatment of the reflective arguments concerning the disjunction, something more becomes obvious. The whole distinction between *Dasein* and *Sosein* becomes problematic. Just as the types of judgment are converted into one another—without alteration of their predicative ontological content—the ontological factors *Dasein* and *Sosein* also pass into one another in “being *qua* being” itself, and moreover, just as much without alteration of their ontological content. What remains appears to be nothing other than the opposition of spheres. This of course cannot be eliminated. It is wrongly transferred to the relation between *Dasein* and *Sosein*. Within a “single” sphere it has no place—*Dasein* is always the *Dasein* of such-and-such a thing within the same sphere. We have to seriously inquire into the status of this distinction between spheres within “being *qua* being” in general.

Chapter 17: Conjunctive and Disjunctive Opposition

a) The Concept of Ontically Neutral *Sosein*

The refutation of the indifference argument (Chapter 15b and c) has led us to an ontic connection between *Dasein* and *Sosein* that can be eliminated only through abstraction. This result became clear in the reorientation of our perspective from “being” to “beings,” in this case from “*Dasein*” to “existing” entities and from “*Sosein*” to “such-and-such” entities. This is not an external methodological artifice. It confirms in the most exact way what proved to be necessary from the very beginning (Chapter 1b and c), and corresponds to the original intention of ancient ontology.

In brief, we can express it this way: *Dasein* and *Sosein* are certainly distinct from one another, and their contrast within a single entity [110] is indisputable; but the “existing” entity and “such-and-such” an entity are not distinct, they are entirely one and the same entity. Its *Dasein* and its *Sosein* only constitute differ-

ent factors in it. If we remain strictly within one sphere of being, then this proposition presents no difficulties.

It first becomes equivocal when we do not keep the spheres cleanly apart. We say, for example, that a lawful regularity, such as that of the imaginary numbers, has no *Dasein*, but it surely must be “such-and-such.” By this we mean that it has no real *Dasein*. This is unobjectionable. We forget, however, that in its own sphere as an ideal entity it most definitely has its *Dasein*. Such a lawful regularity, which does not appear in any real entity (applies to no real thing), is not the *Sosein* of a real thing. Therefore, real *Dasein* does not even come into question.

Nonetheless, merely holding the spheres apart does not cut it either. There is a unique connection between them that in its own way plays a role in all ontological considerations. The traditional use of the term, which always understands “*Dasein*” as real “*Dasein*,” is indeed spurious, but not completely groundless. *Dasein* has some heft precisely in the real sphere. Likewise, it is not for no reason that “*Sosein*” is always understood with a certain indifference relative to ideality and reality. What is unique about *Sosein* is that it conjoins the two ontological spheres, and extends over both ways of being—not completely, to be sure, but over a wide range of objects.

Now we arrive at a new and essential aspect of the problem. Something remains of the indifference of *Sosein* even after our *Aufhebung* of the argument on behalf of indifference—this is not its indifference to *Dasein*, but to ideality and reality. In the roundness of a ball, it makes no difference whether we are dealing with a geometrical ball or a material one. Roundness in general and as such belongs both to the former and the latter. In this sense, we may speak completely unequivocally of “*Sosein* in general.” Or, since we are dealing with a kind of indeterminacy concerning the difference between ideality and reality here, perhaps it is more fitting to speak of “neutral *Sosein*.”

This concept of neutral *Sosein* takes up what is positive in the repudiated concept of indifference after all of the traditional errors in it have been removed. We should not take it too far. Generally speaking, neutrality is not evident in all *Sosein*. In the *Sosein* of imaginary numbers, for example, we would seek it in vain, for these entities only have ideal being. The substantive overlap of the ideal and real spheres of being is of course limited—perhaps in all directions. Only within the limits of their substantive overlap may we speak of the ontic neutrality of *Sosein*. Nevertheless, it has a certain significance, for [111] the sections of both spheres as given to us lie predominantly within these limits.

b) The Difference between Spheres as an Opposition between Modes of *Dasein*

The next implication is of unexpectedly broad significance. If *Sosein* is as such neutral to ideality and reality, then apparently the ontic weight of the opposition between spheres lies fully on the side of *Dasein*. Ideal and real being are distinguished through type and mode of *Dasein*.

It is this difference that has been emphasized in the now-conventional conceptual terminology, where *Dasein* is automatically understood as real *Dasein*. The emphasis is of course mistaken, but it nonetheless contains a kernel of truth. Real *Dasein* is the distinctly more weighty, condensed *Dasein*, as it were, existence in the narrower sense. The ontological weight of real *Dasein* gives all things in life and all situations their hardness, force, and power. In contrast, ideal *Dasein* is something weightless, hardly tangible, something only a detached, theoretical mode of thought reflects upon. The drama of everyday life is not touched by it.

This does not in any way justify making *Dasein* and reality synonymous. The neutrality of *Sosein* clearly corresponds to the dichotomy and oppositionality of modes of *Dasein*. The difference between *Dasein* and *Sosein* in this way again acquires greater significance than it would seem to have after the refutation of the division between them.

Then we have the following to consider. Weightless ideal *Dasein* is always certain to have neutral *Sosein*, for it must at least be ideal *Sosein* and as such have its existence in the ideal sphere of being. It may have real *Dasein* in addition, but does not need to have it. Here the indifference of the merely ideal such-and-such relative to real *Dasein* comes to the fore—the sole kind of indifference that has withstood the critique. Real *Dasein* only has neutral *Sosein* if it is itself more than neutral, that is, is real *Sosein*, i. e., when it is the *Sosein* of a real being. This is why we can know very well the *Sosein* of something without knowing about its real *Dasein*. In this case we know neutral *Sosein*.

This neutrality is not reciprocal. In this way it is different from the types of indifference that have been refuted. Real *Dasein*, for its part, is not neutral to *Sosein*. It necessarily has its *Sosein*, and this is of course real *Sosein*. It is precisely the *Dasein* of a real such-and-such. This does not mean that we already have to know about this *Sosein* in all its details when we know about its *Dasein*. The cognition of what is, on this point, is subject to another law than that of what is as such. The parallel may hold to the extent that in knowledge about *Dasein* at least something of *Sosein* is always [112] comprehended at the same time. Otherwise, we could not at all distinguish it from the *Dasein* of another thing.

Further, we may conclude that only *Sosein* as such—“mere” *Sosein*, so to speak—is neutral being. It is in *Dasein* that the spheres of being part company. The difference between them consists in their “way of being.” Their way of being depends on the mode of *Dasein*, not of *Sosein*. The opposition between ideality and reality is an opposition within *Dasein*. The substantive overlap of these spheres is the identity of *Sosein*. This identity—precisely as far as it goes—is the neutrality of *Sosein*.

In a word: *Sosein* conjoins the two spheres of “what is.” *Dasein* divides them. If we understand this formula with the added qualifications, then we may let it stand as a first approximation.

c) Conjunction of Ontological Factors and Disjunction of Ways of Being

The difference between the two pairs of opposites finally becomes apparent. The earlier specifications are not sufficient for they only indicate a difference between the oppositional structures without being able to positively determine it. The relation between *Dasein* and *Sosein* is not only not parallel to that of reality and ideality, it plays itself out in another ontic dimension. We may now make this more precise by putting the specifications struck upon above to work.

Dasein as such is not itself a way of being, but it is differentiated in terms of its way of being and is always *Dasein* in some determinate way of being. *Sosein* is substantive determination, and the latter admits of diverse ways of being. That is its neutrality. Reality and ideality are pure ways of being, however, and extend not only to *Dasein* but also to *Sosein*. Keeping this in mind, we can suggest two propositions:

1. The difference between *Dasein* and *Sosein* is the difference between way of being and ontological determination. This is because there is no neutral *Dasein*.

2. The difference between real and ideal being is the difference between ways of *Dasein* themselves. Since *Sosein* is neutral, the way of being consists in the mode of *Dasein*.

These propositions express a complex kind of fundamental ontic relation. After introducing the concept of neutral *Sosein*, the intersection of the two pairs of opposites in relation to one another becomes regular; in geometrical terms, they are perpendicular to one another. It is important to take care not to hypostatize the whole relation, however. It is valid only for the pure factors of being and ways of being, and is not applicable to a bearer. There is no neutral “such-and-such,” only neutral *Sosein*. There is also no real existent that is not also a real such-and-such. In every “entity,” the mode of being of *Dasein* is simultaneously simply the mode of being of *Sosein*. It always extends from *Dasein*

directly to *Sosein*. Thus, we must add another proposition to the first two [113] in order to understand them with the correct qualifications:

3. The *Sosein* of a determinate entity is never neutral *Sosein*; it is always either ideal or real *Sosein*, no different than its *Dasein*. The difference between real and ideal being is always *also* a difference between modes of *Sosein* among themselves. Each type of *Dasein* involves a *Sosein* for that particular sphere. The neutrality of *Sosein* only consists in disregarding determinate “entities;” its meaning is merely the substantive overlap of the spheres.

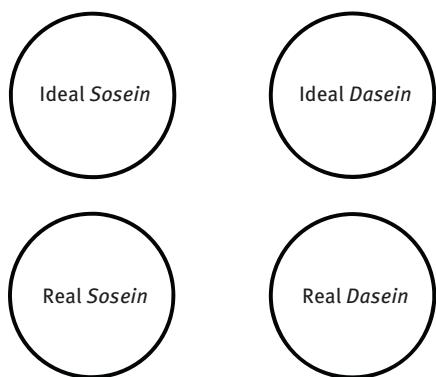


Figure 1.

The relative warrant in the concept of neutral *Sosein* as well as the meaning of propositions 1 and 2 becomes most clearly visible when we completely disregard the neutrality and juxtapose the four members of the paired relations of opposition to one another (Fig. 1). The ontological factors *Sosein* and *Dasein* are positioned horizontally, ideal and real being vertically.

In this dimensional layout, the difference between the horizontal and vertical oppositions strikes us immediately. The first reflects one of indissolubly bound factors, the latter one of alternatives; the horizontal forms a conjunctive relation, the vertical a disjunctive one. One has the form “both—and,” the other “either—or.” Accordingly, this dual principle results: The being of all beings—whether ideal or real—is both *Sosein* and *Dasein*; but the being of all beings—whether *Sosein* or *Dasein*—is either ideal or real.

If we understand this to be a definition of “being *qua* being” in general, and if its definition could generally only be provided from the inside out in terms of its differentiations and their relations, as was previously argued, then we may now say that “being *qua* being” is characterized by two heterogeneous relations that intersect perpendicularly to one another. One is the conjunctive relation of

ontological factors, the other the disjunctive relation of ways of being. The latter splits it into spheres of being, the former holds it together—perpendicular to the opposition of spheres. This interpenetration of conjunction and disjunction is the basic ontical schema in the structure of the world.

d) Analysis and Reduction of the Basic Schema

We need to assess this dual relation. There is no lack of more or less unclear exemplars for this assessment. They are unclear because the tacitly assumed evaluations at the basis of the theories [114] are nowhere explicitly developed. It must be said that for all their unclarity, however, something like a recognition of the basic ontical schema can be found in all theories.

In the ancient concept of *essentia*, ideal being and *Sosein* reflect off of one another. Where the universals are understood to exist *ante res*, the character of ideal being predominates; where they are understood as existing *in rebus*, the *Sosein*-character is considered determinant. We can understand how this unclarity could persist: the neutrality of *Sosein* fostered it. The error was just that neutrality was understood as ideality.

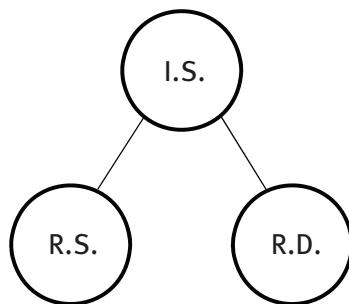


Figure 2.

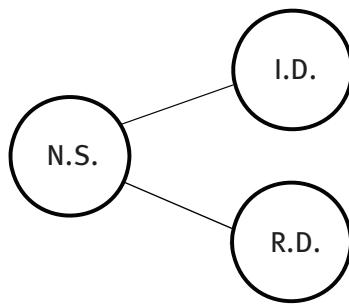


Figure 3.

Now, since ideal *Dasein* is hard to grasp and to the uneducated eye is hardly distinguishable from ideal *Sosein*, all theories have the tendency to ignore it. The difference between the ontological factors in the two pairs of the basic schema above is abandoned, and the overall relation becomes tripartite: a unitary ideal being (I.S.) is juxtaposed with real *Sosein* and with real *Dasein* (Fig. 2). The schema simplified in this way is obviously specious and cannot be maintained. It is either superfluous to accept a sphere of ideal being at all, since its own mode of being (I.D.) is negated (a consequence drawn by Aristotle); or the *Sosein* of the real world (R.S.) is amalgamated with ideality, and only *Dasein* (R.D.) remains left over at the level of the real. Then we get the now traditional identification of *Dasein* and reality, and the identification of *Sosein* with ideality, which has already been proven to be untenable. In both cases, the reduction leaves only two of the four members.

It is completely different when we begin the reduction in the vertical direction. The side of *Dasein* does not come into question here, since it is in *Dasein* where ideal and real being fundamentally differentiate themselves. In *Sosein* there is no difference in principle between them. It is fundamentally the same [115] in ideal as in real entities. This is what its neutrality consists in. Now, *Sosein* (N.S.) understood as a shared or neutral unity contrasts with both modes of *Dasein* “horizontally,” and in this duality the “vertical” (the sphere opposition) comes into its own.

This second kind of reduction evidently has a completely determinate objective warrant, even though it allows a relevant difference to fall by the wayside. First, it corresponds to a demonstrable primary phenomenon, the neutrality of *Sosein*—or, to express it in terms of content, the convergence of the spheres in their two-sided structural content. Secondly, it corresponds to the other just as demonstrable primary phenomenon, the divergence of *Dasein* in the spheres.

The schema reduced in this way thus fits exactly the two propositions formulated above (under c.). It is readily apparent just how the difference between ideal and real being is a difference in type of *Dasein*. It shows likewise that there is no neutral *Dasein*, and that the difference between *Dasein* and *Sosein* is a difference between way of being and ontological determination.

In this model we cannot simply take neutral *Sosein* up into the ideal sphere and thereby view ideal *Sosein* as superior to the real (as its genus), as has happened many times in theories of *essentia*. No difference between ways of being subsists in neutral *Sosein*; ontological determinacy as such is in fact the same in both spheres; it is actually neutral to ways of being. This in turn does not mean that it is indifferent to *Dasein* in general—without *Dasein* it would of course be non-existent determinacy, i.e., no determination. Neutrality concerns only the “type” of *Dasein*.

e) The Role of Neutral *Sosein* in the Controversy over Universals

It may be difficult to assess the philosophical significance of this conclusion at the moment. The purely ontological consequences do not appear that quickly, and we may easily become dubious about the epistemological value of such insights. Therefore, before we go further, we will refer to a few results that do not lie directly on our path, but which highlight what has been said.

The controversy over universals did not in principle deal with ideal being, but with *Sosein*. The term *essentia*, which we so readily understand as ideal essence, does not allow us to see this. We should consider the fact that the controversy dealt precisely with whether the universals subsisted *ante res* or *in rebus* or *post res (in mente)*. These possibilities do not fit with ideal being, but they do conform to neutral *Sosein*. Neutrality is related with a third apparently dependent sphere, that of *mens humana* [the human mind]; and since there could be more spheres than the [116] two independent spheres of being, it is not clear why the neutrality of *Sosein* could not extend to further spheres with dependent modes of being.

The *universalia ante res* [universals prior to things] may be understood without difficulty as ideal *Sosein*; the *universalia in rebus* [universals in things] are manifestly real *Sosein*. Nominalistically understood *universalia in mente* [universals in thought] represent *Sosein* in consciousness. If we take all of this together and consider that in all three cases the same substantive realm of universals was intended, and likewise that in all three cases existence correlatively remained a special ontological problem, then it is evident that the major object of controversy was in fact *Sosein* in its shimmering neutrality. Its shimmering is precisely the indeterminacy and ambiguity of its way of being.

Vivid proof for this lies in the fact that the entire *quidditas* can be taken into the *essentia* in the argument for the realism of universals—down to the individuality of the singular case (the *haecceity*). More proof stems from the fact that the same Duns Scotus who drew the conclusion just referred to, unified all three cases under one ontological theory; and he was not alone in this during this period. What sense would it make to assert something like this about merely ideal entities? That would mean that entities with a very specific mode of being would instead have three different ways of being! We might blame the masters of high scholasticism for many kinds of one-sidedness, but that they consciously championed something contradictory in itself no one can claim, which would be foreign to their logical (often pedantically formal) mode of approach. The puzzle is solved simply by understanding *essentia* in the sense of neutral *Sosein*. It is precisely a kind of neutrality that not only admits these three ways of being from the outset, but virtually comprehends them by its very nature.

What is classical about the great controversy over universals consists in the fact that it was an unavoidable struggle with an ontological ambiguity that actually exists in the *Sosein* of “what is.” It wrestled with this indisputably basic problem almost to the point of being able to solve it. But Modernity, with its gradual turning away from ontological issues, did not know how to appreciate the status of the problematic reached by earlier thinkers.

f) The Status of Phenomenological “Essences”

A second implication concerns quite current and familiar questions, but is more of an epistemological issue. What the phenomenological method of our day (as it engages with concrete cases) “brings before the brackets” as essence is not the genuine essence, but *Sosein*, and in the very form of neutral *Sosein*. In this way, it attends [117] only to the universal in *Sosein* and by so doing gives rise to the illusion that it is dealing with the ideal essence.

If it were ideal being that was directly accessed in the phenomenological reduction, it would be ontologically incomprehensible how it could be gotten from the real case through a bracketing of *Dasein*. We can get nothing from a real thing other than its real *Sosein* and its real *Dasein*. If it were real *Sosein* that was singled out in it, then it would be incomprehensible how we observe in its purity an independent and, as it were, free floating entity behind it and extract laws from it by this observation. This obviously does not involve real *Sosein*.

It does of course involve neutral *Sosein*. This is what gets singled out, and not ideal being. This is evident in other respects as well. The essence of the thing can only be one, but the phenomenon can appear in various ways since it is not identical to the thing, and it is subject to the subjective factors that are hidden in the mode of observation. It can also turn out such that the essence appears to be distorted in it. Nevertheless, we can bring something of the phenomenon, precisely as such, before the brackets: its *Sosein*. The latter can be other than the *Sosein* of the thing itself. It is precisely only the *Sosein* of the phenomenon. What remains, then, is not reality, but the *Dasein* co-given in the phenomenon itself.

If it were merely a phenomenal *Sosein* that was obtained in this way, then we would not be able to get much out of the whole method, and we could save ourselves the trouble. But this is not the situation. Instead, the *Sosein* that is singled out may be understood to be neutral, i.e., such that in the thing itself there could be real *Sosein* and, beyond this, raised into the genuine sphere of essence, ideal *Sosein*. The question whether it is so understood depends on another sort of examination, and we ought not hide the fact that the pure phenomenological

method, as long as it operates without being supplemented by other methods, comes up short. As stimulus for further investigation it is warranted and even unavoidable, however, because all givenness has the “phenomenal” form.

Neutral *Sosein* is not the sort of thing that can be transferred at will from one sphere into the other without hesitation, based on the assumption of a total substantive identity of the spheres guaranteed at the outset. This is not how it stands with the ideal and real spheres—for which this identity is already limited—not to mention with the sphere of subject-relative phenomena in their relation to both. Strictly speaking, we may only speak of an identity of neutral *Sosein* where it is already the case that phenomenon and thing substantively coincide. In this case we may then of course say that ideal *Sosein* is grasped through the reduction at least indirectly. This cannot be universally presupposed for phenomena of every sort, and [118] ideal *Sosein* can never be identified in a single phenomenon in isolation. If we include a broader context of phenomena in relation to which many “deceptions regarding essence” may be excluded, then we transition to a procedure of another kind in which the substantive variance of the spheres is graspable. In fact, only now do we get closer to “what is.”

This explains why phenomenology as such is not ontology and why it cannot become ontology given its starting point. It deals in principle with the *Sosein* of phenomena and can in no way get beyond it. Doing so first of all requires—in conjunction with it, and at the same time in opposition to it—a method that turns our gaze away from phenomena and beyond them toward “being *qua* being.”

Section III: The Inner Relation between Ontological Factors

Chapter 18: The *Dasein* in *Sosein* and the *Sosein* in *Dasein*

a) Connectivity and Reality in the Relation of Ontological Factors

Clarifying the situation with regard to the relation between both pairs of opposites—the opposition between ontological factors and the opposition between ways of being—still does not amount to a final clarification of the relation between *Sosein* and *Dasein* by any means. This may have already been understood from our discussion of the logical convertibility of judgments of *Sosein* and judgments of *Dasein* into one another. The concept of “neutral *Sosein*,” whose warrant is of course only relative, can easily even be misleading insofar as it creates the impression that there may be a neutral sphere among the ontological spheres in which there would be pure *Sosein* without *Dasein*. Only the substantive convergence of the spheres is ontically actual here, a convergence that in no way cancels their disparity. The propositions “no *Sosein* without *Dasein*, no *Dasein* without *Sosein*” remain in force for each of the spheres.

Both of these principles express the conjunctivity of ontological factors. Since the difference between ontological spheres is rooted in the difference between modes of *Dasein*, the first of the two principles also expresses the ontic cleavage in the nature of *Sosein*. There is no neutral *Dasein*. The disjunctive character of the opposition between ways of being is based on the conjunctive character of the contrast between ontological factors.

How is the conjunctive relation between *Sosein* and *Dasein* constituted, however? We look around for an analogy, and a multiplicity of contrastive relations are on offer. None of them fit the situation we are trying to describe. In the opposition “mountain and valley,” for instance, there is also a connection [119] between the factors. It degenerates into complete relativity, however. In a wavy line we only need to change the direction of observation and the wave peaks appear to be wave troughs. In the opposition between form and matter there is another kind of connectedness, but a specific kind of relativity belongs to it too. Every bearer of form may itself already contain formation of a lower kind, and everything formed can again become bearer of a higher formation. This is a familiar relation in the structure of the real world. The consequence is that everything that was taken to be absolute matter—if it did not remain an abstract concept—dissolved again into form, and everything that was taken to be pure form proved itself to be the matter of another formation.

The question is whether a similar relativity exists in the relation between the *Sosein* and *Dasein* of entities in general. We should not expect that it will be of exactly the same kind. Logical analysis has shown, however, that the relation is open to a relativization that does not contradict its oppositional character.

If the two propositions above already no longer concern neutral *Sosein*, then only the last formulation of the question signifies a relation in which the isolation of one ontological factor from the other is erroneous. We may later decide what basis it has in observation. For the time being, we are not dealing with observational perspectives, but rather with the disregard for them. We suspect that the ontic difference between *Dasein* and *Sosein* itself has only been termed an “opposition” due to a specific kind of observation.

b) Primary Consciousness of the World: Language and Logical Form

It is not just theories that project their perspective onto the entities they observe; the naïve consciousness of the world does it too. Above all, it thinks of entities in terms of things; relations, motions, and processes already count for it as existing less. It does not remain fixed at this stage, but something characterizing this point of departure holds back its progress. It substantializes things and ascribes *Dasein* to them as substances. It generally ascribes no *Dasein* to their properties, alterations, and relations. It understands these to be something ontically secondary, predicates them “of” substances, and encapsulates them in terms of the “how” or “what” of things. Naïve consciousness does not say what being a “thing” as such means, and the things themselves are for it *subjectum* [that which lies beneath]—the “substantive” entity to which everything else is attributed, but which is itself attributed to nothing else.

There is no doubt that this is one way of looking at it. There is also no doubt that the currency of the opposition between *Dasein* and *Sosein* stems from it. Obviously, this perspective cannot even be maintained in everyday life. Is the stream, the cloud, or the forest a “thing”? Is only the water the substance, or also the wave, the drifting foam? Is the group of trees a thing [120] or only a property of the forest? Is the bark of a tree a *Sosein* of the tree, or does it have a *Dasein*? Language indiscriminately substantializes everything of which it speaks. And what cannot be spoken about? It also says, of everything expressible and attributable, just as indiscriminately, “that” it is. In this it makes no distinction between the substantial and the insubstantial. The assertion of *Dasein* is contained in the “that.”

Language advances along with the development of consciousness of the world. In its linguistic forms, however, it retains ties to its own origins. Human-

kind has known for a long time that attributed (adjectival) being is also *Dasein*, and no longer distinguishes it from thingly (substantive) being. Indeed, human beings know that the latter is also always a *Sosein* of something; the tree in its place is a *Sosein* of the forest, the leaf in its place is a *Sosein* of the tree. However, once it is coined we retain the linguistic and conceptual form, and we grammatically canonize the opposition between *substantiva* and *adjectiva* and carry it along into our developed consciousness of the world as the division between ontological factors, for which it is no longer fitting.

Ultimately, logical theory comes along. It is empowered by the linguistic forms that have been coined, maintains that they are likewise conceptual forms, and finally canonizes them in types of judgments and concepts. This has nothing to do with the world. Its orientation toward “what is” is limited to the ontological content of propositions, predicative being. It discovers the “that”-claim to be its own kind next to the “what”-claim, and finds the linguistic form of both to be strictly separated. It does not analyze the proposition with a view to the ontological content that lies beyond it. Then the *Dasein*-judgments and *Sosein*-judgments abruptly come to rest side by side.

c) Substantive Relativity of “That” and “What”

These considerations by themselves already indicate that the opposition between ontological factors is ontologically untenable. *Dasein* is of course not the substance of *Sosein*, but the substantialization of the “existing entity” leads to its natural separation from *Sosein* as from its attributes. In the same way, the adjectivization of *Sosein* has fostered its natural separation from *Dasein*. How is it that, as it now seems, the way of being—and with it *Dasein* generally—is indifferent to the distinction between substantive and adjectival being?

The logical conclusion is that it results from the relativization of “that” and “what” to one another.

We cannot see this in the concept of “constitution,” which always stands out with reference to *Sosein*. The adjectival aspect of it is too one-sidedly emphasized. We can readily see it in the “what” or “how,” however. Way of being is ultimately still a determination of “what is” as well. Way of being is a matter of *Dasein*, however. Indeed, even in the mere opposition between being and non-being this conception is not lacking. Yet [121] the traditional table of judgments calls this opposition that of “quality.” Without it *Dasein* would not even be expressible, and the existential judgment would be ontologically meaningless.

It is the same with the “that.” The determination of a thing is ultimately also a “that” and is linguistically composed of “that”-statements. It is the same “that”

whether I say “that” the thing is this way or that, or if I say “that” it is. Thus, the way of being is contained in *Sosein* as well, no less than determination is contained in *Dasein*. In all determination we are dealing with the being of determination, and in all being we are dealing with the determination of a way of being.

A correlation between *Dasein* and *Sosein* exists and with it a certain kind of opposition. It does not allow any kind of limit to be drawn between them, however. All that remains is an opposition of direction. We may very well draw a boundary artificially—as happens in the naïve consciousness of things, and no less in the logical distinction among types of judgment—but such a boundary does not hold up. It shifts with the inception of ontological reflection and finally completely dissolves.

The convertibility of *Dasein*-judgments and *Sosein*-judgments into one another, which was discussed above (Chapter 14b-d), is based on this. “S is” may not only be resolved into “S is existing,” or in a specific case into “S is real,” but it is plainly identical with it. At least this is the case when, in light of the ontological content, we do not make a mistake by misinterpreting the logical form. “S is P” may not only be interpreted as “P is there in S” or as “P is present (is existing, is real) in S,” but is plainly identical with it.

The latter identity may well be proven by the Aristotelian *Analytic*. Aristotle’s fixed expression for predicative being is *ὑπάρχειν* (*τὸ B ὑπάρχει τῷ A*) [to belong to (B belongs to A)] which can only be inexactly reproduced by “attributed to.” The sense of “being at its disposal,” being present, and “there is” is contained in it (there is B in A). The same term *ὑπάρχειν* appears in the *Analytic* also in the bare meaning of “being there,” being given, to exist.

d) Particular Conversions of Judgments and their Ontological Meaning

The ontological content of judgments is far more constant than their logical form. We may grasp the existential meaning of “S is P” in other ways than in terms of the *Dasein* of P in S. The categorial form of judgment also says that the whole relation “S is P” is there, is an existing one. This form of judgment announces the conjunction (synthesis) that it expresses as an existing one. We see this most clearly when we contrast it with the hypothetical form of judgment, in which the predicative being of the *apodosis* [logical consequent] is expressed only as conditioned. In the *modus ponens* of the hypothetical argument the minor premise cancels the conditionedness, in that it [122] categorically expresses the condition as fulfilled (existent). The *conclusio* posits the being of the *apodosis* just as categorically.

In this connection, the “that”-meaning in the *Sosein* of something (in the P-being of S) comes forth quite clearly. That the orbit of the Earth *realiter* is elliptical means, in terms of its ontological content, that the elliptical orbit is real in the Earth’s motion. But it is not expressed this way; for the form of judgment shifts the emphasis to the side of *Sosein*. It conceals the being of *Sosein*, but it does not conceal the being of the whole relation. The latter is contained in the categorical (unconditioned) character of the “is.”

We can find this “that”-meaning in the *Sosein* of something in any judgment whatever. The *Sosein* of an existing thing says nothing other than “that” something determinate “is there” “in” something determinate. “The tree is a living thing” says nothing other than “that” life “is” in the tree. “Living beings are mortal” says “that” death is something that actually overcomes them.

The following examples appear to be more linguistically flexible. “Some plants are not green”—“There are some plants that are not green.” Or: “No human being does evil for the sake of doing evil”—“There are no humans who....” Here the second type of conversion is clearly present; the whole relation “S is P” is absent, in no case is there S. In these examples the linguistic flexibility is based on the negative character of the judgment (o- and e-judgment). Logically this plays no role, however. With linguistically pliable content the conversion into a-judgments also becomes flexible. “Every seventh day is Sunday”—“Every seven days there is a Sunday.”

The ontological meaning of these conversions is a very simple one. What is essential is not the convertibility of the judgments, but the unlimited exchangeability of the *Dasein*-assertions, with the predicative ontological content remaining clearly intact.

“Relativity” of ontological factors is apparently not a very fitting expression for this situation. Just as unsatisfactory is the image of the limit melting away and leaving the distinction behind. The essence of the matter is rather that in *Sosein* itself and as such a *Dasein*-character is hidden, and in *Dasein* itself a *Sosein*-character is present. This must now also be directly demonstrable without regard to judgments about “being *qua* being.”

Chapter 19: Identity and Divergence between Ontological Factors

a) The Progressively Offset Identity of *Dasein* and *Sosein* in the Total Ontological Context

The thesis in which all of this is encapsulated may be formulated this way: every *Sosein* of something “is” itself also the *Dasein* of something, and every *Dasein* [123] of something “is” also the *Sosein* of something. It is just that the “something” is here not one and the same thing.

The *Dasein* of the tree in its place “is” itself a *Sosein* of the forest, and the forest would be different without it; the *Dasein* of the branch of the tree “is” a *Sosein* of the tree; the *Dasein* of the leaf on the branch “is” a *Sosein* of the branch; the *Dasein* of the vein in the leaf “is” a *Sosein* of the leaf. This series may be extended in both directions; *Dasein* of the one is always at the same time *Sosein* of another. The converse is also possible: the *Sosein* of the leaf “is” the *Dasein* of the vein, the *Sosein* of the branch is the *Dasein* of the leaf, and so forth. We shall not find anything to object to in the fact that it is always only a fragment of *Sosein* that subsists in the *Dasein* of something else. We are not dealing with the completeness of *Sosein*. We might say that the remaining fragments of *Sosein* also subsist in the same manner in the *Dasein* of always more and more things.

If we only look at an isolated piece of what is, then *Sosein* and *Dasein* are separated in it. If we keep the whole ontological context in view, then the *Sosein* of one is also already the *Dasein* of another—and in a definite serial order. In this way, the relation between *Sosein* and *Dasein* in the whole world approximates an identity. Since this identity deals with a progressive offsetting of the content, we may call it a progressively offset identity.

Pure qualities that do not have the character of parts of wholes are no exception to this. Only the usual modes of expression, which separate adjectival being as “mere” *Sosein* from the supposedly substantial, obscure this insight. In fact, the colors of things, their hardness, elasticity, shape, movement or change also have a *Dasein* to them in the same sense. *Dasein* is not a prerogative of substances. “There are” properties of substantial things in exactly the same sense as there are substances. Linguistic usage is determined by the substantialist interpretation of things. “Being *qua* being” is not reducible to this interpretation, however. This relation is independent of which of the so-called qualities have genuine reality. Those which do not have it, those which subsist only for a certain mode of interpretation or perspective, also do not come into consideration as such in the real sphere. If, e.g., colors are not physical properties, then nat-

urally they also have no real existence. Then, however, they are also not a real *Sosein* of things.

Expressed in terms of scholastic concepts, this result means that *existentia* is itself also *essentia*, and *essentia* itself is also *existentia*. This is a slap in the face to the ancient interpretation. It is necessary to reeducate ourselves precisely on this point. The error was that *essentia* was isolated and reserved for the ideal sphere, but *existentia* was reserved for the real. It was just as mistaken to take both in isolation as aspects of an individuated [124] entity (*ens*). There are *entia* [beings] only in an ontological context. In it, the existentiality of the one is always the *essentia* of the other, and conversely.

The second of the two propositions—*essentia* is itself also *existentia*—does not at all assert that we should reason that a thing exists due to its essence in the manner of the “ontological argument,” even if it were very much *id quo majus nihil cogitari potest* [that than which nothing greater can be thought]. Instead, only the existence of another thing would follow, and even then, only when it was already certain that the essence in question is the essence of an existing thing. This is the case neither in the ontological argument nor in any argument analogously constructed.

b) *Sosein* as *Dasein* of Something “in” Something

At this point, we have to look more deeply into a formal difficulty than was possible in the discussion of judgments—into the difficulty in the relation between *Dasein* as such and “*Dasein* in something.” The latter is the particular form of *Dasein* of all *Sosein*, while the former is apparently the primary ontic form of *Dasein*. That is to say, it is at least regarded as such. It does not suffice merely to recognize the opposition between the substantial and accidental (attributive, accidental, adjectival) in it and take this to be ontically irrelevant. *Dasein* is not the substance—neither is it the substrate (bearer)—of *Sosein*. There are two other considerations here that are decisive.

1. The character of *Dasein* is not in any way ambiguous when it is only there “in” something else, rather than free floating. Its being-on or being-in something changes nothing at all about existence as such. It is only relevant for the ontical obverse side of *Dasein*, i. e., because it simultaneously constitutes the *Sosein* of something else. The difference between free floating existence (if there is such a thing) and adherent existence is of course ontological, but it is a difference in *Sosein*, not in *Dasein*. It is proof of the degree to which the natural attitude is a purely content-oriented one—directed to *Sosein*—that everyone in the natural attitude feels the difference to be essential, but accepts *Dasein* with unnoticed

self-evidence and as reducible without remainder into the *Sosein* of the larger ontological context. It does not occur to anyone in everyday life to see the individual existence of an entity in as completely isolated a way as would be necessary to single out bare *Dasein* as such.

Here we see proof that the isolation by means of which the difference between *Dasein* and *Sosein* is construed as an opposition is brought in retrospectively, generated by the substantialist mode of interpretation and reified by theory. The formal-logical technics of existential propositions [125] bears the chief blame for this reification. It ignores the real context in principle. The context is ontically always there, however. It is the context in which the *Dasein* of one thing can always be seen to be the *Sosein* of another.

2. In the existential judgment, bare *Dasein* is reached through abstraction from all ontological relations—the relations on which, in which, through which, etc.—thus, by abstraction from everything on the basis of which the *Dasein* asserted subsists. This is logically possible because the ontological relations are in fact logically indifferent. Moreover, this logical indifference is not something absolutely nonsensical, but rests on the ontic peculiarity of *Dasein*. It is possible by virtue of the fact that the ontological relations on which it rests are not substantively entailed in the existence of something. They lie beyond its substantive domain, in a context whose *Dasein* is not identical with the *Dasein* of something specific.

The existence of something of course stands or falls with the relations that bear it. If it existed free floating without the relations, however, then it would still be no less the same existence of the same something. It makes good logical sense to abstract from the relations. The error only arises when we portray this abstraction as ontical isolation. This happens as soon as we deduce a unique form of *Dasein* from the form of the existential judgment. This error becomes egregious when we subsequently ontically isolate this form of the *Dasein* of “what is” and make it into the genuine and only basic type of *Dasein*, as in the ancient ontological theories. In this way, the supporting ontological relations are taken to be inessential or even as not existing at all. Then it is only a small step to the thesis of neo-Kantianism that the relations in general are of a subjective origin and are first brought to the objects by the mode of interpretation.

In contrast, we must hold that the relations are by nature not only essential ontologically, but always constitute the supporting nexus of all individual existence. They have the same existence as the substantial individual.

Everything existing has its “on which,” “in which,” and “through which,” and these relations are themselves existing in the same sense. In existence, determinations and properties do not distinguish themselves from their bearer, whether it be an actual substantial one or something only apparently substan-

tial. That is to say, just as the properties are only something “in” a thing (or something in general), so too are the things themselves only something “on” or “in” a thing-context “in” world events, “in” the world. However, they belong to the *Sosein* of the world as such an “on which” and “in which.” Things, and everything that appears just as substantial as they are, have no prerogative of *Dasein* in comparison to the contextual relations in which they stand. [126]

c) Scope of the Identity between *Sosein* and *Dasein*

Just as properties “are” only “in” something existing, so too “is” the existing entity only “at” and “in” an existing context. The latter is itself an existing entity. *Dasein* is not the bearer of *Sosein*, but the way of being of its *Sosein* and of its bearer. The *Dasein* of an existing entity is the same *Dasein* as that of its determinations, and so the same as that of its *Sosein*. It is indeed the *Dasein* of another something—of an entity in it—but the *Dasein* itself, understood purely as mode of being, is the same.

Therefore, the proposition that every *Sosein* of something may be understood as the *Dasein* of something else is justified. For every *Sosein* “is” the *Dasein* of something in something. Whether this proposition may also be reversed, whether it may be stated analogously in just as unlimited a universality for *Dasein* as well, has not yet been investigated. For this we have to bring in a wider variety of examples.

That Socrates lived (existed) means not that he was isolated there for himself next to the world, but that, more meaningfully, he was there “in” it. His existence is a *Sosein* of the world. Who could misunderstand the fact that the world really would be different without his life in it?

The converse also holds. For example, that the course of world events is lawfully determined means ontologically that “there is” a lawful determination in the course of world events. The *Sosein* of world events proves to be the *Dasein* of the lawfulness “in” it. In the first example, the *Dasein* of something “in” the world turns out to be a *Sosein* of the world; in the second a *Sosein* of the world turns out to be the *Dasein* of something in it. Thus, to that extent, the relation of identity “in the whole” may very well be a reciprocal one.

A categorial example leads us deeper into the central issue. Kant thought that in the causal nexus we are dealing with the “*Dasein*” of something. This certainly cannot be disputed, but it is still only half the truth. A determinate effect does not only depend on the *Dasein* of the cause, but just as much on its *Sosein*. Likewise, the *Sosein* of the effect depends on the cause just as much as its *Dasein*. The effect is there because the cause is there; but the effect is no less

“such as it is” because the cause is “such as it is.” Unequal causes—unequal effects.

Obviously, there is no cause of the mere *Dasein* of something that would not at the same time be the cause of its *Sosein*. The reason for this lies in the relation of progressively offset identity identified above: the *Sosein* of the cause is itself something in it as an existing entity; the same thing goes for the *Sosein* of the effect. And vice versa: the *Dasein* of the cause in a determinate stage of events is itself a *Sosein* of this stage; likewise, the *Dasein* of the effect (its occurrence) in a determinate stage of world events is itself a *Sosein* of this stage. Moreover, both together quite essentially constitute the *Sosein* of world events. [127]

Generally speaking, we have to say that there are not two separate causes for the *Dasein* and for the *Sosein* of something; and there are no separate effects for *Sosein* and effects of *Dasein*. This is not because two kinds of causation and effectuation run parallel to one another, but because the one is itself at the same time the other, i. e., because there is in the causal nexus overall a single effecting and being-effected, which just as much conjoins *Sosein* with *Sosein* as it does *Dasein* with *Dasein*. The apparently twofold causation is really a single self-identical process.

How could it be otherwise, since individual occurrences do not take place in isolation, but always belong to a total event and may only be separated from it by abstraction? The *Dasein* of every particular cause is itself a *Sosein* of the greater causal complex, and the *Dasein* of every effect is itself a *Sosein* of the greater total effect. The more our view is oriented toward the breadth of the ontological context, the more evident it becomes that—in the causal fabric of the world—the offset identity of *Dasein* and *Sosein* is a universal ontological law.

d) The Ontic Limit of Identity

Philosophical experience shows that identity theses, when they are not merely empty tautologies, always have their limits of validity. If we do not identify this limit then the thesis becomes fallacious. Where is the ontic limit of identity between *Dasein* and *Sosein*?

The fact that *Dasein* and *Sosein* are something completely distinct in an isolated individual entity, even on a substantialist account of them, obviously constitutes no such limit. Isolation is abstraction, and a limit to identity such as we might find in it would not be an ontical limit. It would also not contradict the universal ontological law as it has been formulated. It does not claim that the *Sosein* of something is at the same time its own *Dasein*, and vice versa. It claims

only that the *Sosein* of something is at the same time the *Dasein* of another and the *Dasein* of something is at the same time the *Sosein* of another.

It is important to spell this out. We have a similar arrangement in all serial relations. It is this way, e.g., in the causal series. The cause of A is not at the same time the effect of A. It is, in general, at the same time an effect, i.e., the effect of another cause. The causal nexus does not consist of two kinds of series, one made up of causes and one of effects, but only a single series in which everything is at the same time cause and effect. It is a progressively offset identity just like that of *Dasein* and *Sosein*.

In this example it becomes clear where the limit of identity in such a series is to be sought. It is to be sought where the series itself has its limit, namely, in the first member. The claim that everything is at the same time cause and effect is only valid when the series proceeds *in infinitum* and [128] so has its own metaphysical complexity. If it has a first member, however, then it is only a cause, not an effect. The cosmological causal antinomy begins with this dilemma.

We also run into this serial character in the relation between *Dasein* and *Sosein*. Recall the example where the *Dasein* of the tree is the *Sosein* of the forest, the *Dasein* of the branch is the *Sosein* of the tree, the *Dasein* of the leaf is the *Sosein* of the branch, the *Dasein* of the vein is the *Sosein* of the leaf. The question just how far this series may be extended downwards may be set aside, and a specifiable limit cannot be drawn. We do come across a limit when we follow it further upwards. The *Dasein* of the forest is also a *Sosein* of the landscape, the *Dasein* of the landscape a *Sosein* of the Earth, the *Dasein* of the Earth a *Sosein* of the solar system. This progression of the series runs into a final member, the cosmos as a whole. We can no longer say of this whole that its *Dasein* is the *Sosein* of something else.

The “external” nature of the example—the fact that the whole series moves in the domain of things—should not mislead us regarding the essentiality of the ontic relation. Examples from the spiritual world show exactly the same aspect. The ultimate element to which something can adhere as its *Sosein* is always the sum total of what is in general, the world as a whole. This is evident even without attending to the series-character and skipping over all of the intermediate members. Take, for instance, the Socrates example: that there was a Socrates is a *Sosein* of the world. That there is a world is no longer the *Sosein* of something. The world would be different without Socrates, but what is there that would be different without the world? Apparently nothing.

e) The Different Directions of Offset Identity

Now, if we want to engage in metaphysical shenanigans, then we can perhaps even substantialize “the Nothing” and say that the Nothing would be otherwise if it were not restricted by the sum total of Something—the world. First of all, nothing is achieved this way since the aporia likewise skips over the Nothing itself. It is indeed not an aporia regarding the world, but an aporia regarding the ultimate member, and the ultimate member is then the Nothing. Secondly, we are not engaging in a speculative game, but are dealing with an ontological law. In this case we would do well to remain on the soil of “what is.”

The proposition “all *Sosein* is the *Dasein* of something” is not convertible. Not, at least, in strict universality. We cannot say that “all *Dasein* is the *Sosein* of something” with the same warrant. The *Dasein* of the whole is an exception to this. It is also clear why it is an exception: the whole is the sum total of everything that is, and nothing aside from it exists of which it would itself be a *Sosein*.

In general, then, its convertibility is valid only “within” the world. Of course, this is not nothing, but it is a limited universality. Since [129] every particular *Dasein* is substantively contained in the *Dasein* of the world—in the extreme case, i.e., since a particular *Dasein* stands or falls with the *Dasein* of the world, then this limiting and extreme case is revealed to be ontologically substantial. Its significance extends indirectly to all particular *Dasein*. The result is that something still remains of the opposition of ontological factors that is not reducible to the offset identity.

This can be presented as a difference of direction between *Dasein* and *Sosein* in the serial relation. When the *Dasein* of B is the *Sosein* of A, this does not make it the case that the *Dasein* of A is a *Sosein* of B, but the *Sosein* of a third thing. This direction in the offsetting of ontological factors is unilateral and irreversible. This is the reason why the ontological factors appear to be separate and heterogeneous in existing individual entities, are even oppositional down to the level of their logical form. The separation is an illusion, of course. However, their heterogeneity is not merely an illusion. Even their thoroughgoing identity is only a partial factor in the total relation. There is a surplus remainder on the side of *Dasein*. It is this that extends from the whole to the individual and is not reducible to determination in any case.

This is corroborated by the fact that the ways of being are tied to *Dasein*. Way of being is the fundamental ontic factor in everything that is.

Chapter 20: The Outcome and its Consequences

a) Summary of the Results

What remains of the traditional opposition between *essentia* and *existentia*? It has not disappeared. It has been shown that something different, and something far more differentiated is embedded in it, however. Neither the relation between form and matter nor that between possibility and actuality describe it. Instead, it has been shown that “being *qua* being” cuts across both of these pairs of opposites, both of which are latent in the relation between *essentia* and *existentia*.

1. Thus, a four-dimensional relation exists in which the difference between ways of being stands perpendicular to that of the ontological factors (Fig. 1). In it, the difference between ways of being lies in the ontological factor of *Dasein*. In contrast, *Sosein* substantively converges in the spheres. Viewed on its own it is neutral.

2. The difference between *Sosein* and *Dasein* is preserved undiminished in this relation, but it subsists as an opposition only in the individual entity and at the level of the whole of the world. In the ontological context of the world, it tends toward thoroughgoing identity, in which all *Sosein* is itself also *Dasein* and all *Dasein* is itself also *Sosein*. This identity of ontological factors only subsists by virtue of their difference in their ontological relationship, and their difference only subsists due to their identity in their ontological relationship. In different [130] entities they are identical in terms of a determinate serial order, in an identical entity they are irreducibly different.

3. Thus, their difference as “relative” stands to rights. But this does not mean two kinds of being for one entity. *Dasein* and *Sosein* remain, as way of being and ontological determination, in opposition to one another, even in their conjunction; their identity is not tautological, but synthetic identity, it is rooted in the structure of the ontological context. In the same way, they remain tightly bound to one another even in their oppositionality; one can never say of something that is (in whatever sphere) that it only has *Dasein* or only *Sosein*, it always has both. Their connection to one another does not coincide with their identity. It subsists not only in different entities, but also in one and the same entity.

4. The “disjunctive” opposition of ways of being is a completely different kind, and should be contrasted with this “conjunctive” opposition of ontological factors. Its mixture with the latter was the major error of the old ontology and has burdened theories of *essentia* with all the traditional unclarities. Ideal and real being are neither bound to one another, nor is there something in them by means of which they would be rendered identical. The actual bond that subsists between the spheres is a purely substantive one; it rests on the commonality

of *Sosein*, on its “neutrality,” but even this is not uniform. The bond also does not lie in the nature of their way of being, but in the nature of the substantive content, and its limitation in the world is substantive limitation.

5. The commonality of ideal and real *Sosein* is therefore just its neutrality, i.e., the indifference of substantive determination in general to the difference between ways of being. Thus, it does not cancel the opposition of the spheres, for there is no isolated *Sosein* without *Dasein*, and in terms of *Dasein*, everything that falls under a disjunctive relation. Therefore, all entities are either ideally or really existent (or, if there are more ways of being, no entity that would not fall under them); i.e., there is no “neutral entity,” only the aspect of *Sosein* as such (the ontological factor) is neutral in it. The ontological factor as such, however, is a type of conjunctive relation and does not become apparent on its own.

b) Outlook on Further Tasks

These preliminary results already suffice to set ontology on a new foundation. It is no longer a matter of deducing the ontological determinations of the real (such as properties of things) from a realm of ideal essences, where existence alone would have to constitute real being. Real determination is instead determination *sui generis* [of its own kind], and it is always identical with the real existence of manifold factors and contexts. It is also no longer possible to situate its ontological characteristics solely in what is “substantial” about it. In their way of being, substances have no privilege [131] over properties, alterations, or relations. This considerably simplifies the situation of ontology. This is why the fundamental dissolution of the old relation between essence and existence into a system of two intersecting relations does not in principle appear to be a complexification, but looks like a discovery of an unexpectedly simple and lucid fundamental relation.

In addition, we should not forget that the relation between *Sosein* and *Dasein* has been clarified to some extent, but the relation between the ways of being still requires further investigation. Many different things can be meant by “ideal being,” and even its very existence has often been denied, and just as often reasserted. Real being is empirically only all too familiar, but what it is, i.e., what ontologically characterizes its mode of being, is still no less unclear on this account. Here are a few fundamental questions that arise: 1) the question concerning the givenness of the real and the ideal; 2) the question about the ontological characteristics of both of them; and 3) the question concerning the inner structure of their relation to one another.

The first of these questions is an epistemological one and can be handled separately. The following sections will be concerned with it. The second question can only be raised in connection with that of modal relations (at least as far as it can be handled at all). It belongs to the problematic of another investigation. But the third does concern the structural make-up of the world. It is a question of the relation between the ontological strata and the spheres of being. It requires a comprehensive analysis of lawful categorial regularity and constitutes the object of a third series of investigations.¹

c) The Illusion of Disjunction and its Ontological Basis

The arguments concerning the separation between *Dasein* and *Sosein* as they have been summarized above (Chapter 12a-c) have been shown to be spurious. The ontological factors are not essentially different kinds of being, but two sides of the same entity that belong together. *Dasein* does not have an independence that *Sosein* would be lacking, nor does *Sosein* have a dependence that *Dasein* would lack. Their heterogeneity is only that of parts in relation. Since this relation is organized serially in the ontological context, within the larger whole it becomes an identity, and nothing other than a difference of direction remains of the opposition between them.

After this relation is parsed out, the question arises: on what basis does this illusion of their essential difference rest? The illusion is certainly not one arbitrarily brought in, since even after discovering [132] the nature of the situation it is not simply eliminated; it continues to persist and is an unavoidable illusion. It does not have the character of an error that we can simply rectify through reason. It more closely resembles a deception that, even after being uncovered, still remains a deception.

There are two reasons for this illusion. The first is an ontological one. It consists in the fact that the relations in which a thing stands are not substantively contained in its *Dasein*, for they belong to the side of determination (they are indeed contained in *Sosein*), but *Dasein* as such is only a way of being. We can also of course abstract from all further relations and emphasize only a single fragment of determination in the *Sosein* of a thing. But to do this requires a process of abstraction, and this must be accomplished even when *Dasein* presents itself in a certain nakedness without a special act of abstraction.

¹ Thus, the last two questions do not belong to the theme of this book. Their treatment is carried out in the works that follow, *Possibility and Actuality* and *Aufbau der realen Welt*.

There is one “relation” in *Sosein* from which we can never abstract. This is its belonging to an existing thing. By its very nature, determination is something “in” something. In contrast, way of being is indifferent to the “on which” and “in which.” The *Dasein* of a thing of course stands in ontological relations that are themselves existing entities; but it does not “consist” of them. *Sosein* in contrast does consist essentially of them. This is the reason why *Dasein* “appears” to be something independent, while *Sosein* appears to be something non-independent.

This reason is not merely a pretext. It is a genuine ontological reason. It is an error to believe that the reasons for an illusion must themselves be illusory. An illusion that itself has indissoluble persistence has to rest on an ontic basis. Insight into the ontic basis of its irreducibility means that the illusion no longer has power over us. This is only its discovery, not its elimination.

What this is all about in the field of metaphysics is familiar from Kant’s transcendental dialectic. This is precisely a logic of illusion, and its business is the discovery of the reasons for the illusion. In our everyday world this is much less familiar. This is the method in question here. It will illuminate the relation between a thing and its constitution. A constitution is such that it can only exist “in” an existing thing. Therefore, we cannot abstract from all relations concerning it. It is protected from the isolating abstraction in thing-thinking, while things themselves are not. In naïve consciousness they thus have the illusion of independence in themselves. This falls on the side of *Dasein*.

It is precisely to thing-thinking that the prejudice of essential difference primarily belongs. Things are rendered independent as “substances,” and their properties appear dependent. It then appears that they have no existence, but then their bearers have no *Sosein* “in themselves.” Since they are not things “in themselves,” but *Sosein* subsists in them, the latter cannot belong to things “in themselves.” The mistake here lies in [133] attending only to perceptible phenomena. We do not realize that the phenomena of things are not the things themselves.

d) The Epistemological Reason for the Disjunction

The second reason that plays a role here lies in the peculiar structure of human cognition. This reason too is in a broad sense an ontological reason, because cognition belongs to spiritual being, and the cognitive relation of the subject to the world is an ontological relation.

This reason is easy to grasp: we separate *Dasein* and *Sosein* in the “objects” because their mode of givenness is different, and is also often separated into

kinds of understanding quite cognitively distant from one another. The salient point in this diversity is the duality of cognitive sources—or as Kant might say, the roots of cognition—the *a priori* and *a posteriori* components of cognition. The relation of this duality to both ontological factors can be expressed in two simple propositions:

1. *Dasein* is knowable only *a posteriori*.
2. *Sosein* is knowable only *a priori*.

Of course, this only holds for real *Dasein* and *Sosein*; ideal being is cognizable only *a priori*. The significance of the *Dasein*-problem lies primarily in the real sphere, however. It should be further noted that the second proposition is only correct as long as it concerns “pure” *a priori* cognition; as soon as elements from experience lie at its basis, even the *Dasein* of something determinate may also be ascertained by the application of lawful *a priori* cognition. We cannot say much about this case here, which is the usual one in the sciences as in everyday life. The components of cognition already appear mixed together in it. The pure case should not automatically be treated as an artificial one for this reason. In many domains of knowledge, there is an *a priori* knowledge of the universal as such, like the knowledge of a law without the existence of the individual cases. Thus, it presents us with a knowledge of the *Sosein* without knowledge of *Dasein*.

On closer inspection, the relation may be presented in the following manner. Let us assume that *a priori* and *a posteriori* (not to be confused with thinking and intuition) are original modes of givenness of what is, which means that the simple correlation of *Dasein* with *a posteriori* givenness, and *Sosein* with *a priori* givenness, does not hold. Instead, both do not even need to be given at all; the *Dasein* as well as *Sosein* of a thing subsist without givenness, and even without being cognizable. Secondly, there is also *a posteriori* given *Sosein*. For example, all perceptible qualities, spatial forms, relations, and processes are of this type. Perception of course provides us with the *Dasein* of things, but not bare *Dasein*; it is *Dasein* with a considerable portion of *Sosein*.

This is clearly expressed in the two propositions above. These do not state that there is a parallel relationship. If this were so, the second proposition would have to be [134] convertible. And that will not do. *Sosein* is in many cases also cognizable *a posteriori*.

Thus, there appears to be a relation of superposition between the ontological factors and the modes of givenness. The relation between both pairs of opposites is generated by the objectification of “what is,” and naturally it only comes into question within the limits of possible objectification. The relation cannot be expressed as a dimensional intersection. Superposition is something completely

different from intersection. What strikes us right away here is a double boundary relation in which the two limits do not correspond to one another. As it stands, the limits of *a priori* and *a posteriori* givenness do not correlate with the ontic limits of *Dasein* and *Sosein*.

<i>A priori</i> Cognition	<i>A posteriori</i> Cognition
<i>Sosein</i>	<i>Dasein</i>

Figure 4.

Thus, there is both *a priori* and *a posteriori* cognition of *Sosein*, but only *a posteriori* cognition of *Dasein*. And vice versa: there is *a posteriori* cognition of both *Sosein* and *Dasein*, but *a priori* cognition only of *Sosein*. With respect to the duality of our sources of cognition—and therefore of cognizability in general—the side of *Sosein* thus has an advantage. *Dasein* remains aligned solely with the *a posteriori* component of cognition.

Now, if we consider the tremendous scope that the *a priori* cognitive component has in cognition—and especially in scientific cognition—it becomes quite understandable why the exclusion of *Dasein* from it gives rise to the illusion that *Sosein* might be something separable from it. In all purely *a priori* knowledge it appears precisely as something known separately from *Dasein*.

We can also put this more bluntly: *Sosein* really does exist separately in objectified beings. The objectified thing is the object. Now, since neither natural nor scientific consciousness knows how to sharply distinguish the entity from the object as such, the disjunction between *Dasein* and *Sosein* must necessarily appear to be an ontic one. That which cognition divides must also be taken to be divided in itself.

Chapter 21: Modes of Givenness and Ways of Being

a) Threefold Superposition and Threefold Boundary Relation

Now there is, as has been shown, a very determinate relation between the two pairs of ontic opposites, between *Dasein* and *Sosein* [135] and between real and ideal being. The second relation can be presented as a dimensional intersection. For their part, both kinds of givenness (*a priori* and *a posteriori*) display in

turn just as determinate a relation to the opposition between real and ideal. It is of another sort, however, than the relation to the ontological factors.

This new relation too can be roughly presented (not without remainder of course) as a relation of superposition. Here too the boundaries do not coincide. The boundary between ways of being in relation to that of modes of givenness is shifted to the other side this time. This may also be summarized in a few propositions:

1. There is *a priori* cognition of both the ideal and the real; there is *a posteriori* cognition only of the real.
2. There is both *a priori* as well as *a posteriori* cognition of the real, but only *a priori* cognition of the ideal.

With respect to the duality of ways of being and their spheres, the *a priori* component of cognition has an advantage. This is striking, for with respect to the duality of ontological factors a preference for the *a posteriori* component resulted. We should readily see here a new telling proof for the heterogeneity of the two pairs of ontic opposites, into which the old opposition between *essentia* and *existentia* has been dissolved.

Now, if we express this schematically in the same way as with the first relation of superposition, and if we likewise include from it (Fig. 4) the relation of the modes of givenness to the ontological factors, then we get the whole superposition of three pairs of opposites with three boundaries offset relative to each other (Fig. 5). In this superposition, the directional difference in the offsetting of both ontic boundaries relative to the gnoseological boundary is immediately conspicuous. If we start from the gnoseological, then the boundary between modes of being is pushed to the left (into the realm of the *a priori* cognizable), but that between ontological factors is pushed to the right (into the realm of the *a posteriori* cognizable). They are thus shifted in the opposite direction.

<i>A priori</i> Cognition		<i>A posteriori</i> Cognition
Ideal Being	Real Being	
<i>Sosein</i>		<i>(Dasein)</i>

Figure 5.

On closer inspection, however, there is a noticeable incongruity in this schema. It lies in the relation of superposition between ways of being and ontological

factors. The opposition between ideal and real and between *Sosein* and *Dasein* cannot be superimposed at all, because [136] they dimensionally intersect with one another instead. This mistake in the schema becomes quite palpable in the positioning of *Dasein*. *Sosein* is appropriately placed, since it spans both ideal and real being, as is proper to it. But *Dasein* is limited to real being. Thus, it is not properly represented in this schema (which is indicated in Fig. 5 by the parentheses). This would of course correspond to the ancient concept of *existentia*. But it does not harmonize with the fact that the difference between ways of being lies precisely in the factor of *Dasein*.

b) Correction of the Model: True Position of the Modes of Givenness

When we go to correct this mistake, we readily discover that it is impossible to carry this out within the confines of the model. The three pairs of opposites and their boundary relations cannot be encompassed in a threefold relation of superposition in an unambiguous way. There is no place for ideal being in it at all. This tears a hole in the whole arrangement. We would have to set ideal being out over *Dasein* in the middle region, or we would have to shift the boundary between the ontological factors (in the lower region) far to the left, further beyond that of the ways of being. In both cases, the remaining boundary relations are no longer correct.

Obviously, we need to look for another model. We have to transform the relation of superposition into a perpendicular dimensional relation corresponding to the position of both ontic pairs of opposites. We have to proceed from the ontological direction, not from the direction of cognition. The relation of superposition was at first involved at all only because the opposition of the modes of givenness was assumed at the outset. This was the mistake. Of course, this opposition allows a relation of superposition with each of the two ontic oppositions. Then when we combine both superpositions with one another, a third results, and this turns out to be wrong because it does not conform to the relation of the two pairs of ontic opposites.

So, let us proceed on the basis of the two dimensional relation between the latter, as was suggested in Figure 1 before the reduction of *Sosein* (thus omitting its neutrality). Thus, everything comes down to the way that the scope of *a priori* and *a posteriori* cognizability is distributed among the four portions of the schema. This distribution, in which the relations between the three domains come visibly to expression, is in fact unambiguously sketched in Fig. 6. Its gains can be summarized in the following points:

1. *A priori* cognition covers three of the ontic fields of opposition (ideal *Sosein*, ideal *Dasein*, and real *Sosein*). Only real *Dasein* is excluded from it. [137]
2. *A posteriori* cognition spans only two fields (real *Sosein* and real *Dasein*). The two fields of ideal being are excluded from it.
3. *A priori* and *a posteriori* cognition have only one of the four ontic fields in common: real *Sosein*.
4. Real *Dasein* is only accessible to *a posteriori* cognition.
5. Ideal being (both ideal *Sosein* as well as ideal *Dasein*) is only accessible to *a priori* cognition.

Points 1, 3, and 4 may be modified only where *a priori* cognition indirectly extends also to real *Dasein* (on the assumption of a given *a posteriori* point of departure). Thus, these three propositions strictly apply only when we understand *a priori* cognition solely as the “pure” *a priori* component of cognition, without regard to the extent to which it appears in such purity.

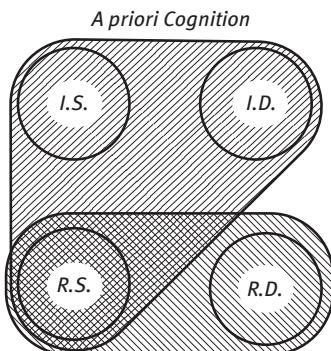


Figure 6.

c) The Divisive Nature of Cognition and the Illusion of Ontical Disjunction

One more thing is still objectionable in the model. A sharp boundary between *Dasein* and *Sosein* is presupposed in this arrangement. But the investigation has shown that such a thing does not exist, and that between *Dasein* and *Sosein* the only difference is one of direction. This followed from the universal ontic condition that every *Dasein* of something is again also the *Sosein* of something, and

every *Sosein* of something is at the same time the *Dasein* of something once again.

On the other hand, the step between that which is cognizable *a priori* and that which is only *a posteriori* cognizable in fact runs straight between real *Sosein* and real *Dasein*, which is clearly shown in Figure 6 by the diagonal demarcation of the *a priori* domain of cognition.

This would be impossible if the modes of givenness of objects were themselves ontological factors in them as if they were things in themselves, or even if they just strictly corresponded to the ontological factors. Neither of these is the case. The limits of cognition are simply not ontological limits. Even the boundary of the *a priori* is merely a gnoseological boundary, and there is no ontic boundary that could correspond to it. But [138] because the boundary line that it draws concerns the object, and this is something possessing being-in-itself, the illusion arises that it severs *Dasein* from *Sosein*.

The duality of the sources of cognition has its basis in the organization of cognition, in the particularities of the cognizing subject, not in the determinations of “what is,” and not in a cleavage of “what is” into *Dasein* and *Sosein*.

“That which is,” insofar as it enters into the relation of objectification at all, is always homogeneous. In it *Dasein* and *Sosein* are only differences of orientation, and within the broadest range of ontological contexts they pass into one another without remainder. The kind and organization of our cognition first brings cleavage to what is, for it is in fact a divided cognition. It cannot of course introduce the cleavage into being itself—for being is in itself and inaccessible to its power—but it can introduce it into the concept of being that it creates for itself. And so it generates the illusion, on the basis of its own divided nature, that being itself is divided.

This illusion is of course foreign to the completely naïve attitude to the world. It arises along with the inception of reflection. It is consolidated in epistemological reflection. In its own way it too is irreducible, but it is easy to see through. It becomes transparent with the discovery of the ontic relation between *Dasein* and *Sosein* and its relation to the cleavage between modes of givenness.

Therefore, the arrangement above (Fig. 6), including the five propositions in which it is explained, is entirely justified. The diagonal ontological demarcation in it is not at all arbitrary, but corresponds to the phenomenon of modes of givenness. It reveals the actual object domains for *a priori* and *a posteriori* cognition in “what is.”

The latter sharply exclude one another in a gnoseological sense. This is most likely the central reason for the stubbornness with which the division between *Dasein* and *Sosein* has been retained in philosophical theories.

Part Three: The Givenness of Real Being

Section I: Cognition and its Object

Chapter 22: Gnoseological and Ontological Being-in-itself

a) *Aufhebung* of Ontological Neutrality

The contrast between “being *qua* being” and “objectified being” played a decisive role in the definition of “being *qua* being” with which we began. The crucial point was to demonstrate the independence of “that which is” from objectification. Now, since the givenness of “what is” always has an objectified form (meaning that it is always grasped as an object), a question arises about the status of “givenness” itself. To answer this question, it does not suffice merely to know the difference between being and being-given. We only become aware that we are dealing with something that has being-in-itself by means of this distinction. However, it is not at all clear to what extent we can claim that there is such a thing. Insofar as an entity’s claim to exist rests on givenness, but “givenness” suggests, at the same time, that the entity is precisely not reducible to its being-given, an aporia emerges here that must be resolved.

In terms of its central theme, the investigation that is now underway would have been better placed at the beginning of the book. However, the investigation could not be carried out before the clarification of the relation between *Dasein* and *Sosein*. Here we are dealing exclusively with the side of *Dasein*. That something possesses “being-in-itself” means precisely that it subsists or exists not just “for us,” not merely in someone’s view or personal opinion.

We are dealing with the demonstration of *Dasein*. Since the latter does not pertain to just any determinate being, but to the *Dasein* of everything that we take to exist on the whole and in general, here we cannot endorse the serial passage from *Dasein* to *Sosein*. This is because the transition between them finds its limit in the world as a whole. It has become clear that we are poised at the point where ontology can no longer [140] keep up its neutral stance “this side” of idealism and realism. Only at the outset could it be neutral. We are compelled to choose between these alternatives (idealism and realism) by the question concerning being-in-itself.

After what has been said above, it is not hard to see that the choice must be for realism. Nevertheless, we should say up front that the expression “realism” really does not describe the ontological stance very well; this is why it is not covered by any of the traditional types of realist classification. Our choice does not have to do with the supposed fact that ontology only deals with real being, for it handles ideal being as well. Moreover, it would be completely missing the mark

to entertain the idea of an ontological reduction to one single type of being. Above all, we have to steer clear of the error of thinking that the concept of “ideal being” has anything to do with idealism. Idealism asserts that the real is precisely “ideality” so that it does not have to concern itself with ideal being any further.

b) Epistemological Background of the Concept of Being-in-itself

The concept of being-in-itself requires further clarification. It is not even an ontological concept, in fact, and so is not at all synonymous with the concept “being *qua* being.” It stems entirely from epistemological considerations and is generated from the perspective of the *intentio obliqua*. It is a complementary concept to the concept of appearance, phenomenon, or object. A reactively posited character belongs to the concept and makes it equivocal. This is because this contrast is only a gnoseological opposition.

Ontologically speaking, it is spurious. “To be” an object, “to be” for me, and “to be” a phenomenon are all equally being. Indeed, they are ontically just as much “in themselves.” The whole relation to which they belong, the cognitive relation, is a relation between two real entities, between the real subject and the real object. It is itself a real relation. The fact that I know some thing, even when that thing is external, is not external “to me.” It is something real in me. Consequently, it is also something real in itself. In real life, it can be quite essential and consequential. This is why it has its own temporal emergence in the process of cognition.

Moreover, this means that even objectified being is, as such and in its own way, being-in-itself. Therefore, “being-an-object” can itself also be made into an object of knowledge, which happens, as a matter of fact, in epistemology. If this did not take place then philosophical knowledge of cognition would be impossible.

If, however, “being-an-object” is also something “in itself,” then the same holds for “being-for-me,” for appearance, and for the phenomenon. Therefore, that which was to be distinguished from “being-in-itself” is itself recognized to be being-in-itself. Do we have a contradiction here? Is the concept of being-in-itself incorrectly formulated? [141]

That is not possible, since without the in-itself character of the object there is no cognition at all. In fact, it is easy to resolve the difficulty when we keep in mind the epistemological origin of the concept of being-in-itself.

Gnoseologically, the distinction between the “in itself” and the “for me” is completely clear and essential. Something can be an “object” only insofar as

it is “standing over against” me, thus, it can only be relative to a subject. In contrast to this relative kind of being, being-in-itself means nothing other than independence from the subject, and especially from being known by the subject. This does not exhaust the ontological characteristics of “being *qua* being.” The fact that even “being-for-me,” and with it “being-an-object,” can themselves become objects of cognition—can themselves have a gnoseological being-in-themselves—does not contradict this point at all. This is because it is not the same act of cognition that makes them into objects. The objectified being of an entity can very well arise in a first act of cognition, but for a second one, layered on top of the first, it is a “being-in-itself,” i.e., something existing independently of it. The cognitive relation can be extended to anything, even to itself. It is just that the relations differ in each case.

For ontology, on the other hand, this independence is inessential. If something is “in itself”—i.e., when it has a *Dasein* together with its *Sosein* in its own ontological sphere—then it is completely beside the point whether it, in existing, stands in relation to some other existent in its sphere or not (for instance, stands in relation to a real subject). It is beside the point even if the relation has a type of “being dependent” about it. In this case, the dependency is itself an existing one, and in it the dependent is no less existent than the independent. Everything existing stands in permanent interdependencies. The whole idea of something “independent” is only a limiting case.

c) *Aufhebung* of Reflection in Ontological Being-in-itself

To the extent that ontology has to do with the question of givenness, it cannot avoid the concept of being-in-itself despite its equivocality, for givenness is a cognitive affair. The givenness of being at once casts the entity “in itself” into oppositional relation to the “for me.” We can thus distinguish ontological being-in-itself, in which this relation is dialectically sublated, from gnoseological being-in-itself, which exists only in the oppositional relation. Here it is necessary, however, to execute the dialectical sublation in the right direction: not toward the subject, but toward “being *qua* being.” Seen from the subject’s point of view (according to the “principle of consciousness”), all being-in-itself is dialectically sublated into being for me (something standing across from me); seen from the perspective of “being *qua* being,” all being-in-itself, *as well as* being-for-me, is dialectically sublated into “what is” as such. [142]

The ontological concept of being-in-itself may thus be described as a return of the ontological perspective from the *intentio obliqua* to the *intentio recta*. That which has been sublated preserves as its own the determination from which it

stems, strictly according to the Hegelian law of “sublation.” The sublated is not simply identical with “being *qua* being,” for nothing has been sublated in the latter. It is, in fact, just the look which “being *qua* being” takes on when our perspective returns from the reflective to the natural standpoint. Ontological being-in-itself is the *Aufhebung* of the reflective stance incorporated in gnoseological being-in-itself.

Ontically, everything that there is, in any sense whatever, is being-in-itself. This includes that which “is” only *in mente*. The *mens*, with its contents, is itself a thing that exists (spiritual being). We should not restrict ontological being-in-itself to the presence or absence of certain relations; not even to the absence of a relation to the subject. Dependence is something that exists in-itself as much as independence.

“Being-in-itself” as an epistemological concept is only a crutch for reflection as a contrast to being-for-me and mere objectified being. Its ontological ambiguity is due to the fact that its oppositional character clings to it in the *Aufhebung* of reflection. The concept 1) fends off a sort of relativity which (in *intentio recta*) no longer really matters ontologically, and 2) it still expresses negative relativity to a subject (its independence from it), which—in contrast to the relations at play in the subject—runs counter to the fundamental indifference of “being *qua* being.”

d) The Law of the Cognitive Object and What Is

In fact, anything that is an object of cognition has a transobjective being, it is “in-itself.” This proposition expresses the “law of the cognitive object.” It is the fundamental law of cognition as such. It means that an act of consciousness that does not grasp a being-in-itself may be a kind of thinking, representing, or an act of imagination—perhaps even an act of judgment—but it is not an act of cognition. Those other acts of consciousness have their own objects, but they are only intentional objects, not objects in themselves.

With this insight, the metaphysics of cognition makes the transition to ontology. We have completed the task of stripping “reflection” away from the concept of being-in-itself. Gnoseological being-in-itself, which was merely an ancillary concept, became the central focus of the cognitive relation. It rose above the whole cognitive relation and was transformed in this way into ontological being-in-itself. Ontological being-in-itself, however, may now lead (from the perspective of cognition) to an articulation of the ontological character of “what is” in general. This perspective is also ontologically essential because it is in it that the problem of givenness arises. [143]

All the ambiguity that clung to the concept due to its origins is avoided on this newly won ontological ground. The ambiguity consists in the fact that even objectified being “is” something too, and indeed, even intentional objects, thoughts, and representations “are” something, and as entities, subsist in themselves and constitute objects of possible cognition.

The law of the cognitive object is not canceled in this case, but is fulfilled. It is fulfilled precisely in those entities that are related to and borne by the subject. This is because they are not objects of the specific cognitive act whose content they form. In the latter, they remain unknown and nonobjective. Cognition is always directed only to its object (understanding this as that which is independent of cognition), rather than to the substantive image of the entity in its own cognizing consciousness, an image first generated by cognition itself. Cognition knows nothing about the image of the object that it itself creates, whether representation, concept, or thought; it only knows about the object itself, but this very knowledge takes the form of representation, concept, or thought. This is why the image does not show up directly in the phenomenon of cognition. Image, representation, and thought are translucent; they do not “stand over against;” only epistemological reflection discovers them. In this kind of reflection, they become the object of a second cognition—one that is “bent backwards” upon the first (reflected). While this second act is directed towards them, it no longer has the same entity as object that was the object of the first cognition.

The nature of gnoseological being-in-itself is relational. This means that the being of the object is never dependent upon the cognition whose object it is. If we contend that it lacks being-in-itself by invoking the spiritual being of the representation, then we misunderstand the meaning of independence. This is because the representation is also independent of the act of cognition that takes it as an object. It is only dependent upon the primary act of cognition in which it arises. However, it was not known in the latter. In that act, it was not an object of cognition at all.

The gnoseological being-in-itself of a thing essentially consists in its “negative relativity” to the act in which it is grasped as existing. This grasping of the thing contains no second act to which the representation of the thing could yet be “negatively relative,” or for which its being would be given. Only when a second cognition is directed upon it, as such, does it also have its gnoseological being-in-itself. However, it does not have this being-in-itself on the basis of the second act, but by virtue of the primary cognition.

Thus, without a change in meaning, gnoseological being-in-itself inherently displays the same scope as ontological being-in-itself. It expands to infinity, as it were, from its own inner ontological weight. This is proof that ontological being-

in-itself is behind it from the very beginning, [144] and it only requires dialectical unfolding in order to be grasped in all its clarity.

The demonstration of the givenness of “being *qua* being” may thus easily begin from gnoseological being-in-itself as an essential part of the phenomenon of cognition. This is because the phenomenon of cognition transcends its own gnoseological being-in-itself and leads us directly to the ontological problematic.

Chapter 23: The Transcendence of the Cognitive Act

a) The Skeptical Burden of Proof and the Problem of the Givenness of Reality

Skepticism, Criticism, and certain forms of Idealism have contested the fact that there is such a thing as being-in-itself. It is not difficult to refute these theories. They are based solely on arguments from the perspective of the *intentio obliqua* and therefore misconstrue the basic phenomena. This is because reflection is itself already a turning away from these phenomena. What the critics argue again and again may be reduced to variations on three themes: the first is the principle of consciousness (that only our representations are given to us); the second is the correlativist prejudice (that there is no object that is not the object of some subject); and the third rests on the assumption that the value and meaning of the world can be understood only on the basis of some primordial subjectivity, a cosmic reason on analogy with human reason.

The last of these is a purely speculative-metaphysical contention and requires no discussion. The second rests on a mistaken analysis of the cognitive relation. Only the first bases itself on an actual phenomenon, although understood in a one-sided way. We will deal with it, as well as the second, below. We encounter both of them in current theories, even if they appear in disguise. They have nevertheless served the historical function of making the problem of being-in-itself ripe for discussion once again.

They have, among other things, made us quite clearly aware of the fact that one cannot really “prove” being-in-itself. We always only encounter things that are given; but things that are given could also be subjective phenomena, and they do not guarantee an “in-itself.” We only come across phenomena, but phenomena could also be illusory.

We might raise the question: do we really need a “proof” of being-in-itself at all? It is nonsense to want to prove the existence of “ultimate things.” They would already have to rest on something else on the basis of which they would be proven. Then, however, they would not be “ultimates.” “Being *qua*

being” is an ultimate. Apart from this observation, we add three separate reasons as to why a proof is not required here.

1. The burden of proof falls on the one who contests the existence of being-in-itself. The givenness of being-in-itself—especially in the form of real *Dasein*—is contained in the basic phenomenon of world-givenness; it accompanies all [145] its constituent phenomena, and accompanies human being in all situations its whole life long. Therefore, if we take this phenomenon to be illusory, we must show how the illusion itself arises. Skepticism has wisely never attempted this. It can never succeed.

2. Idealistic metaphysics did attempt it. For the explanation of mere appearances, Fichte and Schelling resort to an “unconscious production” in which the Ego produces the world. However, the Ego itself becomes a being-in-itself in this way—and not the conscious Ego, the unconscious one. They prove just the opposite of what they meant to prove.

3. Let us say that it can be shown that all given being-in-itself rests on mere appearance; we would still not get around the problem of being-in-itself. The “in-itself” would then have to be transferred to the ontological ground behind the being taken to be mere appearance. This would then be the genuine being-in-itself. This is because mere appearance has to rest on something. Everything else—all special ontological categories—would then apply to “mere appearance.” Since this would not happen arbitrarily but necessarily with reference to this ontological foundation (a conclusion which cannot be avoided), these categories would also apply with ontological necessity. Thus, the same determinations would then constitute a well-founded ontology of mere appearance, which would be indistinguishable from an ontology of being except for the tag “mere appearance,” and so would amount to the same ontology. It would just deal with the being of mere appearance. This is because mere appearance “is” still something that exists.

b) Conclusions: The Question concerning the “How” of Ontological Givenness

Two conclusions can be drawn from these arguments right away. The first pertains to the relation of ontology to the metaphysical antagonism of “standpoints.” It is true that ontology can only initially maintain its strict neutrality between idealism and realism; when the question of givenness arises, the idealistic position becomes obsolete. However, this does not mean that ontology is one-sidedly fixed on realism. The last of the considerations above shows clearly that the whole opposition of standpoints is of secondary importance.

The course of reasoning traversed above corresponds closely to the historical development of idealism from Berkeley to Hegel. The supporting ontological foundation is displaced ever further from the empirical subject, and in the end comes to rest in an Absolute; in this way, that which is supported, the apparent world, is understood ever more objectively, and finally achieves the full ontological value of the real. This is no merely coincidental development. It is necessary, because “mere appearance,” as soon as one conceives it universally, is not distinguishable from being at all. [146]

The second implication of the preceding is that ontology does not have to concern itself with the justification of the problem of givenness, or with the refutation of unnatural theories, but with something else. Since skepticism and the idealism of consciousness themselves rest on an attempted refutation of the natural attitude (an irreducible primary phenomenon), then an empty refutation of a refutation would result. This would only further obscure the fact that the burden of proof rests with the opposing side.

As a matter of fact, what is really at stake is something else. It is not the question “whether” being-in-itself is given, but “how” it is given. This is exactly the same distinction that the *Critique of Pure Reason* took hold of: its question was not “whether” synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible, but “how” they are possible. Here too we are dealing with a question of possibility. This is because the givenness of being-in-itself actually includes a difficulty that is not dispelled by the mere conflict between arguments and theories. Only a positive analysis of the pertinent phenomena of givenness can help us here.

There are three groups of phenomena that offer themselves for analysis: 1) The phenomenon of cognition, with its constituent phenomena; 2) the phenomenon of emotional-transcendent acts; and 3) the phenomenon of the vital context. The first of these shows the most transparent structure and is well-fitted to make the structure of the basic relation evident. The second bears most weight in the givenness of real *Dasein*. To the extent that real *Dasein* takes on central importance for the ontological question of being-in-itself, the major emphasis of the investigation lies on this group of phenomena. The third, however, embraces the first two phenomena in a comprehensive context, and thus assigns the phenomena of givenness their ontological status overall.

For now, we will only deal with the first, the phenomenon of cognition.

c) Cognition as Transcendent Act

In what follows, we always mean by the phrase “transcendent act” an act that does not play out solely in consciousness—such as thinking, representing, or

imagining—but steps outside the limits of consciousness, reaches out beyond it and connects it with that which exists independently of it. It does so irrespective of whether the independent thing is material, mental, or spiritual. Transcendent acts are those which establish a relation between a subject and an entity that itself does not first arise through that act, or, they are acts that make something transobjective into an object.

Transcendent acts are, to be sure, “also” acts of consciousness. They remain bound to consciousness through one member of the relation. But they are not reducible to it. The other relatum lies either beyond consciousness, or it exists otherwise independently of that act of consciousness. It [147] is not superfluous to mention this last point. The other member of the relationship is not necessarily one that is external to consciousness. It could be another act or content of consciousness. What is essential, however, is that it exists in a very determinate transcendent position, namely, beyond the act-executing consciousness. The transcendence of the act only means going out to something independent of the act as such, whether it otherwise belongs to consciousness or not.

The meaning of “transcendent” that is proposed here is not the customary one in philosophy, but it better reflects the etymological meaning of the word. In other uses, we designate objects as “transcendent” and distinguish them from “immanent” objects. That contradicts the etymological meaning of *transcendere* (“to rise above”). Objects do not “rise above” any boundary; they simply lie either on this side of the boundary or beyond it. To be sure, the act—or the relation to the object—must cross a boundary if its object lies beyond its own sphere. Thus, it is not objects of acts that can be transcendent or immanent, but only acts themselves.

Granting this, the basic phenomenon of cognition may be expressed this way: cognition, understood as an act (for it is not “only” an act), is not reducible to an act of consciousness; it is a transcendent act.

This proposition is of fundamental significance for ontology. This is because the givenness of entities is, in the first instance, supported by cognition. Only as a transcendent act, however, can cognition “give” to consciousness the existence of an entity. If consciousness were not capable of any transcendent acts, it could know nothing about the being of the world in which it lives. It would be imprisoned in its immanence, and could know nothing other than its own products, its thoughts or representations. Skepticism has made this claim since antiquity.

It is not only skepticism that misconstrues this state of affairs. All theories that suppose that cognition is the same as thinking, or the same as judgment, misunderstand it. One can think everything possible, even that which does not exist; but we can only cognize what “is.” Judgment is merely a logical form that can accept or not accept what is known and has become the content

of knowledge. If we express an insight, it immediately takes on the form of a judgment; if we consciously conjoin it to a collection of insights, again it takes on the form of a judgment. However, neither the expression of the insight, nor conjoining it with others, is identical to the insight itself. Insight alone is cognition, the epistemic authority, contact with what is.

d) The Act of Grasping and its Object

It is characteristic of all transcendent acts to be oriented towards objects possessing being-in-itself. The cognitive act is not the only one with this feature. The cognitive act is not even an ontically primary relation of the subject to the [148] world. It is always embedded in the context of a multiplicity of acts, both transcendent and nontranscendent ones. However, it has the advantage over other transcendent acts in that it alone is the purely “grasping” act. The philosophizing consciousness consists in grasping the world as it is. In its self-awareness, it comes upon itself as a knowing being. Only on the basis of this prior cognitive relation can the other, more fundamental ontic types of relation to the world be reconstructed. The analysis of the transcendent acts has first to begin then, according to the *ratio cognoscendi*, with the cognitive act.

The Husserlian law of intentionality is a universal law of all acts of consciousness. Since the transcendent acts are “also” acts of consciousness, it definitely continues to hold for them; they too have their intentional object. Cognition also has its own intentional object; it produces some content, a representation, an image of the thing in itself, and between the act and the image exists the relation of intentionality. But the image is not the object of cognition. Even in the case of complete conformity of image and object, the image does not coincide with it, but remains opposed to it, something other than it, an image in consciousness.

The special law of transcendent acts is the law of being-in-itself and the transobjectivity of the object. It is the exact counterpart to the law of intentionality. Just as the latter is the universal law of consciousness, the law of being-in-itself is the universal law of the transcendence of consciousness. The latter is precisely the “form” of transcendent acts. It is what distinguishes the latter as do-nating acts—and this means acts that furnish “being”—from mere acts of consciousness. Only in this way are we able to distinguish cognition, as grasping of something in itself, from mere thinking, representing, or imagining. It is no accident that the Husserlian principle does not offer any purchase here. This is why the phenomenon of grasping has, until now, remained as good as unknown to the phenomenology of acts.

The act of cognition is distinguished from other transcendent acts in that it has the pure characteristic of grasping. In grasping, the relationship of the subject to the object possessing being-in-itself is a completely one-sided, receptive one; the subject is indeed determined by the object, but the object is in no way determined by the subject. The entity that is made into an object (objectified) remains unaffected; nothing in it is altered by the subject's grasping it. Only for the subject does anything change, for knowledge of the object is produced in it. Its receptivity consists in this. The objectification remains extrinsic to the entity that is objectified by the subject. It remains indifferent to whether and how much it is made into an object for the subject. Its being-in-itself consists in this. This type of relation of the subject to a being-in-itself is precisely the meaning of "grasping."

The term "grasping" of course connotes "spontaneity" of the subject, and there is a kind of spontaneity in the cognitive act. However, it is not a kind of activity [149] directed towards the object. It is exhausted in the synthesis of the image. Neither does "grasping" mean that the subject incorporates the object or draws it into itself. The object as grasped does not enter into consciousness, it remains irreducibly over against it. The object itself does not become representation, thought, or content of cognition. It remains untouched in itself, what it in itself was. The subject knows the object, even after it has grasped the object, as a being-in-itself.

Grasping does not mean "to have something in consciousness." One cannot "have" things-in-themselves in the way that one "has" thoughts and representations. Grasping expresses the transcendence of the act, while "having" only expresses an immanent relation to consciousness. We can only "grasp" things that exist-in-themselves, just as we can only "have" contents of consciousness. However, because some content of consciousness is produced in grasping (the image of the object), there is of course also a "having" in the act of cognition. However, it is the "having" of the image that arises in the grasping, not a "having" of the object of cognition itself. Having, thus, does not provide epistemic authority. It already assumes grasping. The having of the image is nothing other than the conscious form of having-grasped. It is not a second act in addition to the act of cognition, but only the immanent, inner aspect of its result. Because the content of consciousness (the image) is not the object of cognition, it is not recognized as such in the cognizing consciousness, and is not directly demonstrable in the phenomenon of grasping that remains unreflected upon. Cognizing consciousness is precisely the grasping consciousness of the object, and does not know anything about its content's way of being, as distinguished from the object.

Chapter 24: The Antinomies in the Phenomenon of Cognition

a) Phenomenon and Theory: Natural Realism

This state of affairs is more significant for ontology than may appear at first glance. It means that if there is no being-in-itself, then there is also no cognition. This is because there is nothing that could be known.

We could draw the conclusion that this means it is even questionable whether there is cognition at all, i. e., whether that which we *call* cognition really is cognition. But this conclusion would be extraordinarily awkward. This is because the “phenomenon” of cognition simply exists and cannot be explained away. We would have to take the whole phenomenon to be illusory if we did not accept it as a real phenomenon. If we take it to be illusory, then we have to show on what basis the illusion rests, and why it is for us an unavoidable, all-pervasive illusion, prevailing throughout our lives. I have shown above why this cannot succeed. For every kind of explanation, there is 1) the being of the foundation on which the illusion rests, and 2) the being of the illusion itself. [150] We have not even taken into account the fact that the explanations themselves are extremely sketchy metaphysical theories whose presuppositions cannot be confirmed and are entangled in contradictions. The most well-known idealistic positions have instructed us sufficiently on this score. They simply could not bear the burden of proof that was placed on them.

Theories struggle against phenomena in vain. Only “with” the phenomena can they achieve anything. We are dealing with the fundamental phenomenon of all cognition here: the being-in-itself of the object does not lie only in the cognitive relation, as if philosophical reflection first discovers its essence; all cognition, even the most naïve, already possesses knowledge of its object’s being-in-itself, and already understands it as a being existing independently of it.

This immediate knowledge of being-in-itself is identical with the primary phenomenon of natural realism. In contrast to other forms of realism—and in contrast to other “standpoints” in general—natural realism is not a theory, doctrine, or thesis, but the foundation upon which all human consciousness of the world is found to be built. All interpretations of the world that take leave of it must do so through particular theses in terms of which they must explain this primary phenomenon, since it cannot be eliminated. Such theses are not themselves phenomena, but theories; they have to grapple with it as a permanent, bedrock phenomenon.

It will first be shown in our examination of the affective transcendent acts just how overwhelmingly strong this primary phenomenon is. In the meantime, it is enough to consider its scope within the domain of cognition. The latter en-

compasses all degrees of cognition, from the most naïve to the most complex scientific knowledge. This fundamental phenomenon is a familiar fact at all levels of cognition. No one who perceives a thing (sees or touches it) imagines that it first arises in the act of seeing and disappears again upon looking away. Perception already distinguishes between its own deed and its object, knows perception's contingency in relation to the object and the object's indifference toward perception. Perception does not transfer its own subjectivity to the object. It sees it as existing-in-itself. This automatic drawing of a distinction and this knowledge are, however, not raised to consciousness. Instead, it is the inner, self-evident form of ontological consciousness in perception.

The same thing holds at higher levels of cognition. The experimenter who searches for a certain kind of lawfulness knows ahead of time that the latter, if it exists at all, exists independently of his searching and finding. If he finds it, it never occurs to him to think that it first came into being with his discovery; he knows that it was always there and was not changed by the discovery. He sees in it something possessing being-in-itself. In the same way, the historian reconstructs an unfamiliar event by means of his "sources." He knows that the event was the way it was, even without his reconstruction; only knowledge about the event arises by his hand. [151]

Only philosophical consciousness has deviated from this course in its theory formation. In doing so, it has taken upon itself a burden of proof that it cannot bear. Theory cannot dismiss the phenomenon shared by both natural and scientific reality. It has to come to terms with it.

b) The Antinomy of Being-in-Itself and Objectified Being

A double antinomy is hidden in the phenomenon of the transcendent cognitive act, and it requires an explanation. The subject-object relation has the form of a correlation. The being of the object is bound to the being of the subject, its counterpart, just as the subject is bound to the object. But the transcendence of the act entails that the being of the object exists independently of the subject. Being-in-itself is independence, while being-an-object is dependence.

On such a superficial interpretation, the conflict appears to be irresolvable. However, it is a merely apparent conflict. The most important point has not even been taken into consideration: objectified being is not identical to being-in-itself. It is supported by being-in-itself, of course, but does not coincide with it. Being-in-itself is that which is "made into an object;" in itself it remains independent, but its objectified being is not independent of the subject. Objectified being can only be encountered in its opposition to a subject.

Objectified being is extrinsic to being-in-itself as such; being-in-itself, on the other hand, is not extrinsic to being an object of knowledge. If being-in-itself were lacking, then something may be an object, but it would not be an object of knowledge, and the act would not be cognition.

We can put this point even more precisely: in the cognitive relation, being-in-itself is essential for the object, but being-in-itself is indifferent to being an object; it admits of it, without requiring it. From this relation, we see that the independence of the object of cognition from the subject—thus, its being-in-itself—is not at all impacted by the dependence of being an object for a subject. The solution to the apparent antinomy consists in this. Dependence and independence in the object of cognition are not contradictory, because the first pertains only to its being an object, while the latter pertains to the being-in-itself in it. Objectified being is an extrinsic determination of being-in-itself.

Such a relationship is nothing out of the ordinary. It can be compared with the relationship between the mass and weight of a body. The mass is independent of where on the earth or on the moon the body exists. But the weight is not independent of its place. Thus, the same body is in the same relation independent and dependent at once. The dependence of its weight does not at all affect the independence of its mass. We should understand that the dependence of objectified being has no bearing on the independence of being-in-itself in exactly the same sense. [152]

c) The Antinomy of Phenomenal Transcendence

In the resolution of the antinomy of the object, we see clearly how the phenomenon of cognition transcends itself and is transformed into an ontological phenomenon. It goes beyond its own limited scope. In what other way should we understand the fact that the cognitive object is not reducible to its objectified being, and nevertheless, that just this irreducibility to the cognitive relation—and thus also its irreducibility to being an object—is essential? Once this antinomy is resolved, a second appears. It pertains to the “phenomenal” character belonging to the cognitive phenomenon as such.

It is the essence of a “phenomenon” to have a verifiable factual character, but the factuality of that which constitutes its content is not verifiable in it. For example, the phenomenon of the daily movement of the Sun in the sky from east to west is given and always verifiable, but whether the sun really executes such a movement in the cosmos is not verifiable with reference only to the phenomenon.

In general, a phenomenon A does not as such signify the being of A. It could be that the being of B (i.e., something completely different) is behind it. In terms of the example above, instead of a movement of the Sun, a movement of the Earth could be behind the phenomenon. If this were not the case, then deception or illusion could never even arise. In phenomenon A, it is never evident whether A also exists in itself, that is, whether the phenomenon itself is the appearance of A or illusion. In this manner, the phenomenon is fundamentally indifferent to the being or non-being of A.

If this is the case, then how can the phenomenon of being-in-itself (in A) exist? This must mean that its being-in-itself is verifiable somehow. However, if it were within the essence of the phenomenon A that only the phenomenon itself was verifiable, but not the being-in-itself of A, then this is impossible.

Now, we have shown that a phenomenon of being-in-itself is concealed in the phenomenon of cognition. This is because cognition implies quite clearly that the act is only knowledge at all if its object is not reducible to its objectified being. Consequently, there is an inner contradiction in the phenomenon of cognition. It is antinomical in itself. Its content contradicts the essence of being a “phenomenon.” Or, expressed positively: the phenomenon of cognition is of a sort that overshoots its own phenomenal character.

This overshoot constitutes its “phenomenal transcendence.” It is very similar to the transcendence of the cognitive act, but is not identical with it.

The antinomy in it may be unfolded in two different directions. On the one hand, we might say that phenomenal transcendence is itself just a phenomenon; then the possibility exists that the transcendence of the cognitive act, and with it the being-in-itself of the object, would only be an illusion. Then again one would have to expose this illusion and “explain” it. On the other hand, we could say that the “phenomena” of transcendent acts are in fact also [153] “transcendent phenomena” themselves, and this would mean that they are more than phenomena. The datum of being-in-itself would have to be contained in them.

The first of these two options is excluded because we can never succeed in explaining the “illusion” as permanent, i.e., necessary. The second option should at least be considered. Since the phenomenon A is in itself indifferent toward the being or non-being of A, the phenomenon of being-in-itself of course indicates that being-in-itself actually exists. This does not mean that this being-in-itself would be verifiable in the phenomenon of being-in-itself. It seems that this is what is implied in this case.

However, it must be here that the error lies. It does not imply this at all. The phenomenon remains phenomenon, even if it is precisely a phenomenon of being-in-itself. At bottom, of course, all phenomena are phenomena of being-in-itself. A always appears in them as “what is.” It belongs to the nature of

the phenomenon in general that it “transcends” itself, allows its content to appear as something transphenomenal. But if all phenomena fundamentally point beyond themselves, then the phenomenon of being-in-itself is not at all exceptional. The universal relation only becomes particularly evident in it. This much is clear: phenomenal transcendence does not extinguish the phenomenal character of phenomena. On the contrary, it enacts it.

d) The Solution of the Antinomy and its Problematic Remainder

Phenomena as such are unstable. They require consciousness to decide whether they are really existent or mere appearance. We cannot deny them, and yet neither can we just be satisfied with them. This is the case in life, even more so regarding scientific work, and definitely the case in relation to the fundamental questions of philosophy. The genuine self-transcendence of phenomena consists in this kind of demand, this imposition on consciousness. This is a result of the instability of our consciousness of phenomena, is common to all phenomena as such, and is peculiar to them.

This transcendence does not consist in the fact that—as it may have appeared at the start—phenomena of a certain kind could guarantee the being-in-itself of their contents. They cannot do so under any circumstances. In the phenomenon of being-in-itself, we are only presented with a particular case of being-in-itself as such, since we are dealing here with its ontological character *in genere*. The ontical side of the question is emphasized here. Therefore, the self-transcendence of the phenomenon, a truly general property, is emphasized and raised to consciousness here as well. This is why it appears to overshoot its phenomenal character.

There are two errors here. First, this overshoot would have to take place just as much in the case of other phenomena. Secondly, the “overshoot” is merely an appearance anyway. The truth here is that phenomena as such possess an apparent instability. This, however, also demonstrates that the [154] antinomy displayed in phenomenal transcendence rests on an illusion. It has been resolved, and the conflict lapses. This means that phenomenal transcendence is in itself without contradiction, is justified, and for its part is not mere appearance.

Phenomenal transcendence signifies, however, here as everywhere, something other than the verifiability of being-in-itself. Its meaning is restricted to forcing the phenomenon out beyond itself—leading to our making a decision about the being or non-being of its content. And, it must be added, this forcing of the phenomenon does not compel us to accept one option or the other. No pre-

liminary decision on behalf of being-in-itself is contained in it. This is at least the way it should be for a purely descriptive, clarified consciousness of phenomena.

If the phenomenon of being-in-itself directly compelled us to affirm its existence, then the proof of being-in-itself would be complete, and there would be no room left for skepticism. But it is not so. Purely in principle, it is possible that there is nothing possessing being-in-itself in cognitive objects; that would mean that they would not even be objects of cognition. Consequently, that which we call knowledge would not be knowledge at all. This conclusion has been drawn by the Cartesian doubt. Its theoretical significance is minimal, of course, because the burden of proof falls on the opposing side. However, the conclusion is, in the meantime, not eliminated.

Chapter 25: Transobjectivity¹

a) Problem-Consciousness and Cognitive Progress

The evidential basis in the phenomena must be more inclusive. This is initially possible even if we remain with the phenomenon of cognition. The latter has not been exhaustively discussed given what we have presented here. There are other features of the phenomenon of cognition in which the weight of being-in-itself as *datum* is more greatly felt: those of problem-consciousness and cognitive progress.

We may define a “problem” as that aspect of the object that is not yet grasped, the unknown element in it. Thus, problem-consciousness is the “knowledge” of this unknown aspect. If, with respect to the content of cognition, it alleges consciousness of its own inadequacy, then it corresponds to the Socratic knowledge that one knows that one does not know.

The “progress of cognition” is then the overcoming of this inadequacy, the tendency and movement toward adequation, the drive of cognition forward into the unknown and the transformation of the unknown into the known.

The ontologically significant point here is that the concept of the object of cognition is once again essentially modified. It is not only the objectified part of the total object that stands over against the subject, but also the nonobjectified part, the “transobjective.” The latter is not *objectum* [object], but *objicien-*

¹ The title of the chapter is “*Transobjektivität und Übergegenständlichkeit*.” Because the term “*Übergegenständlichkeit*” is not used again in this chapter, and the two words appear to be synonymous, I have taken them as Latinate and German forms of the same concept. TR.

dum [the to-be-objectified]. The existing object [155] of cognition is thus partitioned into known and unknown portions, and between the two runs the boundary of the cognitive process of objectification currently underway. What lies beyond the boundary is the transobjective.

This means that problem-consciousness is itself a consciousness of the transobjective, for it is the pre-cognitive knowledge of the being of the unknown, prior to objectification. The phenomenon of problem-consciousness thus proves to be an eminent phenomenon of being-in-itself. We can, if need be, imagine that the objectified portion, as the known part of the object, is reducible to its objectified being and has no being-in-itself; with the transobjective portion we cannot do this, for it pertains precisely to the transobjective that has yet to become an object. It still stands beyond the scope of the subject-object correlation. Since being-in-itself simply entails indifference toward this correlation—for being-in-itself is independence from the subject—then being-in-itself necessarily belongs to the transobjective.

To this it may be objected that this might still just be a “phenomenon” of being-in-itself, but not the real thing. Problem-consciousness can certainly be mistaken; it can also go questioning into emptiness, where there is nothing at all.

The phenomenon of cognitive progress counters this objection. When problems are solved, the transobjective is transformed into the objectified. This proves that the transobjective was not nothing, but that something was there which presented itself to possible knowledge. In terms of its content, progress usually discovers that the transobjective, according to the measure of its progressive objectification, turns out to be otherwise constituted than anticipated; but it still turns out not to be nothing. Being-in-itself proves its own existence. Pure problem-consciousness certainly does not take away the substantive determination belonging to the in-itself. Problem-consciousness is non-knowledge of the content. It knows only that it is present there.

Cognitive progress, as the incipient knowledge of the determinate, is confirmation that in the direction extending beyond the object—above and beyond the boundary of objectification—there is a being-in-itself, something that already existed prior to and independently of the advance of cognition, and which urges itself upon problem-consciousness.

This phenomenon is of great ontological significance. If, at any given time, the object of cognition were reducible to the objectified portion alone, then we might believe that it was reducible to its being an object for a subject. However, if it is not substantively reducible to the objectified portion, then, in its mode of being, it is also not reducible to being an object. The thing must have being-in-itself, must exist in itself indifferent to the cognitive relation.

b) The Being-in-Itself of the Transobjective and the Objectified

If the object of cognition is partitioned into objectified and transobjective portions by virtue of the boundary of objectification, and the transobjective turns out to [156] have being-in-itself, then its objectified aspect must also have being-in-itself. That is to say, the object as a whole must have being-in-itself. It makes no sense to attribute to a part of a whole a different mode of being than that which is attributed to the whole. In this way, being-in-itself conforms to what was said above about the indifference of an entity toward objectification, and toward the boundary of objectification in it at any given time.

This becomes even more obvious when seen from the perspective of cognitive progress. Objectification is a progressive process. Now, if only the transobjective possessed being-in-itself, but not the objectified, we would have to conclude that its being-in-itself would little by little be cancelled out or annihilated with the progress of cognition. That is to say, it is precisely the transobjective that is progressively objectified. This obviously makes no sense. To believe this would come close to one of the most laughable of all preconceptions, the idea that objects, in the course of their being known, “enter into our consciousness.”

The objects of cognition remain irreducibly external to consciousness, whether they are cognized or not. There are no “things” in consciousness, just as little as there are thoughts or representations outside of consciousness. Objectification changes nothing here. This is precisely what the indifference of entities to their objectification means. Thus, either the whole of the object of cognition has being-in-itself, or none of it does. It is ontically homogeneous. If the transobjective in it is “in-itself,” then the objectified portion necessarily is too.

We have to deal with another preconception here as well. It holds that with the progress of cognition the object is “transformed.” The atoms of contemporary physics, for example, are different from those of Democritus. In Neo-Kantianism the conclusion has been drawn from this that the object “came to be” along with the progress of cognition. A crude conflation supports this view: it is not the object that came to be, but the image, representation, or the concept of the object. The “concept” of the atom subtends the change. This may be an approximation to the truth. The atoms themselves, from which things really are constituted, do not undergo this change. If there are any atoms at all, then they were the same then as they are now. Their being is indifferent toward this change in interpretations and toward their progressively becoming known.

Chapter 26: The Limits of Cognizability

a) The Emergence of the Gnoseologically Nonrational

The phenomenon of the gnoseologically nonrational takes us another step further. We do not mean by this an alogical element, but a transintelligible one; not an unthinkable, but an unknowable one. Its emergence is the limit phenomenon of cognition.

As we have seen, the limit of objectification is not static. It is mobile, and it is shifted in accordance with the progress of cognition. Every new insight drives it [157] forward. The object remains there, just as it was, and only knowledge grows. The question is: does this mobility of the boundary extend *in infinitum*, or is it itself limited? Is there a second boundary behind the first, a limit to objectification, to cognizability, to gnoseological rationality? If there were such a thing, it would have to be an immovable boundary. The question concerning this cognitive limit is identical with the question regarding the emergence of the transintelligible.

By “limit” here, we do not mean one that implies the finitude and exhaustibility of the object. Such a limit would not leave anything unknowable. Alternatively, it is of course thinkable that the thing itself might erect a determinate limit to the progress of cognition. We would have to assume that the object resisted further cognitive intrusions, and defended itself from them. In this case, however, it would not be indifferent to its own objectification.

The third possible option would be that the thing itself does not resist cognition, but that cognition is constituted in such a way that it cannot advance as far as it would like at will. The organization of our cognitive faculties could very well be outfitted for cognizing particular sides of entities, but completely fail with others. In this case, our cognition might bring forward a limit to its own penetration into entities. For example, if cognition is bound to determinate inner conditions, such as forms or categories, then one should expect virtually *a priori* the emergence of a limit to the cognition of an entity.

The first of these three options is excluded from the start. It does not address the appearance of the unknowable.

The second can be taken more seriously. We know particular cases in which an object makes a stand against being known. The human person is one such object. A human being can defend itself from the intrusion of a foreign consciousness, can disguise his nature, can deceive the knower. He can conceal himself, put on a mask, can mislead.

First of all, here we are not dealing with something “making itself unknowable,” only with a kind of being unknowable that is not the result of artifice. Sec-

ond, the initiative to fend off being known exists only in objects that themselves possess cognition, and know of their becoming known. This obviously does not allow of being further generalized. Thirdly, all “making-oneself-unknowable” depends on the existence of a corresponding alien faculty of cognition, intelligence, experience, and knowledge of human nature. In general, it may be that in the struggle between deception and transparency, deception requires greater mastery. Otherwise, the defense would be broken through, and the concealment seen through. The mere possibility of being seen through already proves that setting limits of this kind is not static, and so does not reveal something unknowable in any case. [158]

Therefore, we should set aside the imaginative notion that the object defends itself against cognition. We would have to believe in the Cartesian *deus malignus* [evil god], who had already arranged the world in such a way as to deceive us. Being as such does not resist its own being-cognized. It is presented defenselessly everywhere. It is indifferent to objectification.

We could think about the limit of objectifiability in the entity in yet another way. The entity could be so constituted that, from a certain point, it cannot become an object. Theses of this sort have often been advocated, such as “God cannot become an object,” “the subject cannot become an object,” or Scheler’s proposition: “Persons and acts are not capable of becoming objects.”

Pronouncements of this kind do not account for the neutrality of entities toward objectification. They assume that becoming known changes something in the thing known, or that becoming known draws them into consciousness. The thing cognized, however, remains irreducibly counterposed to consciousness, it even remains fundamentally untouched by objectification. Every entity is capable of becoming an object if there is a consciousness that knows how to make it into an object. It is a fact that even persons and acts can be grasped, even in everyday life, and no less in scientific work (for example, in history). That they remain nontransparent in their core is not to be disputed. That does not have to do with them, however, but with us, the knowers, because we cannot advance any further, or because such a variable and internally differentiated entity cannot be exhausted. This would fall under the third option above.

It cannot reasonably be maintained that an entity—either in whole or in part—is of such a kind as not to be capable of becoming an object of cognition. This could only be maintained if one limits cognition to logical-conceptual formalism. Cognition is not limited to this form, however, and has to do with conceptuality only indirectly. For instance, we may think about human insight into human nature in different ways; that it exists, however, no one will dispute, nor that mature human beings cannot live without a certain amount of insight into human nature. This is, without doubt, not knowledge of a conceptual kind.

There is no entity incapable of becoming an object. In fact, the capacity to become “in-itself” an object of cognition belongs to the nature of being-in-itself. If being-in-itself does not or cannot in fact become an object of knowledge on some given occasion, this is no fault of its own. More strictly formulated, this means that nothing exists that is unknowable.

This is what was meant by Husserl’s principle: everything that exists is also cognizable. Being is in itself defenseless against cognition. It is its nature to be presented wherever and however cognition turns toward it. The remaining question is this: is it the nature of cognition to be able to direct itself toward everything that offers itself to it? Is it capable, for its part, of making everything that is into its object? [159]

b) Concept and Status of the Unknowable “For us”

This means that even if there is nothing that is nonrational in itself, there can certainly still be something “nonrational for us.” Here we are referring to the third option above.

If there is a determinate, unalterable form and organization of cognition (that is, of the actual human cognition that we are alone familiar with), and if this is designed for the objectification of one determinate side of an entity but is unsuitable for cognizing its other aspects, then there is something in the entity that is excluded from cognizability. In that case, there is something that is “unknowable for us.”

A number of reasons can be supplied to show that such a thing exists, and that it presents an immovable, subject-conditioned limit of cognition for the subject.

1. We have a small scale model of how our cognitive organization is designed overall in our sensory system. The senses that we possess are correlated with very particular aspects of an entity; they are adapted for the perception of particular groups of properties or processes. Beyond these, they perceive nothing. It is well-known, for example, how the senses of sight, of temperature, and of sound are assigned to very limited ranges of the wavelength continuum—ranges that do not overlap at all. What does not fall into the selected range is not immediately accessible to the senses. If the model is the same for nonsensuous cognition—for understanding, conceptualization, judgment, and interpretation—then the whole of the human cognitive organization must be adapted to knowing only a selected portion from the total range of “what is,” beyond the limit of which the entity is unknowable.

2. We readily ascertain that this really is the case from the fact discovered long ago that our understanding, conceiving, and intellectual penetration are bound to very particular forms or categories. Everything that we understand remains bound to these forms, and beyond them all representation fails.

This conforms to the idea that our cognition is adapted to what is vitally necessary. In the natural consciousness of the world, that which is present and offers itself to cognition is selected with an eye to the vitally relevant. The understanding and senses do not originally serve pure knowing, but self-preservation. Both are originally unsuited to the higher aims of cognition. Only particular methods in the use of the understanding teach a more expansive application. Methodological application of the understanding, however, cannot be expanded at will. It remains bound to the scope of the categories.

3. In scientific praxis, we run up against very noticeable limits everywhere. In the Introduction, we referred to a number of basic problems that all bear a “metaphysical” character, i.e., contain an irreducibly nonrational factor [160]. The most familiar examples include the riddle of living beings, psychophysical unity, freedom, and the first cause, among many others; they are all unavoidable problems that one cannot deny because they are rooted in a whole host of unmistakable phenomena. Their irresolvability apparently does not result from an unsuitable “approach,” but from the complete failure of human categories of cognition.

4. “That which is” has its own principles (ontological categories) as well. There are some among them that are completely incommensurate with the categories of cognition. In research, they come to the fore as knotty problems, where every solution to an aporia reveals new aporias. Infinity, the continuum, substrate, individuality, and the concrete totality are of this kind; they are, on the one hand, the simplest and most elementary, and on the other, the most complex. In these categorial features of “what is,” it turns out that our cognitive apparatus is fettered to the corresponding complementary category: to finitude, discreteness, form, the typical, and the partial aspect of the whole.

5. We may also place the fact that cognition is subject to logical laws under this heading. To what extent the real corresponds to them cannot be ascertained with certainty. The appearance of antinomies in certain problem domains makes it very improbable that “what is” is covered by the law of non-contradiction without remainder. If it contains a contradiction within itself—perhaps in the form of real conflict—then the antinomies are irresolvable; even the attempt to solve them at all would be a mistake. Only apparent antinomies may be resolved, not genuine antinomies. This clearly shows that our laws of cognition encounter a limit and are not entirely sufficient to cognize “that which is.”

6. Classical rationalism also recognized boundaries of cognizability in this sense, in that it opposed the finite intellect to the *intellectus infinitus*, and to it alone granted unlimited cognizability of all things. That was a clear limit-concept for cognition: the logically sound idea of a kind of cognition that we do not have. It would be a mistake to think that one can conclude from this idea that our intellect is infinitely expandable and may approximate to it. Such an approximation can be deduced from it just as little as the capacity of humankind to become God could be deduced from the idea of God. The positive meaning of the idea is our knowledge that there is, as such, something inaccessible to us.

c) The Ontological Significance of the Infinite Remainder

We may accordingly consider the incognizable that subsists in the background of the object of cognition to be very much a part of the total phenomenon of cognition. [161]

This means that there really is a second cognitive boundary, an immobile one, and that beyond it lies the transintelligible. It does not lie beyond the trans-objective, but is a portion of it, just as the latter is itself a portion of the whole *objiciendum* [entity to-be-objectified]. However, the second boundary is only a gnoseological one, not an ontological one. With regard to “what is,” it only limits the range of cognizability, not “what is” in itself. The knowable as well as the unknowable equally exist independently of cognition.

Neither being-known nor being-knowable makes any difference to being-in-itself. This follows from the “law of the cognitive object,” which says that a thing is an object of cognition if it is what it is independently of being-known and being-knowable. Neither being-known nor being-knowable can add or subtract anything from being.

Authors have come up against this principle from two opposite sides. On the one hand, we might think that the unknown, and especially the unknowable, may not even exist; we might conceive of an existent only correlativistically as an object for a subject. On the other hand, we might think that only the unknowable could have authentic (subject-independent) being; the knowable would be dependent on the subject, or would even be mere appearance (Kant).

Both interpretations make the same mistake, only from opposite directions. They misunderstand the indifference of the in-itself toward objectification and objectifiability, just as they misunderstand the merely gnoseological character of both boundaries. “Being” commences neither this side nor beyond one of these boundaries, but passes continuously through them. Only the knowledge of entities encounters a limit in them.

Prejudices of one kind or another are hard to dispel from our own thinking. They have saturated all of our concepts, and constantly draw nourishment from the fact that both limits are projected from the subject like horizons onto the existing world. This is why the illusion that they are ontological boundaries arises again and again. It is obligatory to see through this illusion for the sake of understanding the phenomenon of being-in-itself in cognition, and especially for understanding the limits of cognizability.

Once this has become clear, the appearance of the gnoseologically nonrational acquires a special importance. This is because now the cognizable is presented as a finite portion of that which is, and the natural center of gravity of the complete object (the *objiciendum*) does not lie only beyond the first, but also beyond the second boundary. It lies not only in the transobjective, but also in the transintelligible. This is the reason why all cognitive progress tends toward what is incognizable, and why every series of basic problems urges us on toward ultimate nonrational problems.

The transintelligible is, so to speak, the infinite remainder of all substantive problems, those which draw a limit to the possible advance [162] of finite cognition. “That which is” does not need to be limited at all. We do not feel the burden of this remainder in everyday life only because our openness to being is adapted to what is vitally relevant and does not burden itself with irrelevant things. Moreover, it is the nature of the nonrational to appear as a limit phenomenon of cognition—just barely comprehensible in its negation, so to speak. The nonrational is precisely the dialectical sublation of setting “what is” over against possible knowers; only that which is set over against us can be directly grasped.

d) The Being-in-Itself of the Nonrational

The appearance of the nonrational in the phenomenon of cognition has decisive significance for the givenness of being-in-itself. This significance does not lie in the fact that the nonrational “is” in some sense “more” than the rational. It lies in the fact that the being-in-itself of the whole field of cognitive objects obtrudes more strikingly. It has the same meaning as does the transobjective, but intensified.

To be precise, if the object of cognition was reduced to its cognizable transobjective portion, we might still claim that it is nothing other than a possible object for a subject (“object of possible experience” in the correlativistic sense). However, if it also extends beyond the limit of possible objectification, then it is a different matter entirely; it is substantively more than what is comprehensible by means of our categories. It is a contradiction to hold that a thing could be

beyond being “set over against” us and yet still be reducible to being an object for a subject. Here, every sort of dependence on the subject, every relativity to the act of cognition, every correlativity must necessarily disappear. If there is something incognizable, then it must necessarily exist independently of the subject. It has to possess being-in-itself.

If the whole object of cognition (the *objiciendum*) is split into rational and nonrational portions by the limit of cognizability, and if the nonrational necessarily turns out to possess being-in-itself, then the rational aspect of it—that is, both the objectified (known) as well as the objectifiable (knowable) part of the transobjective—must also have being-in-itself. This means that the object of cognition, as a whole, must possess being-in-itself. If being-in-itself belongs to the object at all, then it exists—by its very nature—indifferently to objectification and objectifiability, and is thus also indifferent with respect to the boundaries they erect to knowledge.

The complete object is homogeneous under all circumstances. If one part of it is relative to a subject, then the whole object is also relative. If a part of it has being-in-itself, then the whole object necessarily possesses being-in-itself.

Simply because some part of the total object is objectifiable, this does not mean that it may be reduced to its objectified being. Becoming an object does not attenuate [163] its ontological character. This determination remains extrinsic to “what is” as such.

The phenomenon of the nonrational casts the brightest light on the objectified and the objectifiable because in the nonrational the evidence of the givenness of being-in-itself is brought nearest; its being-in-itself has the same degree of certainty as does the nonrational.

Section II: Transcendent Affective Acts

Chapter 27: Receptive Affective Acts

a) Place and Structure of the Ontically Fundamental Acts

Among the transcendent acts, cognition is the most transparent, pure, and objective. It is not the strongest testimony to being-in-itself, however. Taken in isolation, skepticism has an easy time with it. Its advantage in terms of objectivity is outweighed by the disadvantage that it is a secondary act in the context of everyday life. It always has to extricate itself from a nexus of more deeply rooted acts that are just as transcendent as it is. Indeed, most of the time it never simply stands out from all the rest, but remains intertwined in their nexus. Only the scientific attitude liberates it. At that moment it becomes vulnerable to skepticism. The earthly realm in which it is rooted drops away from under its feet, as it were.

This embeddedness of cognition is the essential issue for the ontological problematic. In the context of vital activity, cognition extends more deeply into the whole of “what is.” This is because the act context surrounding the bearer of an act is a part of the world, it is the ontological context in which it exists.

Among the transcendent acts, cognition is the only one that is non-affective. The others all have a component of activity, energy, struggle, initiative, risk, suffering, or of being impacted by something. Their affective character consists in this. Every interaction with people, all dealings with things, all experience, striving, desire, deed, action, willing, and being-disposed-towards something belongs here; likewise every success and failure, suffering, enduring, but also expecting, hoping, and fearing. Indeed, even the inner adoption of an attitude towards something, a reaction to value, a value response is a part of this act context. These acts do not just stand there separately in isolation in everyday life, they flow into one another; on the other hand, differentiating between them can go on indefinitely. Analysis should not make the fluid boundaries between them artificially sharp, nor reduce their multiplicity by means of arbitrarily imposed schemes of classification.

What we are concerned with here is precisely what is common to them all: the transcendence of the act and the being-in-itself of the object. In this respect, [164] they are superior to the act of cognition. It will be shown that the thorough-going conviction we possess regarding the being-in-itself of the world in which we live rests not so much on perception as on the experienced resistance that the real provides to the activity of the subject—thus, it rests on a broad foundation of life experience supplied by the affective acts.

When the analysis of cognition proceeds to the network of acts in the background of cognition, it passes from the ontically secondary to the ontically primary and fundamental, but these are also the less transparent and analyzable. The analysis has the advantage that these acts know only a single mode of being of objects, the real mode. Through their type of transcendence we only deal with real being-in-itself. In the analysis, we are thus permitted to leave behind the cumbersome concept of being-in-itself and speak directly about “reality.” It should not be forgotten, however, that by “reality” we are not dealing with one kind of being-in-itself, but with being-in-itself as such.

With the active (spontaneous) acts we have the additional advantage that in them the act consciousness distinguishes between the intentional and real object, which is not the case in cognition. In cognition, it is theory that first brings to light the pre-formed cognitive entity (thought, representation, belief). In willing, in contrast, the goal posited in advance is already distinguished from the goal to be achieved. The act itself moves in the charged relation between one and the other.

b) The Characteristic Quality of Receptive Affective Acts

All transcendent acts have the form of a relation between an existing subject and an existing object. They are the acts of the very subject who knows, and their objects are basically the same as those that can also be cognized. But the structure of the act is different. In the cognitive relation the object remains untouched, unmodified, and the subject is at any rate not affected in its vital *habitus*, but only modified in terms of the content of its consciousness.

Both differ with transcendent affective acts: the object in spontaneous acts, the subject in all of them, but most palpably in those acts with a receptive character.

We should begin with the receptive affective acts here because in them the mode of givenness of real *Dasein* has its purest distinctive form and its most immediate significance. These are the types of acts that we call “experiencing,” “living through,” and “suffering” in their manifold varieties. In a certain way, “enduring” also belongs to this type, at least if we are not dealing with its aspect of “being-done-with” something, but with the purely receptive factor of “having-to-bear” something. [165]

What these acts have in common is that in them something “befalls” the subject. The subject itself undergoes or experiences “that which befalls” it in the form of a very specific kind of being-affected.

This being-affected is a completely real experience. Because it is by its very nature a being-affected “by something,” the reality of that which befalls it unavoidably makes itself known. It is that reality which is perceived as the matter of concern, that which happens to it, or the obtrusive element in being-affected.

In suffering, the obtrusiveness of that which befalls us is particularly harsh. It is even so in the most superficial case; when we receive a physical blow or shove, it dramatically teaches us something about the reality of the something doing the hitting or shoving more than any argument. No causal argumentation, reflection, or association is necessary here. The striking cogency of that which befalls us is immediately identical with the consciousness of being-affected.

It is no different when one is defeated in battle, whether in physical or spiritual struggle, when one succumbs to mental pressure, or even when one is yanked upwards by an alien force: the prevailing, oppressing, or supporting force is perceived immediately as real in our being-affected by it.

In basic living through and experiencing this kind of being-affected is not so dramatic. For that reason, it is infinitely richer in content. In these two types of acts, the immediate consciousness of all that happens to us and to others predominates.

c) That Which Befalls Us and Being-Affected: The Hardness of the Real and our Being Subjected to It

There are further refinements to be made, however. In “living through,” the emphasis on the ego is more in the foreground. “Experience” is more objective, it shows a more conscious stance-taking towards what befalls us, and stands nearer to cognition. The one who is undergoing something is more absorbed into the experience. Correspondingly, in living through something the being-affected is a more immediate and stronger sort. Its kind of being-affected lies closer to suffering.

Nevertheless, experience is not at all lacking a kind of being-affected either. We must not be misled by the epistemological way of speaking that counts all experience as cognition. The experience of which we are speaking here still remains far “this side” of cognition and has nothing in common with empiricism; its correlate is not an object of observation, but an incident that “befalls” someone. A simple experience in this sense is when someone whom I trusted deceives me; I experience in it not only the deception itself, but also the human being as dishonest. This may be transferred directly to cognition; but the way that what is experienced imposes itself and is perceived is not reducible to it. Being-affected is not a grasping. [166]

In this way, we live and experience events, situations, tensions and resolutions, into which we are in some way enlisted, or in the midst of which we exist. We are affected by them in the degree to which we are enlisted in them; but in the degree to which we are affected, the reality of the events or situations is more or less strikingly given. There is no doubt that the consciousness of the reality of every given situation does not await cognition. Instead, conversely, the reality of cognition—where it arises—is always already scaffolded by the primary reality of living.

This also becomes quite evident in the way that we experience the consequences of our actions. It is not an experience “of” them, such as speaking and hearing; not a detached acquisition of knowledge about them. It is occasionally a quite sensitive getting a feeling for them, or a being struck by them. We have to savor the consequences of our own actions, we cannot get around them, we have to take them on board. They are there and weigh on us.

It is the same kind of experience when other people act towards me, when they treat me well or badly: I “experience” the treatment. In the same way, I also “experience” their disposition toward me, and both of these not at all in the sense of cognition. I may even be mistaken about their intentions and misunderstand them; I can even be completely wrong about the way I am treated in the experience. But I have “experience” nevertheless; I have been affected by them.

I can suspend cognition within certain limits, and I can redirect my attention. I cannot suspend what is experienced, as it does not wait for my attention to be drawn to it. That which befalls us as such is inexorable, it does not ask whether I am prepared, it happens to me. It precisely “befalls” me. I can perhaps avoid it to some extent, but only insofar as I foresee it; I cannot avoid it without actively engaging with it and in this way evoking a new experience of being affected. Avoidance has narrow limits, and it has nothing in common with detached standing by and watching. Here there is no selective attentiveness to what is wanted or to what is found interesting as there is with cognition. Human being, standing in the pull of events, cannot experience something or not experience it at will. Instead, we experience what befalls us, no more and no less. Humankind is subject to this law for the duration of its life.

There is a likeness to fate here, provided we do not understand this term in a fatalistic, metaphysical sense. We are not talking about the prearrangement of events, but simply with their arising on the basis of powers over which we have no control. It is our standing in the midst of the wide current of the flow of reality, which human beings have not created and cannot predict, whose impacts on their own lives they cannot impede. At the individual level this standing in the midst of the flow is neither passive nor defenseless. But at the level of the whole, it is both. Only when something befalls us is our activity engaged. What

lies at its basis is precisely the [167] unsought, uncreated, and (in general) through no fault of one's own, completely exposed and fragile nature of humankind being pulled into and being subjected to the current of real events—the hardness of the real experienced ever-anew, as it were—and this is true independently of whether and to what extent the current of events is also cognized.

It is precisely this hardness of the real that we encounter in being-affected. It is the real being-in-itself of relations, occurrences, and situations that is directly manifest to us.

d) The Idea of Fate: Experience and Cognition

In the same way, we ultimately “experience” and “live through” everything that reaches into the domain of our own lives. We experience the course of the world, suffer our own fate, live through success and failure—not only our own, but also that of others, to the degree that we participate in it. We also live through the shared, public events, the ongoing course of history. According to the degree of our involvement in communal political life we are affected by it; we can also be shaken, crushed, disgusted, or exalted by it.

The average person experiences the social relations in which he stands as a kind of enduring background from which particular occurrences then extract him. He experiences them the way that we experience the taste of our daily bread; he experiences them affirming or denying, supported by or oppressed by them, but he cannot readily get out of them. He is trapped in them. This captivity is in turn perceived as a force, as pressure, as fate. It is the weight, the resistance, the hardness of the real which is experienced, lived through, or suffered here too as everywhere else: an eminent, immediate certainty of being-in-itself.

Again, this does not entail that we cognize what is experienced. It is not only the case that for some time we have not understood what this certainty is based on; in most cases we do not even have a bare knowledge of the facts about what the existing relations really are. It is precisely our own standing in the midst of the relations that makes understanding difficult. The epigone more easily recognizes them from a historical distance, but he no longer experiences and lives through them. He is not affected by them.

In all experiencing, living through, and suffering there is an aspect of “enduring,” or at least of “having to endure.” To be sure, it is limited to that which is perceived as difficult, hard, or bitter; however, it is precisely the things of such a sort that befall us which best communicate the significance of the testimony of reality. The “having to” here is a genuine being-compelled; it displays quite clearly the irresistibility and unavoidability of events and is perceived as their “inex-

orability”—the terrifying indifference, as it were, of that which befalls those who must bear it. [168]

This feeling, metaphysically intensified, is the soil in which the idea of fate has grown, and from which it continues to draw nourishment up to the present day. What is quite naïve about it is the idea of predetermination, the vision of doom (*εἰμαρμένη* [destiny]), whose obvious teleological pattern betrays its anthropomorphism. In such an interpretation, the understanding of the superior power of the world process generally implied in it is splendid and still recognizable. In broader terms, this power is nothing other than the weight of reality whose inexorability is experienced in the various forms of being-affected. The metaphysical interpretation that this weight of reality is given by the idea of fate is the best proof that experience is not cognition (knowing, understanding). In cognition, the structure of the real context on which it is itself based is fundamentally misunderstood.

This point casts even more light on the relation between experience and cognition. Both may validate the same real occurrence, and in both of them one and the same thing is then brought to givenness in terms of content. But the kind of givenness remains fundamentally different: in experience there is the human being's being-seized by occurrences, a coming-over-him of the unavoidable, while in cognition there is a remaining at a distance or even an independence from something, so to speak, without our being touched by it.

This is perhaps the characteristic contrast: experiencing is not cognition because it is instead a being-seized by occurrences. What is essential in this relation is that in the life of humankind on the whole being-seized takes priority over cognition. It is not that being-seized already extends in advance to all objects of possible experience; the scope of cultivated cognition is broader than this. But the reality of the world in which cognition plays out and which it knows is first and foremost given through our being-seized by the stream of events in which cognition exists.

Being-seized is not merely an image. It is something quite real that happens to us, an actual being-negatively-affected. In just this way it resonates throughout the weaker gradations of being-affected: being shaken by something, being struck by something, being deeply moved, and indeed resonates even in exaltation, being touched, being impressed, being taken with something, being enamored with something. At the lower end of this scale we should place being interested, in which genuine being-affected as good as disappears. We can look upon it as the stepping-stone to cognition.

Chapter 28: Gradations of Experience and Unity of Reality

a) Experience of Resistance and the Reality of Things

Closely related to these act phenomena is the consciousness of resistance in inhibited activity. It is distinguished from purely receptive experience or suffering by the engaged prior spontaneity [169] (desiring, striving, willing) that endures the resistance. To that extent, half of this phenomenon already belongs to another category of acts. Even so, the experience of inhibition is not identical with the striving that is inhibited; and on the other hand, the receptive acts in general cannot be strictly isolated from the spontaneous ones. Setbacks to the original intentions of the person are already contained in every experiencing and living through, and can be counted as essential factors in the form of being-affected. Thus, we are not concerned here with isolated factors, but precisely with exhibiting the factors always contained in life as a totality.

As soon as we have become attentive to this aspect of experienced resistance, then we cannot be mistaken about the fact that the givenness of reality takes on a particularly concentrated form in it. What is essential here is that it accompanies all levels of human activity, from the lowest to the highest, without any essential alteration in the felt significance of real resistance. Only the style of being-affected changes, but this only concerns the difference in height of the ontological strata from which the resistance stems.

In this respect, we may compare the following series of examples. I want to roll a stone and experience the resistance of its weight; I want to oppose someone and experience his self-defense; I want to take possession of something that does not belong to me and experience the retaliation of the law; I want to convince someone of something and experience the resistance of his autonomous thought. Everywhere it is the same experience of the same real resistance. It is not only the weight of the stone that is real, the self-defense of the one attacked is just as real, as is the power of the prevailing laws or their appointed representative; the autonomy of another's thinking is just as real.

The resistance experienced at the lowest level is particularly dramatic of course. It is a mistake to make it seem as if the senses alone provide us with the givenness of thing-reality. Some basis in experience, included along with what is perceived, is always already fundamental to the resistance lived through. Perception already appears on the prepared soil of a more primitive but more intense experience of reality. It is not as if every case of seeing things must already be preceded by tripping over the same things; the naively experienced resistance is quite readily generalized. The resistance is nevertheless fundamental to the

generalization and therefore does not in any way need to be retrospectively interpreted into the seeing.

This is why, among the senses, the motor senses, including the sense of touch, persistently have a disproportionate degree of certainty of reality. By virtue of their very active mode of functioning (feeling, striking, lifting, etc.), they already depend on inhibited activity.

On the basis of these facts, Max Scheler drew the conclusion that all consciousness of reality rests on the experience of resistance, and he developed this thesis [170] into a “voluntaristic realism.”¹ In this particularly exaggerated form it cannot be maintained, however. First, the multiplicity of affective acts that contribute to the testimony of reality is far more diverse. Secondly, it is a mistake to transfer the mode of givenness to the thing itself; we cannot ascribe a voluntaristic background to the real itself just because the form of consciousness in which it is primarily given has a voluntaristic background. Thirdly, it does not help to rely on affective givenness alone as testimony for the “thingly” real; the form in which it arises with things may be a particularly urgent one, but this holds for everything real in the same way—for the organic, mental, and spiritual no less than for the crudely material. Moreover, it cannot be true that the mode of being-affected in the experience of resistance in external motor inhibition is the most intense. It achieves a completely different significance in the higher forms of experience and suffering.

b) Clarification of the Ontological Concept of Reality

Before we go any further, a justification must be provided for the concept of reality laid at the basis of this investigation. It is not simply the conventional one; the latter privileges the mode of being of things as genuine reality (which of course also corresponds to the original etymological meaning of *realitas*). For naïve consciousness, things are the most proximate representatives of the real. Given their substantiality, they appear to have ontological priority to everything else that may be a part of the world.

It has already been shown above that giving ontological priority to substantiality is not at all justified. It can further be shown that even the substance-character of things is something completely dubious (demonstrating this would be the subject of a far more specific categorial analysis). A third consideration

¹ In which he followed the classical thought of F.[ranz] Bouterwek and Maine de Biran.

may be brought to bear here, which at this point is suggested by the analysis of the act phenomena above.

Things are not only objects of perception, they are also objects of desire, of achievement, of deception, commerce, action, workmanship, utility, contention, and discord. Thus, they exist squarely in the sphere in which human life plays itself out, in the sphere of action and striving, of suffering and struggling, of human relations and situations, as well as historical occurrences. Wherever we deal with the reality of things in the world, we deal just as much with the reality of human relations, situations, conflicts, destinies, and indeed, with the reality of the course of history. The severity of the problem of reality rests on this: it always concerns the being of things *and* human being, the being of the material *and* that of the spiritual world at the same time and with the same immediacy; and of course it includes everything on the continuum that lies between the former and the latter. [171]

Thus, the concept of reality that is fundamental here is inclusive from the start, one that stands in contrast to all merely thing-oriented interpretations. This is also why it is the natural concept of reality: it alone conceives the “real world” in which we live as unified. It is conceived as a world that contains heterogeneous elements linked and entangled in manifold ways: living and non-living entities, tangible and spiritual processes. The same mode of being covers matter and spirit; this is why matter and spirit display the same fundamental factors of individuality and temporality. Spiritual being also comes to be and passes away in time, is unique and unrepeatable in every individuation, as soon as it is past. It is distinguished from the tangible only by spatiality.

It is the basic error of materialism to take only what is extended as real. Matter is indeed extended, but not only matter is real. Spatiality is not the decisive (specific) trait of the real, but time is. Size, measure, or visibility do not characterize the real; instead, it is becoming, process, singularity, duration, succession, and simultaneity.

c) Reality and Temporality

This ontological concept of reality depends completely on the unity and singularity of real time. The existence of such a thing is often disputed today; we have dissolved the unity of time into a plurality of times. We begin with the difference between occurrences in time—such as that between historical and natural occurrences—and ascribe this difference to time itself. Or we even interpret the time stream itself as a production of events (a “temporalizing”); and since this is very different for nature and history, we come to believe that time itself

also has to be different. In this way, however, we not only cancel out the unity of the world, which is simply both natural and historical at once, but also the meaning of all-pervasive simultaneity and succession as such, which envelop and link everything that happens.

What is essential about real time is that it encompasses everything real without regard to difference of kind or level, that it unifies natural and historical, mental and material events. We see this most clearly from the perspective of the field of history, since it makes the most extensive use of all-pervasive simultaneity; its measure of time is derived from natural events, for it measures according to days, years, and centuries. Thus, it explicitly presupposes the complete parallelism of *all* events, physical as well as human-historical ones, in a *single* time.

An analysis of time that ignores this phenomenon of unity is a false analysis. An ontology of the real that rests on [172] such an act of denial would be a false ontology of the real. It would encompass only a fragment of the real, only the lower strata. The way of being of the higher strata would remain misunderstood.

This becomes quite apparent in the analysis of the transcendent affective acts, and it has already become obtrusive in the first group of them, the receptive acts. The characteristic hardness of the real is directly given in everything that obtrudes itself in experiencing, living through, and suffering. The being-affected of living through things is relatively weak or even superficial precisely among things. It reaches its fullest weight in the situations and fortunes that befall us in the human sphere. This is proof that the genuine core of the givenness of reality consists in the latter, and not in things.

d) Cognition and Affective Consciousness of Reality

As has been shown, the phenomenon of cognition cannot fully account for the claim to reality that it itself has raised, and so it can account even less for the complete certainty of the reality in which we live. The traditional compartmentalization of the problem of cognition cuts it off from its natural basis. The latter lies in the context of the phenomena of everyday life. This compartmentalization is a consequence of the overly high expectations which, since Kant, we have linked with the task of the *Critique*. It begins with the prejudice that all primary givenness lies in the field of cognition. The true situation is the converse.

In everyday life there is no isolated cognitive relation, and in science only an approximation to it. Even in this approximation, however, we retroactively leave aside its connection to all primary forms of givenness. The pure “subject-object” relation is ontically secondary. It is already incorporated into a plethora of pri-

many relations to the same objects—things, persons, circumstances, events. The “objects” first of all are not something that we know, but something that “concerns” us practically, something that we have to “face” in life and “grapple” with; something with which we have “to deal,” that we have to utilize, overcome, or endure. Cognition usually limps along behind.

In this way, for example, even persons can also become objects of cognition. It is just that in everyday life it usually never comes to this; the distance required, the attitude of detached standing aloof and intellectual penetration is not so easy to muster and must first be wrested from the immediate and urgent. First of all, we encounter other persons as forces with which we must come to terms, make pacts with, make do with, or struggle with; or we encounter them as decisive factors in the circumstances in which we find ourselves and in which we have to find our own way. When, despite this, we want to call them objects, then they are at any rate objects about which we have opinions, love and hate, etc., not objects of cognition first of all. [173]

It is the same with everything else that belongs to the sphere of human life as it is with persons. Everywhere the primacy of experience and living through relative to cognition is on display. The affective consciousness of reality is fundamental. Cognition arises as embedded in the context of everyday life. Even where cognition retroactively strips it away and leaves it behind, one side nevertheless remains perennially bound to it. This side is the original givenness of the real *Dasein* of the world that we know. It is the same world in which we live.

Chapter 29: Prospective Affective Acts

a) Life in Anticipation and Anticipatory Being-Affected

The stream of events in which we stand does not only touch us with that which exists in the present. We live in the face of what is coming, and can see it coming within certain limits. Humankind is not entirely without “providence” in life. As limited as it may be, it gives our consciousness of the world a broader footing.

The fact that we see what is coming also gives us the power to direct ourselves to it, to take an anticipatory receptive stance, an active, adaptive preparation. Seeing what is coming is purely cognitive just as little as is consciousness of the present. Cognition of what is coming is even more limited than affective anticipation. We constantly live with the consciousness that the stream of events relentlessly “comes to us” and that this “what is to come” inexorably intrudes into the present independently of genuine cognition, and that we must engage with it to the degree to which it intrudes. We are as certain of what is coming

as we are of what is unknown. Therefore, we come to terms with it as the incalculable, unexpected, surprising. And this reckoning is always right. For there is always some new event in the offing.

Thus, the anticipatory (prospective) affective acts come alongside the receptive affective acts. They are no less transcendent than the latter. Reckoning with what is coming as something inexorable has a very decisive kind of certainty to it, very different from that of consciousness of the present; but it is still genuine certainty of reality. It is a certainty that precedes the givenness of determinate real things. The acts of this kind—their basic types are expectation, presentiment, readiness, preparedness—anticipate living through something and experiencing. Perhaps more correctly, they consist in the anticipation of living through something and experiencing, and no less of suffering, and even of enduring. As such they are at the same time the anticipation of being-affected. Being-affected itself becomes a presentiment in them. It is modified as “anticipatory being-affected.” [174]

The fundamental, universal ontological situation of humankind is thus our being suspended in time. This is no standstill; it is our moving along with the time stream in which the now point is constantly being shifted, and so flowing along with the stream. Consciousness, with its corresponding reality, is bound to this moving present; it cannot get out of it, its *Dasein* is, like the *Dasein* of everything real, present every time. It co-creates the ontic cadence of time. In terms of its content, however, it is not bound to present things, since there is conceiving of and being-seized by both past and future things, although not to an unlimited degree. The peculiar nature of transcendent acts is precisely that they also transcend consciousness’ ties to the present time whose concurrent acts they are.

The anticipation of the future takes place in them. It does not consist in the fact that human being could *realiter* [in reality] live beforehand in the present not yet come—as if being in front of oneself—this we cannot do at all. It instead consists only in the fact that we anticipate the present with consciousness, to which we remain bound in terms of real *Dasein*. We cannot experience or live through what has not yet occurred, but we can plan for it, have a presentiment of it, expect it, be ready for it. This is not nothing. It is deeply characteristic that we are capable not only of anticipation in this sense, but also have the capacity to deal with what preoccupies us and currently concerns us; we live essentially in anticipation. In this way we live in anticipatory being-affected.

New events that we will experience and that will concern us come to us relentlessly. What comes to us is what-is-to-come, and indeed just insofar as it is that which advances toward us. As such, it is already that which concerns us. The transcendent prospective acts are nothing other than particular forms of the general, habitual adjustment to that which advances as such. The impossi-

bility of escape, of avoidance, of stepping outside of the stream of events, together with the tight restriction on every attempt to fend off and influence it, all substantive redirection, give to that which advances as such its tremendous weight of reality, even before it has become actual. At the same time, it gives to the anticipatory acts the weight of a testimony to reality.

Moreover, this anticipatory mode of givenness of reality is uniquely irreducible, and knowledge of the particular constitution of the advancing real is highly fragmentary. If we were dealing with cognition, this would be almost a contradiction—for all *Dasein* is also the *Sosein* of something—but expectation, presentiment, and readiness are not cognition.

b) Real Anticipation: Expectation and Readiness

This can be seen most simply in the act of expectation. Preparing oneself and readiness are also quite closely related to it. That [175] which advances already has a significant preponderance over the here and now in any given present moment; the latter is always already half waved aside. The dark womb of the future keeps us mesmerized. It appears to be an inexhaustible wellspring of fortune and misfortune. What issues from it is always what befalls us, assails us, and overcomes us.

Everyday life conforms to it in its constant expectation of what is coming. In this general sense, expectation is not an illusion, however much it might substantively miss the mark. It acquires its enduring justification in the stream of events—at least in principle, for events are always advancing. Anticipatory being-affected is just as much an actual being-affected by what advances as are living through something and suffering from present situations.

Expectation reckons with the intrusion of something determinate, but it may be deceived by this determinacy. This deception does not in turn cancel out the full sense of anticipatory being-affected. For expectation “can” know not only about its deceptiveness, but it knows about it in fact, and this knowledge is essential to it. It reckons with the determinate in a way no different from the way it reckons with something it is sure of; even in readiness for determinate advancing things there is clearly still a consciousness that it can “eventually” turn out otherwise. This means that in general it actually only reckons with the eventuality, and thus always reckons with the possibility of a different outcome.

Expectation is completely oriented toward the real in this way. It can even be oriented by minimal foresight, e.g., on the basis of a superficial analogy that for its part need not be conscious at all. We are not dealing with cognition of what is advancing. We are determined by expectation in our behavior, but not in our cog-

nition. It is not only the outcome that distinguishes between the expected and the actually arising event—we might say between the intentional and the real object of expectation—nor does a cognition that perhaps accompanies expectation make the distinction; it is the expectation itself and as such that makes the distinction. It has the consciousness of indeterminacy in itself, and it reckons with this indeterminacy of its own. It can play a very essential role in readiness and in preparation, and we may very well be prepared for something that we do not regard as particularly probable. Consciousness of reality comes clearly to light in the indeterminacy of expectation. This indeterminacy is only an uncertainty about the content of expectation. It is accompanied every time by the even stronger certainty that the course of events will bring complete, irrevocable determination.

On the other hand, the close linkage between expectation and readiness displays yet another facet concerning what is advancing. Readiness and (even more so) preparation for what is coming already constitute an inner, real process of preparing oneself for something. Thus, they are not only a reckoning with [176] what is coming, but already the initiating receptive stance towards its entry into the present—seeking-cover, as it were, in face of its stunning force, or even presenting an initial and anticipatory resistance. The reality of anticipatory being-affected is completely palpable here. Human being has a kind of protective agency in this; its being at the mercy of the stream of events encounters a limit. It is far better adapted to the onslaught of what is advancing by anticipatory being-affected and the power of readiness than through rigid resistance. It is capable of flexible adaptation to the ever-new real context. This is only because it can, in anticipatory being-affected, anticipate its actual becoming-affected and can blunt it thanks to its readiness.

There is a testimony to reality with a totally unique significance in the prospective act of expectation—which we do not see at first glance. This act has been shown to be a perfectly real mode of getting by in daily life, of getting ready for the very same real approaching situations that expectation displays to consciousness. The whole hardness of the real is implied in having to get ready for something.

c) Secondary Forms of Presentiment

In this connection, acts such as presentiment and intimation cannot be entirely excluded. They are distinguished from expectation and readiness by their indeterminacy, their haziness, their fluctuating simulation, their high degree of deceptiveness, their element of play of the imagination and subjectivity, in short,

by their irreality. The substantive feeling of the real is easily lost in them and gives way to illusion.

Ontologically, however, we do not do justice to these acts this way. On one point they are and remain real: namely, in that they are in general a feeling for what is inexorably advancing. On this point they are not deceived, and instead are supported by certainty. Indeed, they are the most preliminarily groping affective testimony of this certainty, a testimony to the reality of what is advancing even before determinate expectation. The dim announcement of events is hidden in them prior to their becoming palpable, the shadow cast ahead of themselves in consciousness, as it were; that which advances of course remains unknowable by its shadows, but that it advances is nevertheless certain.

In presentiment the testimony to reality is set up such that it applies accurately only to the “*Dasein*” of what is coming, but hazily and uncertainly to its *Sosein*. The relativity between *Dasein* and *Sosein* discussed above becomes manifest precisely in this haziness. Consciousness separates what is ontically inseparable. [177]

For the same reason we cannot fail to pay heed to curiosity insofar as it concerns what is to come. It too is a form of living forward into what is advancing, even if the frivolousness of its attitude makes it worlds apart from those acts that incorporate it into their foresight concerning the fatefulness of events. The basis of curiosity is the same anticipatory disposition, even if it stems from dissatisfaction with the present and from the emptiness of boredom. It is the same receptive stance of consciousness oriented ahead, as in expectation and intimation, but with the frivolous affective tone of hunger for new sensations, habitually catching scent of the future, as it were.

As such, curiosity appears to be, as paradoxical as it may sound, more real than the other prospective acts: the indeterminacy of content has not only become absolute in it, but becomes precisely the essential element. Not only does it not expect the determinate, it does not even suspect it, nor does it want to. Its presentiment is not substantive at all. Whatever happens unexpectedly and leads to disappointment is precisely what it is set up for: being surprised, it wants to be surprised. It wants to be directly affected out of the blue, and it can want to be so affected because it does not reckon with the seriousness of being-affected. The peculiar thing is that in this it is completely certain of its central concern. It plays a game of certainty. For something new is always in the offing. All uncertainty in our foresight concerns the *Sosein* of what is advancing; here it is not the *Sosein* that is anticipated but only what is advancing as such. In waiting for the unexpected as such, anticipatory being-affected achieves its most adequate form for human providence.

Chapter 30: Genuine Affective Acts of the Prospective Type

a) Act Transcendence in Selective Affective Anticipation

Expectation and its modifications, all the way to the level of curiosity, are neutral in terms of their affective tone. It is otherwise with hope and fear, along with their particular variations. The group of acts based on hope includes living for the sake of what is longed for, having prospects for something, being glad about something, all the way to pleasant anticipation that is already exhausted in the present; the group of acts based on fear includes the diverse kinds of apprehension and unease, anxiety, as well as genuine fear.

Both of these groups of acts share the basic aspect of expectation. What is new in them is the selective value emphasis. Acts of this kind are always certain about what is advancing as such, and the validity of their act transcendence and their givenness of reality consists in this. The value accent in them is not only an affective tone resulting from anticipatory being-affected, but also from a principle of subjective choice. [178]

Hopeful acts move what is wished for in anticipation into the visual field, they preemptively select what is coming with regard to what is valuable in it and hold themselves one-sidedly to it. The fearful acts have the tendency to bring into view in anticipation what is not wished for and adverse, even what is threatening; they preemptively select what is coming with regard to what is disvalued—fascinated, as it were, by its inexorably coming closer—and just as one-sidedly hold themselves to it. The affective tone of elevation corresponds to the first, and the affective tone of gloominess to the latter. The whole way of life of the human being becomes optimistic or pessimistic where there is a greater preponderance of the one or of the other.

It is clear that this affective selective factor brings something quite subjective, irreal, and even patently illusory into both groups of acts. Its real factor is not to be forgotten, however: its reckoning with what is advancing is an eminently real process, and it makes no difference whether this is what is longed for or what is feared or threatening. It means precisely coming to terms with it as with something independent of us, and it is a knowledge of its independence. What is advancing appears unmistakably to fear or to hope as something that only obeys its own existing lawfulness, regularity, or necessity—whether or not what is expected (feared, longed for) enters into it—but in no way can it become what has been long yearned for or be averted through our hoping, longing, or fearing.

Knowledge of this independence is the same as in the case of a cognitive relation to what lies in the future. It has a different significance in these acts, how-

ever, and determines us in terms of our affective tone. Human beings feel quite constrained by the limits of their power with respect to what is yearned for or feared; we “experience” it as impotence to lend a hand to chance or to oppose calamity. This feeling of impotence can escalate to overwhelming proportions with respect to what is threatening.

The “real” element of these acts, despite its subjectivity, lies squarely in the affective tone of impotence, the unique and irreducible testimony of reality in them. It testifies to the being-in-itself of the whole stream of events, to the extent that we are ourselves immersed in it and subjected to it, but not to the being-in-itself of a determinate feared or hoped for thing. This affective tone is most powerful in fear; in it the indifference of what is advancing is perceived in our being-affected by it in a mostly portentous way, and this perception is “real.” In the acts of fear, humankind has the greatest sensitivity to the weight of reality in what is in the offing. This is even more obvious in the stance of preparedness, which we oppose to what is feared. With this disposition, we already execute a real inner reorientation in anticipatory being-affected, and through some type of preparation, provide ourselves with a counterbalance to the weight of that which is inexorably advancing toward us. [179]

b) Coming to Terms with Chance

Also in the optimistic attitude there is no lack of awareness of the ontic indifference of what is advancing on us. All pure hope knows very well the fact that in what is hoped for it is dealing with only a “chance,” and that the decision about the outcome is not its own. The optimism of hope and its positive value for life does not lie in a subjective intensification of chance—such as a fixed faith in its arrival—and is thus not negated by the “illusion of hope;” for the latter only pertains to the blindness of the deluded. The positive aspect of hope lies solely in coming to terms with the lucky chance as the kind of thing that outshines the dark present, as it were. The pleasant anticipation is real here as well and not at all illusory. It is itself already genuine joy and fulfillment.

The real meaning of that great pathos that we like to conjoin to hope as a moral force consists in this, and not in a superstitious guarantee of actualization. The popular image of enduring in a state of hope as if it were a service that could be satisfied by some kind of reward strips hope of its genuine character of transcendence. For it takes away from consciousness the notion that the fulfillment or nonfulfillment in the outcome occurs independently of it. It mistakenly attributes to it an influence on the course of events, darkly intensifies its essence with imagined activity into a kind of metaphysical deed. Hope is misunderstood in

this way, and is sacrificed to the great disappointment of life, to the insight, late in coming, that it has made a fool of itself.

The ethical character of hope as a force in everyday life is misunderstood as well, and rests on the same perversion of its essence, but this cannot be discussed further here. Through this negation of the transcendence of the act in the power of affirmation of life, humankind is led into misfortune. The failure of the view that statically limits itself to a determinate chance and in this way intends to force it has to overwhelm us.

On a smaller scale and brought down to a banal level, as it were, the same relation can be found in all speculation about chance, e. g., in games of chance, the principle of lottery, even in many kinds of gambling on the stock exchange. What the sober player clearly has in his affective undertone is the consciousness of the indifference to his wishes and hopes of the “contingency” decisive for him. In this way too he is oriented toward something real. Only when the fervor of games of chance carries him away does he lose this consciousness and fall prey to the self-deception that he could force “chance.” At this point his behavior is no longer pure speculation. From a subjective point of view, his bluff becomes a kind of hustle. This is why psychologically [180] it is only a small step from this self-deception to the deception of another player—i.e., to an actual hustle.

c) What is Illusory in Anticipatory Being-Affected and the Limits of Act Transcendence

What is contrasted with the givenness of reality in the prospective acts is the element of the illusory. Hope and pleasant anticipation lead to a rosy picture, apprehension and fear to looking at the darker side of things; even a neutral presentiment and intuition tend toward intemperance. These acts are distinguished from simple expectation and preparedness, from all simple coming to terms with what is coming as something unknown, by their inner instability and “irreality.” There is always a snatching at intimations in hoping as well as in apprehension, but at the same time the tendency to misunderstand that which is “real” in intimation—i. e., that it justifiably only reckons with the fact that what advances on us is generally on the way. Hope takes the intuition as a guarantee of what is dreamed of, and it falls prey to the delusion of dreams. Fear is completely absorbed in its self-generated bad omen. It too falsifies what is imagined, but with a portentous opposite valence; its maintenance of and self-consumption by an irreal that will never become actual can be a very real struggle.

The limits of act transcendence are easy to see here. With the illusory element these acts—to the extent that they support it—are thrown back onto their “irreal” side and lose the value of relatedness to reality.

The illusion signifies generally that the feeling for what is in itself gets lost. It is in the domain of affective acts what imagination is in the domain of presentational acts. Imagination roves freely, without a real object; illusion does the same thing, but it too has only self-created, intentional objects. Just as the imagined thing has no epistemic value in the domain of presentation, the illusory has no ontological value.

This is something completely different from the mere distinction between the intentional and real object. This kind of difference exists in error, in deception, in inadequation, in the difference between what is expected and what is encountered, but this does not yet cancel the act transcendence, does not dissolve the relation to reality as such; it only substantively limits it. In contrast, in free imagination and in illusion the whole relation is dissolved. They no longer strike upon anything at all in the stream of real occurrences with their intention; they have emancipated themselves from it. They are not bound to anything on the object side, and so experience no correction from it either. They no longer come to terms with the real and its significance, independence, and indifference to the exercise of these acts.

Instead, they show the same indifference to what is in itself from their side—as if “what is,” along with their being-affected by it, [181] was switched off. Imagination can justify this of course, for it can minimize the indifference where it engages in play for its own sake and does not generate it for cognition. Illusion cannot do this. It is lacking the innocence of play and knowledge of its non-binding nature. With its display of indifference to the real it necessarily takes a gamble in life. Its indifference to it is a self-deception. Illusion cannot really minimize it. The stream of real events brushes aside the illusory just as indifferently as delusions and apprehensions and buries them in their own nothingness.

d) Metaphysical Delusion and Spurious Argumentation

There is something special about dread in this context. It is subject to delusion to a far greater extent than hope, pleasant anticipation, or apprehension, and among the prospective acts it is the most illusory and ontologically equivocal. We frighten ourselves in life mostly without a genuine inducement to fear—such as when someone who was expected fails to appear for a little too long—we picture everything that might have happened, and talk ourselves into be-

lieving it, where the most improbable possibilities take shape. Dread is inventive, aimless, and obstinate in its aimlessness; as often as it might discover its own nullity, it nevertheless stays put in self-deception. Its nature is not to come to terms with what is actually advancing, even if it is merely indeterminate, but is an inner disturbance of equilibrium and a subjective compulsion to self-torture.

Dread is not entirely without an object. It is unilaterally oriented toward what is advancing; and the indeterminacy with which what is advancing appears to it is well-grounded. The status of “being without an object” that we attribute to it is something different. It is, namely, a withdrawal from the feeling for what is actually coming—of which sober expectation is capable—the tendency to falsification of foresight as well as to the production of images and representations that are liberally substituted for what is actually foreseeable (and perhaps also for that which is actually to be feared). What is special about dread is that the real feeling for what is advancing, of which humankind is of course capable, is destroyed by it. The transcendence of the act, its relatedness to reality, is eliminated.

It is well-known that deception and the agony of dread can permeate metaphysical perspectives quite thoroughly. They destroy any calm coming to terms with the real, in theory as in everyday life. This is the point at which ontology has to fend off the falsification that is repeatedly brought into its domain of problems by self-torturing metaphysicians. [182]

Since ancient times, humankind’s fear of death has been unscrupulously exploited by speculative fanatics. Instead of dissuading the ignorant from this fear, they stoke and nourish it with the most daring representations of a beyond. Yet it is as clear as day that any real feeling for what is coming is lacking in it, any evidence that death is even particularly important for humankind at all. As a mere stopping point—and we do not know it as any more than this—it is at any rate not important. Naturally, it must be terrifying for someone who leads his life based exclusively on his own interests and understands the world merely as “his own:” the habitual perversity of taking oneself to be important comes home to roost for egoistic men. Death would be of relative indifference for those who see themselves in an unfalsified ontic attitude as an insignificant individual among individuals, as a drop in the total stream of world events, historical as well as larger cosmic events, and who, in awe of its vastness, know how to be humble. This is the natural disposition of human beings in their as yet uninterrupted rootedness in life. To show off one’s own *Dasein* is always to unroot it, an artificial promoting of the self to the sole existing thing, or even a superstitious intimidation of those who have already been morally thrown off the

rails. As long as this fear does not accompany a vital struggle against dissolution, all fear of death is deluded, self-generated torment.

The metaphysical deception of dread, intensified by an immoral and dissolute self-torture, is the inexhaustible source of limitless error. It strikes us as bizarre when we see sincere thinkers fall prey to this deception in their construction of philosophical theories and turn dread into an inception of self-reflection on authenticity and what is genuine in human being.²

Dread is precisely the worst conceivable guide to the genuine and authentic. It readily falls prey to every deception—whether a traditional or self-imposed delusion. The person filled with dread is such that he is incapable of achieving a sober vision of life and what is, in the way that it is. He is predisposed to submit to every deception, both in everyday life as well as in theory. It is, philosophically speaking, the most irredeemably enmeshed in reflection, which in principle obstructs the return to the *intentio recta* and the attitude of ontological thinking.

Chapter 31: Spontaneous Affective Acts

a) Activity and its Type of Act Transcendence

Humankind lives not only in expectation of what lies in the future, whether it be in preparedness for important events or in a playful desire for sensations, [183] or whether in fearing or in hoping. We live in active anticipation of the future. Our longing, willing, acting, doing, even our inner attitude and disposition in germinal form, is anticipation and predetermination. This is an essential law of these acts.

That which already is as it is no longer remains open to human decision and to active human access, neither the past that he has experienced nor the genuinely present that he is experiencing at the moment. Both already possess their complete form in themselves, and no power in the world can alter them. Humankind cannot influence what has once become and happened any longer. But perhaps within certain limits we can influence that which is yet to come. We can insert our decisions into the chain of conditions that shape what is advancing. Only what lies in the future lies open to our initiative.

² Martin Heidegger has done this in his famous analysis of dread, and indeed by giving a particular privilege to fear of death. In this he follows the most deplorable and cunning of all self-torturers known to history, Søren Kierkegaard.

This is the reason why all active (spontaneous) acts are prospectively oriented. But they are also completely different from the anticipatory acts, for these are still completely receptive, much influenced by anticipatory being-affected. In willing and doing there is no anticipatory being-affected, no acceptance, no passive standing open. Instead, they are the end of subjection and fatalism; they are powers that human beings oppose to their own impotence of their own accord. They really are the marvel of human nature: they actuate that which is advancing from a distance as it is closing in, as it were; and at the limits of human providence and human instruments of power, they master it.

This situation is in fact extremely remarkable. What is experienceable in the stream of events is no longer tractable, and what is still tractable in it—and precisely as long as it is so—is not experienceable. This is what the image of the veil that is hung before the future signifies for us. If the veil were completely impenetrable, then for us all anticipatory life and thereby all guiding and doing would be cut off; our subjection to world events would be complete. The narrow tear in the veil, the tightly bound providence of humankind, paired with our capacity for activity, i.e., the realization of what is proposed in advance, relieves us of fatalism.

We see that the affective transcendent acts are just as transcendent as the experiencing and the expectant acts. But their transcendence is of a different sort. They do not consist in the givenness of the real, but in the initial inclination to produce it; this is why the acting person is not the one affected, but something in the person's life surroundings is affected. If, in these acts, we are only dealing with a goal as something that is posited in consciousness, then the transcendence of the act might be disputed; but we are more importantly dealing with the realization of the goal. This is why willing is directed only to what is achievable, to that for which it sees the means, but not to what is dreamed, for which it does not have the power. In this it is distinguished from impotent wishing and longing. Willing can [184] be deceived about its ability, but even in the deception it originally reckons with the real chance of achievement and thereby unequivocally manifests its transcendence. Even the impossible may be longed for. To will it while knowing of its impossibility, however, is insanity.

Not all willing transitions into acting, but all willing has the tendency to transition into action. The inclination is essential to it, otherwise it is not willing at all. Thus, in will the real transcendence of the act is always already complete in advance; it does not wait for the realization of what is willed. Correspondingly, the real sphere into which it pushes forward is always already preselected with an eye toward the means of its possible realization. The more determinately and circumspectly this selection is accomplished, the more unequivocally the tran-

scendence of the teleological act is, even at its inception, withdrawn from the impotent immanence of dreamy wishing.

b) Immediate Spontaneity and Mediated Receptivity

The transcendence of the active acts is thus more emphatic than that of the receptive. It is immediate, palpable real transcendence, a force for steering and effecting, which manifests its real significance in the world as an intervention in it.

Because of this, will and deed (along with all of the acts related to them) are serially inserted homogeneously into the real context of events and imply at the same time the knowledge of this insertion. The emphasis lies on knowledge here. The serial insertion does not proceed from these acts alone. All acts in principle already exist as such in the same real context of events; this is why there is always already a reaction to the real in them. But in acts of will and deed this insertion into events palpably comes to the fore for the act-consciousness itself. The acting subject cannot imagine that it is standing there uninvolved without having a world “on” which it acts. Acting is its being involved in it, and this is an extremely urgent conscious involvement, burdening consciousness with responsibility. It is absolutely irreducible.

Since the real world, to which will and deed see themselves related, is the same as the world to which the receptive acts and cognition find themselves related, the being-in-itself of this real world is brought to givenness once more in a new mode of significance through the real transcendence of the act of will.

This givenness nevertheless does not belong solely and as such to the activity. It belongs more to the indirect receptivity that accompanies all spontaneous acts and is directly involved in them. All being-given has the form of receptivity and—for affective acts—of being-affected. Thus, in the spontaneous acts in which the real comes to affective givenness for willing and acting in fact three very different aspects of the accompanying receptivity [185] are revealed.

In first place, there is the resistance of the real to activity, which, as shown above, constitutes a special form of experience. On the basis of the real transcendence of the spontaneous acts exhibited above, this phenomenon can now be explained at a deeper level.

All human action inserts itself into a real context that already has its own fixed determinacy. Action finds its means in it, but also the limits of what is possible for it. Only those ends for which the means offer themselves can be realized in it. It is not just success or failure in the result that decide the realizability of human ends; in reality, in willing itself the means are already taken into ac-

count, and corresponding to them (within the limits of the foreseeable) the ends are preselected for attainability.

Where the realization encompasses a long chain of individual actions there is a constant struggle with the variability of chance. It moves through the stages of ever-novel beginning, continuation, failure, learning, trying, and beginning again. It is a slow progress in which every step must be wrested from the resistance of the real. What we call “labor” in everyday life is essentially just such a wresting of something from the real, no matter what kind of labor it is. It is not only achievement that constitutes labor; a peculiar mode of experience that first makes the achievement possible belongs just as much to it. Human being always first “experiences” the thing on which he labors in its processual character. However, the thing discloses itself to us in the resistance that it affords—in the very resistance through which it appears to close itself off to us. In the resistance of the thing, humankind gets to feel the weight of its determinateness. We grapple with its particular kind of lawful regularity. Because we experience it in this way, we wrest this patterned regularity from it and learn to control it.

What is experienced this way in the resistance of things is not only the hardness of their reality, but the human being’s own power to master them. This power too, although it consists in intervening, understanding, and adapting, is real, and the experience that a human being creates with it is real experience.

c) Reflexive Being-Affected of the Person in their own Action

The activity expressed in willing and acting is not limited in application to things as real objects. This activity extends to persons. Labor too does not take place just for the sake of things; the interests of persons stand behind it. Action in the narrower sense is always directed towards and against persons this way. The “second” and authentic real object of action, of willing, and even of disposition, is the other person. They are the directly affected party in these acts. [186]

The second aspect of the givenness of reality in the spontaneous acts depends on this. At first of course it appears to be the reverse. The one acted upon is the one affected, not the one acting; the agent can, so it seems, experience at most the resistance of the other person, their defense, their countermove. This is not what we are talking about here; this belongs to the experience of resistance. There is another way in which the agent experiences the other person as a real object.

By virtue of the fact that the other person is the affected party, the agent experiences his action and will reflected back on their own action, on the person themselves. This reveals that action and will have the peculiar power to “affect”

the person quite distinctly and very delicately, to “sketch” them, and to a certain extent to label them. These are the apparently imponderable factors of moral value and disvalue, rooted beyond the real, which reflect back on the agent and then adhere to the agent as its own—whether they recognize this or deny it, realize it or mistake it. We are not dealing with the ideal content of values in this case, but with the fulfillment or failure to fulfill the ideal demand that stems from them in the real behavior of humankind. Therefore, they have a real significance in the world of human actuality, a significance that increases immeasurably and can supersede any external hardness of the real.

This significance does not consist in the human interpretation of what is valuable or nonvaluable. Instead, it lies at the basis of all interpretation and explanation. It is an irreducible, elementary phenomenon that action and will learn their value preference precisely through what they bring about concerning real persons in the world—where the cause does not first come from external events (the results), but already lies in the intention. For the cause already has its significance in the persons’ being-affected relative to the intention of the acting and willing agent. This significance is reflected onto the one who willed it to be so. It burdens us, “portrays” us in a certain light, and is one that falls back on us. We cannot escape the reflection of what we want on ourselves—whether as guilt or as merit—it is completed for us without our assistance, as curse or as blessing of our deeds. It does not subsist in our intention, nor solely in the value judgment of the community, but in itself. It is inexorable, a genuine, real “reflexive being-affected,” no less than a direct being-affected by something befalling us from the outside.

It precisely “befalls” the guilty party in fact as an inner consequence of the deed; and we “experience” it no differently than we experience the visible consequences of our acts externally. The way in which it is experienced and perceived by us corresponds to this sense of externality. Reflexive being-affected is perceived precisely as something independent of perception, as a fate descending upon the guilty party, assaulting us and relentless in its own way. It falls to us as something that [187] we must bear, something that we cannot shake off, even if it deeply depresses and oppresses us.

Put briefly, this means that what descends upon us, that by which we are reflexively affected in our willing and acting, is experienced by us in reflexive being-affected as an eminently real event.

d) The Reality of Persons for Persons

If we were concerned here only with the external consequences of acts, then morally speaking reflexive being-affected would only be a particular form of experience. This would correspond to the interpretation provided by ethical consequentialism. The true weight of the *ethos* is more deeply rooted in the first inklings of initiative, in germinal willing, in the inner stance. Disposition as such, from which action and offense spring, already shows the transcendence of being directed to the other person prior to all determinate willing. In this way, the moral demand is already originally characterized by moral value and disvalue, is already underwritten by the reflexive being-affected of an act that could proceed from it in the moment of decision. It could not be otherwise; the being-affected of the other person is already anticipated in it as the very inception of possible intention.

It becomes apparent here that in relation to practical life—and this is the decisive perspective for everyday life—the ontological weight of persons for persons is more urgent and directly perceived than the weight of things and states of affairs. In terms of things and our traffic with them, as long as no persons are co-affected there is no genuine reflexive being-affected of the person himself. The fact that no skeptical or idealistic theory has risked denying reality to persons in the same way that they have denied it to things corroborates this.

This principle already has a long history in the modern era. There are theories under its influence that ascribe genuine reality to persons alone and deny it to things. This way we reify a difference of givenness into a difference of being—a mistake which we have already encountered repeatedly. In light of this error, we have to hold that persons and their acts do not have a greater reality than things and their relations; they just belong to a higher stratum of the real, have an incomparably higher ontological and structural fullness, and are substantively higher entities. Therefore, they have for us a far weightier kind of “givenness of reality;” for givenness does not depend on the way of being, but on practical relevance. Their way of being is precisely the same, however, which is why persons and things exist collectively with one another in one real world and one real time, and precisely through this ontological context lead the multiplicity of situations—which are conditioned just as much by things and persons—back to *one* level. [188]

The basic ontological phenomenon of reality as such is precisely the unity of its way of being along with a multiplicity of ontological levels and human significances. The basis of this difference of givenness lies in the immeasurably richer affective connection between person and person. This connection works itself out in the inordinate abundance and significance of transcendent affective

acts. There is no connection with things and states of affairs of the same depth and interiority for us. This is why skepticism has such an easy time of it when it refers the disputed relation of transcendence solely to things. This is precisely its mistake: it acts as if there is a real world of things that is not at the same time a world of persons and their interaction with these things in relation to persons.

e) The Apparent Division in Reality: Theoretical Errors

Skepticism conceals the significant reality of persons; realism about persons recognizes it, but conceals its irreducible connection with the ontological weight of things. They are both half the story, and both are counterproductive as soon as we have the whole pertinent phenomenal context before our eyes. We cannot allow persons to have the reality that we deny to things and events. Persons are far too deeply embedded in the real context of events to think that this is the case, and they are affected by it from all sides. If they are real, then their being-affected is also real. Then the whole sphere in which their lives and their struggles over possessions, goods, power, etc., play out, is also real. If things and events are not real, then being-affected by them is not real either; then the affected persons would not be real either.

“Reality” is not the ontological privilege of some specific type of being. It does not increase with ontological form, with organization, with value height. It either belongs to everything that arises and passes away in time or to nothing. It makes no sense to claim that a human being is more real than the air that he breathes—or conversely, that the air is more real—for breathing itself can only be either a real or a non-real process. In the first case, both are real; in the second, both are unreal. This division of reality is a theoretical error.

The following conclusion should be drawn instead: if there is an irreducible givenness of other persons with the full weight of their reality in a person’s own reflexive being-affected, then this weight is necessarily transferred to the whole sphere in which the lives of persons play themselves out, i.e., to things, events, relations, situations, in short, to the whole world context of which their lives are an excerpt.

In principle, this is a very simple piece of wisdom. Just as things are involved in human deeds, the being of human being is involved in things [189] occurrences. A falling stone can strike down a human being, and with the body it also strikes down the spiritual being of the person supported by it. Only a metaphysical prejudice could mistake such a plain and familiar connection.

Set once more in its rightful place, ontology secures the strongest and most irreducible givenness of reality from the weight of practical life and especially of

ethos, not only for the highest forms of the real, but for the whole world context. It is certain that its unified mode of being is independent of its mode of givenness.

Chapter 32: Inner Activity and Freedom

a) The Characteristic Quality of Interpersonal Ties

The dispositional acts constitute a special topic insofar as they stand “this side” of all action, even of all goal setting. It is commonly held that goodwill and envy, sympathy and jealousy, adoration and contempt, hate and love are something purely inner that is lacking all transcendence; we then take the objects of these acts to be purely intentional.

The opposite is true. It is precisely the intentional object that is hard to show in them—unless we understand it purely schematically as a correlate of the act. A genuine dispositional act, however, is never without a real object. Its real object is always a person.

No one can love or hate without “someone” to love or to hate. Even where we are dealing with something specific about someone we love, the person is nonetheless implicated. We can of course be amazed by natural phenomena, but in that case our amazement is more like marveling at something, not an authentic disposition toward the marvel, and it does not really benefit what is marveled at. The person marveling knows that it is not advantageous for the object, and that the object is unaffected by it. On the other hand, we can disdain gold, adore iron, can love a country or a city, can be attached to useful objects. In fact, we disdain the power that drags men down, adore the weapon that ennobles him, love the living space that is the soil and field of his acts, become attached to the mute equipment of his labor and his industriousness. The being of the person is always co-implicated, and the disposition is indirectly related to it.

However, what really disappears in the disposition is its active teleological factor. It is not entirely excluded, but it has sunk back down into potentiality, or rather it is not yet awakened to activity. In this way, the determinate goal as an object of active intention disappears, and the consciously anticipatory character of the act disappears along with it. But it exists potentially. It remains palpable in its constant capacity for irruption. [190]

This tangibility of disposition—e.g., the exasperation felt at those who recklessly exploit personal situations—exists both in the bearer of the disposition as well as the affected person. Indeed, it is for both at once a presentiment of possible irruption. The will only lies dormant in the disposition, and along with it,

the act; or it is arrested due to its impotence to act. It will become free and transition into action at the first opportunity. To this extent, activity and anticipation are already implicit in disposition, and the reflexive being-affected of the person himself and the real givenness of the other person are implicit in disposition as well.

This givenness comes to expression in still other ways. Just as the will reckons very specifically with another's will, involves them in its luck, tries to counter them, disposition also already reckons with the disposition of the other. Indeed, since the latter essentially pertains to a person, it means first of all that it pertains to the person as a specific disposition towards someone. We do not adore and disdain indiscriminately, nor just in relation to extrinsic properties, but in relation to the total inner stance, i.e., in relation to the other disposition. We admire nobility and self-sacrifice, despise pettiness in a person, love the person in awareness of their goodness, of their openness, their moral superiority.

Every disposition is already related to another disposition. In everyday life, we are not acquainted with it isolated on its own. In the vital face to face encounter of persons this relatedness is many-sided and all-pervasive. It binds human beings together with yet another deeper and more primal tie than will, action, living through, and experience in their multiply stratified being with one another. It forms a network of highly urgent, real relational threads, through which persons—even before conscious awareness—are given to one another in their profoundly felt actuality. It is an eminent form of givenness of reality.

b) Primary Givenness in Reaction

This tie does not superimpose itself secondarily over the more dramatic, tougher tie of being-affected in action. It always already preexists it as something underlying it, and all the drama of the givenness of reality appearing in consciousness arises against this background—in such a way that the primary givenness of persons is always already included in it.

How other dispositions are actually given to us is a very puzzling matter. The ontic mode of contact is conditioned by a complicated network of factors. The givenness itself remains no less obscure for all that. It is also no more puzzling than other kinds of givenness, e.g., sensible or bodily appearance. Viewed as givenness as such, it is completely simple. It subsists as a phenomenon independently of its decomposition into factors.

The phenomenon, however, consists in the fact that persons are given to us firstly in their dispositions, and not in their external appearance [191], their gestures, acts, movements, or expressions. These factors do play a role, and they are

even factors of givenness without a doubt; but they are not the first thing that enters into consciousness with the weight of reality. The initial consciousness of a person has the form of an inner reaction; it is “feeling touched in a particular way” by a human being, the felt rejection, being repelled or attracted, opening up or remaining concealed, trusting or mistrusting, the feeling of closeness or distance. It is these factors that dominate the so-called first impression. They remain decisive in all later, more reflective and more “objective” impressions. Of course they are also covered up by them, often to the detriment of the genuine givenness of reality, and they are falsified by conscious criteria, concepts, and conventions. The most minimal experience that resonates with them, however, calls them up again and proves their fundamental nature.

These factors of disposition, as the first response to another disposition, are not only prospective to a high degree—in that they tell us what we should expect from other human beings—they are also a substantively very determinate and effective being-affected of the person by the other already. To this extent there is in them an initial givenness of reality preceding all others. Insofar as persons cannot claim a unique mode of being, but share the mode of being of the rest of the world in which they exist, this givenness is transferred to the whole of the real world, just as with action and will.

c) The Role of the Situation and its Form of Givenness

In willing and acting there appears yet a third form of real object alongside things and persons. This is the current situation in which and to which action pertains. All initiative of human beings is situationally conditioned, but is situation-shaping at the same time. Initiative is called forth by the circumstances, provoked by them as it were, but again formatively forges ahead through them.

This relation displays another new form of the givenness of reality. We do not arbitrarily choose the situation in which we act. We can, where we see it coming, even plan ahead or avoid it within certain limits; but even as we avoid it we stir up a new unwanted situation, and usually we do not see it coming at all. The situation comes unbidden, it befalls humankind, we “get into” it. But once we get into it, we are also imprisoned in it. We cannot “back out” of it, we would have to make what has happened unhappy, which is ontically impossible; we also cannot avoid it “by going around it,” since it is too late for that once it has already occurred. Thus, we have to go “forward,” according to the law of time, which nowhere stands still; we have to get through it. This means we have to act. We must decide whatever it is that falls to our decision in the particular kind of situation that has come into being. [192]

In this we have no freedom with respect to whether we want to act or decide. In fact we continuously decide this way or that, in whatever way we may behave. We decide and act even when we avoid intervening through indecision and inaction. It is of no help to us when we shirk the action. Omission is also an action, and what it brings about in the real world is just as consequential as the active deed; this is why our partners in the situation are just as affected by our failing to act, and the person himself is just as much reflexively affected.

Whatever stance a human being takes, the situation compels us to act under all circumstances. However, how we are to act is not prescribed by the situation for us. Our freedom consists in this. This is an ontically unique state of affairs: the situation into which we enter provides unfreedom and freedom at the same time, compulsion and latitude to act. In general, we are compelled to decide, but free in the way that we decide.

If we hold these two aspects together—and they are indissolubly joined together—then the paradox in the essence of the situation comes clearly into view: human being is compelled to decide freely by the situation into which we enter. Or, put simply: the situation, once come into being, is for us the “compulsion to freedom.”

This means precisely that we cannot avoid it by going “backwards” or “side-ways,” that we can only go “through” it, and that the “way” in which we go through it is up to us. If we could let ourselves merely be driven, without being able to be otherwise at all, the compulsion would be total and no freedom would remain to us. However, the situations in life are not like this. They compel us neither to inactivity nor to a determinate deed, but to a decision between one and the other. They require the human being to make a decision, and they appeal to our freedom. This way they compel us to actuate our freedom.

Thus, human being “experiences” the situation as a compulsion precisely as a free being. Consequently, we experience it as a real power, and indeed, such that it concerns us not only externally, but deep down in the essential core of our personality. The real compulsion to freedom that proceeds from it is a special and new mode of our being-affected by the real world in which we live. This form of being-affected seizes us more deeply than any other. It is no mere “befalling” that concerns the human being here; it is our inexorably being pressed into responsibility and guilt. For without the risk of being guilty we cannot make decisions in situations of value conflict. Situations give rise to value conflict.

The fatefulness of what befalls us is only external, even when it is quite weighty. The fatefulness of situations, in contrast—even when they are quite fleeting, perishable, ephemeral, imponderable—is an inner sort. It concerns the moral being of humankind. That which we decide and bring about under the “compulsion to freedom” falls back on us. Human life essentially consists

in an unbroken chain [193] of situations, and life is continuously held in suspense by them. Every single situation requires the human being to act, but the act follows on reflexive being-affected. It is a form of being burdened by the unbroken chain of demands on our freedom, singular and enduring. In this we experience—in yet another and more deeply decisive way—the hardness of the real. We experience it by means of our freedom.

Section III: Real Life and Cognition of Reality

Chapter 33: The Context of Life as Ontological

a) The Sum Total of Act Transcendence as a Real Mode of Life

The three groups of acts that we have discussed do not exhaust the series of transcendent affective acts. These are just those that may be roughly isolated and analyzed. This isolation also obscures an essential side of them, the indissoluble context of acts of which they are a part. An abundance of more, harder to differentiate acts is conjoined to them; they form a network of interpenetrating human relations to the world—from the most primitive to the most spiritual—they run underground beneath all else, as it were, and are fundamental for reflective consciousness. The real stream of consciousness and the real stream of world events converge in it, and every particular given aspect of reality plays out in its sphere. Hardly perceptible at the individual level, the network of acts subsists in the overall impact of life.

The objective life context in the broad sense, as it has been partially presented in the acts indicated—in paradigmatic examples, as it were—can only be exhausted in its all-pervasive givenness by the richness of this network. At the moment, we are dealing with its real being-in-itself insofar as it is conceivable in the total phenomenon as a unity. In its vast ramified diversity, one thing is completely unitary: the transcendence of the acts themselves and the being-in-itself of that toward which they are directed. The individual acts themselves disappear completely into the conglomerate of acts. Their transcendence does not disappear; it is still just as immediately demonstrable in the total phenomenon of the conglomerate as in the individual types of acts. It is pervasive and identical across the multiplicity of acts, and this is what is essential for the problem of reality; for it proves that the transformation of inner into outer reality is many-sided. The stream of consciousness integrates itself into the stream of world events and is a consciousness of this integration at the same time. It is such a consciousness in the whole as in the part, without regard [194] to the interpenetration and isolation of the acts. Only the weight of being-affected is different; the mode of being of what is experienced is the same.

We cannot concern ourselves with running through this multiplicity here. We are only concerned with supplementing the total image. To this end, it is necessary to grasp a few general basic types of integration that are in no way further reducible to a determinate act form, but presuppose the whole conglomerate of acts. The feeling for values in lived experience is of such a kind, as are interac-

tion with persons, dealings with things, vital communal standing in the midst of social, cultural, and historical relations, as well as involvement in the cosmic context.

b) The Reality in Value References

There is hardly anything for human beings that does not bear value accents or disvalue accents. This holds not only for moral values; vital values and welfare values of all kinds come into the picture, and the same goes for aesthetic values and the whole multiplicity of spiritual goods values. Every human behavior, every expression of feeling, every reaction is attractive or off-putting, we feel “for it” or we feel “against it.” Even where they remain unnoticed, these accents are present and give color to everything. Everything is accompanied by an inner “value response;” disinterested human interpretation is only a limit case that first appears in pure form with theoretical reflection. In life itself it is hardly ever given.

The reaction of our value feeling is not bound to the genuine being-affected of the person himself. It not only accompanies the transcendent acts of the other person, but absolutely everything that comes to appearance in them, their whole *Sosein*. How someone walks and stands, gets to work and speaks, conceals or presents themselves, how they struggle with difficulties or absentmindedly reveal an impression—everything triggers happiness, delight, silent agreement, or even refusal and turning away.

The same holds for the interpretation of all objects, things, events, relations, and situations. We simply assign other values to them. It is also true that many things can leave us indifferent, but in life there is no sharp borderline to the value-disvalue accent; it is blurry, it fluctuates—according to the openness or closedness of the person. Wherever the value accents appear, they are not *a posteriori* but are simultaneously present with the interpretation of the thing.

It is characteristic of this general, pervasive value feeling that it is a fully transcendent aspect of the act, and so its objects are given as real beings in themselves. It does not deal with values in their pure ideality, but with the givenness of a “real thing” as something valuable or contrary to value. The real that is experienced in life has its own significance for us, even an obtrusiveness, precisely [195] because of these value accents.

We see this very clearly as soon as we look at an example of deeper value-accentuation. Imagine I am witness to the way a man is harshly treated, or to the slander of a well-known but harmless person. The whole affair has nothing to do with me, and I also know that it happens a thousand times without my being

able to do anything to change it. “That” it happens here and now, right under my eyes, is a hard actuality; it haunts me, and it does not let me rest. The weight of the reality of the injustice as something that has happened, or its contrariness to value as that of a real thing, constitutes the weight of the impression.

If the matter was value indifferent then its real being would not touch me. If it was a mere thought experiment, my condemnation of it would also be merely thought, and would not be an actual value reaction in me—i.e., would not possess the reality of an act. Only an injustice that really happened triggers a real injury to the feelings. Generally speaking, only the disvalue or value of a “real thing” calls up the vital, effective response to value.

This holds quite universally for each and every actual value reaction, even where it only deals with agreeable or disagreeable, useful or nonuseful things, with annoyances, advantageous things, pleasant things, or whatever else it may be. Everywhere the value feeling only responds to the real with actual commitment, not to the merely thought up or represented. We would not ever be “agitated” if what agitates us had not really happened. What the poet lets appear in his figures, what the actor presents in the footlights as true to nature, also fails to provoke the genuine weight of value reaction. It is indeed present, but it lacks the weight of reality, like an echo.

The feeling for values in life itself has the ontological function of continuously emphasizing the value and disvalue accents that we encounter in everything real and makes its reality palpable. We feel the immovably real in its hardness most strongly where it touches the feeling for values. Neither the value-indifferent nor the irreal excites us. The sphere of what is lived through and experienced is selected in advance by the reaction of the response to value.

This is why the feeling for values in life, although it is in itself something completely different—it is only an axiological, not an ontological feeling—nevertheless indirectly becomes a significant testimony to reality. Because this testimony, in terms of reality, is obviously indifferent to whether and how the feeling for value responds axiologically, this form of the givenness of reality is transferred to everything, even to the real that has not received a value response. That is to say, it is transferred to the whole sphere.

c) The Practical Givenness of the World of Things

Having our way with things comes into the life context from another direction. It constitutes another equally primary side of the givenness of reality. [196]

Human beings “use” things as we find them, utilize them, exploit them, make use of them for our aims. We even consume them, use them up. We also

first shape them for our use. They enter as our own into our personal sphere, belong to it, and receive from it the imprint of what they are “for us.” Every human has such a proximate sphere of things around themselves. Clothes, furniture, home, tools, and many other such things belong to it.

Initially, it is not important to each of us what these things are in themselves, but exclusively what they are “for us.” They have a “being-for-us” of their own emphatic kind in our interpretation and in our life. Heidegger has coined the expression “ready-to-hand” for this; it is quite apt for this relation, though it may be a little too narrow because it only strictly applies to actual tools for labor. The more general ontological expression for the mode of being of such things in the sphere of the person would have to be: “its *Dasein* as something for us.”

If we take the person as the “I” who uses things, then the “being-for-me” of useful objects is not only something other than their being-in-themselves, but is also earlier in terms of givenness, a genuine *πρότερον πρὸς ἡμᾶς* [what is first for us]. In the world context, ontically it may very well be what is later. However, it would be a mistake to think that no being-in-itself was contained in the being for me of “my things.” Being-for-me does not merely rest on the opinion of the I, does not merely consist in “my idea.” It is a real relation that exists independently of my cognizing grasp, indifferent to whether or not I create an idea of it at all. Thus, epistemologically it is definitely a relation possessing being-in-itself in the strict sense, even if a secondary one in broader ontic contexts; it is real being-for-me. Consequently, the useful thing is as such a completely real thing—not only in abstraction from its being-for-me, but precisely in and through it.

The proof of this is that I only gradually experience the being-for-me of my tool—what it actually is for me, my work, and my life—in learning how to use it (as in craft), in applying it or also in testing it out, figuring it out, in a discovery of everything that I can do with it. This process is a process in me, however, not in the tool. It is the process of practical cultivation by working with the tool, the development of the self, the increase of our capacity and skill. We can perhaps say that “the tool gradually becomes me;” but in fact we grow familiar with the tool, while for its part it endures unchanged. It endures just so in its being-for-me, for I know very well that in this development the earlier limitations on use lay with me, not with it. The process in me skips over the tool when I change something in it, perhaps “improving” it. Then its [197] real being-for-me changes fundamentally—not only “my” capability with it, but also “its” possibilities for performance in my hand.

Heidegger’s analysis of “readiness-to-hand” is valuable insofar as it exposes a determinate, completely primary—not of course “the” primary—mode of givenness of the real and thereby of the world. Its strength is its limitation to the narrowest sphere of the everyday, but of course in life it is never isolated in this way.

On the other hand, its conflation of the mode of givenness with the mode of being is fallacious. The mode of disclosure is attributed to the being disclosed as its mode of being; in this way, this being is referred to the I to whom it is given, and the world stands relativized as “in each case mine.”

Put differently: the nature of being-in-itself (reality) in readiness-to-hand is misunderstood. The being-in-the-world of the one for whom the ready-to-hand is at hand should not be conceived as a being “in a world of its own;” the “*Da-sein*” of human being should not be singled out as what is solely real. The readiness-to-hand of things for human being is already supported by their *Dasein* and *Sosein* in the real world. Thus, the world in which the human being finds itself on the basis of this relation is from the start not solely “its world.”

Readiness-to-hand, setting aside prejudicial interpretations, is a quite determinate and irreducible datum of the reality of the world as a single world possessing being-in-itself. It is of course only one form of givenness among many, but still a fundamental one. It is fundamental because the readiness-to-hand of useful things itself emerges “for me” as real and as really lived through in everyday life. This is why it is able to be lived through and experienced further at any time. It is the reality of things lived and experienced in their use, and as such is tangible in what has been achieved with the tool, and clearly testifies to the totality of the real context in which its use is alone possible.

In ontological terms, the relation looks like this. The “ready-to-hand” is not “given” as present-at-hand; i.e., it is only given in the context of real being-for-me. But it does no good to draw the conclusion from this that it “is” not present at all. Instead, it seems to be the case that something can be “ready-to-hand” at all only if it is present in the first place. It can only “be for me” if it “is” at all.

Ontic dependence is to be distinguished from dependence in mode of givenness. The givenness of being-in-itself is conveyed through the givenness of being-for-me, but being-for-me is itself conditioned by being-in-itself.

In this way, what Heidegger is after comes much more sharply to the fore: the disclosedness of the world through readiness-to-hand. The world is not disclosed to me as mere “*Umwelt*” and certainly not as “in each case mine,” but [198] as the one real world in which every person and their corresponding circle of ready-to-hand things is localized. The disclosedness of the world in this way is then a rigid datum of reality.

d) The Object of “Care”

The phenomenon of “care,” widely discussed by Heidegger, belongs here as well. Caring about something is clearly stamped with the character of a transcen-

dent act, and even of a teleologically prospective act. It is closely joined to willing, striving, doing, and acting, but no less to expectation, fear, and hope as well. According to whether we conceive it more broadly or more narrowly, it could encompass all of these acts, or be a particular act among others. In its broadest conception, care remains an undifferentiated, diffuse total stance of the subject toward what is advancing in time, without more specific characteristics.

The central place that Heidegger gives to it must have arisen from his attempt to reconstruct the most primitive consciousness of being and the world as possible. It remains questionable, however, whether we are familiar with such a primitive consciousness, and whether the reconstruction conforms to something actually given. What we know is always already a striving, acting, laboring, suffering, hoping or fearing consciousness, and an always already cognizing consciousness at the same time.

Additionally, there is a certain one-sidedness that favors the gloomy shades of care. Even for the grey everyday with its narrowness and triviality we should not generalize this shading. It may be edifying to follow life into this smothering air in order to then display the marvel of breaking free from it into the light and into freedom. Both only appear to be believable to someone who, with an unfortunate temperament, carries with him the same oppressiveness and sees disvalue in the raw world in which he struggles and creates. This has very little to do with ontology, of course.

If we keep ourselves to a neutral understanding of “care,” then the whole series of transcendent acts is contained in it, to the extent that they are prospective. Above all, what is contained in it is what we may call simple labor, procuring the necessary things, contending with basic needs—and not at all just one’s own. This includes compensating for what is missing, conducting affairs, working towards what is striven for, adjusting and equipping ourselves for things that befall us, bearing responsibility for what is coming, being responsible for things undertaken, attending to our obligations.

We can extend this enumeration of acts in greater detail as far as we would like. Compared to the integrative general concept of “care,” this list has the double advantage of a neutral evaluation relative to the “world,” as well as a purer and more manifold prospectivity. All of these acts have in common with one another the restlessness of humankind’s being kept in suspense in face of what is advancing, [199] and precisely this is the real content of that which Heidegger calls being-ahead-of-oneself. Care in the narrower sense is just one among these acts.

The only essential ontological point here is the transcendence of the act, i.e., that what is advancing is given as a real object. Taken as a whole, they

are only a single, though complex and differentiated, basic form of the givenness of reality. The philosophically important thing about care is the only thing important to care itself, namely, its object. The same holds for the object of care as holds for the object of all prospective acts: its way of being is given unequivocally as entirely substantial, real being-in-itself.

Chapter 34: Particular Spheres of Embeddedness in the Real World

a) The Real Phenomenon of “Labor”

From among these acts, “labor” should be especially emphasized as more central than care. As a primary phenomenon it is neither economic nor sociological, but ontological.

As a transcendent act, labor is a deed of a special kind. It is a real achievement in the real world, deals with things as means, and is to that extent an employment and utilization of them (Cf. Chapter 31b). It has, additionally, a goal, which it actualizes, and in its actualization makes it into a real object. At the same time, it is always labor “on something,” and thus concerns something already present whose *Sosein* it transforms. Finally, through it, its goal is also always related by extension to “someone”—to persons, “for” whom it occurs, whom the goal benefits. Whether it is the person themselves for whom it happens, or for another, or for groups of people, makes no difference to this relation.

Thus, labor is extensively related in many ways to different real things as a real act of the person. To the extent that there is knowledge of this relationality in the consciousness of labor, a fourfold givenness of reality is contained in it.

The inner side of labor is of particular ontological significance here, what we might call its moral side. Labor is initiative, effort, sacrifice: the person gets down to it, expends force, gives their energy to it. Labor wants to be completed, “done with.” It not only runs into the resistance of things, it first wrests from them that which is striven for, struggles for it. Humankind of course allows other forces to labor on its behalf, employing the forces of nature that are in themselves neutral. Human being must steer them, however, must first of all enlist them for its ends, and both require first and foremost our own initiative of force, experience, and insight. Humankind sacrifices itself in labor, even consumes itself in it.

The fact that labor never happens automatically, but must be “achieved” through the initiative of humankind, constitutes a unique relation [200] between person and thing. The human being relies on continually testing himself with ref-

erence to the thing by his labor. Our inclination leans in the direction of growing beyond it, toward becoming master of it. Human being thus constantly “experiences” in labor both itself as well as the thing: ourselves in the spontaneity of the energy deployed, physical as well as spiritual, and the thing in its resistance to it. Both are irreducibly bound to one another, and both are an experience of reality.

This is clear proof that in labor—and generally in the shadows with things—I do not experience the world as “my own.” I experience it in the hardness of its resistance, in terms of its own determinations and the meaning peculiar to things. I experience the determination proper to it as a foreign power, with respect to which I either give up or come out on top. This decision is not up to the will alone.

Further, what is of note ontologically is the experience of the equal standing of person and thing in the character of reality. It is a function of the contrast between effectiveness and resistance, of taking the measure of two kinds of power at the same level. The predominant aspects of the thing in terms of reality are its passivity and indifference, its neutral letting-happen, but at the same time the hardness of the determination that it brings along, its inertial force, as it were. The predominant aspects of the person are of another sort. They consist in spontaneity, initiative, adaptability, their experience and inventiveness, their teleological force to circumvent the passive resistance, so to speak.

Here power always stands against power. The real phenomenon of labor is unequivocal evidence that the sphere of the real is homogeneous in itself, i.e., that everything actual in it is ontically at the same level and constitutes a single unified world in terms of its way of being.

b) The Form of Givenness of the wider Real Context

Our “dealings with persons” run parallel to our traffic with things. Our dealings with persons have already been analyzed above on the basis of the spontaneous acts which essentially constitute it (Chapters 31 & 32). The analysis must now be supplemented, since in everyday life we never deal solely with our behavior regarding an individual person, but at the same time with their place relative to larger unities and wholes. The latter are also experienced, lived through, and cognized in the human being’s own behavior in relation to them. With this we enter into the phenomenal domain of social, juridical, political, and historical life contexts.

The ontology of the “situation,” which provides the space for all willing and acting, also applies to these wider relations. Along with the private, ephemeral

situation comes the total situation of vital relations at any given time, in which everyone stands together. The individual can be affected by the total situation to varying degrees, but they [201] are encompassed by it all the same—even when they do not see through it, or perhaps do not even perceive it as a particularly structured situation because they are born into it and do not know life can be any other way.

The total situation of social life is also mobile, but in terms of other temporal measures. It easily appears to be standing still to the individual who lives in only one phase of its movement. Measured by the runaway tempo of personal life situations it has a certain constancy. Its movement is the movement of history.

In the total situation, humankind is also challenged to show initiative and faced with decisions, even if less depends upon the behavior of the individual here. Their decision is only a vanishingly small fragment of that which moves the whole process. It is only in exceptional cases that a decision grows beyond it. In principle, however, the situation is the same. The human being “gets into” the total situation, is inserted into it, is encompassed and supported by it as by a second nature. Prior to the emergence of reflection, they also take it to be something given by nature, necessary, unalterable. What is generally valid appears to them to be valid *φύσει* [by nature].

The total situation does not in any way indicate to us what we ought to do, how we have to behave in any given case. It leaves us the latitude to decide this way or that. This is why the same compulsion to decide proceeds from it as from a private situation. The human being “experiences” this compulsion as a real one that limits them in life, determines them, loads them with responsibility, but also shields and supports them. In this way they experience social life itself in its reality.

The normativity of public life for the individual is a single uninterrupted chain of such experiences. The narrowest community of interest in which they stand already inhibits their action in a determinate direction, but fosters it in another. It pre-structures the chances that stand open to them.

This is even more apparent in legal relations. All existing law delineates a determinate authority and duty for the individual. We cannot live arbitrarily with respect to a determinate, valid (positive) law, but only in a determinate way. People could hold slaves under ancient law, but cannot under current law; they cannot keep the slaves from running away and being free. People can hold property under bourgeois law, but could not under communist law; people cannot hinder their fellows from seeing some piece of property as their own and using it.

Humankind “experiences” the reality of existing legal relations in a very palpable way—at the limits of their own freedom of action and decision. We can

break through them of course, but not without punishment. The law stands as a real power over against us, treating us as violators of the existing order. We can at best break it secretly [202], but must then preserve appearances. Or we can fight it publicly in terms of principle, but then it matters whether we have the power to revolutionize the total situation of the existing public order, to convince people, to bring them along with us.

The latitude that the total situation as given leaves us extends in principle beyond the situation itself, not for arbitrary initiatives of the individual, but only for a real power co-equal with it. The innovator must set in motion the historical power of the community's vital normative consciousness. Only the collective has the force to penetrate it.

The human being experiences the political situation in which they live in the same way, and even to a certain extent the course of world history. The destiny of a people and a nation is the destiny of the individual as well. War and peace, revolution and reaction, inflation and unemployment, all of it concerns them too. It reaches determinately into their life, independently of how much they recognize it, see through it, or even only understandingly follow it. This experience too is no contemplative observation, but a dramatic and incisive one, an experience of our own life and limb, wellbeing, property, family—an experience that is also always suffering and having-to-endure, always demands anew that we get our bearings and overcome what is onrushing.

Again, the obverse side of the real situation is also apparent. The historical situation places demands on humankind that extend beyond our own feelings about the situation. The appeal to our own resolve also proceeds from it, which compels us to actuate our freedom and burdens us with responsibility for the existing world and the world to come. However much our act might disappear into the political-historical event, it is nevertheless not without consequences and significance for the whole. The deed of the masses is an integration of the deeds of individuals; even where the masses only follow a leading individual, merely following already requires decision and initiative.

c) Life in the Context of the Cosmos

Beyond the historical life context only the cosmic context remains, which leads to the immeasurable in the dimensions of space and time.

It very much "concerns" human being, even in the most familiar dimensions of experience, but impalpably for the most part, because it is taken for granted and remains unchanged in terms of human temporality. The reality of day and night, summer and winter is that of lawful regularity, and so is unobtrusive.

Only the peculiar and conspicuous can be distinguished against the uniform background of such cycles.

This constitutes a limit to the givenness of reality, a blurry one, not specifiable as a borderline, but still irreducible [203] and rooted in the form of the total situation of life. The greatest, hardest, most uninfluenceable and most superior reality is in general not one that is given in its full significance. This does not only apply to macrocosmic relations; it applies just as much to the movements of atoms, the life-processes in our bodies, to everything internal and external on which our physical lives rest.

All real relations of this kind, even if they concern us quite closely, are still not experienced through our capacity of being-affected. They are grasped only late and by detours, i.e., they are only “cognized.” A particular kind of reflection on the given is first required for the purposes of cognition. Something pertinent is indeed always given in everyday life, but it remains unnoticed. On the other hand, consciousness is free at any time to reflect on these cases of implicit facts, to draw them out of their concealedness. Consciousness then “un-covers” what is not understood in the apparently obvious. It becomes a problem for consciousness. Indirectly, by way of a detour through the problem, the mode of consciousness’ own being-affected by the existing relations can become convincingly palpable to it.

Occasionally, the cosmic context overwhelmingly steps forward into immediate givenness, knocking everything down as it were, and then our being-affected reaches a degree of intensity that leaves all other experiences far behind. Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions make us shudder in our deepest interior, and we feel small, dependent, and at their mercy. Such natural catastrophes are recorded in the annals of history as fate, doom, or are superstitiously interpreted as divine intervention, as judgment.

In such experiences, even a more advanced cognition is not exempt from horror. The ever-present all-supporting natural forces remind even those who know of their existence by breaking through their usual limits. From ancient times, such a reminder has been an impetus to human intervention, far more often than the regular flow of daily processes. Because interpretations have already falsified the experience itself for a long time, a wide historical detour is needed until sober reflection gets on the trail of the real kernel of what is experienced and becomes an actual grasp of interrelations instead of a helpless seizure by what is overwhelming.

Chapter 35: Cognition and Affective Givenness

a) Identity of the World and Sectors of Givenness

Let us step back and take in the current situation. The problem of cognition cannot satisfy its own need for certainty about reality, not to mention the demands of ontology. A stronger type of givenness is shown in the transcendent [204] affective acts, all of which, moreover, are unified in the total phenomenon of the life context. In the different types of being-affected, a stronger mode of real being's givenness is demonstrated in anticipatory and reflexive being-affected, in the experience of resistance, and in being compelled to make a free decision.

The question now arises as to just how far this stronger givenness actually proves advantageous for cognition, sustains and supports it. It is conceivable that it may be “out of kilter” with it, and does not even come into contact with it; there might exist two kinds of reality, or even two substantively different real worlds, one of them bearing on the givenness of perception and one on affective givenness. In this case, nothing would follow for affective givenness from the existence of two worlds, and cognition would gain nothing from its embeddedness in affective life. What is perceived and what is lived through would not interpenetrate one another and would not even fit one another. It would be impossible even to cognize what has been lived through or suffered.

There is no such impossibility. What is experienced and lived through is surely in principle cognizable. It does not necessarily need to be cognized, however. The consequences of my actions that I experience in the behavior of human beings affect me independently of whether I also cognize them as such or not. Where cognition arises, however, it does not cancel out the primary experience. What is experienced and suffered in life transitions into what is known without any apparent boundary. All perception and all cognition is woven into the context of lived experience. There is only *one* reality, and it is that of the one real world in which we live and die; one in which we act, hope, fear, suffer, experience, and endure—the same one, however, in which we know. It is the one by whose interrelations we are so variously affected, hard-pressed, moved; it is the one whose interrelations are also the object of possible cognition.

Of course, the sector of the world that we know does not automatically coincide substantively with the sector that we affectively experience. Even so, the two sectors are not ever out of touch with one another. They always partially cut across each other, and coincide broadly enough in order for us to be able to automatically recognize the identity of the world from which they are cut out as a world co-given in these ways. They are the same persons that we perceive and judge, but toward whom we act at the same time, and whose treatment we expe-

rience. The things that we see and touch are the same as those we deal with in acting and whose resistance we experience. The events that affect us, the consequences of our own actions that we have to bear, are also the same as those we can learn to conceive. The situations that demand our decisions are the same as those we look at objectively and can judge from a higher vantage point. [205]

There is a way of looking at things in contemporary philosophy that much exaggerates the diversity of aspects and sectors of the world. The differences between sensory domains already suffice to facilitate such a tearing apart of the world. “Object of touch” and “object of sight” do not coincide; motor and visual space are not identical; the “*umwelt*” of the child and that of the adult are dramatically different. Contrasts of this kind exist without a doubt, and we could add to the list the difference between the experienced and cognized world.

However, as long as this way of looking at things only affirms differences, it has only done half the work and remains methodologically superficial. The special thing about such contrasting phenomena is precisely that they are conjoined in the first place above and beyond all such differences, are firmly related to one another through the identity of that which constitutes the object of these perspectives, and consciousness is always already aware of this identity. Consciousness in the natural attitude does not know any “object of sight” or “visual space;” only psychological theory creates these concepts for the sake of its distinctions. There are no actual things that would only be “objects of sight.” The same holds for “*umwelts*;” they are not “worlds” at all, but only aspects of one and the same world, although quite different sectors of it. The child lives in the same real world as the adult, but other sides of the world are given to him, and within a different compass.

The same thing applies to the opposition between the cognized world and the world affectively experienced—though this contrast is of an entirely different kind. It is already a misuse of the term to designate each of them a “world.” Nothing in the whole phenomenon of world consciousness indicates that there may be different worlds. All substantive diversity here is already supported instead by the identity of the one real world, experienced in two different ways; it is still understood by consciousness itself as one and the same at any given time.

b) Consequences of the Transcendence of Affective Acts

We may draw a general conclusion from the analysis of the transcendent affective acts that proves advantageous for cognition. Namely, if on the whole it is the same real world that in both contexts constitutes our object, then obviously the

affective givenness of reality is transferred to the objects of cognition. Affective experience and objective cognition are and shall remain fundamentally different of course, but the objects of such experiences are at the same time objects of possible cognition nevertheless.

Once we have grasped this relation, we cannot in principle deny reality to the substantive interconnections perceived, regardless of how much subjective forms of interpretation might be layered over them. It is the same reality by which we are also [206] affected in many ways in the context of life. There is no need to be of the opinion, with naïve realism, that the real is also substantively constituted (in terms of *Sosein*) exactly as perception discloses it. We are not dealing with the *Sosein* of the real here, but with its general way of being, with reality as such. All categorial superformation by the mode of interpretation of the subject is precisely only a superformation of content. A kernel of reality remains behind that is not affected by the mode of apprehension. The conclusion we have drawn above concerns only this kernel of reality. Epistemologically this might seem like a meager result; ontologically it is the only fundamental and decisive one.

The significance of this conclusion can first really be gauged when it becomes clear that it is not only philosophical thinking that retrospectively draws it. It is just the logical reconstruction of a fully primary and fundamental relation of dependence that governs and permeates our whole life in the world from the ground up, but that for this very reason is only presupposed by consciousness, not noticed as such and grasped objectively.

By virtue of this relation, the significance of what is lived through and the reality experienced in being-affected is always automatically transferred to what is perceived, and from there it is applied to the objects of cognition at any given time. From the start, all perception and all higher cognition is firmly included in the same life context in which we fatefully experience the hardness of reality. Neither perception nor cognition occurs outside of it.

Only retrospectively, by way of abstraction, does the process of tearing cognition out of this context begin; it is artificially isolated for the purpose of special theoretical observation. It is philosophical theories that first accomplish this. It then happens that in the progress of observation the process of abstraction is forgotten, and the cognitive relation is taken by them as self-sufficient and floating in mid-air, as it were.

Beyond this first mistake, insofar as it is tacitly made the basis for further considerations, a second much bigger error arises, one widespread throughout the fallacious arguments of skepticism and of epistemological idealism. All of these arguments have in common, regardless of their differences, this *πρῶτον*

$\psiεῦδος$ [first false premise] as their presupposition already, and they stand or fall with it.

c) Further Consequences

Knowledge about perception's relativity and susceptibility to deception is ancient, and it is already involved in the naïve relation to objects. In spite of this, it would hardly be comprehensible that perception is taken to be a completely reliable testimony of reality in everyday life and forms the basis of empiricism if it were not linked to a stronger basic form of givenness prior to all reflection. [207]

The non-independence of perception, its embeddedness in the affective context of experience, is not its weakness epistemologically speaking, but its strength. It is our embeddedness in the real context of human life and in the basic forms of experience entailed in acting and suffering. The weight of transcendent affective acts and being-affected exists behind perception at all times. It has its backing in this center of gravity and always proves itself by it in cases of doubt, before all conscious consideration.

It is no different for the higher levels of cognition than with perception. Cognition usually arises in life as the retrospective or even concurrent raising of what is affectively experienced and lived through into objective view. Such is our knowledge of the personal uniqueness of human beings, of their desire, longing, and intentions to act supported by their own action, suffering, and undergoing experiences, their anticipation of what is coming through expectation, fear, hope, and readiness. Even the pure drive for knowledge and the basic philosophical attitude of wonder are closely related to curiosity and not effectively distinguished from it. Beyond this, of course, is the sphere of judgment, of a relaxed objective attitude. We know it in its pure form in the sciences. We must first raise ourselves up to it with a certain self-discipline, however. Even in it all claims to real validity are bound to the life context. The cognition of the world, while it frees itself from the narrowness of immediate worldly experience and rises above it, still adheres to it by its roots. Only in this way can it be certain of the reality of this world.

The relation that thus concerns us here is the foundation of cognition in the context of everyday life in which it stands. Cognition has the advantage of objectivity over the transcendent affective acts, of substantive structure and of unlimited comprehension in principle. It has the disadvantage of a lesser certainty about reality. It is superior to all experience in the mode of being-affected regarding the *Sosein* of the world, but needs supplementation by this mode in relation

to the *Dasein* of the world. This does not contradict the ontic relativity of *Sosein* and *Dasein* at all, since this has its limit in the *Dasein* of the world as a whole. What the transcendent affective acts guarantee to cognition by their support is precisely certainty of reality in the whole of the knowable world. The relation of complementarity between these acts and cognition is of a sort that at the outset proves advantageous for cognition's certainty of reality.

d) Cognition and the Gradation of Phenomenal Transcendence

It was shown above (Chapter 24c and d) how the phenomenon of cognition already transcends its own phenomenal character, and that [208] its “phenomenal transcendence” cannot be justified by drawing only on its own resources. Phenomena can also be illusory phenomena. The question then arises: in what way are real phenomena to be distinguished from illusory phenomena? The question is the same as the question about how appearance is to be distinguished from illusion. It does not suffice to know that in the appearance a being “appears,” but not in an illusion. The question is just how we should distinguish the “appearing” of a being from an empty illusion. Just as little can we refer to criteria that lie in the broader context here, such as the “correspondence” with something otherwise known; for precisely that with which what is cognized ought to correspond is open to the same question. Thus, we must look for another point of departure.

This can only lie in a phenomenal transcendence that is stronger than that of the act of cognition. The act itself must have the character of an undeniably given real relation that imposes itself on consciousness in everyday life. This is exactly what occurs with transcendent affective acts. In the mode of being-affected and its derivatives, the particular content of appearance leads away from itself imperiously and unavoidably to something beyond it that is itself not an appearance, to something characteristically unphenomenal and transphenomenal.

The transphenomenality in the mode of givenness is the crucial point in the complementary relation between cognition and affective experience. Since cognition and experience relate to the same world, but the object of cognition in the act of cognition itself comes forward with a claim to transobjectivity, the latter receives its confirmation in the transphenomenality of what is affectively experienced. Uncertain on its own, the phenomenal transcendence of cognition is promoted to certainty by the phenomenal transcendence of the affective acts more deeply grounded in the real context of life.

If we survey the whole multiplicity of transcendent acts, affective as well as nonaffective, we recognize in them a distinct gradation of phenomenal transcen-

dence. At the very bottom are the *a priori* constituents of cognition; these phenomena show no phenomenal transcendence, which is why their “objective validity” first requires special proof. At the very top may be placed the receptive affective acts, such acts as experiencing, suffering, and their relatives. In them the phenomenon as such presses inexorably beyond itself; the real “appears” in the form of obtrusiveness, harshness, encumbrance, even of compulsion. In this form it cannot be skeptically denied. The phenomenal transcendence here is striking.

Between these extremes, all of the remaining transcendent acts may be informally arranged. This graduated series is nevertheless not a series of act transcendence. The latter does not admit of more or less at all; only the form of its givenness in the phenomenon of the act comes in degrees. [209] This gradation is identical to the gradation of weight in the givenness of reality. The factor of phenomenal transcendence precisely rises and falls along with the degree of this weight.

We can also express this differently: the weight of the givenness of reality in an act is the greater the more inseparably joined the reality of the act is with the reality of its object in the act-phenomenon itself—such as the factuality of experience with the factuality of that which is experienced. This is the case in the transcendent affective acts to such a degree that the decoupling of the one from the other can only succeed in abstraction, i.e., by sacrificing the phenomenon. In genuine experiencing and suffering it is meaningless to consider “what befalls us” to be something merely borne by the act itself, standing or falling with it. Such an understanding is a misunderstanding of the act phenomenon. Moreover, it is a deep misrecognition of what is significant and serious in human life, a blithe forfeiture of what is essential.

Chapter 36: The Special Place of Cognition

a) Homogeneity and Opposition in the Act Context

To be sure, cognition takes a special place among the transcendent acts—but not as if it relates to another world. It does not stand outside the life context (as do logical forms), but plays such a determinate and unique role “in” it that it completely stands out from it.

As a transcendent act, it is homogeneous with the other acts, hardly appears in life without them, and shares their orientation to the real. Indeed, it accompanies most of the affective acts. It accompanies experiencing and living through something, illuminates and clarifies them; it is involved in expectation, hope,

and fear, and the element of anticipation belongs to it; it plays a role in all givenness of persons and situations, in all labor and all responsibility. At least this is the case in the consciousness of the world with which we are familiar, namely, our own. How it might look for a primitive consciousness may only be reconstructed. We only know that cognition is already at work everywhere an affective givenness of reality is raised into the light of consciousness. Indeed, this process of raising it into consciousness is precisely its essential accomplishment. This would be impossible if it were not itself embedded in the life context in the first place.

If we decouple it from this context, if we grasp it as something purely on its own, we artificially isolate it and make the primary phenomenon of cognition—grasping “that which is”—incomprehensible. When we take it as in principle the opposite of affective experience its ontic function in life is also obscured. An ontologically fundamental opposition does not even exist here. The actual difference between cognition and affective experience is a purely structural one. It is significant in its way, but it does not take the form of a sharp dividing line. Ontically speaking, what is fundamental is the homogeneity of the network of acts as a closed and living whole. The commonality of their transcendence and the concord of their orientation toward the one real world is the binding and, so to speak, unifying factor in this wholeness.

As a kind of relation to the world, cognition is a secondary relation dependent on other equally relational forms. Wherever and however it arises, it grows out of the network of transcendent affective acts, not as their product, but surely as requiring and supplementing them. Its autonomy is that of a dependent and supported thing. It has the form of self-sufficiency that belongs to entities of a higher order in relation to lower ones everywhere in the structure of the world: it has its own kind of lawfulness in its relation of dependency.

The way it is extracted from the whole network of acts is characterized by stripping away affectivity as such, while retaining the weight of affective givenness. Being-seized and being-affected yields to disinterested “apprehending,” the subject moves to a distance from its object; it is released from the urgency of the current moment, and in this way the world besetting us becomes a world of objects.

This transition is not a sharp demarcation, but an imperceptible, blurry slide. Only from the perspective of the result achieved does there appear to be a dividing line. The rootedness of objectivity in the form of what is affectively given is not brought into the light of cognition at the same time. It disappears in the cultivated consciousness of objects. It lends a pretense of cognitive freedom to the subject that cognition does not possess either as a whole or in part.

The disappearance of being-affected does not actually cancel out the situatedness of cognition in the life context. It only cancels our knowledge about it. Even in the sciences, where cognition posits its own goals (which actually leave what is most urgent for life far behind), their anchoring in primary givenness still remains. Moreover, there is also a goal-setting of scientific advance that incessantly reminds us of this background, for again and again affective urgency, the demands of life, and of practical interests allow new domains of objects to become comprehensible, and first and foremost bring them into the field of what is noticed. [211]

b) Givenness of *Sosein* and *Dasein* in the Multiplicity of Acts

All transcendent acts have in common that their ontological givenness is a givenness of *Dasein* and of *Sosein* at the same time, just as in the case of cognition. This of course tapers off in the passive prospective acts, insofar as the subject there only reckons with chance, and is really certain only about what is advancing in general; even in the case of luck it reckons with something determinate.

This relation is completely clear in the basic types of affective givenness, in experience, living through, and suffering, and no less so in acting, doing, willing, in dealing with persons, and in the compulsion to decide in a given situation. We always experience and suffer something determinate—and not merely secondarily, but essentially and as such. In just this way we experience determinate guilt in reflexive being-affected, the compulsion to make a specific decision (not just any one) in our being subjected to the situation, and resistance of a determinate kind in labor with things. All of this concerns the *Sosein* of the real, and not bare, general *Dasein* without differentiation.

This means that the transcendent affective acts do not make the (quite ontologically relative) distinction between *Dasein* and *Sosein*; the given is for them still ontically simple. Only retrospective reflection makes the distinction, and it is brought in secondarily by cognition. Thus, just as in cognition, there is no fundamental distinction in givenness in these acts.

This is consistent with the weakness of all affective givenness, namely, with its substantive unclarity, blurriness or obscurity in many kinds of acts. It may well be that the *Sosein* of the thing is also given at once with its *Dasein*, primarily and completely, but it is not firmly outlined in its determinacy. This holds not only for hoping and fearing, but also for many forms of suffering and living through, for reflexive being-affected in one's own action, and in experiencing the other person in their behavior. Just as there is the “obscure” feeling of guilt that already apprehends the weight of guilt but does not yet know precisely what it consists

in, there is also an obscure consciousness of another's mistrust, or another's rejection. In the same way, we can impressionably "live through" an agitated street scene without being totally clear about what is really going on in it.

Our life is full of such substantively obscure or blurry givenness, in which factuality itself (*Dasein* or reality as such) is completely beyond question. We cannot say that no *Sosein* is given in it, for it is very much apprehended along with it. We also cannot say that it would be uncertain, for even the little that is substantively given is not perceived as uncertain at all. *Sosein* is given in these acts precisely as "unclear"—this is something other than "uncertain"—it displays a certain indeterminacy and often enough is also accompanied by a knowledge of this indeterminacy. In the latter case, the inclination arises to penetrate through to the determinacy of the matter at hand.

This inclination is already the beginning of cognition. The peculiar superiority of cognition to affective acts of all kinds consists in the fact that it provides a narrower specification of that which it grasps, not just intimations, and substantively penetrates it and raises it into the objective conscious form of representation, thought, or concept.

c) Superiority of Cognition and Intellectualist Prejudice

Thus, the strength of cognition lies in the apprehension of *Sosein*, while the strength of transcendent affective acts lies in givenness of *Dasein*. *Dasein* and *Sosein* are of course given in both kinds of acts, but in the former *Dasein* is given "uncertainly," and in the latter *Sosein* is given "unclearly." Therefore, if the acts are otherwise entirely homogeneous and on the whole are related to the same world, then the complementary relation between them might be perfectly ideal. The special place of cognition among the remaining transcendent acts is not to be sought in its ontic heterogeneity, but is to be sought on the basis of their homogeneity: namely, in the complementary character of its strengths and weaknesses with respect to those of the transcendent affective acts.

This complementary relation is also familiar in everyday life. Plato first portrayed it as *αἴσθησις* [perception] "not-being-done" with its given object, and calling in a higher kind of insight to help. Of course, he related it only to perception, but this "calling in to help" fits the affective forms of givenness with their obscurity and blurriness much better, which the inclination to clarification, elucidation and determination in fact already brings along. What the inclination brings is the summoning of cognition.

The great superiority of cognition in terms of content, its capacity for criticism and reexamination (which loans to it a kind of judicatory position

among the other donative acts of other kinds) is, thanks to its wide-ranging practical consequences in everyday life, far too generally recognized and objectively entrenched to require a demonstration. On the other hand, there is a gross overestimation of purely scientific cognition, isolated in terms of its method; there exists a widespread intellectualist prejudice that cognition alone and by its own resources is able to achieve all of the certainty that human beings wish for. In this way, not only its substantive limitations, but its [213] being founded on the affective givenness of the *Dasein* of its world of objects, is also misunderstood.

This intellectualist prejudice arises with a certain inevitability everywhere we one-sidedly orient the problem of cognition by the sciences. The danger that this signifies for philosophy lies not only in this error, but in the fact that error and truth are fatally conflated in it. The overestimation of the sciences that results from it, especially the exact sciences, is just as fundamentally mistaken as their underestimation, provoked as a reaction to the former. Here, as everywhere in life, humankind affectively tends to one-sided extremes, and finds it difficult to keep to the modest path of integration and synthesis of the two-sidedness of phenomena.

d) **Standalone Science and Alienation from Things**

The great upsurge of the exact sciences in the nineteenth century led to the notion that its methods may stand alone, and even led to their imitation in philosophy. Doing so leads us to believe we are placing philosophy on a “realistic” basis. This tendency emerged in reaction to Hegel (who was of course arbitrarily skipped over when considering these methods). We relied on the Kantian orientation to the *factum* of the sciences, universalized it, and arrived at Neo-Kantian Idealism on one side, and at pure positivism on the other.

What these two directions have in common is not only the exclusion of basic metaphysical problems in philosophy, but also a certain falsification of positive science itself. It is reduced to “scientific thinking” as such, to its inner methods and operations; it sets them apart from the being of the world, and allows them to take their own course, so to speak. They are even understood as purely quantitative thinking, where the presupposition is that only the quantitative is conceivable with exactness.

This development leads to the sacrifice of the substantive ontic content of the sciences. The qualitative, and even more so what is genuinely substantial, remains external to what is grasped. It limits itself to relations, laws, and forms, and understands them to be posited by thinking, brought in or even sub-

jectively produced. Moreover, the prejudice that relations are not real entities, only thought entities, lies at the basis of the latter interpretation; this way we also cannot attribute any independent being to the object of cognition, which essentially consists in relations. The object is made more and more synonymous with the concept being substantively constructed in the process of cognition. Accordingly, its laws—i. e., everything in it that is conceivable in terms of inner relations—have to be understood as logical relations, judgments, or formulas. It allows the sciences to run dry. [214]

Pragmatism, although it was cultivated in another soil, is organically incorporated into this trend. For it, the forms of interpretation, that is, the laws of objects scientifically conceived, are fictional from the start, having nothing to do with the actual constitution of entities; they count for it as means for practical conduct, purposive for their respective situations, a kind of economy of consciousness in its vitally necessary world orientation. If the Neo-Kantians already took truth to be merely an immanent correspondence between concept and judgment, pragmatism completely cancels the meaning of truth. In its place is substituted practical serviceability, the bare utility of modes of interpretation in whatever situation, without respect to any accuracy or lack thereof.

These philosophical approaches and their permutations in principle constitute a single clean sweep of cognition right out of the sciences—or in other words, of ontology right out of its fields of objects—a trend that of course does not impact the healthy core of research, but has codetermined its theoretical-speculative consequences. We sense this clearly today in the reckless conclusions drawn by theoretical physics. The concept of laws of nature, once the basis of exact determination, is thought to be dissolving. We speak of laws of the sciences and act as if we are still dealing with real laws of natural relations. We relativize the dimensions in which all determinacy operates, confuse scientific determinability with the determinacy of that which is, the boundaries of the one with those of the other. We distance ourselves from what is actually given by means of mathematical formulas, and even finally reverse our mode of questioning. We no longer ask which formulas best correspond to the given, but which interpretation of the given corresponds best to the formulas calculated. It is as if the formulas, not the manifest phenomena, were the fixed foundation on which everything else was erected.

e) Phenomenology and Critique of Science

The reaction to this direction goes more than a little astray. It has its precursors in the early representatives of the “human sciences,” but only radically begins

with Bergson and the French science critics, and in Germany it achieves a more stable form in nascent phenomenology. (The latter is to be understood here more in the sense of a school of thought than in terms of methodological achievements.)

The critique of science takes off from the form of science emptied of content and reduced to a formalistic level. The critique sees this, but mistakenly takes it [215] to be the essence of science itself. In this way, it allows itself to be deceived by a narrow momentary trend in the history of science. It can no longer see beyond its towering conceptual apparatus, does not see the relational contexts with their abundance of givenness, with the intuitively concrete; it only sees abstraction and construction. It regards science to be estranged from life, estranged from intuition, as spruced up “theory.” It joins to the supposed clean sweep of ontology out of the sciences a clean sweep of the sciences out of life and out of philosophy. The result is a return to the “naïve” consciousness of the world. Since, for philosophizing human beings, there is no such thing, we cannot refer to some primary givenness here, but must attempt to reconstruct it. In this case the theoretical burden of reconstruction cannot be avoided.

In terms of its inspiration, the return to such a consciousness of the world should be positively valued. The negative side is far more questionable, however; the exclusion of the sciences with their innumerable modes of access to the given—a condemnation of science, as if it were the enemy of truth, as if it were its job to plug up the sources of intuition in order to exist in the realm of construction.

In its place, the idea is that we have to backtrack to the “naïvely” understood “phenomena.” Characteristically, however, it is only by means of pure phenomena of consciousness and act phenomena, not world phenomena and object phenomena, with which we are to construe pure givenness, and whose phenomenality one specifically underlines. On this basis, “phenomenology” is proclaimed to be a return to truth and life.

Two consequences become clear here right away. First of all, if we condemn philosophy to remaining solely on the surface of things, we deny to it penetration into reality, discovery, inference, understanding, explanation. Phenomena as such are necessarily superficial; they are, substantively understood, the external sides of objects turned to cognition, which is colored by the subjectively conditioned modes of intuition, introducing elements that do not belong to the objects. Essential intuition arrives in this manner not directly to the essence of “what is,” but always at first only to the essence of the “phenomenon” of what is. If we stand firm with the latter, then we cut ourselves off from “what is.” In this way, philosophy becomes colorful and full of intuitive multiplicity; but it is a shallow colorfulness, superficial glimmers on an animated surface.

The recourse to phenomena is fruitful and necessary; they are the accessible surfaces for every possible penetration. Since they do not obtrude on their own, but require effort, demonstration, and description, the method directed to them as a preparation is not to be avoided. However, standing firm by them is the death of all deeper penetration, the sacrifice of genuinely philosophical problems. [216]

There is a second consequence. We believe that naïve consciousness is the authoritative standard of all givenness. We do not notice that we are not familiar with such a thing, however. Every individual consciousness can only know itself directly, not some other consciousness, and certainly not one completely different from it. Naïve consciousness does not philosophize, and so does not reflect on itself, but philosophizing consciousness is not naïve. Thus, neither encompasses naïve consciousness; the former does not because it does not ask, the latter does not because it stands worlds apart from it and does not know it. Thus, we reconstruct naïve consciousness, and take the reconstruction to be the description of something immediately given. The description turns out to be necessarily false.

A classic example of this is Husserl's analysis of pure perception. In fact, we are not familiar with pure perception at all in everyday life; we only know perception as mixed with other cognitive factors, only in the totality of wider relational contexts and as integrated into them; how it might look taken on its own cannot be deduced from this context. In place of something seen, something conjectured is described. This might suffice for it. But it is a tremendous self-deception to take what is described to be something directly given. Alternatively, the reviled natural science still exists, which at least does not take its constructions to be "phenomena," does not pretend naïveté, but actually remains true to the natural direction of consciousness toward the thing, and in this way is, despite its distance from its point of departure, still the direct extension of the actual naïve cognition of the world.

Chapter 37: The Place of Science

a) Methodological Errors and Misunderstandings

The overall result of this discussion is that where phenomenology is a preparatory method, it performs outstanding and indispensable service. Where it encompasses the whole of philosophy as such, it relinquishes scientific culture and a larger comprehensive view of things, instead making a new appeal to healthy human understanding—as if the latter did not first have to learn to use its “un-

derstanding”—becoming a kind of willfully uninformed philosophizing. The consequence is an uncritical faith in evidence and allegedly infallible certainty, the sacrifice of criteria worked out through centuries-long struggle, the general destruction of philosophical achievements and the disappearance of the problem of cognition that becomes palpable in these achievements. The final phase of this development is a return to the worldview of the “unhappy consciousness”—as Hegel once described it, and as Kierkegaard later unintentionally demonstrated under the pressure of his obsessive ideas. [217]

One error begets another. The struggle against intellectualism ends in the annihilation of the intellect, and in the unintelligent presumption of ignorance. In the general devaluation of knowledge, that end for the sake of which the whole preparatory analysis of phenomena (even that of phenomenology itself narrowly construed) was undertaken, is radically falsified: the grasp of “what is insofar as it is.”

The greatest misunderstanding in the critique of the sciences does not lie in its substantive details—here it is often correct in many ways—but in what is fundamental: in its failure to see the fact that it is precisely science that has always been oriented to “being *qua* being,” and remains so even in its excesses. To pass judgment on science as a comprehensive view of things that is indefinitely capable of expansion, with a division of labor making its structure virtually unsurveyable, is of course not easy. It demands a many-sided investigation that a single individual in fact is no longer able to pull off. We should never forget that positive science in all of its many branches is ontologically oriented, and that in this matter philosophy is rightly able to orient itself by it. The failure to understand the essence of science is the consequence of a one-sided philosophical evaluation of its disconnected results, not the fault of science itself.

b) Embeddedness of Science in the Context of Everyday Life

The harms outlined can only be remedied when we succeed once again in accepting the ontological embeddedness of cognition in general and of science in particular. The basis for this has already been laid in the analysis of transcendent affective acts. It has been shown that cognition in general—and in principle even scientific cognition—is not oriented in the opposite direction relative to the mode of experience at the core of these acts. It is not in opposition to the true basic forms of unreflective consciousness of the world, but is integrated into them homogeneously. Cognition has the life context as it is actually lived through and experienced, not “against” it, but always “for” it, and as it were, behind it.

We can call this relation the basic law of the givenness of reality: all transcendent acts, including cognition, are distinctly homogeneous, despite all their structural and functional diversity, and even including their complex interweaving into the context of life experience. In all of them, one and the same fundamental reality is experienced—i.e., the existence of one and the same real world, although in various ways and from different sides. On the subject's side, not only is the experiencing consciousness itself a unity, but it also knows the unity of this manifold experience and experiences [218] it in such a way that the particularity of the individual acts completely disappears for it relative to the unity of the total experience—as the experience of “one” common and identical real world in which it itself lives and exists.

This relation is the soil on which science grows. It never abandons this soil, as long as it does not degenerate and transform itself into an objectless play with concepts. If it degenerates, however, then it ceases to be science.

We can also describe this homogeneity differently. Naïve experience and scientific cognition have in common the basic stance toward the real world as a total object—i.e., *intentio recta*. They are by their very nature ontologically oriented. They embody this stance as their natural way of existing in the world and seeing the world. This means substantively that both originally understand everything they encounter in the world as being-in-itself, indeed they perceive it, live it, experience it, and even cognize it this way.

This means that it is not even necessary for philosophy to place itself specifically on ontological soil; it always already stands on it when it reaches out from life and from science without displacing the natural attitude. The direction of ontology is not secondary, first achieved by theory; it is, as was already shown at the start (Chapter 4), the direction of natural and scientific cognition, and is the direct extension of it. Now we have shown that the context of its orientation reaches back much further and is rooted much deeper in the life context. Already “this side” of all genuine cognition, even natural cognition, the fundamental stance of consciousness is the same as that of living and experiencing, of fearing and hoping, of willing and acting, i.e., as that of the transcendent affective acts. The ontological stance is thus from the start proper to those acts that support the initial and fundamental givenness of reality as such.

Here we bring full circle the account devoted to the treatment of the problem of the givenness of reality. It has led back to its point of departure. With this outcome the soil for a realist ontological investigation is now secured. On this basis, the analysis can give itself safely over to the categorial specification of “what is.” The worry that it could distance itself from the way of being of the given should no longer hamper it.

c) Correction of the Prejudices of Science Critique

The further criticisms that follow from this account only concern isolated instances of one-sidedness and errors regarding the essence of science, and in particular the exact sciences. [219]

1. Exact science is far from being a purely quantitative form of cognition. The quantitative is only the most identifiable aspect of real entities and therefore a means to exact formulation. Restricting itself to the quantitative, or even the “reduction” of everything identifiable to quantity, is not something any of the sciences do; there is always something else that is conceived indirectly through the quantitative relationships. This other thing is the genuine object that is never reducible to the conceptual forms in terms of which it is formulated. Types of this “other thing” include: body, forces, energy, real process, events, effects and being-effectuated. In order to even meaningfully understand a mathematical formula of mechanics that employs the terms m , g , t , $v...$, we must already know what mass, acceleration, temporal duration, and velocity are. This knowledge is not just a knowledge of quantities, but knowledge of the relations in which possible quantity circulates—or in a more exact categorial formulation, knowledge of the substrates and dimensions of possible quantity. There is no idle quantitative determination in science; it is always the determination of some other nonquantitative thing. The great significance of mathematics in exact science rests solely on this fact. It would not be a science of the real in any other way.

2. Science reduces its objects to relations as little as it reduces them to quantities. Its inclination is not “relationalist.” Since all lawful regularity is a form of relation, we could also say that the content of science is not reducible to lawful regularity. It always deals with the laws of a determinate real thing, and not with lawfulness as such and for its own sake. The determinate real thing is its object. Thus, there are only determinate aspects of the real that are reducible to laws and relations, just as there is only a specific aspect of law and relation that is reducible to quantity.

3. On the other hand, it is still important not to underestimate law and relation. They are far from being something merely thought up or brought in from the outside (as if they existed only *in mente*). They are not results, but are the object of research, and are as such themselves real. In that they constitute the general *Sosein* of a specific kind of real thing, they have—according to the basic relation between *Dasein* and *Sosein* developed above—their own real *Dasein* “in” this real thing. To what extent they can be known is a question that changes nothing about their being real.

4. The laws established by science—as exact, transparent, and illuminating as they may well be—may not automatically be presented as real laws of nature. They are just as susceptible to error as is all other cognitive content, and strictly speaking always serve as only stages of approximation to it that will again be superseded in the advancement of knowledge. The real laws of nature, to the extent that there are such things, exist “in themselves” and remain in force independently of all being known. It is conceivable that we know none of them correctly, despite our highly developed science of laws. [220]

5. Science is not isolation, reduction, abstraction, or even impoverishment and falsification of the world picture, as the critique of science believes. It is essentially a comprehensive vision, synthesis of a total image, a vision of a higher order with well-tested means for seeing (*θεωρία* [theoria]). It is a powerful enrichment of our comprehension of the world, a discovery of what is otherwise concealed, making conceivable what is otherwise inconceivable. It is all of this even where it proceeds one-sidedly. It is in principle not bound to any of its one-sided views, and can again go beyond all of them in complete freedom.

6. The necessity of the division of labor and the distribution of the total object to special domains of research is what hinders the comprehensive view of the individual. Science itself always aims at the undivided whole, but in all eras the conspective minds have been few. A comprehensive vision requires an eminent power of intuition, one for which all conceptualization and all argumentation is only a means. Such a vision is infinitely richer in content than the naïve perspective. Since it is a vision on a grand scale, however, it is always a rare gift. To whomever does not have it, “laws” are only abstractions, as they do not see the essence in the form, do not feel the heartbeat of the actual in the articulated conceptual forms. This is why to them concepts themselves are not equivalent to the vital process of conceiving.

7. Because synthesis is a requirement of scientific vision, and usually extends far beyond average human capability, the saying that “few are chosen” is valid in science. However, because it requires inestimably diverse special labors in its subfields, the more it diversifies the more minds are drawn to it that are not capable of such synthesis. These minds incapable of synthesis, whom science cannot dispense with but who have only a conceptual-formal knowledge in relation to the whole, have corrupted the meaning of science and estranged its substantive structure from the life context. This situation cannot be remedied, but there is a counterweight to it, namely, philosophy. It is the enduring task of philosophy to be the conscience of science and to always lead it back to a living comprehensive vision.

d) Ontological Embeddedness of Cognition

Philosophy has not always grasped this task. It has been blinded by the partial successes of positive science in particular domains and has been misled by their one-sidedness; in following these tendencies it has frequently lost the feeling for life and for immediacy—whether this happened in a critical-negativistic or positivistic direction amounts to the same thing. Its task is not affected by this, however, and it always advances once more. Its return to the natural-ontological stance in our times is [221], despite the many detours and wrong turns it has made, at bottom an unmistakably new form of self-reflection on its essence and on its task.

We can hardly make a secret of the fact that this self-reflection is ontological, and that the decisive step consists in insight into the homogeneity of all transcendent acts and the incipient understanding of the place of cognition among them. We have already become aware that cognition is secondary in comparison to affective experience, but we do not grasp that in spite of this it has the special significance and advantage of being the objective conceptual result of every ontological experience and datum of being that is raised into consciousness. It is no accident that the transcendent affective acts all have the tendency to extend into cognition, to summon it forth, as it were, and moreover to still remain registered in it as aspects of givenness. This also holds for consciously methodical, scientific cognition.

Expressed ontologically, our standing in the midst of the real world means that we are conjoined to it by multiple relational threads. We experience the world in and through our being joined with it, and also experience our own being as a being in it. Both occur on account of the fact that the threads of relations are themselves existent things, insofar as they constitute our being in the world. Cognition—and with it science and philosophy—is a type of relation. It has the same being as the others, but it is the one in which the other relations are given to us in terms of their objective implications.

This is only possible on the basis of the homogeneity of acts described above. Affective givenness could not lead to cognition if the transcendent character of the respective acts was not the same as that in cognition. There is no specifiable boundary between experience and cognition. An aspect of cognition is latently concealed in the forms of experience, and even cognition is a form of experience—an affectively bland but substantively expanded experience.

This relational context stretches out into the all-pervasive world context. We, existing subjects, are in the world and our being belongs to the being of the world. This proposition is not convertible; the transcendence of our world-experiencing acts does not allow it. The being of the world is thoroughly bound up

with it, however: it is a single broad context of conditionedness and dependence, a single stream of events, in which our life and experience is a conditioned partial event. A kind of being that might be detached from it would be unexperiencable for us.

From this perspective, all philosophies of subjectivity and world-relativity are revealed to be crude misunderstandings of the phenomena of givenness. The world is not “someone’s” world, is not a world “for” the individual at all, however limited and distorted he may look at it. It cannot be, because each “someone” already exists as real in this one world [222] and all diversity concerns only the limits of his orientation in it. The world is not a correlate of anything; it is rather the shared ontological plane and dimension of all possible correlation. “Me and the world”—or even “me and my world”—that is just as ontologically perverse as “God and the world.” Either God exists and he belongs to the sum total of what exists, belongs to the real world, or he does not exist, but is then also not placed over against the world. The same thing holds for the self.

It is ontologically important from the outset to understand the category of the “world” as the encompassing category that it is. A flawed category of world is just as disorienting as a flawed category of the self. At best, a distinction might lie in the mode of givenness of the self, but not in its mode of being. We might say with Descartes: we experience only a single thing directly as “in itself,” that is myself, the I. That is at least meaningful.

However, in terms of the phenomenon itself, this is untenable. With respect to the phenomenon, all experience of external reality is of the same immediacy. It only remains susceptible to skepticism as long as we limit experiencing to cognizing. This kind of limitation has proven to be arbitrary. There is no isolated cognition; it only appears in conjunction with transcendent acts that constitute the life context. However, seen from the perspective of these acts, everything real stands equally immediately given to the self.

The Cartesian argument is done with because it only proves something that is a constituent of the homogeneous datum of reality anyway.

Part Four: The Problem and Status of Ideal Being

Section I: The Givenness of Mathematical Being

Chapter 38: Ontological Aporias of Ideality

a) The Primary Aporia and its Consequences

The transcendent affective acts only have the real as their object. The feeling for values is the exception, of course, but it concerns only a determinate kind of ideal being, a kind whose ontological character is most difficult to conceive and the most disputed. Its realm of content must be set aside for the time being. What remains is a kind of ontological givenness that relies on cognition alone—and indeed, as was already shown above, on a particular kind and source of cognition, the *a priori* type.

This makes the givenness of ideal being extraordinarily complicated from the start. It is precisely *a priori* cognition that is subject to the gnoseological aporia that asks how a being can be given in it at all. *A priori* cognition serves only as an indicator of possible being, not of the givenness of an actual being—which is why, across the whole domain of real cognition, we never see purely *a priori* whether something actually “is” or “is” not, but always only “how” something already evidentially real is constituted. A range of *a posteriori* data is always already contained in reality’s evidentiality, including affective givenness.

The primary aporia of ideal being automatically results from this situation. It says that we can never determine in advance whether there is ideal being at all.

This aporia is ontological and gnoseological at the same time. The question is, first, whether that which forms the object of ideal cognition is even something possessing being-in-itself; secondly, whether so-called ideal cognition—the sort concerning essential relations of all kinds—is genuine “cognition.” [224]

In any particular consciousness of objects we cannot discern whether it is cognition or not. It could also be mere thinking, representing, or imagining. It may even have a rigorous thought-structure and an inner, logical correctness; the point of departure from which it takes off can still be an error. Logical form in all its evident transparency and demonstrability does not protect us from error. Judgment and concept do not safeguard their object, and the most exact form of argumentation leaves the objective validity of its premises open.

Or, in other words: it may very well be the case that an immanent, intentional object is before us, not an object in itself. Consequently, it would mean that there is no genuine object of cognition.

b) Ideal Being and Ideal Cognition

In order to resolve this aporia, we expect a decision to be based on an analysis of the act of cognition. In the analysis, so it is thought, it must be shown whether cognition is a transcendent act or not.

Even this is difficult to show in the case of ideal cognition. The natural consciousness of being is exclusively oriented to the real. The ideal counts for it initially only as something “irreal.” Ontological consciousness of the ideal is lost in the negativity of its aloofness in contrast to the ontological weight of the real. In the “irreality” of an objectively structured content of consciousness, we never see directly whether or not an entity independent of consciousness is concealed behind it. A decision about this can only be based on its interconnections with the real. However, the independence of its genuinely ideal ontological character disappears in the latter.

The reasons for this situation lie in the peculiar nature of human experience. The givenness of the real is rooted in the transcendent affective acts. In them, being-affected is always an irreducible feature; even the most naïve consciousness of the world already possesses a complete and unshakeable conviction of the reality of the world in which it has experiences. Here, the ontological stance is the natural one, one that can only retroactively be shaken by skepticism or artificial theories.

It is just the opposite with ideal being. First of all, no transcendent affective acts speak on its behalf. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that there is no natural consciousness of ideal being, but one that only surfaces secondarily. It is given in cognition, and even then only in a highly developed, clarified cognition that is raised to the level of science.

This is also why ideal being was a late historical discovery; prior to Plato there are only dim traces of it in philosophy. Even when it was discovered, it was not as if it was demonstrated purely in its essence right away; it was instead initially burdened with metaphysical [225] theories and used as a premise for very tenuous arguments and muddled together with their speculative aims. Only slowly did a lucid consciousness of ideal being crystallize historically. The medieval theories of *essentia* and the debate over universals fought out in them have contributed the most to it, despite the speculative burden that they repeatedly introduced. Even in the Kantian era the problem was not yet ready to be addressed. Kant himself did not ask about the objective validity of the ideal *a priori* in cognition, but only about that of the real *a priori*. This is why in his transcendental deduction he is only concerned with the objective “reality” of the object of cognition, but not at the same time with a corresponding objective ideality. The fact that mathematical cognition, whose synthetic *a priori* char-

acter he clearly recognized in the transcendental aesthetic, would also have needed a deduction of its objective validity, did not even occur to him. Apparently, he did not yet recognize the problem.

Aside from these historical reasons, there is also an ontological one. There is no urgency in ideal being; in life nothing depends on it, at least not directly. It does not directly “concern” human beings, it does not “overcome” them like a fate the way that events overcome them, it does not “advance on them,” it threatens no one. This is because it is not in time. It pervades the real, as well as our consciousness of the real, silently and in hiding; to this extent it does concern human beings in their lives, but continually and unnoticed, as it were. Its subsistence and its pervasiveness are inconspicuous, and first require a particular conscious attitude in order to be noticed. This is why there is no experience and no suffering of ideal entities, no genuine being-affected by them. Their existence is unobtrusive.

The timeless is, as the ever-existing (*ἀεὶ ὅν*), what is necessarily hidden in everyday life, no matter how much it may be evident to advanced cognition. Therefore, its “silent existence” is contestable to a much larger extent than real existence. It contrasts with the “noise” and obtrusive existence of the real. Human being is the kind of being for whom that which does not dramatically obtrude, does not seize us, does not send us reeling, beset, or threaten us, is easily not believable.

c) Approach to Ontological Givenness in Mathematical Cognition

Where do we identify the phenomenon of ideal being? At the earliest and most well-known level it is of course identifiable in mathematics. The Pythagoreans knew of the “being” of numbers. Since they recognized its timelessness, they took it to be the sole pure and perfect being. Plato followed in their footsteps by calling geometry an *ἐπιστήμη* [226] *τοῦ ἀεί ὄντος* [knowledge of what always exists]. This interpretation lived on in the Platonism of late antiquity; Proclus taught a “mathematical being” and especially a “geometrical being” (*οὐσία* [substance]). Today, in mathematics, we still speak of “mathematical existence,” and we express it in the form of existential judgments. For example, “there is an infinite series of fractions between any two whole numbers;” “there is no logarithm of a negative number;” “there is only one straight line between two points;” “there are five regular bodies,” etc.

These are existential judgments not only in terms of their logical form, but also in terms of their content. They say what there is or is not in the relevant sphere. We are not dealing with the logical being of the judgment, but with

the being of mathematical entities independent of the judgment, those about which the judgment is speaking.

Since the distinction between *Dasein* and *Sosein* is ontically relative, it must also show the same ontological meaning in the structure of a judgment about *Sosein*. This is easy to see in some simple examples: " $3^6 = 729$ "; " $a^0 = 1$ "; "the sum of the angles in a polygon is $= 2(n-2)R$ "; " $\pi = 3.14159\dots$ ". The "is" in these judgments means that the object actually, i.e., in itself, is so constituted, or that the relevant property is existent in it.

It occurred to many thinkers early on that in such judgments we are only dealing with thoughts, or even only with thinking or having-to-think; logarithms, for instance, or the geometrically straight line, 3^6 , or a^0 , exist only in thinking, and something actual may not be referred to by them at all. The judgments themselves say nothing to this effect, however. They do not mean "I think this way" or "I must think this way;" instead they simply express an "it is so." Thus, they express a being, and not a kind of thinking. We are not talking about thinking, not even about any special mathematical thinking, as if it were different from other kinds of thinking. Every interpretation that goes in this direction distances itself from the meaning of the statement; it conjoins it with something that simply does not appear in the judgment. We find the root of a long series of errors in such an interpretation, which have become widespread in theories of mathematical thinking. Even Kant's theory of "synthetic *a priori* judgments in mathematics" has its point of departure in it, although it does not make thinking but intuition instead into the foundation of judgments. The form of intuition belongs to the subject and is not taken to be a property of the object.

d) Objections and Criticism of Objections

It may be objected that we still find these judgments only in thinking, and that we cannot detach that which they express from the statement itself. It is a matter of logical positing. It is characteristic of thinking, stating, or positing that they can only turn out in such and such a way and not haphazardly. [227]

Further, it may be argued that by the "triangle" by means of which someone demonstrates something mathematical, we mean neither the drawn triangle on which one demonstrates (it is merely a crutch for the intuition, and an inadequate one), nor a real material triangle, but "triangle in general," *in abstracto*, i.e., as it only appears in geometrical thinking. Thus, we take it as an intentional object. In the same way, by 3^6 , we do not mean three things that are to be multiplied by 3 six times, but generally and *in abstracto* the sixth power of 3, as only arithmetical thinking conceives it.

The central issue, however—the object and its ontological character—is overlooked in such argumentation. Of course, only in thinking do we find the judgments in which the relations indicated are stated; but this holds for all judgments, even for those about real things, e.g., for the judgment “the atomic weight of H is = 1.” Here we would be careful not to argue that hydrogen “is” along with its atomic weight only in thinking. The judgment “posit” something of course, but the positing does not intend itself, it intends another something that exists independently of the positing but whose content is touched by it. Put differently: the positing intends the posited not “as” posited, but as something subsisting in itself. The essence of positing, insofar as it is an expression of a cognitive relation, consists in transcending itself and indicating something possessing being-in-itself. Correspondingly, nothing is contained in the content of the judgment that deals with the judgment itself or with the positing. The judgment is rather the pure expression of an objective relation, and the latter is, in the positing, already distinguished from it (the positing as such). Thus, the content is from the start thought to be something possessing being-in-itself. Whether it also actually “is” in itself is of course not answered solely by the positing. That is another question entirely, for the positing, and with it thinking, might rest on an error. The judgment can be untrue. Precisely in the case of error, however, it is illuminating that the being-in-itself of an ontological relation was genuinely meant. For error consists in the inaccuracy of what is said in relation to “what is.” Where the latter is lacking, the distinction between true and untrue loses its meaning.

If we go to the other extreme and we understand the ontological relation indicated as a real relation—e.g., we understand the “3” as three things, the triangle as a material triangle—then again the meaning of the mathematical statement is misunderstood. It is then lacking not only the characteristic universality and necessity, but also exactness and sufficient accuracy. No one who understands the meaning of the mathematical judgment draws this conclusion. This conclusion is apparently easy to draw because we are accustomed to understand by “beings” real beings, and therefore to confuse being with reality. However, the judgments of mathematics teach us, despite all habits of thinking to the contrary, precisely that there is another kind of being, and that it is a mistake to simply take mathematical forms to be non-being, i.e., mere forms of thought, simply because they are of themselves [228] not real.

The fact that inorganic nature conforms in large measure to mathematical lawfulness, and that in fact mathematical relations are far from merely existing only in thought, but permeate the real world and are contained in it as its fundamental relations, amply shows that the interpretation above is incorrect. We will expand on this side of the issue more extensively below. It concerns the re-

lation between ideal and real being, and a larger circle of questions is conjoined to this. For the time being, it will suffice to understand the difference between ways of being as a difference given in mathematical statements and intended by them. To specify it more precisely is not so difficult when we have once freed ourselves from the prejudice of the subjectivity of ideal being and have understood why and in what sense we are dealing with genuine being-in-itself when it comes to such statements.

e) Mathematical Judgment and Mathematical Object

Thus, we can see that the statement is constructed in such a way that it transcends itself. It does not express “itself”—this would be a judgment about a judgment—but expresses a specific content, and the latter is already characterized as an existing content in the form of the statement. This is the ontological meaning of the copula. The “is” in the judgment is indeed identical with the positing, but the positing itself intends something else, something that is. It does not state that the concept (the subject of the judgment) “is” in such and such a way, but that the object “is” thus and so. Thus, in the case of the mathematical judgment what is said is valid for the mathematical object.

This may easily be demonstrated by a few examples. In a proposition about the sum of the angles of a polygon, we do not mean the drawn polygon with which one demonstrates it, but also not—and above all not—the thought or concept of a polygon. Instead, we mean the polygon itself, as such, and *in genere* [in kind]. A concept has no sum of its angles, it does not even have angles at all since it is not a spatial entity. The concept of a polygon is no exception. The proposition about the sum of its angles thus says what it says, not about the “concept” of the polygon, but about the polygon itself *in genere*. In contrast, the concept, which takes the place of the subject of the judgment, is only the intellectual interpretation of the polygon *in genere*, and thus does not coincide with it. It is only its representative in the sphere of thought. The proposition certainly occurs with its help, but is valid for the thing, i.e., for the polygon as spatial entity, not for the concept. A proposition about something spatial in a concept would be a nonsensical proposition.

This should be self-evident. However, the complexity of logical problems and the reification of logical [229] entities (concept and judgment) have led to the acceptance of the opposite view. In the field of real being, the confusion between concept and thing is not as dangerous; here the powerful natural consciousness of reality works against it. But when the thing has a different mode of being that does not so rudely announce itself to consciousness, this con-

flation becomes highly misleading, for it naturally simplifies the relation. This is one of the primary reasons why it is so difficult to conceive ideal being purely and as such.

Therefore, it is necessary to begin with precisely this point in order to clarify the situation that has been confused by the tradition. To this end, the first step is to keep the distinction just made between the concept and object of the proposition in the meaning of the mathematical judgment. It is important to keep this first apparently negligible result strictly in mind and to make it the basis for what follows: the magnitude of the sum of the angles is not asserted about the concept of a polygon, but about the polygon itself. We mean by this the polygon not insofar as it is thought, but insofar as it “is” in itself and according to its own nature. We know very well that our thinking one way or another changes nothing about the “*Sosein*” of the polygon.

Only on this presupposition does it make any sense at all to speak of the truth or untruth of such judgments. For truth means the applicability of the proposition in relation to something that is such as it is independently of the claim; likewise, untruth means inapplicability. If there is no being of the thing beyond the concept or an existing state of affairs beyond the judgment, there is also nothing to which concept and judgment could be applicable, and the distinction between true and untrue becomes superfluous. Since in mathematics there is a very particular claim to truth, the being of its objects (with which it deals in its judgments) is tacitly presupposed in them. Since it cannot automatically deal with its objects as real being, a different kind of being must be attributed to them. The expression “ideal being” indicates this other kind of being.

f) Further Examples and Consequences

This consideration exactly conforms to the phenomenon of mathematical judgment, of argument, of calculating, demonstrating, deriving operations, in short, mathematical thinking as we find it and are able to analyze it with precision. Its type is the characteristic form of givenness of ideal being, where following the phenomenon reveals the presupposition that the object is an object existing in itself. Retrospectively, we can of course reflect on this being directly. At first, however, a detour through the statement is required. The statement, as well as the whole sphere of thinking in which it operates, conceals ideal being. It conceals it from view [230] on initial inspection—and even from its own consciousness due to its being upstream of it—and therefore they reveal ideal being to consciousness only upon deeper investigation. The investigation

consists in looking into what has been presupposed, and penetrating to what has been covered up by the judgment.

The alternative “either real or merely thought” is thus a false dichotomy. It is not true that only real material polygons, or even drawn ones, exist in themselves. There is still another kind of being-in-itself, an irreal kind, but it is far from being a mere abstraction. This is what is meant in the geometrical judgment.

The same thing holds for the objects of the propositions “ $a^0 = 1$ ” or “ $3^6 = 729$.” When someone asserts “ $a^0 = 1$ ” or “ $3^6 = 729$,” it may easily be shown that this “is” not the case, that the assertion is untrue; and this means that it does not agree with what a^0 or 3^6 “is” in actuality. It is clearly shown in them that the actual being of the quantities a^0 and 3^6 in their spheres, a being *sui generis* [of its own kind], is already presupposed in the meaning of the assertion. In relation to this being the assertion can be true or untrue, but the being-true or being-untrue of the assertion can no longer change anything in the existence of this being.

Thus, the mode of being with which we are dealing here apparently has independence in relation to judgment and opinion, being cognized and not being cognized, knowability and unknowability. It has this independence even though the object to which the judgment corresponds is not a real one and is also not meant as a real one. Such independence is the precise meaning of what epistemology calls being-in-itself: the subsistence of the object independently of cognition, or—as was demonstrated above in a more general discussion—the trans-objectivity of the object of cognition.

It is crucial here to hold on to this simple meaning of “gnoseological being-in-itself” rigorously and to not conflate it with the likes of the Kantian concept of the “thing in itself” or some other metaphysically substantialized meaning. Only in the sense discussed does it apply to the phenomenon. In this meaning it cannot be abstracted from it: in mathematical thinking, judging, and cognition the object conceived is understood in such a way that it subsists independently of thinking, judging, and cognition. It is understood to be such that it has always existed and will continue to exist as something atemporal, but never as something that first comes to be in the judgment.

It is this character of being-in-itself that ideal being shares with real being. The two ways of being are not different on this point, and that is the reason why we must set them side by side ontologically, and why we have to avoid every precipitous reluctance to attribute being-in-itself to one but not the other—as has often been attempted. Thus, in this respect, we see one and the same basic phenomenon from the simple perception of things up to mathematical cognition. Just as when we say that [231] we catch sight of something, we do not mean

that the things caught sight of first arise upon our seeing them, but that they already previously existed in themselves and only moved into the visual field; we also mean that in mathematical cognition the atemporal ideal object moves into the visual field of intuition but does not first arise with our intuition of it. Therefore, we consider such intuition to be genuine cognition, even though it does not concern a real object. The difference between ways of being does not lie in gnoseological being-in-itself, but in the specific mode of existence belonging to entities.

Chapter 39: Theories and Interpretations

a) Mathematical Subjectivism

We are permitted to speak of the gnoseological being-in-itself of mathematical objects to the extent that there is a being-in-itself that is intended and presupposed in mathematical thinking.

This intending and presupposing can of course also be mistaken. Actually, it may well be the case that thinking “posits” mathematical objects but misjudges them as posited; it allows itself to be duped by the inner structure and objectivity of the entities posited, so to speak—especially by their atemporality—and surrenders to the illusion of their being-in-itself. The same well-known aporia from ancient skepticism arises in mathematical cognition as in cognition of the real, where in the latter the weight of transcendent affective acts and of the life context is there to counter it.

The position that we adopt when we make room for this possibility is consequently a mathematical skepticism. This does not mean that we doubt mathematical judgments as such, but only that we deny the being of the mathematical objects allegedly met with and intended in them. In our era, there are two theories that develop this position, mathematical subjectivism and mathematical intuitionism.

The first claims that there are no fixed and irrefutable primary mathematical realities. Mathematics then floats freely in the realm of thought with its posittings. It begins with definitions and axioms that it purposefully lays down with a view to further operations. It allows conditional validity to what is defined, and the rest consists simply in drawing conclusions from them.

The mathematician can work with this interpretation in his circumscribed field of labor; his conceptual space is then that of a thought context existing purely in itself detached from the world context; his science becomes a kind of higher order game of chess under very specific logical laws, which he presup-

poses and recognizes as authoritative. His criterion is only that of an inner [232] correspondence, the principle of contradiction. Aside from this presupposed lawfulness, everything rests on pure positing.

This view acquires a certain persuasive force from contemporary research in axiomatics. In terms of logical structure, everything particular depends on axioms and definitions. However, they do not stand there immovably fixed when we eliminate the original data of intuition—not empirical intuition in this case, but *a priori* intuition; something like the Kantian intuition of space. We cannot prove them in the same way that we can prove particular theorems by using them. In principle, the possibility of cancelling, displacing, or exchanging them for others always exists. One famous example (among others) is the eleventh axiom of Euclid, with which these kinds of considerations begin. The consequence is a geometry and arithmetic that come out differently in essential ways. Taken merely logically, Euclid's classical geometry has no advantage over one arranged differently.

When generalized, this consideration leads to pure mathematical subjectivism. That is, if everything depends on the first positings and these can be arbitrarily changed, then mathematics ceases to have any relation to an existing sphere of objects. Just as these first positings form an arbitrary system, on their basis all particular mathematical being also appears to be arbitrary.

b) Mathematical Intuitionism

In contrast, mathematical intuitionism allows for the validity of fixed primary data that are at first presented to pure inner intuition and that then serve as the foundation for everything else. It is not necessary to restrict this basis in intuition to the Kantian intuition of space and time. We may also allow it a wider foundation. It is crucial, however, to be able to easily erect an “essential axiomatic” on such a foundation in intuition in contrast to the multiplicity of axiom systems, which then suffices not only for the system of theorems, but is also necessary in itself.

Arbitrariness is eliminated here, to be sure. We cannot begin with arbitrarily chosen definitions and axioms, since intuition prescribes determinate ones. It is the intuition of specific, immovable contents, and we can delineate only these contents in our first principles. Therefore, not everything depends on positings. However, it does depend on primary evidence. It is not easy to say what this really is and in what its stability is rooted. We may grasp it in terms of objective content, but not as an entity. Thus, it possesses merely intentional objecthood.

If we pursue this peculiar relation further, we find only the presentive act of intuition [233] here for the data in question, but not a presentive object. Such a thing would have to be more than a merely intentional object; it would have to be an object possessing being-in-itself, and intuition would have to relate to it as to a thing independent of it. Intuition would have to be immersed in its essence and seek to garner from it the essential features that belong to the thing itself. This kind of mathematical intuition does not reckon with such an object, however. Evidence remains an inner, immanent sort, and its phenomenon is a phenomenon of consciousness; the presentive act to which it attaches is not a transcendent act, and therefore there is no ontological testimony in it.

Therefore, not much is gained by this theory in light of subjectivism. We could go much further with concept of intuition, since in principle intuition is a form of grasping (cognition); as such, it can only be a transcendent act, necessarily oriented outwardly to an object possessing being-in-itself. The theory overlooks this fact. The meaning of the act of grasping is falsified in this construal of “intuition.” There remains merely an inner relation between consciousness and its content. When we say “intuition” instead of “positing,” we name only an internal modal difference. Basically, we have only substituted one kind of immanent act for another.

c) Disastrous Consequences

Both theories begin with the point that mathematical lawfulness belongs to consciousness, while mathematical objects are merely contents of consciousness; the difference among objects is only a difference in the function of consciousness that lies at their basis. Even so, with “intuition” we come somewhat closer to the primary phenomenon than we do with “positing;” but intuition is conceived subjectively as well, and the result is still unfortunate. It reinterprets the phenomena. It says that there are no genuine numerical laws or spatial laws, but only laws of intuition; in exactly the same way, there are only laws of thinking for the theory that takes positing to be central.

That “the straight line is the shortest” then only means that it must be represented as the shortest; that “ a^0 is = 1” likewise means a necessity in intuitive representation (as in the representation of the series of exponents). In terms of the meaning of the proposition, however, in neither case are we speaking of a necessity of representations, even of an intuitive necessity (and just as little of a necessity of thinking), but of the constitution of object-like entities, i.e., of a line and of a specific exponent. In the former, a spatial quantity is expressed, and in the latter a numerical magnitude, both of which apply neither to intuition

as such nor to thinking as such. Of course, both the representation of “magnitude” and the concept of “magnitude” exist, but neither the representation itself nor the concept itself can possess “magnitude”—neither spatial nor arithmetical magnitude. [234]

Nothing is gained by referring to some intuitive compulsion or a compulsion to think contained in these laws. Of course, it is impossible to think or represent their content in any other way. The laws do not speak of this impossibility, however, they speak of another and more fundamental one: of the impossibility that the matter “be” otherwise (that a^0 “is” not $=1$, that the straight line “is” not the shortest). That consciousness cannot conceive them otherwise is then already the result of their “being” thus and not otherwise.

A specific interpretation of the primary phenomenon is already contained in both theories, a reinterpretation of lawfulness that changes it from a lawfulness of the object into a lawfulness of the consciousness of objects. To be sure, interpretation is the privilege of theory. The question is whether this interpretation can be upheld. In the above case, we have shown that these interpretations neglect the essential ontological content of the phenomenon, and thus cannot be maintained philosophically.

It is the task of the next chapter to demonstrate this. The demonstration only has the external appearance of a refutation. In fact, it goes beyond an initial treatment of the primary phenomenon insofar as it is contained in the presuppositions of mathematical science. The two theories introduced above only provide the polemical entry into it. Both are designed in accord with one and the same model and stand very near to one another despite their incompatibility in specific details. This common model contains the primary traditional fallacy whose root we need to unearth.

d) The Basic Epistemological Fallacy

Interpretations of this kind commit the error of ignoring the cognitive character of mathematical science, to be precise. Cognition is not the same as thinking or as intuitive presentation; it is not a production of its contents, not even a mere “having” of contents, but is in its essence a “grasping” of something possessing being-in-itself.

The distinction between “having” and “grasping” is lost wherever we one-sidedly focus on logical lawfulness in the essence of the sciences. Lawful regularity is indifferent to conception. The nineteenth century logical theories of science have therefore misconstrued the problem of cognition from the ground up, and have nearly led to its oblivion despite the incessant talk about “knowledge.”

Along with the being-in-itself of the object, the transcendent character of the act was also lost, and the phenomenon of cognition was flattened out into a mere phenomenon of consciousness. It is conceivable that the methodology of the mathematical sciences had to give priority to just this interpretation; for in its domain serious difficulties arise for an ontological conception of the object. Theories of this kind certainly did not develop apart from the problem [235] of ideal being.

Of course, phenomenology ran counter to this logical direction, but did not discover the basic error in it and instead incorporated this error into its own expanded kind of intuitive phenomenological description. With its imprecise, so to speak “ontologically neutral” conception of the intentional object, it had only once again given priority to the old prejudice. Indeed, the doctrine of ideal being received from it new inspiration, and the latter was provided to it by its treatment of the sphere of essences. However, it did not pay attention to the ontological characteristics of these essences. Instead, through the indeterminacy that it left to this sphere, it transformed into a kind of metaphysical theory; this is clearly displayed in Husserl’s return to an idealism of the Neo-Kantian variety. This is why it is the least capable of distinguishing between the “having” of a content of consciousness and the “grasping” of an existing object.

It is important to keep these two factors strictly apart in order to deal with the conflation of concepts just outlined. We can “have” thoughts, representations, intuitions, opinions, concepts, and intentional objects. Having is a relation immanent to consciousness and does not touch the object independent of consciousness. In contrast, we can “grasp” only an object existing in itself, the kind that exists independently of consciousness (also independently of conception) and that is not reducible to its being an object for consciousness. Cognition of the real “grasps” real events, persons, things, and situations (states of affairs) in this way. But “grasping” is essentially a transcendent relation, and its objects necessarily have a transobjective being-in-itself.

If we apply this relation to the knowledge of ideal objects, such as those of pure mathematics, then we have to conclude that pure mathematics can count as genuine cognition, i.e., as “grasping” of something, if its objects also have being-in-itself. It is not sufficient for cognition if they subsist in the mere “having” of mathematical entities in consciousness, even if their immanent lawful regularity is impressive. As cognition it must be a genuine grasping. This is only possible when the mathematical entities—numbers, numerical relations, figures, spatial relations, etc.—have a kind of being independent of consciousness and from conception itself. This means that these entities must not first arise through intuition or positing, but have to exist without them and as that which atemporally are prior to these acts.

e) Cross-check: Mathematics without Cognition

There is only one way we can avoid this conclusion, namely, by denying that mathematics has the character of cognition. What [236] takes place in it would then not need to be regarded as a grasping, and therefore would not be regarded as a transcendent act either. Then of course it would require no existing objects. However, this way we arrive again at the idea of a chess game in thought.

We can of course conceive the possibility, but it hardly corresponds to the seriousness of mathematics. If the latter is not cognition, then neither is it a science, but instead a highly structured game of the imagination. The mathematician, at least, will not accept this. He could at best escape this conclusion by saying that mathematics is a science of thinking or intuition—in order to say that it is not a science of the imagination. We cannot really pull this off, however, not even if we wanted to limit it to a specific kind of thinking or intuition. Mathematics obviously does not deal with thinking and intuition at all, but with numbers, magnitudes, figures, and everything related to them on the same ontological plane. A science of those acts (thinking and intuition), in contrast, would be psychology.

In principle, the mathematician knows very well the independent mode of being of his objects. He is just not accustomed to designating his objects “existing” because he naively believes that being is synonymous with reality. This makes sense, since he cannot possibly have the more general concept of “being-in-itself” that philosophy first works out. He would not have much to object to about it. Without this concept, however, the mode of being of mathematical objects is not conceivable.

This is naturally not compatible with a purely subjectivistic mode of thinking. Subjectivism contests the cognitive character of mathematics, albeit without considering what it sacrifices in this way. It is more compatible with the intuitionist interpretation, but then the internal inconsistency of the theory comes to the fore. “Intuition” is from the start a mode of cognition, a “grasping,” a transcendent act; in this way it is oriented entirely differently than “positing,” and it is only the theory of intuition that misjudges this. The truth of intuition is that it is not a presentive act, but an act of apprehension (receptive), and the epistemic authority behind it is to be sought in the object. The latter determines intuition, insofar as the object “is offered” to it (appears) and is indifferent to the act of intuition itself. It is thus already presupposed as being-in-itself. If such an object does not offer itself, if no existent thing lies before it that has its determinate *Sein* already in itself, then the act is not an intuitive grasping at all.

The reason why errors concerning this point crop up again and again is that the traditional concept of intuition is ambiguous. No dividing line is drawn be-

tween a “grasping” and a constructive (imaginative) intuition. For the mere phenomenon of consciousness that we call intuition, i.e., vision of a higher order, we [237] do not need to draw such a line, since in both cases the concrete pictorial nature of the content of consciousness is the same, and this pictorial nature (in contrast to the abstractness of concepts) is what we then understand by “intuitability.” If we held firmly to this neutral meaning of “intuition” there would be no reason to object to it; but in this neutral state the concept of intuition would not be suitable as the foundation of mathematics. In this case, the origin of the primary data would be equivocal. The theory thus tacitly replaces the narrower concept of “grasping intuition” with the neutral concept, actually takes into account the cognitive relation (including its transcendence), but does not realize this and therefore proceeds as if it had not presupposed an object possessing being-in-itself at all.

From whatever perspective we examine the situation, an interpretation of mathematics that does not consider it to be a kind of cognition is simply unsuitable and does not correspond to the meaning of science. It is not impossible, but would be a fruitless undertaking; fruitless, because it would be without objects. Therefore, in order to understand its actual method philosophically, we have to start at the other end; i.e., we must attempt to understand the way of being of its field of objects. Such an understanding leads us to a closer specification of ideal being.

Chapter 40: Ideal Cognition and Objective Validity

a) Immanent and Transcendent Apriority

We should not take this specification of ideal being too lightly, of course. We might readily invoke the familiar intersubjective consensus regarding mathematical propositions, i.e., the agreement of diverse subjects about that which they accept as evident. If we restrict ourselves to the limits of what is subjectively accessible to the individual, and objectively to contents that are sufficiently clarified scientifically in order to claim for them a universal validity, this is legitimate for the phenomenon. The question is whether this is enough to make the ontological character of mathematical objects concrete.

Here we run into a limit to this kind of argument. We can take any mathematical state of affairs and make it evident to anyone who has the cognitive ability (mathematical capacity and education) to grasp it: he will find it to be “thus and not otherwise,” if he grasps it at all. The oft-invoked agreement among subjects in their mathematical intuition consists in this; since we are dealing with *a priori*

cognition, this phenomenon can be more specifically termed the “intersubjective universality of the *a priori*.” Since it means mere agreement between subject and subject, [238] and the question whether it applies to the thing itself remains suspended, it is a merely immanent or subjective agreement, despite the many subjects included in it. The *a priori* on which it is supported is a mere “immanent *apriority*,” whose “objective validity”—i.e., its genuine cognitive value—still remains open to question.

It can be shown that wherever this immanent *apriority* has actual cognitive status, it already rests on a shared relation of the subjects to an existing thing, i.e., on “transcendent *apriority*”—that is, on a kind that already has objective validity. Thus, the intersubjective agreement is already a consequence of the identity of the object, which is evident to all in the same way because the object has its determinate *Sosein* in itself and the latter can only be seen as it is by those who bring it into view at all, and not as it is not.

However, if we want to use this consideration as an argument on behalf of the being-in-itself of the object, we would be engaging in a logical circle. The presupposition was just that immanent *apriority* already had cognitive character, and this means that its object possesses being-in-itself. Thus, that which ought to have been demonstrated has already been presupposed. The peculiar thing about the *a priori* in consciousness is that it is not necessarily *a priori* “cognition” at all, and it is even never directly evident whether it is cognition or not. There are even contents of consciousness that do not stem from experience, and which are *a priori*, but are still not cognition, such things as free fabrications, constructions, imaginings, or also mistaken assumptions, presuppositions, unjustified opinions. That which we call a “prejudice” in everyday life is something entirely *a priori*, and its name shows this quite clearly (pre-judgment); but the prejudice has no cognitive status, it is lacking “objective validity.” Therefore, the first concern of all cognitive endeavors is to make oneself free of prejudices.

We have Neo-Kantianism to blame for the fact that the double-edged and problematic character of the *a priori* has passed into oblivion, and that *apriority eo ipso* counts as cognition. In contrast, Kant still knew of the difficulties surrounding the cognitive claim of the *a priori*. This explains his laborious struggles with the demonstration of the legitimacy of this claim for a specific, very narrowly limited set of primary *a priori* basic cognitive factors. Everything possible could be judged *a priori*, but not everything judged *a priori* is true (has objective validity). Judgments as such are generally indifferent to whether they are true or untrue; we cannot find indications in judgments themselves whether they are the expression of insight into the thing (cognition) or not. The deduction of their “objective validity” then forms for Kant the major concern of the *Critique*. It consists in nothing other than the demonstration of the basic condition under which

“synthetic *a priori* judgments” may count as substantive insight into the essence of the thing. This is why, on the other hand, the negative business [239] of the *Critique* consists in showing that certain *a priori* metaphysical judgments wrongly raise the claim to validity and cognitive value.

b) Ideal Apriority and Necessity

What holds for judgment holds even more so for representation, opinion, and belief. They all contain *a priori* factors and these are the dubious aspect in them. The opinions we form about an issue of concern according to some vague analogy are *a priori* to a high degree; the generalization contained in the analogy can never be confirmed by experience, so it is anticipatory. We have in advance an image of the issue of concern before the data can support it. This is why the inclination exists to verify opinions retrospectively based on experience. The anticipation always initially has the character of a prejudice.

The conclusion that should be drawn from this is that immanent *apriority*, even when it is still very much subjectively universal, is never automatically “ideal *apriority*.” Its universality can always also be that of a prejudice. Ideal *apriority*, if it counts as cognition at all, is transcendent *apriority*. That is, it is insight into the essence of something that is. The entity that chastens cognition in this case is an ideal entity.

But how can we know whether a whole *a priori* domain of content like that of mathematics has a merely immanent or a genuinely ideal *apriority*—i.e., transcendent, entity-cognizing *apriority*? In the one case as in the other, the empirical test is lacking. If fabricated opinions and prejudices can be just as universal as genuine insight, what speaks on behalf of the view that mathematics is genuine ontological cognition? This question is obviously undecidable for mathematics left to itself. A criterion can be secured neither on the basis of its content nor from this content’s mode of givenness.

“Necessity” offers itself as a second factor in addition to intersubjective universality. It has always been seen as a feature of *apriority*. The form in which it becomes palpable to consciousness is also initially subjective, however; we experience it as a kind of compulsion in thinking, or even more generally as a compulsion of intuition and representation. It is impossible to represent the straight line otherwise than as the shortest line between two points; impossible to think a^0 otherwise than as $= 1$, where we have the whole series of exponents before our eyes, among which the 0th has the same numerical value of 1 for every a .

Thinking or intuition thus “experiences” here a power over which it is not master. Consciousness here “experiences,” as it were, the severity and intracta-

bility of the matter of concern with which it deals. This experiencing is of course not as dramatic as the experience of the real. Nevertheless, it is definitely no less rigid. When experience rises to the grasp of pure mathematical [240] entities—to which it is not compelled in everyday life, of course—then it runs into the same fixed determinacy it can do nothing about. The unobtrusiveness of ideal objects does not entail the softening of their contours. These form an inalterable *Sosein*, and the consciousness that reflects on them experiences their complete immutability. It is even completely convinced of this. It knows that it is not possible for it to posit $a^0 = 0$, or to represent the straight line as the “longer” path; it knows that it would not correspond either to the essence of a^0 or to that of the straight line.

The compulsion that stems from the object in the conviction of consciousness itself is definitely to be compared with that which stems from the real. We can confirm it by guiding those who do not know with questions and allowing them to discover it. This is what the famous Platonic experiment with the “mathematical youngster” demonstrated. Mathematical thinking does not invent; it is insight into the matter at hand, and so can only “discover,” and in the discovery be convinced about that which “is,” but not about that which is not.

c) Cognitive Necessity and Ontological Necessity

The necessity present in mathematical thinking depends on this relation. If we follow it up unreflectively, we find that, in the interconnections of thinking itself, it already points to an ontological necessity by which it is supported. Further, the Platonic justification for the possibility of agreement between opinions (*όμολογία*) is based on it, as is the possibility of convincing someone else or of being persuaded by him. This is the meaning of the ancient “dialogue,” in which the opponent is made a witness of the truth. It is the grand idea that with a controlled intuition into the thing through the commonality of concern with it—in shared apperception (*νόησις*) of it—the thing itself will necessarily show itself as it is in itself. Since the best executed examples of this dialogical procedure are mathematical examples, it testifies to the fact that the whole ontological relation was essentially discovered in the cognition of ideal being.

Here we have an experience of ideal being, we would like to think, that holds up very well in comparison with the experience of real being, and in terms of substantive evidentiality is even superior to it. Nevertheless, it is not equal to it as testimony to being-in-itself. The possibility remains open of interpreting it subjectively; for the subject may also stand under inalterable, intersubjectively

identical lawful relations. This would suffice to account for the agreement and would also make clearly understandable why the subject mistakenly refers the compulsion experienced in thinking back to ontological necessity. This is a skeptical interpretation, of course, but it cannot be dealt with solely by reference to the necessity in the *a priori*. [241] Even if there were no further argument about the ideal being of mathematical objects, we would still have no right to speak of such a thing on this basis.

Or, to put it another way: up to this point, ideal *apriority* can always be understood as mere “immanent *apriority*” with intersubjective lawfulness. It could be that there is no “thing” at all that could “show itself,” that the necessity stems from an original compulsion of thinking, from a subjective or act-lawfulness, which on such an account only appears to depend on the object because it is borne by the act. Then, that which becomes conscious is not the act itself, but only its intentional object. If it depends completely on the act, however, then the invisible necessity in the act must become visible. The “experienced” necessity in the object may then be explained with reference to a present but concealed necessity in the act.

This is a rather artificial theory, but we cannot refute it with a simple reference to the phenomenon that it explains. Indeed, we cannot deflate it at all with reference to the facts of ideal cognition as long as we isolate the latter from cognition of the real. We could popularly express this calamity in the form of the Cartesian idea of a *deus malignus*: it “could” be that God has so formed our intellect (or intuition) such that we all have to think $a^0 = 1$ our whole lives, while a^0 in actuality is something different (such as = 0). To generalize this would mean that “our” mathematics could not be cognition.

Chapter 41: Ideal Cognition and Real Cognition

a) The Application of Mathematical Cognition to Real Relations

This means that the entire weight of the question concerning the being-in-itself of ideal being now rests on its relation to the real world. Accordingly, it is necessary to determine the cognitive character of mathematics based on its relation to cognition of the real.

In the domain of ideal cognition, this relation to the real can be considered to be genuinely miraculous, precisely because it fundamentally cuts off the possibility of an immanent-subjective interpretation of the pertinent phenomenon. Since its discovery, all those who have considered its meaning have seen it as the great marvel of cognition. The fact that its implications in terms of worldview

have been overestimated from early on, and have again and again led to subsequent overestimations, should not bias us against its legitimate meaning.

At the earliest inception of natural-scientific thinking the ancient Pythagoreans discovered this relation. They discovered [242] it in the calculability of pitch from string length as well as in the mathematical determinability of movements of stars in the heavens. They formulated it such that the principles of the mathematical domain have to be at the same time principles of “what is” (i.e., of the real).¹ This would also mean that the real relations between things, processes, and motions rigorously conform to the laws of mathematical ideal forms—of numbers and figures.

This classical discovery became, after many detours of course, the foundation of the exact natural sciences. It is not simply identical to the latter, and at first seduced us into many kinds of number-mystical constructions. In principle, the basic phenomenon that natural processes in general can be mathematically conceived and calculated is grasped in it. The ontological character of mathematical objects is thus also in principle grasped in it.

We have to give an account of what is really expressed in this primary phenomenon. If we introduce the long series of achievements that the exact natural sciences of the last three centuries have recorded, and suggest that they all rest on the same relation, then we may make the ontological connections in the following way:

1. The mathematical lawfulness that our calculating takes hold of and is grasped in pure inner intuition applies to the relations between real things in the world. They cannot first be introduced into the objects of natural science by mathematical thinking (through the calculative mode of interpretation, for instance), for they are initially presented to observation and are experienced independently of calculation, and so they subsist before all conceiving of them in terms of mathematical formulas. Consequently, mathematical lawfulness must already be contained in them independently of mathematical thinking and interpreting.

2. However, there is the further consequence that this mathematical lawfulness does not only hold for ideal mathematical entities, but must at least indirectly be lawful regularity of the real as well. Since this lawfulness can be conceived purely in itself and developed in pure mathematics—as an independent object—without regard to real relations, the indirectness of its validity in the real is apparently essential to it. Thus, it subsists independently of its prevalence

1 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A 985b 25f.: *τάς τούτων (τῶν μαθημάτων) ἀρχὰς τῶν ὄντων ἀρχὰς φήνησον εἶναι πάντων* [mathematical principles are the principles of everything]. Cf. 986a 1.

in the real sphere and can also be conceived independently of it. It is only “potentially” a lawfulness of the real. That is, it is of no concern to it whether a real world exists whose relations are established in conformity with it. For the real world, however, it is essential that its spatio-temporal and material relations are thoroughly permeated by this lawfulness. [243]

3. Assuming this is correct, it follows that a lawful regularity that is also potentially a real lawful regularity in the sense indicated, one that also really prevails in and uninterruptedly governs real relations (as far as they occupy a certain ontological level) cannot possibly be a merely subjective or intellectual act-lawfulness. Instead, it must be a lawful regularity of objects—even in the full sense of transobjective objects of cognition; i.e., it must originally be pure ontological lawfulness. The whole force of affective givenness bears witness to the being-in-itself of the real that it governs. Mathematical objects as such must then already have an ontological character.

b) *A priori* Cognition of the Real

If we wanted to interpret this relation idealistically, then we would have to modify the meaning of the “reality” of the real world and with it the givenness of reality; as has been shown, in principle this cannot succeed. We would have to assume a legislative transcendental subject that produces the real world (Fichte) or even just “prescribes” its laws (Kant). We would thus fall back into the greatest metaphysical recklessness. Attempts of this kind have been developed in German Idealism as well as in Neo-Kantianism in sufficient number. They have all been shown to be unworkable.

The weight of the argument that we find in the mathematical *apriorism* of the natural sciences can be made quite vivid in concrete examples. The astronomer works out the time of eclipses, calculates the places of the planets in the heavens from the law of their motion, and when the time comes for which it is valid, what has been calculated occurs. Thus, we see that the stars are guided in their courses by the same mathematical laws which calculative thinking applies. The artillery gunner guides his defense according to the law of the ballistic curve, in which are contained the calculated moments of the parabola of the trajectory, air resistance, lateral deviation due to spin, rotation of the Earth, etc., and within the limits of the (equally calculable) estimated precision, the shot hits its target. In the same way, the engineer calculates the load-bearing capacity of a bridge under construction, the output of a machine, and a test to determine successful execution confirms the calculation. This goes so far that everywhere

some discrepancy results the mistake is to be found in the empirical presuppositions, but not in the calculation.

The scope of these phenomena and their substantive multiplicity is inestimably broad. We can, with reference to them, make room for the opinion that in mathematical lawfulness we are not dealing with properly ideal lawful regularities, but are dealing directly with real lawful [244] regularity. We cannot maintain that this is merely a lawful regularity belonging to acts or to consciousness, nor even a mere lawfulness of thought. Nature would not guide itself by such lawfulness.

Conversely, we have to see in the mathematical element of natural relations, where we deal with mathematical entities whose laws lie at the basis of the calculability of the real, a rigorous proof for the fact that we are dealing with being-in-itself in the fullest sense of the word. Then we can say that mathematics as a science is not a mere chess game governed by mental laws, but genuine ontological cognition in the sense of transcendent grasping. The universal validity of its contents, its intersubjectivity and necessity for all individual thinkers, does not rest merely on immanent *apriority*, but on transcendent *apriority*. That which occurs in the latter is the actual self-showing of objects possessing being-in-itself, which is exhibited in every genuine vision into the thing itself. The possibility of mutual understanding, of persuasion and being convinced, does not rest on the necessity of thinking, but on the identity of the ideal object for every vision that directs itself to it. This object is the mathematical entity itself—number, magnitude, size, space, as well as their relations and lawfulness, in their ideality. These cannot originally be things of thought or of representation because then they could not be all-pervasive relations and laws of the real.

c) The Equivocation in the Concept of Ideality

Mathematical entities are the “object” of the sciences, not a product of the sciences. However, like all objects of genuine cognition, they are not reducible to their being-an-object; they have a transobjective being-in-itself, and their lawful regularity is just as essential to natural relations as to mathematical thinking. Nature does not do science, and it does not wait on the science of human beings for mathematical order, but it “is” in itself mathematically ordered. It is so ordered regardless of our mathematical understanding or nonunderstanding. The science is our business, it comes afterwards. It discovers nature already mathematically organized. This is the meaning of the Galilean saying that “the philosophy in the book of nature is written in mathematical characters.”

This is the true and only sufficient epistemological basis for the being-in-itself of ideal objects. Initially, it covers only the mathematical, but it will be shown that the argument automatically expands to cover broader domains of ideal cognition, for the way of being of mathematical objects cannot be separated from the way of being of essences with a different content. This argument does not depend on the characteristic givenness of the ideal as such, and also not [245] on the pure phenomenon of ideal cognition, but on the givenness and cognition of the real insofar as the latter already presupposes and contains ideal ontological structures as its own. The whole weight of real being-in-itself comes up behind the apparently floating ideal entities, as it were, thanks to the interwoven nature of ideal and real being, and displays the ideal beings in their true ontic nature.

We should keep one thing in mind here: it has only been demonstrated that mathematical objects have an ontological character, but not that this is a specifically “ideal” being. If we have qualms, for whatever reason, about the validity of such a thing—for instance, fearing that we would conjure up a superfluous doubling of the existing world (the usual tendency of ontologically naïve thinking)—we cannot counter them with reference to the reality of mathematical relations in nature.

Nevertheless, there are points of support for such a view. Ideal being is something highly paradoxical and suspect to a consciousness of nature solely oriented to the real world—despite the long and rich history of the problematic. We are accustomed to beginning with a completely different distinction, the opposition between the external world and the inner world, the Cartesian duality between *cogitatio* and *extensio*, the epistemological correlation between subject and object. We then let the external world count as existent, but take the inner world to be a thing of representation, thinking, and imagination. Then we make the real synonymous with the external world, the ideal synonymous with the inner world; for we understand “idea,” in accord with the habitual way of speaking in Modernity, as representation. The ideal is made equivalent to the immanent, and it is thereby inadvertently robbed of its autonomous ontological character. If the mathematical is demonstrated to be real in natural relations, we may think that we have freed it from the sphere of representation and thinking, but not from an “ideal” sphere.

As long as we remain attached to this meaning of “ideal,” naturally there remains no room for ideal being at all. With it we rob ideal objects of their ontological status in principle. But in fact, two completely different concepts of the ideal are intermingled with one another. This equivocation has caused a terrible confusion. In the subjective interpretation, the ideal means only “irreal;” but ir-reality is also attributed to imaginary objects, to purely intentional objects borne

by acts, which are not objects of cognition at all. Ideality in the ontological sense is something completely different, a way of being *sui generis* next to that of the real. Making reference to the intercalated nature of the ways of being is only half the proof. The other half is made up by the fact that there is also an autonomous givenness of ideal entities, independently of their being contained in the real.

Section II: The Interconnection of Ideal and Real Being

Chapter 42: The Disappearance of Ideal Objects in the Field of Cognition

a) The Obtrusiveness of the Concept

Before we enter into the second part of the proof that draws a dividing line relative to the real and before we elaborate on the positive relation between ideal and real being, another side of ideal cognition should be brought into view. The traditional equivocation in the concept of ideality is not the only reason for our failure to recognize the ontological character of ideal objects. It is already provoked by a peculiarity of the kind of cognition that pertains to it. We may designate this peculiarity the “disappearance of the gnoseological character of the object in the field of cognition.” Since transobjectivity and being-in-itself depend on the gnoseological character of the object, however, such a disappearance is simultaneously a disappearance of ideal being—and consequently, it is a disappearance of its genuine cognitive status in our cognition of the ideal.

We should recall here what has been presented above (Chapter 38f). The mathematical statement expresses the purely mathematical relation, but it also conceals it at the same time, through its own intellectualized preconception and awareness, through its “logical obtrusiveness,” as it were. It gives the illusory impression that it is only dealing with itself, with its existence in thought, or we might also say, with its conceptual existence. It simply moves in the sphere of concepts. For its part, the concept is admittedly a concept of the thing, but it is not identical with the thing. It can also fall short of it. Because every grasp of the thing—i.e., of the mathematical object—takes on the form of the concept, the emergence of the concept in consciousness takes on the illusory appearance that it is itself already the thing, and in this way the thing, along with its ontological character, is covered up. The concept, in its very grasping (“comprehension”) of the ideal ontological relation, conceals it from consciousness at the same time. The concept does not disappear relative to the weight of the object. It is obtrusive by nature. In this way, it allows the way of being of that which it grasps to vanish.

The theories of mathematical thinking addressed above attest that this is the case. They let the way of being of mathematical objects slip from view such that these objects simply appear to be products of science. It is by no means easy, even for an unbiased observer, to decisively hold fast to the distinction between

the concept of the triangle and the triangle itself, or between the statement and the relation of magnitude stated in it. [247]

In light of this situation, we have to ask ourselves what the real reason for this is. There are also statements (judgments) and concepts in the field of real cognition. Why do they not obtrude themselves there? Why does it not occur as easily to anyone to confuse the concept of a thing or of a person with the thing or person themselves?

Or, should we perhaps grant that such a conflation also takes place in cognition of the real? There are of course theories that say that we only have our concepts and representations of the real world, but not the real world itself. Skepticism has taught this since ancient times, and then subjective idealism followed out its consequences and contested the cognitive character of our natural consciousness of the world. The Neo-Kantians have gone the furthest in that they sought to reduce the whole of nature to the conceptual content of the sciences.

Ultimately, these are merely philosophical theories, outgrowths of one-sided statements of the problem and built on the basis of an incomplete analysis of the phenomenon of cognition. They do not eliminate the natural consciousness of reality. The latter is rooted in a kind of givenness of a completely different order than science and theory. The discussion of the affective acts and of the life context teaches us this.

b) Obtrusiveness and Unobtrusiveness of the Object

This mistake also teaches us where we have to look for the reason for the disappearance of the ideal object. In the first instance, we might look for it in its mode of givenness. This is quite different from that of the real. Reality is obtrusive. It is not experienced in cognition alone, but also in living through and suffering, in humankind's being-affected by events, even in anticipatory being-affected and reflexive being-affected. Reality befalls humankind and convinces us by its assault. It does not wait on judgment and concept, and it is there "before" all genuine being-known, seizes us irresistibly, is indifferent to whether cognition follows it or not. Scientific cognition and the formation of concepts definitely follow only at a distance. In contrast, the ideal object does not impose itself. Pure spatial relations and relations of magnitude, even where we actually deal with them in life, remain unnoticed; they appear immersed in the real relations to which they belong. But if cognition rises to the task of conceiving them purely as such in their universal lawful regularity, it does so in a scientific way. Then they acquire logical structure through the way they are brought into conscious-

ness and are made into objects of observation. This means that they are brought to consciousness in the form of the concept and judgment.

Since consciousness does not know them by means of any other mode of givenness, it is understandable that conceptuality “obtrudes” in them. This is [248] naturally not the same obtrusiveness that being-affected has, but it is still a certain kind of urgency; this does not belong to the object itself, but to the “concept” of the object. We should not take this to mean that only the concept of the object is cognized and not the object; instead, the object is cognized here as there, and the concept is only the substantive form in which it is conceived. Otherwise it would not even be cognition. However, cognizing consciousness tends to accept this substantive form of conception as the object itself. It confuses the two things. At this point, it thinks that it is only dealing with constructed entities, concepts and their relations. It does not even notice that it denies itself a cognitive status this way, nor that it denies its objects ontological status.

For mathematical consciousness, the self-deception arises that it is a science that merely engages in an immanent game of thought. The unobtrusiveness of ideal objects facilitates this deception. There is no mode of givenness behind our operations with concepts that might forcefully break through this play of concepts and necessitate that consciousness reflect on the transconceptual and transobjective being of mathematical entities. Within the limits of pure mathematics, the compelling immediacy stemming from the concept remains completely undisturbed; it does not encounter any obstacle in its field and can develop into a system of concepts and judgments in which the ontological meaning of the statement and of concept formation is completely forgotten.

The disappearance of the ontological character of the ideal in the field of objects of pure ideal cognition consists in this.

This disappearance is first arrested by the connection between ideal cognition and real cognition. It encounters resistance at the moment when cognizing consciousness reflects on the fact that there are real relations that possess mathematical lawfulness and may be mathematically understood. Then it becomes impossible to see mathematical relations as relations between concepts alone. The weight of the real object compels us to reflect on the being of the ideal object. The ontological character of the ideal that vanished and was covered up by conceptuality once more comes to light. At the same time, the pressing immediacy of the concept then disappears. In science itself, the borderline between pure and applied mathematics constitutes the threshold of this reflection.

c) The Place of the Cognized Entity in Ideal Cognition

The concept is for science what representation is for everyday cognition. Representation takes on the most manifold forms, and can be far from having a logical structure; moreover, it is subject to [249] the most far-reaching gradations of awareness. Generally, we do not become conscious of representations as being a particular kind of entity, and they are not even noticed in the cognition of objects, although the cognition of objects precisely consists in consciousness achieving a representation of them. Consciousness in the cognitive relation simply faces the object completely. The image that consciousness makes of it in cognition—whether in the form of a concept of it, a belief about it, or even only a perceptual image of it—does not constitute a second object alongside the real object, but disappears in our consciousness of the object. We can also put it this way: the cognized content-bearing entity in the cognizing consciousness is the form in which the latter grasps the object. This is why it is not simultaneously conceived alongside the object in the conceptual grasp of the object.

There has been much dispute about this relation recently.¹ Phenomenology proper has contested the emergence of an image in the cognitive relation, for the simple reason that it cannot be shown in the naïve consciousness of the object. This is not decisive, however, for there is just as little a consciousness of acts as there is a consciousness of the image (or consciousness of representation) in unreflective everyday cognition. It would be peculiar if we wanted to conclude from this that no act at all was there, i.e., that it was not an act. Instead, we see that everywhere cognition advances, in particular where it discovers and rectifies errors, a consciousness of the image arises. That is, it proves that the object is different in a specific respect than it has been presented, and in this way distinguishes the newly acquired representation from the previous one, thereby making the latter visible.

What is instructive for us in the objection is the fact, justly alleged, that the image of the object as such does not become conscious in the natural cognitive relation. Consciousness of course “has” a representation of the object, but does not “grasp” it; it only grasps the object itself in it and through it, as it were. The representation thus remains unnoticed. It disappears relative to the weight of the object; or, to use another analogy, it is only a means for grasping the object, is transparent for the perspective oriented to the thing at hand.

¹ The essentials of this dispute can be found in my *Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* (3^{te} Aufl.) 1941, Chapter 10, “Critical Notes;” in particular sections a., b., and f.—Additionally, Part V. of the same book on the general problem of ideal cognition.

Cognition of the real follows this course to the extent that it consists in the unreflective natural attitude. It first changes in scientific reflection, insofar as the image no longer has the changeable form of representation, but takes on the more fixed and logically structured form of the concept. The concept is constructed in conscious methodical synthesis, is worked on and molded. This labor brings it into the light of consciousness. This is the reason why scientific cognition [250] is not unreflectively directed to the object, but is always accompanied by cognition of a second order, in which its own constructive content-bearing deed is made into an object. In an advanced stage, this second cognition is transformed into methodology. The same thing goes for method as for the image: even naïve cognition “has” its particular procedure, but it does not know anything about it, does not “grasp” it. It is scientific method that first brings it to consciousness to the extent that it makes the procedure into an object. It is then just as much a second order object as its accompanying cognition is a cognition of a second order.

d) Two Kinds of Disappearance: Representation and Concept

If we compare the cognition of ideal objects with the unreflective cognition of the real—such as the simple grasp of things or events in everyday life—the contrast comes clearly into focus. In the first, as has been shown, the object has the tendency to disappear and the image obtrudes; in the second, the image disappears and consciousness only has to do with the object. Both go so far that theory seduces us to the denial of what has disappeared. Mathematical theory can imagine that in mathematics consciousness only has to do with concepts; and the phenomenology of real cognition falls prey to the illusion that there is in cognition no image of the object at all.

Even when we free ourselves from such theoretical extremes, the fact of the disappearance still remains in both cases. We have to ask why that is. An indication of the answer is provided by the reversal of the situation in the relation between ideal cognition and real cognition. In the latter, the object is primarily obtrusive, its givenness is rooted in emotional being-affected; in ideal cognition, this aspect is completely missing, and its object must first be detected by scientific reflection and drawn out of its concealment. Apparently, it is the obtrusiveness of the object that the cognitive model in consciousness allows to disappear. Correspondingly, we have to infer that it is the unobtrusiveness that the cognitive model accounts for, but then it allows the ontological character of the object to disappear. It seems that cognizing consciousness does not have room for two objectified, structured entities layered on top of one another; it grasps only the one

or the other. If the givenness of the object of cognition did not have the force to obtrude itself upon consciousness with the weight of its being-in-itself and to push the image out of consciousness in this way, then the object itself would be pushed out by the image and covered up, as it were. This means that the image, for its part, obtrudes.

The distinction between representation and concept furnished above fits this account very well. If we do not attend to the logical side of the concept, then [251] both are only different types of cognitive model; in both, consciousness does not hold on to itself, but grasps the object. Thus, they are types of image of the object. Representation is fleeting, however, and in contrast the concept is firmly structured, it is worked through. It requires consciously constructive labor. If an object of cognition is so constituted that it first becomes visible at the level of scientific labor, then its cognition is tied to the conceptual type of image. The latter is precisely the cognitive entity raised to consciousness. The conceptual type of image is the one that covers up the way of being of the object in ideal cognition. To briefly summarize the whole relation: the form of the image through which ideal being becomes conceivable simultaneously allows its ontological character to disappear.

Cognition of the real also works with concepts of course, but only at a higher level. Here the preservation of ontological consciousness is provided for by the primary mode of givenness of the real. It is strong enough that it does not become covered up in the conceptual labor on the cognitive model. Here the influence of conceptuality only goes so far as to bring the existence of the image to consciousness. Moreover, this is possible without leading to the disappearance of the object because the accompanying second order cognition creates room for the conception of the whole cognitive relation at the scientific level, i.e., for the duality of the entities layered on top of one another, the image in consciousness and the object in itself.

Cognition of the ideal is in principle also capable of such comprehension. In general, mathematical cognition is not lacking it. It is only made more difficult by its lack of a preconceptual grasp of the object. It so happens that it loses its ontological orientation by its predilection for concepts and statements.

Chapter 43: The Threecold Relation

a) The Proximity of Ideal Being to Consciousness

In addition to the “unobtrusiveness of the object” and the “conceptuality of the cognitive entity,” yet another reason may be furnished for the disappearance of

ideal being in ideal cognition. It consists in the peculiar mediating position that ideal entities take on between the cognitive entity and the real.

Since the discovery of ideal being, the difference of its status for consciousness relative to that of real being has been well known. Its status comes to be expressed in terms of the way that it is grasped in an “inner” vision. Consciousness here has, as it were, direct access to the object. Naturally, it has to bring itself to specifically reflect on it, but when [252] it succeeds in reflecting, it grasps the object immediately. This kind of grasp has been designated “intuition,” and we mean by this a vision of a higher order with *a priori* characteristics, in which consciousness comes directly into a kind of feeling contact with its object. This circumstance has, more than anything else, led to the impression that we are not dealing with existent things at all in the case of ideal being, but merely with thoughts. Now this impression may be laid to rest, since it has been settled by the argument regarding the containment of mathematical relations in the real. What remains of the immediacy of inner vision, when we disregard all misinterpretation, is the inner graspability or givenness itself. We can call this figuratively the “proximity” of ideal being to consciousness.

This proximity obviously stands in contrast to the otherness or distanced status of real being to consciousness, which is never grasped in pure inner intuition. The transcendence of the conceptual grasp clearly has wider range with real being. This means, however, that the ideal object appears positioned closer to the whole sphere of consciousness. The ideal object, in fact, takes on a meditating position in this respect. It stands, when seen from the perspective of the subject, beyond the cognitive model, but “this side” of the real. Since there is an ontic connection between ideal and real being, and the latter, insofar as it is cognizable *a priori*, is always governed by ideal essential relations, cognition reaches through them and into the real.

If we consider the objection that cognizing consciousness, as has been shown, does not leave room for two entities layered on top of one another, but always suppresses one at the expense of the other, then it is easy to see that consciousness is not even close to comprehending the whole relation in the layering of these three entities: the image, the ideal object, and the real object. This is the case at least as long as consciousness does not turn toward the relation in an act of special reflection. Actually, as a rule the mediating elements also disappear. It is not only the image that disappears in *a priori* cognition of the real, but also the ideal essential structure (e.g., mathematical), to the advantage of the real object. Ideal being appears to be immersed in the real, such that it first requires a special emphasis in order to be grasped as such. For cognition, it has disappeared deep into the real.

Where there is no real object present, as in pure mathematics, where the layering is only double, the obtrusiveness of the concept makes it such that the ideal object, in contrast, disappears deep into the cognitive model.

Thus, in both cases its ideal ontological character vanishes for consciousness, in one case beyond its sphere, in the other “this side” of it. The overall result is that it is hard to actually conceive ideal being at all. It slips away, so to speak, from the grasp of the cognizing consciousness. The latter is by nature not oriented toward [253] grasping ideal being. Only to the extent that cognition transforms its own nature through philosophical reflection does it bring into range that which is originally denied to it.

b) Nominalism and Realism

The ancient debate over universals again plays a role in this context, and in a quite different way than in the relation between *Dasein* and *Sosein*. In this case we are not dealing with the relation between *essentia* and *existentia*, but with the being of the *essentia* itself. This is because it was *essentia* that was understood to be the ideal entity.

In this dispute we find both sorts of disappearance. It was nominalism that made the *essentia* into a mere matter of thought, thus into something retrospective (*post rem*) that had no genuine being. It allowed the ideal being within the cognitive model to disappear and only retained the real as what alone exists. Nominalism was thus “realism” in the current sense of the word.

What we call the realism of the Middle Ages was something completely different. It does not deal with the being of the real world, but directly with the being of ideal essences. This interpretation understood *essentia* as the ontic foundation of the real, such that essences either only exist “in” the real, or they constitute an independent and superior sphere outside of it. In the first case they exist *in rebus*, in the latter *ante res*. Of these two forms of the realism of universals, the first corresponds exactly to the case mentioned above, in which for consciousness the ideal object vanishes into the real. In fact, the unique ontological character of the *essentia* has disappeared here, and it only appears as immersed in things. There is no room here for unfettered ideality.

The other, far more extreme form—the Platonic—gives to *essentia* precisely what the latter view denies to it, and what nominalism definitely denies it: independent being. We might say that it knew best how to combine both aspects of the primary phenomenon. Here the ideal slipped away from consciousness neither into the real nor into the representation (the concept). However, this realism of universals falls into a third extreme: it promotes the ontological character of

the ideal into the only genuine kind of being and demotes the character of the real to mere imitation, even to illusion. For it the real vanishes in favor of the ideal essences, and it burdens them with far more than they can carry. It proves to be an idealism of essences and of the divine understanding.

What is instructive about these theories is not so much their metaphysical consistency as the palpable evidence they provide for the tremendous difficulty of conceiving ideal being purely as such. The thinkers of the Middle Ages were apparently far more concerned with this task than we are today. Nevertheless, they did not succeed in grasping it. Scholastic theories allow the being of the *essentia* to slip away [254] in three different directions: into the concept, into things, and into the divine Beyond. Each of these conceptions corresponds to just one side of the total relation as the phenomena disclose it. None of them give an account of the whole relation.

c) The Unavoidable Deception

It is not as hard to conceive the being of ideal objects in its purity after these errors have been discovered. We have made a start at this above, and the following chapters will bring this attempt to its conclusion. One thing must be kept firmly in mind: the persistent covering-over that belongs to ideal objects as such, their disappearance for consciousness, their slipping away into the concept, into the real, or into hypostatized transcendence, cannot be eliminated. The substantive content of ideal cognition is not limited by this, but this deception concerning the ontological character of its objects persists.

This point is consistent with what has been said above. The discovery of ideal being in Platonic philosophy began with an intensification of its ontic significance; the consequence of this was the enduring hypostatization of the whole sphere in the realism of universals. Ideal being then appears to be a second world hovering above the real world, and demotes the latter to inauthenticity. If, with the Aristotelians, we reflect on the significance of the real, a unique mode of being for the *essentia* becomes implausible. Nothing remains of the essences in the real world except their universality. If, subsequently, following the *intentio obliqua*, we attend to the act of consciousness and its contents, then we always find, in place of an entity, only a concept.

These are tendencies of theoretical interpretation that we cannot simply do away with as soon as we gain insight into their mistakes. We cannot set them aside like habits, and we are subject to their compelling force again and again. They are grounded in the nature of the phenomenon. Errors are a matter of opinion; we can see through them, and with such insight they are finished. No

one holds on to a mistake once he has seen through it. Deceptions can also be seen through of course, but they are not over and done with on that account, they continue to exist; for they are not a matter of judgment, nor of opinion, but of the phenomenon as it is initially given. The oar submerged in the water at an angle continues to look broken no matter how much we know that it is an illusion.

The disappearance of ideal being for cognizing consciousness is not an error, but an illusion of this type. This deception cannot be eliminated because it is grounded in the mode of givenness of ideal being. The unobtrusiveness of the object is just as deeply conjoined here with its mode of being as is the obtrusiveness of the concept with its mode of appearance and its disappearance into the relations among things, its being immersed in the real. [255]

The illusion that ideal objects have no being can only be “discovered,” not “eliminated.” Ontology has to take the burden of this irreducible illusion upon itself and face it again and again through reflection on its foundations. At every step, it cannot bank on prior understandings, and always has to lead the struggle against the illusion anew. Additionally, what is most difficult is that it has to be careful regarding the other extreme at the same time. Nothing comes to it more easily than the error of Platonism, to interpret the mode of being of the essences when they are actually grasped as the “higher,” and in this way to misunderstand them all the more.

Chapter 44: Relative Independence of Ideal Being

a) Role of Ideality in *apriorism* Concerning the Real

The fact that essential relations are contained in the real is proof of their ontological status. However, the fact that their ontological character is of another kind than that of the real cannot be inferred from this alone. What is still lacking is evidence for their “ideality.” It is necessary to show that, e.g., the mathematical, aside from its determining role in the real world, is not something originally and in itself already something real, but is legitimate in itself without reality—exactly the same as it is when it is also contained in the real.

Three arguments will be introduced for this part of the demonstration. 1. An argument based on the nature of apriorism; 2. on the position of pure mathematics in relation to applied mathematics; and 3. on the indifference of the mathematical (and of the essences in general) to real cases.

The first of these is familiar to everyone. All *a priori* cognition of the real is “objectively universal.” This means that in each judgment to which it leads, it

speaks of a totality of possible real cases, no matter whether these come forth in actuality, have appeared, or will appear. This totality is internal to the nature of *a priori* cognition, and to this extent, is a quite genuinely “ideal” one. It says that even all actually unknown cases, future as well as past, fall under the general principle that the judgment expresses; moreover, it extends even beyond this to cases that will never become actual in the real context of the world, for the real context is “contingent” when seen from the perspective of essential intuition. We are not talking about real contingency here, naturally, but only about essential contingency.

What Kant meant by the “universality and necessity” of synthetic judgments *a priori* corresponds exactly to this totality. With these two features he identified the distinguishing marks of genuine *apriority*. In pure mathematics such a totality is assumed to be self-evident. It is not explicitly expressed in any particular mathematical proposition, but only implicitly presupposed [256]. The validity of this presupposition is therefore an object of special epistemological discussion and must be specially demonstrated. Meanwhile, the mathematical proposition itself is indifferent to it. Understood purely in terms of its essential content, it does not speak about real cases at all; the totality, however, is precisely that of the real cases. The universality of the intuition is not that of a collective predicate, but only of an essential predicate.

Therefore, the variety of real cases is not even included in the mathematical proposition. The ideal content of the proposition is all that is intuited in it. This ideal content is already an object of cognition, complete in itself and entirely valid. Cognition of this sort does not wait to find out whether another field of objects of another kind emerges from behind it or not. That the real cases actually do emerge as further objects does nothing to change the basic relation; it only proves the being-in-itself of the mathematical objects, but not their ideality. Their ideality is instead to be grasped, conversely, through the indifference of essential intuition (and its object) to the “contingency” of the real. That which is to be intuited mathematically in the mathematical object is intuited completely independently of all givenness or nongivenness of real cases—“this side” of their multiplicity and their ontological significance, as it were.

b) Genuine Autonomy and Spurious Isolation of the Ideal Object

In light of this first insight, we can see that it is not a matter of completely dissolving ideal being into real being. If we nevertheless wanted to attempt to do this, then we would have to understand mathematical cognition as cognition of the real from the start; this would mean, moreover, that there is no math-

ematics. Then it would become difficult to honestly maintain the *apriority* of mathematical cognition. This way we fall into a “mathematical empiricism” that traces everything back to experience of the real. We have the experience, e.g., that 3×12 things make 36 things, and abstract the universal principle from this. The unfortunate fact remains that no strictly universal propositions will result in this way. What actually results will still require universalization. This is not even possible on the basis of empiricism; we can never know, without the aforementioned strict universality and necessity, how the remaining cases—i.e., those not experienced—will turn out. However, we can know this quite well when we look to the ideal mathematical relations themselves, rather than to the real cases.

How are we able to look to ideal mathematical relations if they are not autonomous objects of theoretical vision? They must still be intuitable “this side” of their specification in the real cases. In fact, this intuitability does exist. In this manner, *the triangle* [257], *the circle*, *the ellipse*, *the series of exponents*, *the number e*, etc., are completely intuitable in themselves, and in that characteristically singular fashion belonging to ideal essential structure, “this side” of all multiplicity of the real. The whole of pure mathematics rests on such intuitability of ideal objects in themselves. Understood purely as a fact, this is precisely an obvious refutation not only of mathematical empiricism, but also of mathematical realism.

On the other hand, it is important to be on the lookout for conclusions whose scope is too broad. Autonomous objectivity is, after all, an expression easily misunderstood. What we actually observed in objectivity was only objective universality and evident necessity. Whether these exist only for the domain of possible real cases or also beyond it cannot be discovered in objectivity itself. Thus, we are not permitted to infer from this an autonomous being of the universal. Or, more precisely, there is no reason to take the *a priori* evident ideal relations to be something that would exist isolated on their own and, as it were, to constitute a second world next to the world of real cases. Autonomous objectivity for a specific kind of vision does not justify this. The thoroughgoing immersion of ideal essential relations in the real, despite their isolation in theoretical vision, could very well be ontically legitimate.

The history of philosophy is rife with examples of these kinds of lapses. Since Platonism it has happened again and again that the sphere of essences, or even only that of the mathematical, is posited as a second world of things or substances next to the real. The autonomy with which it stood out as a sphere of objects always misled thinkers into isolating it. Objectivity is not Being, however, and what steps forward in isolation as an object of specific insight does not need to exist as isolated by itself. Since, as was shown, there is an interpenetra-

tion of modes of being in a single world, generally and finally letting go of this standpoint of isolation is in order. The way of being of the universal and essential in the world may well be extremely peculiar, and its isolability in our conception can quite clearly provide testimony for this. However, if we wanted to tear the being of the universal and essential out of the systematic structure of the real for this reason, we would falsify the unity of the world in which heterogeneous elements (in terms of their way of being) exist firmly conjoined.

c) Pure and Applied Mathematics

The fact that pure mathematics is applicable to real natural relations guarantees the characteristic being-in-itself of ideal objects. However, mathematics is an *a priori* science complete in itself, before all application and independent of it; it already includes “objectively” and purely in itself the same laws that afterwards prove to be applicable to the real. This proves that its characteristic being-in-itself [258] is originally ideal, and that the entities that possess it—individually of the specificity of the given portion of the real that they govern—are valid.

Therefore, what is fundamental about the relation between the ideal and the real can be illuminated by the case of the relation between pure and applied mathematics.

There is an all-pervasive containment of ideal being in the real. The real world is structured throughout and thoroughly governed by ideal essential relations. Whether this pervasive shaping extends to all aspects and characteristics of the real is another question; what is important is only that it exists and that it may be identified. We can also put it this way: ideal being functions in the real as a kind of fundamental structure. Consequently, the real world stands in an inner relation of dependence upon it.

This relation, however, cannot be reversed. Ideal being is, for its part, not conditioned by the real, and is not bound to the existence of something real. It has autonomy relative to the real’s presence, and it is therefore conceivable in its purity precisely by disregarding the real. Therefore, the conditionedness that prevails here is asymmetrical: the mathematical governs a determinate portion of the real, but the latter does not govern the mathematical. Within this portion the real relations are arranged according to mathematical laws, but that fact does not tie these laws to the sphere of the real.

This is the reason why the ideal can extend far beyond the real in certain domains in terms of content, i.e., why there are also ideal relations that are not contained (“realized”) in any reality. The most familiar examples of these

are the imaginary numbers and non-Euclidean spaces. There is nothing corresponding to the imaginary numbers in the physical world. It may at least be said of the multiplicity of geometrical “spaces” that only one of them can apply to real space, in terms of its structure and laws, and that only one of these geometrical dimensional and lawful systems can be that of the existing cosmos. For cosmic space is necessarily “one.” Whichever type of geometry may belong to it the others are always there, which are then precisely unreal. As ideal objects the unreal spaces stand entirely on par with the one that is realized in the cosmos. They have ideal being in the same way that it does, but not real being; this is why they present the same structural rigidity to pure intuition and to thinking. Therefore, we cannot determine geometrically which one of these spaces is real space.

In short, we can express the relation this way: ideal being is indifferent to real being, namely, to its own realization in the world. However, real being is never indifferent to ideal being; it always already presupposes ideal structure, bears it within itself and is completely governed by it. [259]

d) The “Contingency” of the Real and the Ideal “Realm of Possibility”

From the perspective of the ideal, the much-touted “contingency” of the real is based on this indifference. For ideal being only ideal being is necessary, but never real being. This necessity is not real necessity, but merely essential necessity. It never follows from ideal necessity that the entity is real, and this means precisely that in spite of such necessity the being-real of the thing remains “contingent.” Moreover, this contingency is only essential contingency, not real contingency. In the context of the real, the thing may very well be necessary despite its essential contingency.

This is also why the realm of ideal being presents itself as a realm of “possibilities” when seen from the perspective of the real. In this sense, Leibniz spoke of the multiplicity of “possible worlds.” This sort of possibility too, however, is only essential possibility, not real possibility. To the latter belongs a long chain of real conditions, and as long as they are not fulfilled, the thing is instead impossible *realiter* [in reality].

These relations between necessity, contingency, and possibility can only be explored in detail by means of a special modal analysis. This analysis belongs with another set of considerations. There is just one thing to add here: the “contingency” of the real and the ideal “realm of possibility” are not genuine modal determinations, but only the mirror image of the relations between the universal and the individual insofar as both are interwoven in this one common world. The

ideal structures are universal, and to that extent they incorporate a certain indeterminacy, but they appear to be a plurality of “possibilities.” The real cases, in turn, are individual and to that extent are “contingent” from the perspective of the universal. Behind the contrast of these modalities is thus instead the interpenetration of the ideal and the real. In light of this, the real result of the whole discussion clearly leads to that which was already taken above to be the essence of this relation: the way of being of the ideal is not severed from the real at all, but possesses a relative autonomy, and for this reason is also conceivable in its autonomy. The place of the ideal in the system of the world is clearly characterized through the position of the universal relative to the multiplicity of cases.

The universal exists in itself precisely not beyond the cases (*ante res*), nor only *in mente* as abstracted from them (*post rem*), but completely *in rebus* [in the things]. However, the universal is not automatically reducible to the particularity of the real cases, but encompasses more. This is why we cannot automatically make its way of being synonymous with that of what is “common” to the real cases. We are justified in speaking of a proper way of being of the ideal only in the sense of its extending beyond the real sphere. There is no danger of being misunderstood as long as we do not make a reified or even substantialized being-for-itself out of the simple character of being-in-itself, which only signifies its difference [260] from the being of the real cases.

Thus, formally we may speak of a priority of ideal being relative to the real—just as has been claimed by all Platonizing approaches to philosophy. Ontologically, however, this cannot be maintained, at least if we conjoin priority with the notion that we are dealing with a higher, more absolute, or more perfect way of being. Just as the universal is only one aspect in the real individual and is as such subordinate ontologically, it must be the case that ideal being is instead the lower and, as it were, incomplete mode of being, and that the real is complete. This is why the lower is always contained in the higher, but not the higher in the lower. Incompleteness is the indeterminacy of the universal, and this again conjures up the vague plurality of “possibilities” that are not genuine real possibilities.

Therefore, the “conditionedness” of the real by the ideal is not a determination of being real, not to mention a specification of the real. It is only an asymmetrical dependence, in the sense of partial conditioning. It only signifies the being-conditioned of higher entities by the lower. This is why the universal is only a structural element of the individual.

Chapter 45: Indifference and Connection

a) The “Inexactness” of Real Cases

The indifference of the mathematical in relation to the real case has still not been exhaustively described with what has been said so far. Indifference is at work not only where the mathematical extends substantively beyond the real, but also within the bounds of its hegemony in the cosmos.

There has been much debate over the fact that in nature there is no mathematically precise triangle, no exact circle, no strict ellipse, that real figures and mobile curves are far more complex, and therefore that the mathematically formulable laws of mechanics do not exactly apply to any single case of actually occurring motion. In this way, e.g., the Keplerian laws are only approximately fulfilled in the orbits of the planets and comets; there are always small deviations—often even quite observable ones—that are themselves approximately measurable, but are not quite interpretable as mere “disturbances,” and so are not eliminable either. The fact that we traditionally designate them “disturbances” does not improve matters. The disturbances can accumulate and transform the basic structure essentially.

We might think that this signifies a limitation of the validity of the mathematical in relation to real spatial motion. We have in fact from the outset kept the Platonic relation in mind, according to which the pure ellipse is like the ideal form to which the actual motion of the heavenly [261] body in space tends, without being able to reach it. The real is then the realm of imperfection, the ideal the realm of perfection.

The simplest consideration already departs from this teleologism of the ideal form. In a word, the real case is complex. We know very well that conditions contribute to it that are not even taken into account in the simplicity of a universal basic law. The fact that no material triangle is mathematically exact thus does not mean that the law of the triangle is not satisfied in it; it instead means that it is interconnected with other laws of form in the unity of a complex structure, because in general a far more complicated structure lies before us in the real case. We hold ourselves to the simple form of a geometrically observable figure as we conceive it because the complexity of the actual form escapes our grasp. In place of the latter, the simplified figure enters into the interpretation, but this does not coincide with the real figure.

The same thing holds for the laws of mechanics. The Galilean law of falling bodies holds strictly only for an absolutely free fall. However, this is not even producible in the real world. Other factors are always mixed together in it that displace the fall. Its lawful regularity is complicated by other forms of lawful-

ness. They definitely remain as components of the complex lawful regularity (e.g., in the particular ballistic curve of a missile). In the same way, the Keplerian ellipses are not given purely in any planetary orbit—not because the law does not apply, but because deviations play a role in it. This is easily demonstrable by the fact that the deviations may be explained within the limits of a given accuracy of observation by means of the same laws, such that we can mathematically approximate the actual individual orbit within a specifiable acceptable range. Thus, in the deviations lies the confirmation of a perfectly exact correspondence.

b) Correct and Incorrect Conclusions

The essence of these phenomena is not the “inexactness” of the real, but its concreteness. It is a misunderstanding to draw from these phenomena the often inferred conclusion that ideal relations do not apply to the real; this is a complete inversion of the facts, and rests on a misconstrual of the meaning of the methods of the sciences. Unfortunately, it is still necessary to repeatedly emphasize this today despite the self-evidence of the situation; for the scientific semi-literacy that aids and abets this error has finally spread to philosophy itself and has contributed to the obfuscation of the ontological problem.

We may of course draw another conclusion instead of this one, which at first glance only addresses the problem of cognition: it is impossible [262] to abstract, solely from the observation of real cases—no matter how precise—simple quantitative mathematical laws, although they are contained in the cases. We can thus never get them purely empirically, but always only in a pure intuition of the simple basic relations themselves. We can only obtain them with precision in ideal being. This is what pure mathematics does.

The reason for this does not rest only on the mere fact that the vast number of cases cannot be empirically traversed. It also does not consist in the fact that the simple laws were not strictly fulfilled in the real cases (they are indeed fulfilled, despite all the complexity of the cases). It is instead based on the fact that the real cases are never simple cases, and that we cannot discern by observation which aspects of their determinacy belong to simple fundamental lawful regularity. In experimentation, we can influence the real conditions and can isolate them such that the real case approaches the simple ideal case. However, we can neither take this approximation all the way to a complete convergence with it, nor can we experiment in every domain of scientific knowledge. The motion of the cosmic bodies in outer space is not susceptible to any such influence; their laws can only be grasped at all in the ideal case, in that we hypothetically assume the latter as their basis. The Keplerian laws were conceived in this way.

The observation of the apparent motion of Mars only provided the introduction to them.

The knowledge of these simple fundamental mathematical laws thus already presupposes their being grasped “this side” of the real. They necessarily have an ideal being-in-itself because they are conceivable with precision in pure *a priori* cognition—and indeed only in it—and also because the complex real cases may be understood on the basis of their validity. Their being-in-itself is such as it is independently of the particularity of the real cases.

In general, here is how things stand: the mathematical relations are at first intuited purely in themselves, strictly *a priori*, and only afterwards is what is intuited in the ideal “applied” to the real. It is in the “application” that we first stumble onto the complexity of the real cases. The intuited relation as such will always be independent of whether we ever find any real cases to which it applies.

c) Meaning and Limits of the Indifference of Ideal Being

Since all mathematical objects are homogeneous in terms of their way of being, they all have the same ideality and are given purely *a priori* in the same way, indifferent to the existence or nonexistence of corresponding real cases. Since in addition the real is demonstrably subject to the respective ideal structures, it follows that all mathematical objects have ideal being-in-itself.

This being-in-itself does not mean that a *χορισμός* [separation] exists between ideal and real being, it does not indicate detachment or otherworldliness, nor that [263] the ideal sphere of being ontically floats around as a world existing for itself. The phenomenon of indifference cannot be taken that far. “Ideality” only signifies indifference toward the particularity and existence of real cases; but “being-in-itself” nevertheless preserves the ideal inherently in the real, for it is verified through nothing other than its being contained in the real. This containment, although it is not complete, suffices to push being-in-itself beyond the status of merely being an object.

We notice here that the ontological character of ideal objects is given in a certain twofold aspect, and that this form of givenness may not arbitrarily be eliminated. If we begin from the pure intuition of mathematical entities, then their indifference to the real comes to the fore and can mislead us into an exaggerated isolation of the sphere. From this perspective, ideal being appears to be superior to the real. The fact that it serves as the basic structure of a real world remains extrinsic to it, offering the lawful regularities or the archetypes for it; it is not in its nature to lead to realization. It remains what it essentially is even

when no real case corresponds to it. However, it does belong to the nature of real being to have the structure of the ideal in itself and, as such, to be the realization of an ideal structure. It is not extrinsic to it that ideal relations prevail in it. The amalgamation of the two modes of being does not lie in the ideal, therefore, but solely in the specification of the real. The necessity of the real indeed contains essential necessity, but is not reducible to it; therefore, the argument from *essentia* to *existentia* is not possible. Moreover, this perspective shows that cognition of the ideal is not automatically cognition of the real, and that a component of ideal cognition is contained in all cognition of the real. The component of the *a priori* in real cognition depends on the ideal structures contained in the real.

This gnoseological perspective, however, does not take us any further. It is always going to be ontologically one-sided. It cannot grasp the entire relation because from the start it embraces the *intentio obliqua*—it stems from reflection on the universals isolated by means of thought, concept, and proposition. Its instability is unmistakably displayed by its inability to hold the ideal entities grasped in the “suspended” state into which this perspective places them. This is revealed in the tendency either to hypostatize them and to make a realm of substantial forms out of them, or to demote them to mere concepts. The first is well known from Platonism, the realism of universals, and even from the phenomenological interpretation of essences; the latter has been advocated by nominalism, subjectivism, and philosophical relativism.

Another perspective can be contrasted with this gnoseological one. It is ontological, and consists in the reversion to the *intentio recta*. It shows that the interconnection between ideal and real being is the primary phenomenon. From its perspective, ideal essential structure exists as [264] the universal contained within the real, and the peculiarity of its ontological status comes to the fore only as a limit phenomenon: namely, everywhere the realm of the mathematical substantively extends beyond the domain of the real. In this way, a limit is given to the indifference of ideal being. The phenomenal chain of its givenness does not lead to its being regarded as independent (neither a floating realm of ideas nor a merely mental detachment of ideal entities follows from it), but only affirms its indifference to the number, particularity, and existence of real cases.

Keeping this conclusion firmly in mind in every detail of the problem is a task that can only succeed if an overview of all of the basic relations, down to the smallest detail, is secured. To this end, a more expansive discussion is required.

Section III: Ideal Being in the Real

Chapter 46: The Phenomenology of Essences

a) Bracketing and Isolation

The investigation that formed our point of departure showed that ideal being, as distinct from real being, is only given in cognition, and even then it is grasped purely only in *a priori* cognition. The urgency accompanying being-affected is completely lacking in its mode of givenness. Mathematical being was a convincing test of such “unobtrusive” givenness.

This changes, however, as soon as we notice that there are many more kinds of ideal being than mathematical ideal being. Indeed, it already changes when we bring into view the role of the mathematical in the real—the Pythagorean relation. That which is “contained” in the real can in principle be experienced in the experience of the real. This is confirmed by the fact that the founders of geometry frequently began from the mere measurement of real spatial relations and only by this means were led indirectly to universal geometrical lawfulness. The same thing holds for mechanistic lawful regularity. The precise collocation of the observed positions of Mars led Kepler to the idea of the elliptical orbit.

However, we do not “experience” ideal being as such in this way, and not in its characteristic universality, but experience it in the particularity of the individual case. A particular procedure is required in order to retrospectively “isolate” it in its purity. This isolation happens through the conscious neglect of the particulars of the real case, which [265] also presupposes the intuition that determinate aspects of the case are the essential and universal in it. Intuition of this kind, however, is already *a priori*.

Thus, with this proviso we may say that another mode of givenness of ideal being arises. In the advanced stages of the exact sciences this mode is pushed into the background when considering mathematical being. We have to attend to another domain of content in order to evaluate this relation ontologically.

Husserl’s phenomenology paved the way here. In its analyses, it isolated essential features, essential laws, and essential interconnections in the real. The latter extend in principle beyond the real case in their universality, more than the analysis anticipated. Turning our attention away from the “contingent” particulars of the case is accomplished through an express “bracketing,” where that which is isolated is brought “before the brackets.”¹ This procedure is not abstrac-

¹ Readers may be familiar with the more common phenomenological use of the term “bracket-

tion. Through abstraction we would never come to something strictly universal. The universal encompasses all possible real cases of a primary kind, cases that we know and cases that we do not know; thus, we intuit the universal only *a priori*. On the basis of the intuition that the universal belongs to the essence of the thing, it is brought in front of the brackets. This intuition is precisely *a priori*. This *a priori* intuition does not arise purely on its own, but is occasioned by the givenness of the real case. This is possible insofar as the latter is a specific case of the universal.

Whether this occurs in acts or in the objects of acts is a completely secondary question. Phenomenology has predominantly analyzed acts, and its origins in psychology contributed to this. The procedure was developed in relation to the problem of acts. Acts are just as real as objects of cognition, such as things and events. They have mental reality in the same sense that the latter have physical reality. This is why the mode of givenness is also the same. The “essence” is discovered “in” the real. As substantively different as the essential structures of acts and of objects of acts may be, they are still the same in that they are structures of a real thing and are raised to the universality of the ideal only by means of bringing them before the brackets. Put more precisely, their original universality and ideality must first be precipitated out of their interweaving with the particulars of the real case and reclaimed, as it were.² [266]

b) Essence and its Relation to the Real

The ontological relation that is fundamental here is obviously that of being-contained, or of the ideal’s deep immersion in the real. This is the same relation that we found in mathematical being. However, we may of course doubt whether it even makes sense to speak of observing the ideal being of essences purely in itself, as if it could somehow “appear” even without real cases. This sort of ap-

ing” to mean suspending judgment regarding the existence of the world. Hartmann instead uses it to metaphorically describe the procedure of intuiting what is universal across various particular cases. Specifically in relation to universals or essences, he uses the mathematical metaphor of placing the more general function in front of the parentheses and more specific operators within parentheses, thus giving the former scope over the latter (e.g., $a (b + c)$). TR

² What was said about essential intuition above (Chapter 17f) should be kept in mind in what follows: strictly speaking, intuition does not grasp ideal being immediately, but “neutral *Sosein*.” Only in this way can essential intuition discover ideal being in the real case. Naturally, this does not interfere with our ability to reflect indirectly on what is grasped in its ideality by means of this detour.

pearance is quite natural for certain kinds of mathematical being. Where this is applicable to essences of a more concrete kind remains to be seen, and is at least relative to the way in which we encounter them.

First, let us attend to the positive aspect of the relation. This is well known in terms of the universality that phenomenology attributes to it. Even between the Platonic and Aristotelian interpretations there is massive disagreement regarding the detached existence of the essences. According to Plato, the essential forms possess a being-for-themselves, and according to Aristotle they never appear elsewhere than in the real. Both were familiar with the method of reflecting on them, and both knew the real case was the point of departure: Plato by the “recollection” of the idea occasioned by the perceived, Aristotle in the localizability of the universal in the individual itself (as what is contained in it at all times).

Expressed systematically, the paradox in the essence of the universal is that it cannot be reduced to any particular or individual, and nevertheless it is substantively contained in it completely and undiminished, and that cognition can obtain the universal in contrast to the individual. There is a reality to the universal within the real cases themselves, and it consists in nothing other than the fact that the cases in all their diversity have a certain array of fundamental features in common. Commonality of this kind is thus in fact real, and its reality is not separable from the series of real cases. On the other hand, this very essence of the universal is indifferent to the number of real cases, and nothing changes substantially even when there are no real cases. To this extent, the universal possesses an indifference to the real that becomes palpable in mathematical objects. Once again this tells us that its way of being is originally merely ideal.

Since the analysis of the real case puts everything that belongs to its particularity into parenthesis, it hits upon the universal in its ideality. The analysis recognizes the universal by reflecting on its essentiality for all possible real cases, whereby the indifference of this essentiality to their particularity, number, and existence becomes directly visible. The remarkable thing about this is that more can be seen in the individual case than is present in it as such. This transcendence of the case is precisely the achievement of the *a priori*. Abstraction or “reduction” as such does not pull this off; these are only an introduction to another more immediate kind of intuition [267], the intuition of essences that first begins where the former leaves off, and which signifies a novel and autonomous kind of penetration.

We may also put it this way: more can be seen in the individual case than is present in it because the insight *into* it is a turning *away* from it at the same time, a kind of seeing through it, as it were, that sees the ideal essence. In fact, the universal is not beheld in it, but in its ideal essence. As soon as the intuition

pushes through to the essential features in it, the individual case at once becomes representative of a totality of possible cases, even without these cases themselves being conceived at the same time. This means that what is universal in it is recognized not in its reality, but in its ideality.

This is the reason why Aristotle sought the “essence” in the things themselves, and at the same time the reason why Plato did not seek it in the things themselves, but beyond their particularity. The one as the other has, properly understood, their justification. The truth of the whole relation does not lie somewhere in the middle, but in the synthesis of both interpretations. Each of them only looks at one side of the relation, but both took the whole relation into account, and both took the same path methodologically. This path is *a priori* reflection on the universal essence, insofar as the individual case offers the occasion for it.

c) Free Floating and Attached Ideality

Ontologically, this relation has to be one and the same for all ideality and forms the basis of every ideal structure. The examples of essential structures to which nothing in the realm of the real corresponds fundamentally change nothing here; they only confirm its otherwise palpable indifference. As long as we do not hypostatize such structures into a pseudo-real existence—as the realism of universals did—their ideality is the same as that of the others too.

In contrast, gnoseologically—i.e., in the way that ideal being is given and becomes an object—there is a decisive difference. We may call it the difference between “free” and “attached ideality.”³

This difference does not bear on the ontic relation to the real, but on the cognitive relation to the subject, i.e., in the mode of access to the ideal. “Free ideality” designates the sort of ideality that can be brought to intuition immediately in itself, such as mathematical ideality, but which appears darkened or obscured when bound to the real case; “attached ideality” designates the sort that can reach intuition only by coming through the real case indirectly, and is not conceivable detached from it. [268]

We may also say that this second form of the ideal only appears as the essence of a real thing. Here the Aristotelian demand of a real immanence of the *eidos* is fulfilled in its mode of givenness. This does not happen with the first form of the ideal. On the basis of this distinction, we may easily understand

³ As introduced in *Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 3^{te} Aufl. 1941, Part V, Chapter 62.

the *χορισμός* [separation], which became a reproach to Plato, to be a result of Plato's one-sided orientation to mathematics.

That essences "are given" only as essences of a real thing does not in itself mean of course that they "are" only essences of a real thing. Givenness *qua* givenness is not a way of being. Thus, in principle there is a certain latitude for indifference. The fact that we can bring the essences "before the brackets" proves their detachability, i.e., that they could very well have free ideality in themselves.

The method of detaching ideality occurs only *in mente*; *realiter* nothing may be detached from the actual. That which the actual has in itself remains in it. This confinement is only essential to the real, however, it is extrinsic to the ideal. From the perspective of the essence, detachability not only definitely refers to a method for human beings, but it is the expression of this extrinsicality and of the ontic relation among ways of being. The possibility of detaching the ideal from the real *in mente* rests on the fact that the ideal is of itself indifferent to the real. This indifference is tangible in it as soon as we direct our attention to its uniqueness. The obverse of this relation, however, is that we cannot detach the real from the ideal at all. Everything particular within the brackets remains intermingled with the ideal.

Additionally, we may not arbitrarily abstract as we like in any given case; of course we could do it, but then we would not arrive at the essential structure. That which is abstracted bears the essential features within itself. There is no real case that does not carry ideal structure in itself and each case requires it for its reality. If we wanted to abstract the case from the ideal structure, then we would destroy its reality and have an empty "*abstractum*" remaining, an indeterminate something that never appears this way anywhere. We may carry out such thought experiments, but they do not lead to any insight and remain empty game playing. In contrast, if we abstract from the reality of the individual case in essential intuition, then the result is not an empty "*abstractum*," but a very determinate essential structure, which, in the way that it manifests the "essence of the thing," demonstrates the same "hardness," i.e., the same power of resisting capriciousness in thinking, as mathematical structure.

d) Unity of Essences and Duality of Access

The genuine contribution made by phenomenological analysis is not abstraction —i.e., a negative one—but the positive intuition, or the grasp of essential structures. This grasp always remains in clear [269] contrast to the negative act of bracketing; it possesses autonomy in relation to the empirically given even though its point of departure is found there. This is only possible if the essential

structure “is” something in itself. This does not mean isolation, being-for-itself, or detachment from the real, but it does mean autonomy with respect to the act of conception. For conception is a transcendent act.

I can isolate the essential relation “part and whole,” for example, in any given “whole” you please, such as a crystal, an animal organism, or a planet. I will discover therein their strict correlation, the presupposition of the whole in the part (as part) as well as the presupposition of the part in the whole (as whole), the essential relatedness of the part to other parts in the whole, and much else. I have to abstract from everything by which crystal, organism, and Earth are distinguished; this creates no difficulty, since the essential relation sought is not affected by these differences. I cannot abstract from the essential relation “part and whole” in the essence of the planet, however, or even from just one of the components of lawful regularity that are contained in it. I cannot do this because the planet is, without this essential relation, not a planet any more. However, I can surely accomplish the first act of abstraction, because the relation “part and whole” “is something” even without the planet, something that is valid and may be contemplated. This “being something”—not in detachment from the real in general, but from the particularity and existence of the determinate real case—is ideal being-in-itself.

It is no different when dealing with the essence of acts. When I isolate the peculiar turning of the I against itself in the lived act of remorse, for example, and my transformation into a different person, including the transvaluation of my own deed, etc., this is only possible because these factors together form an essential structure that is valid even without the particular real execution of the act. It even has meaning as an unsatisfied ethical demand to the guilty person. Even if we disregard the real case, it is in itself the same as it is in the case.

Thus, to that extent we have the same relation as in the case of mathematical being. The law of the sum of the angles is valid even without the real triangle. However, I can isolate it from the real triangle, insofar as I have more in view than what is merely measured (which is at best an approximation to the law)—i.e., insofar as I contemplate the universal essence of the triangle in it. I also conceive the essence in the same way in the example of the real case. The difference is only that the mathematical essential intuition can move freely in the ideal, and in general the other kind of essential intuition cannot. The latter remains bound to the empirical occasions for its contemplation, the former can dispense with them, and it finds immediate access to ideal being.

This is a merely gnoseological distinction that we may not transfer into the ontic domain. It concerns only the two modes of access [270] to the unity of the essence. Without it, mathematical demonstration using a diagrammed figure would be impossible. The gnoseological distinction demonstrates the fact that

an essential ontological distinction does not exist here. This means that ontologically the “attached ideality,” which we isolate in the real cases, and “free ideality,” which we grasp immediately in itself, are one and the same ideality.

Chapter 47: Essential Intuition and Evidence

a) The Idea of *mathesis universalis*

The realm of the isolable nonmathematical essences has a particular privilege over the mathematical for demonstrating ideal being because it is of a completely different scope and richness and extends to all forms and layers of the real, without privileging a specific sector of it. When we reflect that the mathematical only concerns the lowest level of structure—the quantitative—the degree of its privilege becomes manifest right away. It is not really hindered by the lack of “exactness” in its form of presentation. Exactness does not concern the entity itself, but only its conceivability; exactness is not an ontological factor, but only a gnoseological one.

An exact science of objects and acts, material and spiritual being, is quite thinkable in itself. Husserl’s idea of philosophy as exact science—a renewal of the Cartesian *mathesis universalis*—is in principle based on this possibility. The possibility exists only ontologically, however, not gnoseologically. The essences of all ontological domains would surely admit of exactness of conception. However, the organization of our cognition does not allow it: it has no tools other than logical and mathematical relations for grasping things with precision. Human beings do not have the power to create the organ for grasping all essences with exactitude. They can only appreciate the power of cognition that they have, up to the limit of its capacity. In philosophy, wherever the idea of a *mathesis universalis* crops up, the utopia of the *intellectus infinitus* also plays into it behind the scenes. This is the mistake in Husserl’s reckoning, as with the old rationalists; it is science counting its chickens before they hatch.

This is why the mathematical may play an important role and has the power to orient ontology, despite the fact that it is limited and narrow in terms of its content in relation to the broad realm of essences.

At the same time, the realm of essences has the great advantage that it already brings along its interconnections with the real. It demonstrates its kind of mediated givenness to us *ad oculos* [visually]. As we have seen, the testimony of being-in-itself depends on this real context. [271] The real is given in experience as being-in-itself through the impact of being-affected. If there is an ideal interweaving of essences that is already immanently manifest in its kind of giv-

eness as real, a determinacy that is always already contained in it before our conception and opinion, then its gnoseological independence, autonomy, and indifference to objectification—in short, its being-in-itself—is also guaranteed. It cannot first arise with the methodological isolation itself because the real would not even be what it is without these structures.

However, if this interweaving is manifestly indifferent to the existence and particularity of real cases, if it is evident that the latter are extrinsic to its existence as such (and it remains evident as “what it is” without them), then the two factors of indifference—indifference to objectification or being conceived, and indifference to the real being of cases—are conjoined and together constitute the strict concept of ideal being-in-itself. Thus, they together form the proof for the existence and the scope of ideal being-in-itself.

b) Limits of Certainty regarding Content

There is a disadvantage to the privilege of expanded essential intuition, nevertheless, that endangers its results. It concerns the certainty regarding the content of our knowledge of ideal being.

Essential intuition has the “evidence” of vision itself as the only and ultimate epistemic authority of its certainty. It cannot refer to anything else by which it might obtain a check on itself. The unacknowledged presupposition here is that it is itself infallible. We then have to ask, is it really infallible? At the outset this does not seem to be probable. No cognitive authority known to us is entirely free of error. Can we then rely on what is intuited?

We need to resist the temptation to generalize too hastily the misgiving that arises here. In mathematics, e.g., the issue is different, as the much-touted certainty of mathematical propositions shows. Here the hardness of *Sosein* is experienced not only in the subjectively tangible resistance to possibly thinking otherwise; mathematics secures its individual insights by inserting them into the broad context of what is already grasped and secured. The well-known Euclidean method of demonstration also has the same methodological significance. It consists in referring us all the way back to the axioms; moreover, these are not simply left as self-evident, but secured with reference to more specific axioms, which rest on the general axioms as conditions. The whole sphere of mathematical being is bound together this way; and for the sciences this means there is a single, broad essential interconnection of condition and conditioned that seamlessly permeates the whole. Individual instances of deceptive evidentiality are as good as eliminated. [272] At most, there is a possibility of doubting the whole, but this gets us nowhere when considering its relations to the real.

It is different with the kind of essential intuition that, starting from the real, isolates essences. It intuits “stigmatically,” i.e., it intuits something regarding an individual. It lacks the broader context provided by a survey of the sphere, a “conspicitive” vision. Therefore, it does not easily find a check and correction with reference to what else is intuited. Its evidence rests in itself, exists for itself, and possesses the questionable nature of what exists for itself.

The praxis of essential intuition itself provides the evidence for this, most clearly in the divergence of what is intuited by different individuals. The diversity of points of departure and intention can bring very different things into the range of intuition. Errors, which are detected right away in conspicuous intuition because the inconsistency is immediately palpable, remain unremedied in stigmatic intuition. They first become detectable where larger interconnections are brought in. However, this is not part of the procedure of pure essential intuition.

c) Subjective and Objective Evidentiality

The appeal to immediate “evidence” has the unfortunate weakness that the concept of evidence itself contains an equivocation.

We mean by such an appeal “objective evidence,” of course, which means not only the subject’s being convinced by what is intuited, but also a sufficient warrant of truth in such conviction. We mean nothing less, therefore, than certainty regarding knowledge of what is true and untrue. This is never immediately given, and where we perhaps might actually have a claim to it with a particular insight, it is still not ascertainable. For it can only be “given” in the form of conviction. We may very well “have” conviction, of course, but it is not an objective guarantee, it may still deceive. It is only subjective evidence.

Subjective evidence, everywhere that it arises, is also actually given, but it is only a mode of consciousness, not a mode of cognition; we can be convinced of the most untrue things. Prejudices and fallacies can be quite convincing in this sense. The capacity to be deceived by conviction consists in this. If we wanted to make an appeal to conviction in the sciences we would be ridiculed. At any rate, subjective evidence is no criterion of what is true and untrue.

Objective evidence is not a criterion either. If it were ever given at any time, then it would of course be a criterion, for its meaning is precisely to be sufficient warrant. However, it is never given. A criterion must be “given,” for it must be the indicator of certainty for consciousness. If subjective evidence were such an indicator, then it would convey the objective. [273] It is not such an indicator at all. We would have to already possess a criterion to determine whether in a given case the subjective evidence is an indicator of the objective or not. This

means that neither subjective nor objective evidence is a criterion of truth—we are lacking the latter, and having the former does not help at all. What we need is a criterion for evidence itself. This would have to tell us whether the subjective evidence provided is at the same time objective evidence.

There is a widespread view that in cognition of the ideal there is no possibility of deception. We have accepted Spinoza's claim for the whole domain: *veritas norma est sui et falsi* [truth is the criterion of itself and the false]. This view rests on a misunderstanding of ideal being, and it also misunderstands the genuine cognitive characteristics of essential intuition. Again and again we think that we are dealing only with an inner, intentional object, and that deception, error, and misconstrual are not even possible regarding it. Then we should not talk about the intuition, insight, or grasp of such objects, and should not present our dealings with them as science. Essential intuition would only be a play of representations. We think that thought abides by itself, does not transcend itself, and that the same essences that we grasp are also essences of the real, and at any rate possess being-in-itself.

We do not come to grips with the difficulty in the concept of evidence this way. To entertain even the possibility of evidential deception means an annihilation of ideal cognition.

d) Positive Meaning of Evidential Deception

The situation is only so grave, of course, for pure stigmatic intuition as phenomenology proper has one-sidedly developed it. Actually, essential intuition is not dependent on stigmatic intuition alone. It is quite as capable of conspective intuition, as is geometry. It can incorporate individual components of cognition into the context of the whole, by which the sources of error in single intuitions are rectified. This takes place automatically everywhere scientific methods are underway. Science is interconnection, incorporation, comprehensive vision. An at least relative criterion of evidence results from the synthesis of stigmatic and conspective intuition—comparable to the criterion of cognition of the real in the synthesis of *a priori* and *a posteriori* elements. In both, it is not an absolute criterion; but such a thing is not available for humankind in any case.

Nevertheless, to claim that the givenness of ideal being in essential intuition is illusory, or would even just be weakened, due to this aporia regarding evidence, is to draw a completely mistaken conclusion. This aporia only concerns the substantive grasp of the individual essence, but not the givenness of its ontological characteristics. Moreover, the deception reaches at most to the negative, that is, it consists in not seeing; what is positively envisioned is subject to it far

less. [274] The mistake of the phenomenologists normally emerges where they say that “there is no such thing;” where they see something and say “there is such a thing,” they take care not to make a mistake. This is quite understandable since all genuine intuition is affirmative.

However, we are dealing with an even more fundamental consideration. Let us grant that we can be deceived about the details in our isolation of the essential structure from the real case, that we can hit the mark or miss it, grasp them or misconstrue them. We still have to admit that this holds for all cognition, even for cognition of the real. Regarding the latter, no one would claim that the possibility of deception or error affects the reality of the object. It is just the opposite: where we can be mistaken about something, the thing about which we may be mistaken naturally must first of all be present. If it is not present, then there is nothing that we could be mistaken about. It must necessarily be present, however, as the kind of thing whose being is simply there, indifferent to being (inadequately) grasped by us. This is in the strict sense the kind of thing having being-in-itself.

We then have to draw the opposite conclusion instead: if being deceived about evidence were impossible, then we could at any time doubt the being-in-itself of the essences; we would then say that essences are a mere matter of thought. For how could thought be mistaken about itself? However, if being deceived about evidence is possible, and if it comes clearly to light in occasional divergence with what has been understood to be evident by different intuiting subjects, then the being of that about which they are deceived is demonstrated by this fact. In the consciousness of disagreement is then the completely indisputable guarantee for the fact that the essences are themselves something independent of all opinion and all evidentiality, all intuition and cognition. This means that they possess being-in-themselves.

Truth and error are only possible in the relation of transcendence. Their unequivocal meaning is that of adequacy or inadequacy relative to an object that is more than an object and has its properties in itself even without it ever becoming the object of an intuition. What is “true” must correspond with just these properties in consciousness, and the “untrue” must lack such correspondence.

We can only be wrong about this situation when we understand by “essence” something that it is not, namely, when we do not recognize it as the ideal structure of the thing, but only take it to be what is “placed before the parentheses” as content of consciousness (as concept or product of abstraction). The latter is naturally only an inauthentic object, an intentional object or one borne by the act, not an object of cognition. Intuition is only cognition when it does not produce something, but “grasps” something. This means that it is only cognition to the extent that the product of the act (the concept or the iso-

lated universal) corresponds to the essence of the thing, just as it is in itself and as it is contained in the real as “its” structure. [275]

Chapter 48: The Realm of the Logical and its Laws

a) The Dual Lawful Regularity of Thinking

There are still two regions of the ideal that have not been covered above, the logical and the realm of values. The first is associated with mathematical being, the latter with the essences. Both share the misfortune that the meaning of ideal being in them has been misconstrued for the longest time. For both, their meaning depends on the relation to the real, but the relation is quite different for each, and different again from that in the mathematical domain and in the essences.

First, let us bring the realm of the logical into view. There is an ancient dispute concerning its mode of being. We will not deal with it in its full extent here. It will suffice to begin with the following provision: if genuine being-in-itself appears here at all, then it is ideal being-in-itself; and if it is ideal being, then it counts as “free ideality.” Its givenness is immediate, and it is grasped “in itself,” like the mathematical object.

Its being grasped in itself, as well as its existence as a sphere of ideal being, is particularly pure here. This is not only because it requires no extraction from the real; it is also lacking a particular concrete content, which, e.g., in geometry, still retains a certain analogy to the real.

The laws of the syllogistic forms and modes, just like the forms and modes themselves, are structures of the highest generality, pure forms of possible content. These forms govern intelligible interconnections (to the extent that they are objectively determined), and they exert a kind of inner necessity in thinking. The reason for the familiar and often recurring interpretation of formal logic as a “science of thinking” lies in this fact.

We should not contest the idea that it is indirectly such a science. Whether its essence can primarily be so characterized is an entirely different question. Even the simplest consideration here leads us to a different conclusion. The logical forms in fact say nothing about thinking itself, but exclusively concern the content of thinking as an objectively structured content. This is clearly displayed in the meaning of the categorical statement, whose copula “is” and “is not” expresses this pure ontological meaning. This has been demonstrated often and exhaustively.

At the same time, however, there is a psychology of thinking. Here we are dealing with completely different laws, laws of thought processes and intercon-

nctions of thought insofar as thought is subjectively conditioned. The laws of association are the most familiar type of such laws, which, taken purely descriptively, retain their meaning quite well for the coming and going of thoughts, even after it has been proven that other forms of interconnection are concealed behind them. These are also not logical forms of interconnection. [276]

The process of thinking is in the peculiar position of standing under two quite different forms of lawful regularity at the same time. It constitutes a kind of battleground for their heterogeneous determination and is torn apart by it, as it were. The phenomenon of so-called “logical fallacies” rests on this. These are not simply “errors,” but precisely logical errors; psychologically they are just consistent with psychological laws. They prove sufficiently that logical lawfulness is far from actually governing thinking and constituting a genuine lawful regularity for thinking. The logical is a kind of lawful regularity completely heterogeneous to the process of thought, which is only laid on top of it secondarily and captures it, as it were, both transforming it and adapting it to that entity with whose grasp it deals in thinking.

This lawful regularity, and this multiplicity of forms and structures generally—the system of logical forms—is originally ontological, and indeed an ideal ontological regularity.

b) Ideal Ontological Character of Logical Lawfulness

This is not difficult to demonstrate based on the containment of this lawfulness in the whole domain of ideal being, most tangibly in mathematical being. When, e.g., the law of the circle is proven to be a special case of the law of the ellipse, then the *dictum de omni et nullo* is clearly contained in it.⁴ When a law of permutation posits that $a + b = b + a$, then the principle of identity is presupposed in it—as it is in any other equivalence, for sameness is just partial identity. That the Euclidean proofs are constructed on the basis of the modes of the syllogism proves that the latter permeate the interconnections of geometrical being in general, in such a way that the modes are readily comprehensible in them.

If the logical laws were merely laws of thought, then their “application” in mathematics would distort mathematical objects. At any rate, they could not serve as the tool by means of which thinking comes to seize these objects, and distortions would moreover come to light somewhere as mistakes in calcu-

⁴ In Aristotelean logic, the *dictum de omni et nullo* is the principle that whatever is affirmed or denied of a whole class or kind may be affirmed or denied of any part of it. TR

lation, in inconsistencies and discrepancies. We experience nothing of this in mathematical thinking provided it shows strict logical form.

Therefore, we have to draw the opposite conclusion: logical laws originally belong to mathematical being and govern it as their own domain. Since they are not themselves mathematical laws, but are far more general than they are, this can only mean that they are originally laws of ideal being. This is why they are also laws of mathematical “thinking,” as long as the latter is not mere thinking, but grasping of mathematical being.

In a word, it is entirely extrinsic to them whether or not some form of thinking orients itself by means of them or not, but it is not extrinsic to our thinking [277] that it is oriented by them. To the extent that it orients itself by them and submits itself to them as norms of inner correctness, as it were, it is able to be adequate thinking—i.e., “grasping”—of mathematical being, and indirectly an adequate thinking of everything real that is governed by it. The adaptation of thinking to “what is,” i.e., its cognitive significance and its truth value, depends on its logical structure—on its conformity to logical laws.

c) Relation of Logical to Attached Ideality

Mathematical being may serve as a prototype for this situation because the mathematical is transparent and its structures may be easily cognized. We do not have it as easy with the relation of the logical to the complex essences, which are only given as attached idealities. Nevertheless, it is quite demonstrable that the logical is contained even in them. It just further recedes from view because the essences are far more concrete in this case, and the basic logical structure in them completely coincides with their particular structured content.

We need only think of the simple meaning of the objective universality of essences in order to realize that the general logical relation between universality and particularity (or the individual case) is contained in it. If, for example, the essence of an act is grasped in a type of act, this holds *a priori* for all possible special cases. If the more general and the more specific are distinguished, then the logical relation of classification comes directly into force. The same holds for the forms of the syllogism. We in fact “reason” about the mediation of complex essences on the basis of the simple ones. In this way, we generate the additional “essential interconnections” that are prerequisites for a conspective vision and form the necessary counterpart to stigmatic intuition.

Finally, we may introduce the principle of contradiction here in particular, which is decisive for every coexistence of essential factors. This is the implicit presupposition in simple essential intuition. Intuition cannot validate that

which contains a contradiction, and likewise, that which comes into contradiction with something else intuited is eliminated automatically. If the principle of contradiction were not an ontological law and did not have validity in relation to the being of essences, it would be a violation of the essences by a tyrannical kind of thinking. In fact, it is the converse: the logical laws are ever-present laws of ideal being, and it is extrinsic to them that our thinking orients itself by them within certain limits. This is of central importance for thinking and for intuition, since otherwise the grasp of the essences that these laws contain would not be possible for human intuition. [278]

d) Logical Laws and the Lawful Regularity of the Real

The key question, however, concerns the relation of the logical to the real. Ultimately, the ideal being of the essences as well as of the mathematical stands as open to question as that of the logical itself. If the latter is contained only in the realm of essences or in mathematical objects, then, even with its claim to ideal being-in-itself, it is only aligned with the ideal. However, if it is shown that it is also contained in the real, then the whole weight of real being-in-itself, with the pressing immediacy of its conditions, stands behind its unique significance.

We can already see indirectly that it is contained in the real via its relation to the mathematical and to the essences, for these are contained in the real. We can also demonstrate this directly.

The proof lies in the special nature of cognition of the real, insofar as it everywhere has the structure of logical regularity as its presupposition, in all of its substantive interconnections, its conspective intuition, its components of objective universality and *apriority*, and in the relation of these elements to the given individual case as well.

Above all, what we mean here is the self-evidence with which we “apply” the once-recognized and conceived universal to real cases that have not been given in any experience, such as future ones. This application indisputably has the form of subsumption, whether or not this is conscious; and if we look for a form of expression for it afterwards, then it necessarily adopts the form of one of the familiar logical modes of inference. This holds not only for the universal in the form of the concept and in the lawfulness expressed in judgment as they appear in the sciences, but just as much for all unconceived, not consciously thematized universals, intuitively grasped in everyday life itself (e.g., grasped by means of analogy). The peculiar thing here is that we manage to get by in life with this kind of application—i.e., that we, within the limits of human knowledge of what is true and untrue, correctly understand and deal with the real.

The mistake that we make with such application tends not to lie in the form of application itself, but in the conception of the universal, as well as our sense of its fittedness for the particular.

This would be impossible if the real were not itself already somehow “logically” ordered in its structural relations, if the forms of dependency that we know as belonging to our thinking and that we apply in grasping the real did not already originally permeate and govern the real independently of all thinking.

This relation will seem completely paradoxical as long as we understand logical regularity as mere lawful regularity of thought. It is not at all paradoxical, however, when we see that it is originally an ontological [279] regularity. This means that its essence is not exhausted by being the lawful regularity of the logical sphere—as a sphere of thinking—and that it is instead ideal ontological lawful regularity originally, and the regularity of thought that relies on it is the recurrence of an ontological regularity in thinking itself (which rests on it at the same time). Accordingly, the peculiar thing about the logical is that thought, in that it follows logical regularity, does not follow its own regularity but an ontic essential regularity whose ideal character of being-in-itself manifests itself by being the shared structural scaffold both of the real and of thought.

A kind of lawful regularity that is nothing other than a lawfulness of thinking would, when transferred to real relations, only be a falsification of the real. A kind of thinking that wanted to “apply” its own subjective logic in its grasp of real objects would be an unusable kind of thinking in everyday practical life. It could not be a “grasping” kind of thinking. It could not serve humankind in the real world as a means of orientation, could not teach them about their environments, about given situations or about the means to their ends, could not serve as a lever for inquiry into what is concealed. This kind of thinking would not be a universal methodological means for a comprehensive vision of the wide expanse of real interrelations and real dependencies. Everyday life and the sciences of the real (in all of their subfields) teach us that our thinking is, on the basis of its logic, such a universal means.

If the logical is originally an ideal ontological regularity for our thinking, if the most general laws of interconnection of ideal being constitute the canon which gives regularity to the interconnections of thinking and our consciousness of this regularity, all inconsistency is struck down with one blow. The logical, understood as sum total of this lawfulness, then stands in the same relation to the real as the mathematical. It is contained, on one hand, as an essential structure in the real, but at the same time, it is a determining essential structure of thought in our consciousness. We could also say that it is, as a fundamental ideal ontological lawfulness, the determining factor on both sides: on the side of thinking

and on the side of real being. Only in this way is it comprehensible that thinking, as long as it follows logical lawfulness in its inferences from the given to what is not given, does not distance itself from the real, but always grasps real things.

e) Objective Validity of the Logical and the Possibility of Sciences of the Real

We can readily show this for each mode of inference. The first figure shows in the mode Barbara the premises $M \text{ a } P$ and $S \text{ a } M$ [all M are P , all S are M]. We do not know whether $S \text{ a } P$ [all S are P] is valid; we only know that $M \text{ a } P$ is valid and that $S \text{ a } M$ is valid. The conclusion $S \text{ a } P$ can then only arise in thinking if thinking stands under this law of inference, i.e., of the mode; but it can only apply to the real S [280] when the real relation between S , M , and P is also originally subject to the same inference. If it were not subject to it, then all of our inferences in the mode Barbara would be fallacies in relation to the real, even those exactly followed and necessary for thought (those of the sciences). Our thinking would then be compelled, in the sense of the Cartesian *deus malignus*, to infer wrongly—i.e., not wrong in itself, but in relation to the real.

The possibility of sciences of the real and of a substantively interconnected consciousness of reality in general, as logically structured and unified, exists only under the presupposition that logical lawfulness lies at the basis of thinking and of the real at the same time as ideal essential lawfulness.

This relation was already worked out with complete clarity in the original design of the Aristotelian analytic. This analytic is primarily an ontologically founded logic; it is built on the strict parallelism between being asserted in a judgment (*κατηγορεῖσθαι*) and ontic belonging or relatedness (*ὑπάρχειν*). It formed the basis of the theory of universals in Scholasticism. This is first misunderstood in the Modern period, as a consequence of the Cartesian interpretation of *cogitatio* as a substance separated from and heterogeneous to *extensio*. Descartes himself did not draw this conclusion, but the epistemology of the following era, which began with his doctrine of two substances, saw itself more and more pushed toward it. The nineteenth century first really broke through to the tradition of the more natural, i.e., ontological, relation.

The identity of lawful logical regularity in the difference between the sphere of consciousness and the real sphere will always remain something remarkable. It belongs to the long series of “wonders” on which the phenomenon of cognition rests. We can understand quite well why the idealist theories fell prey to the reversal of the relation in their reflection on the role of logic in cognition. It must seem that the real is determined by the lawfulness of consciousness. It is the same deception that also crops up in relation to the mathematical, and which

then has the demotion of reality to subjectively understood appearance as a consequence.

At first glance, this reversal looks like a helpful simplification. The inconsistency of its consequences is what first reveals its untenability. These have been developed above and do not need to be repeated here. Kant clearly worked out the relation, at least insofar as he recognized the universal and its specification in nature to be a fittedness of nature to our cognitive faculty. Of course, even here a trace of the reversal of the relation still remains. Nevertheless, the basic fact that he grasps here goes far beyond this. Our understanding, through its lawful cognitive logical regularity [281], according to which it subsumes the particular under the universal, is fitted to a nature in which there are ever-present common features, where everything particular is structured by universal lawful regularities.

This relation is the comprehensive ideality of an essential lawfulness, covering interconnections of thought and real interconnections, that is grasped as logical in our structured concept of the world.

Chapter 49: The Realm of Values and its Way of Being

a) The Special Status of Values among the Essences

The other region of the ideal yet to be treated (aside from the logical) is that of values. It has affinities with the dimension of essences; the values were also originally understood as a kind of essence—long before the question about their mode of being matured and a concept of value existed in order to grasp them. Plato understood justice, courage, and wisdom this way as “ideas”—i.e., as archetypes that are neither created out of experience nor invented by human beings, but are accessible to them in pure intuition.

It is sufficiently well-known that even today the debate over the essence of values is not settled, and that educated opinions about whether they are something existing independently of opinion and “evaluation” are still as diverse as can be. A statement on this question does not belong in ontology, but in value theory, so we cannot give an account of it here. The affinity of the values with the essences requires that they be treated at the same level as the latter, especial-

ly since the disputed question to which they are subject extends in its wider significance even to the essences themselves.⁵

Their special place in contrast to the latter consists in the following. The isolated essences have the peculiarity, like mathematical structures, that all real cases that fall under their kind are also determined by them and are governed by them. They thus relate to the real like laws to which the real is completely subject. This is different when it comes to the values. Real cases may or may not correspond to them; and in the first case they are then “valuable,” in the second “counter to value.” Values do not directly determine the real, but only constitute the decisive authority over their being-valuable or being counter to value. However, when the real is counter to value, this changes nothing about the essence of the value. Thus, values originally exist independently of whether reality corresponds to them or not. To this extent, their autonomy is apparently of a higher sort than that of the essences. [282]

This is most familiar with the moral values. For example, the essence of the promise does not consist in its also actually being kept; but of course it is part of its essence that it is counter to value when we do not keep it. Factically not keeping it changes nothing about the value of “keeping a promise.” Even the varying will of humankind or its opportunistic conviction is not capable of changing anything about it. This independence of value from the opinion of human beings stands in strict analogy to the independence of objects of cognition from cognition, i. e., to their transobjectivity. They refer to the same characteristic being-in-itself. Since we cannot be dealing with reality here—for value subsists independently of the specifications of the real—the mode of being of value is obviously that of ideal being. This is why the value of real modes of activity turns out very differently when they correspond to the “value itself” or not (e.g., when we keep our promise or not), but being-valuable as such, and the value itself in its ideality, remains untouched by it.

b) Consciousness of Value and Cognition of Value

The reason why we cannot “isolate” values in given real cases as their essences (such as moral values in the factual actions of human beings), but can only grasp them independently of cases (even often in opposition to them), is that they simply may not be instantiated in them. Only what is contained (realized)

⁵ For an account of their mode of being, cf. this author's *Ethik* (Berlin 1926), Part I, Chapters 15 and 16. [See Hartmann 2002, same chapters. TR]

in the actual action can be obtained from it. We can only know whether the value is realized in it if we have already grasped the value itself and can use it as a criterion for the experience; without it we would be able to isolate the ontic constitution of the action quite well in its essential features, but would not be able to know whether it is valuable or not in this way.

Gnoseologically speaking, it follows from this that the *apriorism* of value consciousness is a stricter and more absolute kind than that of essential intuition; cognition of value is on its own in a completely different way than any other kind of essential cognition. A reference through the experiential real case is lacking, and nothing is to be gained here by merely bracketing the particular. Ontologically it seems that a certain “floating” of ideal being above the real is shown here: the indifference is not only that of values to the real, but also an indifference of the real to values. Values themselves exist independently of whether and how far the behavior of human beings corresponds to it, and this cannot be done away with no matter how much we would like it to be otherwise. The real also exists in a certain independence of them; it is a far cry from being substantively determined by them. It retains flexibility toward them. To be more precise, it is only dependent on them in terms of its characteristic value or disvalue, in its ontological character it is independent. [283]

Nevertheless, values are not grasped by looking away from the real, but precisely by looking at “its” being valuable or being counter to value. That is, the feeling for values does not respond to fictional cases, but only to real ones; it does not take the fictional seriously. Only the importance of what is actually lived through has the power to awaken it.

The value of justice is not made evident to anyone through lovely examples of virtue. It becomes palpable automatically as soon as someone is witness to unjust treatment; the moral feeling revolts against it, it rises up. It responds to what is actual and urgent. That which is grasped is not merely what is actual and urgent; the latter alone would not be value-significant in itself at all. We also grasp its being valuable and counter to value as well. In this way we also indirectly grasp the value itself—and characteristically grasp it best where it is lacking in the real case experienced (as in the example of revolt in light of unjust treatment).

It is the inner reaction that indicates the value. It arises as a spontaneous emotional reaction, as a “value response” of consciousness, as it were, to the real that is experienced; and it is as such already a feeling for the value itself. Therefore, inner intuition—in this case “value intuition”—can also grasp the value itself through its immediate connection with the value response. It then grasps it in its purity and universality, insofar as it subsists in itself independently of its being fulfilled in the real, and even in spite of its being unfulfilled, in-

dependently of being grasped and before any feeling of value as well. That is, it grasps it in its ideal being-in-itself.

c) Reality of Value Feeling and the Determining Power of Values

Despite all their detachment and despite the “floating” of this sphere, there is nevertheless an analogy with the process of essential intuition here. Values too may be “isolated,” not in real cases of human conduct, but in the cases of value reaction, of actual value feeling, the “value response” and the inner reaction. Only the will has freedom in face of the demand that emanates from moral values, and through the will, the deed, the conduct may be free. It is the will that is called to make a decision by the situation (cf. Chapter 32c), and its decision is always a decision for or against the individual value. The capacity of the will to be morally good or evil is based on this. However, the value feeling does not have freedom in face of the value once it is grasped; this is why it is less a grasp of the value than a being seized by it. It is the immediate indicator of the value in consciousness. We have an example in the fact that the deciding will, where it ignores the value, runs into conflict with the value feeling and suffers its judgment by the voice of conscience. [284]

The unswerving nature of the value feeling, imperturbable even by one’s own will, shows the power of determination of values in it, their being contained like essences in it as in a real thing. The kaleidoscopic abundance of value reactions in life, the entirety of human life shot through with them, is the real sphere in which the value essences may be brought to evidence through reduction. Values evidently form the ideal object of value feeling acts; they are the objective content of these acts, and this content is perceived in them as independent of real conduct in will and deed. Moreover, the content is even perceived to be independent of the value feeling itself, in that the latter feels itself to be dependent on it. To this extent, the essential intuition of values obtained through value reactions—the moral reaction and the value response—is the genuine intuition of an ideal being-in-itself.

We must remind ourselves about what was said above regarding the act transcendence of value feeling acts (cf. Chapter 33b). There we were dealing only with its real transcendence. Here its other side comes to the fore, the ideal transcendence of value feeling that is always contained in it at the same time. It concerns the existence of values independent of the act as a second domain of objects in addition to real objects (persons). It is not directly palpable and requires a particular reorientation of consciousness to appreciate it, because the values as such do not appear as isolated objects, but are co-given only as the background

providing value accent to real objects (of human conduct). Only conscious intuition of value isolates them from the actual constituent acts in value reactions.

In this way, the relation between value and reality, which seemed shaken by the variability of real conduct in relation to value, is fully reestablished. The ideal being of value structures is also guaranteed by the being-in-itself of real value reactions—in the same way that mathematical entities are guaranteed by the reality of the processes in which they are contained.

d) The Variability of Value Consciousness and the Being of Values

In this manner, the realm of values is homogeneously integrated into the realm of essences and into the realm of ideal being as well. However, the fact that values—or that which corresponds to them in the terminology of other eras—are taken to be the mere “valuation” of humankind or even to be conventions, and are misunderstood again and again in terms of their ontological status, is based in the historical variability of their validity. That is to say, we have to distinguish between their ideal being and their historical validity.

This variability cannot be disputed. It is well-known in the multiplicity of historical moral codes, as when the prevailing cultural taste sometimes prefers one aspect of human quality, sometimes the other. [285] Preference is without a doubt dependent on completely different factors than the essences, otherwise it could not be variable. Opinion, with its historical conditionedness, plays a role here. Whether we allow the value of happiness to “count” as the criterion of value in life, or that of sacrifice, or of heroism, or of justice, etc., is a difference in the total interpretation of life; likewise whether we take strict self-discipline and effort or meekness and humanism to be what are decisive in the *ethos*. Doing so changes nothing at all in the value of humanism itself, and likewise changes nothing at all in fortitude, self-discipline, effort, or justice. They remain what they are, and the conduct of human beings, as far as it specifically falls under them, remains valuable or counter to value whether the conduct as such is valued, assessed, and rejected or not—that is, whether it is perceived by the value consciousness in any case as valuable or counter to value. Value consciousness is variable; therefore, being valuable is not identical with counting as valuable.

The changing validity of specific values in specific times does not, therefore, indicate their arising and perishing in historical eras. The change is not variability of value, but variability of preference that specific eras lend to specific values (or even whole groups of values). We may understand this preference without difficulty by seeing that the value feeling under specific conditions—such as in spe-

pecific situations in life—preferentially responds or is disposed to determinate values, but is unreceptive to others (or value blind).

It is not necessary to interpret this phenomenon in terms of errors in value consciousness. Blindness is not an error, it is just lack of insight. Value feeling, where it makes itself known, can be quite infallible; its limitation lies only in the negative, in lack, or in the one-sidedness of its response. We can call this a “narrowness of value consciousness,” where the value feeling of the era always responds only to a few, not to all values, such that it never has them all in view at the same time, and even displays an inclination to rank one value above all others. Its field of vision is just too “narrow” for the plurality and multiplicity of the value realm. It always grasps only a sector of it, but not always the same sector; its visual field “roams” historically, so to speak, over the levels of value, and in this way ever new values enter into its orbit.

This becomes more understandable when we clarify that we are not really dealing with cognition of values—at least not primarily—that is, not with a grasp of values, but with our being-seized by them instead. Humankind cannot remain neutral to felt values; we are moved by them in value feeling, seized by them, determined in our feeling of them. Something in human being is determined by values, namely, [286] our attitude, our “valuation” of what is experienced, our being taken with something or being disgusted by something. Being-seized, however, necessarily shows a certain limitation. Human being cannot simultaneously be “seized” by as many things as you like. Each value, once felt, claims the whole human being. Its power to seize us consists in this. In fact, even a single value can very well determine, stamp, or fulfill a whole human life. Indeed, it can become tyrannical in a human life, suppress other value feelings, and make the human being into a one-sided value fanatic.

e) Conclusions: An Apparent Contradiction and its Resolution

If our vision of value “roams,” then it, and not the values themselves, is the relative factor. The latter are, wherever and however they are grasped, the same. Something even arises in value consciousness that may be compared to “being-affected” in living through and experiencing of the real: “being-seized” by values, being gripped by them, being determined or suffused by them, clearly shows an affective character. Here too we are dealing with an “experience,” just with a very different kind of experience. Human being in fact has its own quite particular mode of experiencing values. Human beings “experience” them in their value feeling, insofar as the latter arises in them unbidden, and “responds” to the given in external experience; likewise by their disposition, their refusal or

approval. It is just that such an experience is not the same in all human beings, and not in all eras. It increases with maturity, with personal maturity as with historical. Its variations are not variations in values, however.

If we bring this together with what was said above, we find all aspects of ideal being-in-itself clearly combined: being experienced and at the same time independence from being experienced; being contained in the real and at the same time independence from being contained in the real. This is the case at least when we understand value responsive acts as belonging to the real sphere. If we understand human conduct in life (in will and action) as belonging to the real sphere, then the real also appears to be independent of the values; in this sphere conduct has flexibility towards them. In fact, there is a double indifference in values: on the one hand, indifference to the consciousness of value, and on the other hand, indifference to real cases. Being-in-itself makes itself known in the former, ideality in the latter.

Obviously, there is still a contradiction here. First of all, the givenness of values as beings-in-themselves was derived from the reality of value reactions; but then the value reactions appeared to be inconstant, relative, and variable. It must follow that the values themselves are also inconstant.

This would be the case if the variability of value consciousness and value reactions included actual value deception or error, i.e., if it were possible to feel something that is valuable, precisely in its very determination, as something that is also contrary to value. If this were [287] possible, then we would have to be able to feel cowardice as such, just as it is grasped, as valuable, and we would have to be able to admire it. We would have to be able to approve of cruelty for its own sake, or be able to detest good or justice for its own sake. This is just what we do not find in any value consciousness; between one value feeling and another we never find such extremes, not even between those differently constituted. What we actually find is only unreceptivity or insensitivity to a value, a nonresponse of the value reaction. This is something completely different, since it is only value blindness for determinate values.

The lack of value feeling is no more a kind of deception than lack of cognition is a kind of deception. The absence of value feeling does not connote the nonbeing of the value, just as the absence of cognition does not connote the non-being of the object. Its inception, however, does signify the being of the value. Wherever and however it arises at a certain time, it always and necessarily signifies the same thing. Value feeling cannot feel the value that it grasps as a disvalue. The contradiction is resolved in this manner. The variability of value consciousness concerns only the arising and disappearance of the value feeling, not its content.

Chapter 50: Ways of Being and Position of the Spheres

a) Floating of the Spheres and Immanence of Ways of Being

When we combine the results of our investigation into the four respective domains of the ideal, they coincide on one major point. The diversity of modes of givenness is not a diversity of “ideality.” Nevertheless, the consequences are not completely uniform. We may summarize them in the following points.

1. The ideal in all domains shows a demonstrable, even if unobtrusive, being-in-itself. The indifference of the latter is palpable for the transcendent act to which it is given.

2. An ontological indifference that is just as essential is to be contrasted with this gnoseological indifference: the indifference of the ideal to reality and irreality. It is manifest that ideal being-in-itself is detached from the real as a being of its own kind and cannot be interpreted entirely as an essential structure of the real. The fact that it actually inheres in the real to the greatest extent as “its” essence does not fundamentally change anything about its detachment.

3. The being of values teaches us that the opposite indifference may come to the fore in the same relation as well. Even the real is, for its part, indifferent to certain domains of the ideal; it does fall under the values and is marked by them (positively or negatively), but is not governed and structured by them.

That is, not only does it not belong to the essence of the ideal to govern something real, but it is not part of the essence of the real [288] to be completely governed by structures of the ideal. Or, to put it differently, there is ideal being to which no real being corresponds, just as much as there is real being that is withdrawn from corresponding ideal structures. For the former, the examples lie in the field of the mathematical; for the latter they lie in the field of values and the logical. Even real thinking deviates from logical lawfulness.

This relation, which has only been outlined here in broad strokes, is of great significance for the ontology of specific domains, i.e., for the theory of categories. It shows that the ideal cannot automatically be the ontological home of the real categories, nor that the categories of the ideal and the real could simply be identical. Both positions have often been advocated without one or the other having been able to be upheld, but also without the corresponding consequences having been drawn from their untenability. It will be a major task of categorial analysis to draw these consequences, since for some time this task has been considered a desideratum of ontology, and it is beginning to be feasible on the basis of the investigations carried out above.

The difference between the two types of categories can naturally only be shown where there exists a particularly well-developed cognition of the ideal

in addition to cognition of the real—or, what is the same, where ideal being is given in the form of “free ideality.” This occurs in mathematics and in certain domains of value cognition, but not in all domains of ontological cognition. Everywhere that ideal being can be grasped in the real by means of essential intuition, the distinctions of categorial structure can (at best) be indirectly revealed.

b) The Tenable Meaning of “Floating” of the Spheres

We can now formulate the basic law of the relation between the ways of being this way: ideal being is found to be a basic structure in *everything* real, but ideal being is neither in itself a structure of the real because of this, nor is all real structure constituted by ideal being.

That is, ideal being is not reducible to the fact that it may be, and very often is, real structure. It also subsists in itself independently of this—as that which it is. It is also graspable as something independent of the real in cognition of the ideal. This holds at least as far as pure ideal cognition can reach. Its scope is of course limited. The limitation is only gnoseological, however, while the independence of ideal being is itself ontical.

Ontologically, therefore, its indifference to the real extends in principle to the whole sphere of ideal being. It forms a primary phenomenon characteristic of it. Understood in this way, this primary phenomenon is the legitimate meaning of the image of “floating spheres.” The image then means neither detachment (existence for itself) nor a doubling of ontological structures, but only indicates its way of being distinct from the real. [289] It expresses the tenable and necessary aspect of Platonism, insofar as this does not consist in a *χωρισμός* [separation] of the spheres—which has always been attributed to it—but consists in working out a way of being that cannot be reduced to the way of being of things and occurrences. It also forms the genuine centerpiece of the Medieval doctrine of *essentia* and *existentia* (at least to the extent that it does not resolve itself into the contrast between *Sosein* and *Dasein*), and makes apparent the insufficiency of the essences for explaining the ontological character of the real.

If we hold on firmly to this meaning of the floating of the spheres, then we can further conceive it as a positional relation (in terms of content). The sphere of ideal being is superimposed on that of the real in its “floating,” but the limits of both do not coincide. Ideal being extends beyond the real in terms of content, and this becomes clear with mathematical being (plurality of mathematical spaces), as well as in the unreality of the multiplicity of values. For its part, the real also extends substantively beyond the limits of the ideal—with all of the

alogical things in it, all its real contradictions (real antinomies), and all things contrary to value.

c) The Relation between Ways of Being in the Individual

Additionally, there is another contrasting factor between the ways of being. This is connected to individuality; it divides ideal and real being radically from one another—much more radically than they are actually divided in the unity of the world—in two distinct ways. On the one hand, everything real is individual, unique, and unrepeatable; on the other hand, everything ideal is universal, recurrent, and everlasting.

Stated in just this way, these two propositions are not liable to be free from misunderstood. Regarding the first, we have to add that there is certainly a reality to the universal as well, and it simply consists in the commonality of certain determinations in the plurality of the individual cases. Such a commonality is a universal subsisting in the real itself, whether or not it is something principal and fundamental in it, i.e., whether it deals with laws and essential forms of the real or with secondary properties. It is important to note that the real universal does not exist for itself, it attaches to the existing real cases. Its reality stands or falls with the latter. The cases themselves are not reducible to it, however, and they are and shall remain individual.⁶

The second proposition says that no individuals appear in the realm of the ideal. It rests on the fact that essences are indifferent [290] to the number of real cases that fall under them, and at any rate always hold for other possible cases. This is where there is a difficulty. Ideal being may be individuated in principle without limit; the idea (essence) of the individual has to exist in its sphere. Leibniz, for example, carried it off with the idea of Caesar. Such an idea is then highly complex, and is in any case no longer conceivable. The realm of essences is not limited by the bounds of intelligibility. Its nature makes quite clear the fact that it has room for the unintelligible as much as the intelligible.

Nevertheless, the fact that there is an idea of an individual changes nothing about the fact that there is nothing individual in the realm of the ideal. The idea

⁶ Universality and individuality are to be understood strictly ontologically in this context. The first is not conceptuality, is not what has been abstracted; the latter is not concreteness. The former only addresses being-in-common, the latter being-singular and being-unique. Concreteness (such as abundance of properties) varies with ontological height. Individuality does not vary with it: a trivial thing is ontically no less singular than a human being or a historical occurrence. Only “for us” this individuality of things may be irrelevant; we “take” them in a general manner.

of an individual is of course not itself an individual idea. It is still completely universal; for if, in the course of the world, a second case recurs that falls under it, then this universality is manifest by its very recurrence. In other words, the fact that only one real case actually corresponds to it is not part of the nature of the idea (its essence), but of the whole real context. By means of its spatio-temporality the latter is so constituted that it produces only one case with exactly this determination; in contrast, the essential structure always admits a plurality of real cases. This production does not occur by incorporating into its ideal content its place in the real context. This way we would overstep the limits of the ideal, for the real context is not an essential feature but itself an individual. It is strictly singular and unique, and everything that exists in it has singularity and uniqueness thanks to it (as a portion of it).

It will always be utterly extrinsic to ideal being—even for the most complex essential structure—whether one real case falls under it or many, or even none. This is exclusively an issue for the real. Thus, even with the idea of an individual, its being-individual is purely an affair of the real context. It determines that no second case arises, just as it may determine that not a single one does.

We can understand this exclusion of the individual from the ideal ontological sphere to be the obverse of the Platonic “eternity,” which at bottom means atemporality. The individual is just what is temporal, arising and passing away, the ephemeral, existing only in transition, or is even that which exists only as a processual stage. The realm of the ideal does not know any perishability. It also does not know any processes, for even essences of processes are themselves not processes.

d) The *Nimbus* of “Grandeur”

We should not neglect to mention that the transtemporality of ideal being led early on to a value prejudice that tends to obscure the whole issue. Namely, transtemporality—especially when presented in the mode of imperishability—lent to the ideal realm [291] that *nimbus* of grandeur that presides over everything in the Platonic theory of ideas and which became traditional in later Platonism. The realm of ideas counted as the better or “higher” kind of being from the outset, as a realm of the perfect and divine, because it is a realm of the eternal, untouched by becoming and exempt from death. In Neo-Platonism it was made synonymous with pure *voūç* [mind], which, according to Aristotle, only has itself as an object and, understood in this way, is the divine *voūç*. The realm of essences lived on in Scholasticism as the content of the *intellectus divinus*. Leibniz still understood it this way as the sum total of “eternal truths.”

But even in Kant's transcendental subject and in Husserl's eidetic sphere, a pale reflection of this grandeur can still be detected.

We should not be surprised that superstitious imagery has been associated with these notions throughout the ages. It is this very imagery that makes its genuine ontological content dubious.

Ontologically speaking, we must hold on to the fact that we are not talking about any sort of value-preference or grandeur at all. It is true that all value is something atemporal, but it is not true that the valuable thing itself, which has value, must therefore be an atemporal thing. The value of a highly perishable, even ephemeral creature can very well be an eternal value. What is valuable in it is just not its real character. Thus, there is no reason to attribute an ontological superiority to the "everlasting" on account of the value perspective. We have to free ourselves from this misunderstanding derived from Platonism.

In fact, it is exactly the opposite. Ideal being is, compared to the real, the lesser kind of being. It is only the universal "in" the real; taken on its own it never brings concretion to actual individuality. This is the reason why cognition always grasps the ideal with a certain amount of abstraction. A science such as mathematics, which exclusively has the ideal as its object, is not, as we philosophers have often believed, the highest science, but rather the lowest science. It owes its methodological advantages of exactness and transparency to the simplicity of its objects. It is the science of the lowest kind of being, and therefore it can be a complete science, which the sciences of higher and fuller being could never be. This is why mathematical penetration into the real is also possible only on its lowest level. Exact natural science pays for its methodological advantage with a limitation on its domain of objects, with its bondage to the lowest region of the real world, as it were. All attempts to transfer this advantage to higher ontological domains come to grief on the ineliminable limit of the mathematical ontological structure in the structure of the actual world.

Even without regard to the stratification of the real world, reality purely as such is already the higher mode of being. All kaleidoscopic variety and abundance [292] belong to the real, for it belongs to individuals. This means that it belongs precisely to the temporal, perishable, and ephemeral. From the perspective of axiology, it is the case that even the realization of a value is itself valuable, and that all genuine value is the value of a real thing; the world as such in its ideality is not at all what is valuable, but only the general criterion for what is valuable.

In more everyday terms, we might say that the ideal has being-in-itself, but it is a "thinner," floating, insubstantial kind of being, only half-being, as it were, lacking the full weight of being. In this sense, we can also say that in spite of

its “indifference,” it is an ontically dependent, and to that extent incomplete, being; for its autonomy is only gnoseological, not ontological.

This is the reason why, concerning the problem of the “highest being,” the demonstration of its “existence” always formed the core issue, and the argument that sought to introduce it was simply called the “ontological” argument. Pious sentiment is just as poorly served as is metaphysics with a merely ideally existing divinity. The *nimbus* of grandeur belonging to ideal being subsists only in the eyes of those who do not know it. It is the expression of a false idealism that exacts its vengeance in everyday life, for it leads to a devaluating and misunderstanding of the real.

In fact, it plays the same role in life as in metaphysics. The overestimation of the eternal and imperishable is a blind longing. It does not know what it longs for, does not recognize it, and pictures it to itself arbitrarily. It projects it out to infinity, into the transcendent, where no cognition reaches, cluelessly gives to it a reality in the imagination that by its nature it cannot have, and holds on to it as if it were something actual. Therefore, in life it passes by what is actually valuable. The true values of human life always lie in the perishable, they flare up in the bright light of the moment of actual fulfillment. What is valuable in life cannot last because it is real. If it did last, it would not have for humankind the kind of luminosity that outshines all else.

e) Ideal Ontology and Real Ontology

A further consequence of this relation between the spheres is that there is no “ideal ontology” to be distinguished from real ontology in terms of its content. Some have been driven to construct such an ontology in our era with implicit reference to ancient models. The titles are different of course—they have attempted to cast them in terms of an “ontology of essences” and “formal ontology”—but the issue is still always the same as it was with the intuition of the ideas (Plato’s *διαλεκτικὴ μέθοδος* [dialectical method], which moves purely among the *εἰδη* [ideas]). An ontologically individuated realm of essences still makes sense for this procedure.

We “can” of course develop this kind of ideal ontology; indeed, we could do it in every domain of objects, even if [293] with variable levels of success, depending on the accessibility of their stock of essences. There are domains in which this method of advancing is in fact required; this is the case in pure mathematics and logic. In fact, with such a procedure we do not detach the lawfulness of the ideal from the real, but necessarily deal with the corresponding portion of real lawfulness in it at the same time. This was the conclusion we reached

for all those separate domains of the ideal in the discussion above. This fact is particularly illuminating for essential intuition, because the cognition of the ideal is directly required in order to proceed based on the data of the real cases.

For the ontology of specific domains—i.e., for the theory of categories—this has the further consequence that in every domain we cannot work out the categories of ideal being in isolation from those of the real. At least we cannot do it unless they coincide in certain essential features. This means that they would be on the whole the same categories. They just get modified in each of the two ontological spheres. A perennial concern of categorial analysis, important even for all minor problems, is to work out these modifications. We should not interpret the distinction that becomes apparent here into a doubling of the realm of categories. In fact, it is instead the case that the distinction between ways of being only becomes concretely conceivable through the differences between their jointly shared categories. The distinctive factors introduced above— temporality, perishability, individuality—are decisive for this. They and their like are already suggest themselves as primary categorial features. This series of features may not be extended at will, and the decisive features are few. The rich abundance of categorial determination is shared.

Chapter 51: Proximity to Consciousness and Ideal Transcendence

a) Inner Givenness and Pure Apriority

A point that has led to much misunderstanding is the phenomenon of ideal objects’ “proximity to consciousness,” already touched on above. It is perhaps at its most evident in the domain of the logical, but also recurs in the essences and in the values. Natural ontological consciousness is always oriented to the real; initially it does not know what to make of ideal being. Such a thing is always originally felt to be only an irreality whose ontological status remains dubious.

The peculiar “inner givenness” that pertains to ideal objects aids and abets this sense of irreality. Thinking is “by itself” here, as it were—as in logical or mathematical reflection—and does not need to reach out beyond itself at all. It only needs to turn its gaze inward, to reflect upon itself, and in this way it finds what was sought in itself as its own. The Platonic theory of *anamnesis* forged and defined the idea [294] of “discovering something within oneself” or of retrieving something from one’s own depths. It has returned again and again with innumerable modifications, and we have never completely gotten over it.

What is ineliminable in it is the pure *apriority* of the givenness of ideal objects. *A priori* cognition does not relate to given individual cases; it is surely relatable to them, but *qua* universal it is not by definition related to them. Only the individual case is immediately manifest as being-in-itself, since only it is real. If this constituted an argument for the mere intentionality of the ideal object, i.e., for its lack of being-in-itself, then we would have to say the same thing about all *a priori* cognition, even about *a priori* cognition of the real. That is completely impossible, for the being-in-itself of the real is secured in other ways. The marvel of *a priori* cognition is just that it grasps a being-in-itself without direct reference to given cases.

Its immediate or “inner” givenness is far from indicating immanence to consciousness. It means something completely different. This other meaning is the proximity of the ideal to the cognizing consciousness, its gnoseological “nearness.” That is, the nearness does not take away its transcendence. It only indicates that the reach of transcendence is shorter. This also agrees with the point developed earlier regarding the cognitive relation, namely, that from the subject’s perspective the ideal object is situated in front of the real object.

“Nearness” does not mean being in or being incorporated into consciousness; it is only a diminution of the distance to consciousness. Ideal being lies “snug” to consciousness, as it were, but it still remains something lying across from it. Only in this way can it be something independent of opinion.

b) Ideal Transcendence and Real Transcendence

What is irritating about this phenomenon cannot be eliminated. It doggedly persists. We can neither get rid of it nor resolve it. We thus have to accept it—in spite of its apparent paradox. The paradox only depends on the metaphors we use (nearness, proximity, reach). The metaphors cripple everything. They veil things, in that they make them graphic; they cannot adequately express the unique relation as such. There is no parallel in the world for this relation. Graphic presentation cannot help us here, for this relation is not a matter of perception. Generally speaking, for everything that exists only its determinations are striking. The ways of being are never vivid in this way.

What we can do is make the contrasting aspect of the phenomenon clear. It consists in a specific kind of conscious structure that blends with the ideal objects’ proximity to consciousness in a unique way. It correlates with the unobtrusiveness that we became familiar with above. For humankind, ideal being does not move the body, like the real. There is no genuine being-affected by it. Even where an analogy to such being-affected [295] is apparent, as with the values, it

still depends more on the weight of the reality of what is valuable and contrary to value in life, rather than on the value itself. Ideal being has a certain distance to the subject, one far more characteristic of it than real being. It never advances on us. It has a clearly evident aspect of keeping its distance from the subject. Ideal being is the furthest from the subject in a certain sense, even while it is the nearest to the subject in terms of its inner conceivability.

This feature alone should suffice to keep its proximity to consciousness free of all illusions of immanence, from our confusing it with the merely mental. It suffices to recognize its peculiar “ideal transcendence,” like real transcendence, as genuinely beyond the subject—and just as irreducible as it is. We cannot do justice to this phenomenon in any other way.

c) The Nonrational in the Realm of Ideal Being

There is still one more phenomenon that confirms beyond all doubt that this is a transcendent relation and that ideal being has being-in-itself. This is the aspect of the nonrational in ideal being; we could even add that the aspect of the unknown (transobjective) in general, i.e., what is “this side” of genuine incognizability, carries some weight here. The limit of what is incognizable in general, relative to the cognizable, lies far beyond that of what has been cognized, here as everywhere.

It was shown earlier how the emergence of something gnoseologically nonrational (i.e., something transintelligible) in every object, no matter what mode of being it has, is an infallible indicator of being-in-itself. The incognizable as such is not an intentional object at any rate, because it is not something that can be brought to stand over against the cognizing subject. It is no harder to demonstrate nonrationality in ideal being than in real being.

First, both problem-consciousness and cognitive progress exist for ideal cognition. Consequently, there is a flexible limit to objectification, as well as something transobjective in it. The field of mathematics, e.g., consists in constant forward motion; it advances with its insights. There must also be something unknown in its total object of inquiry that makes room for this. There are whole domains of objects newly discovered from time to time. These must have an existence that is not reducible to their being objects. Research into essences, and definitely value research—both new, hardly explored domains—still have such a narrow range of what is objectified around themselves that clearly the major part of their field of objects is for the time being transobjective. Logic too, at least with reference to its first fundamental laws, is in a similar situation. These laws of course also extend into the nonrational in the same way.

Secondly, nonrationality can also be directly demonstrated. Wherever a limit to objectification is pushed back in cognition, a limit [296] to this shift is to be expected *a priori*. Otherwise, our cognition would be that of an infinite intellect.

In the logical domain, the highest laws are encumbered by a clearly evident component of nonrationality. On closer inspection, these laws are neither intelligible through themselves nor on the basis of others. The principle of identity states the identity of the different, “ $A_1 = A_2$ ” (otherwise it would be an empty tautology and logically meaningless), that is, the identity of the nonidentical. It is a principle that includes contradiction. The principle of contradiction cancels the contradiction, however. Both principles consequently cannot exist together. At the same time, they also cannot exist without one another: if A is non- A , then it is not A , and conversely. They can neither exist with one another nor without one another. This goes against the principle of the excluded third. The latter, then, cannot exist along with the first two, but it also cannot exist without them. This again violates its own principle.

The fundamental logical laws are for their part not only alogical, but—since the form of intelligibility that is appropriate here is solely logical—also transintelligible.

The mathematical-nonrational is more familiar, such as the transcendent numbers, the relation between the sides and the diagonal in the square, etc. These magnitudes “exist” mathematically; it is cognizable that they have their place in the continuum of value magnitudes. A more specific quantity is not assignable to them, however. Mathematics only has surrogates for them: either a symbol or an approximate value. The first only indicates what is meant, and the latter is substantively distinct from the intended magnitude. The law of the series of approximate values clearly shows the transintelligibility of the limit value. The latter is the genuine one to which they are related.

The idea of the individual is an example of this transintelligibility from the realm of essences. We have seen that the idea of the individual quite rightly exists, but that it is not an individual idea. This does not make it nonrational, its infinite complexity is what makes it nonrational. No essential intuition can grasp an infinitely complex entity in itself. The same thing also holds for value intuition. There are also values of the individual as such. Our lives depend considerably on the values of the individual, the value of personality among them.

Finally, if we bring together the facticity of the nonrational in ideal being with the phenomenon of proximity to consciousness, the latter is seen to be completely meaningless ontologically. It merely concerns the mode of givenness, not the mode of being of the ideal. Thus, nothing follows from it ontologically. Proximity to consciousness is only an indication of the lesser gnoseological range of transcendence, but it is not a diminution of this transcendence itself in its re-

spective acts of grasping, and consequently, is no impairment to the independence of its objects.

BERSERKER
BOOKS

