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SOME REFLECTIONS ON HEIDEGGER'S VIEWS ON DASEIN, PHENOMENOLOGY, TIME AND DEATH

Martin Heidegger, in his early youth was attracted to the Roman Catholic priesthood and studied theology in a Jesuit seminary. Later, he changed his mind and turned to philosophy. His primary vocation was to teach philosophy at a university level. His major work was *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)*, written in 1927 on the faculty at the University of Marburg. He had as colleagues at Marburg two of the most influential Protestant theologians of the twentieth century, Rudolf Bultman and Paul Tillich.

In 1928 Heidegger became a member of the University of Freiburg. There he became associated with the new National Socialist Party with the hope of renewing the German nation. He became the Rector of the University after Hitler took power in Germany. However, later, he became disillusioned in Nazism and retired to the Black Forest to study and write on philosophical topics. After World War II he lived in isolation because he was «persona non grata» in the new Germany. While he was still alive he was visited by many intellectuals from all over the world. Most of Heidegger's writings have been translated into many languages in the world, including English. His most influential book is *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York: Harper and Row, 1962. His philosophy is earthly and very much human in its content and spirit. Here I present some reflections on several themes, including Dasein, phenomenology, time and death. Heidegger's emphasis has been on nihilism (nothingness) as illustrated by his inaugural lecture at the University of Freiburg in 1928. The purpose of the present essay is to introduce the reader to Heidegger and his existential philosophy.

D a s e i n (M a n: B e i n g - i n - t h e - W o r l d)

Dasein (man: being-in-the-world), is always understood in concrete terms, and «not as a bare thinking subject» or separate from the world or abstract. Heidegger does not make an attempt to prove the reality of the external world, because he begins with the assumption that man is in the world and is not



just a thinking subject. (John Macquirrie, *Martin Heidegger*. Richmond, Va. John Knox Press, 1968, p. 14).

The difficulty in understanding the thought of Heidegger at this point is the special understanding that he gives to Being, which cannot be confused with the understanding of it by other philosophers. It seems that this concept does not include «being» as essence, or as existence, but refers specifically to the «being» of its existing, that is, the mode of ones existence. By extending this to the universal Being, we cannot understand it as essence or existence in an objective way only, but always in relation to Dasein, as a particular relation and as concrete existence, and the uncovering of the primordial principle of the universal Being. Truth, as understood by the Greek word «aletheia» (= unveiled or uncovered), does not exist because Being as truth is self-revealed. Since there is no Being without being, that is, immediately unfolding its existence (kein Sein ohne Seiendes) (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 161-163. All references to Heidegger, unless otherwise indicated, will be made to this work). It is evident that Heidegger claims that Being is always in relation to the world. «The correspondence to the Being of beings does, to be sure, always remain our abode. But only at times does it become an unfolding attitude specifically adopted by us» (Martin Heidegger, *What is Philosophy?* p. 75). Being determines over being in the world. The being, that is the immediately existent uncovers the Being and only the extension of Dasein as Ek-sistenz is able to be conceived in its ineffable reality.

Man has a unique position in the world where truth unfolds itself. He says, «'place' places man in that dimension which reveals the revealing meaning of Being» (Martin Heidegger, *The Question of Being*, p. 19). However, Being-in-the-world does not mean merely located in the world, but «a much richer relation than merely the spatial one of being located in the world» (Macquirrie, *Martin Heidegger*, p. 15). It is further stated that, «the wider kind of personal or existential 'inhood' implies the whole relation of 'dwelling' in place. We are not simply located there, but are bound to it by all the ties of work, interest, affection and so on» (*ibid.*). «Being-in-the-world» means «Being in something», as water is in a glass; it is the relationship of two entities (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 79). This concept of «Being-in-the-world» deals with unitary, organic, structural whole. Dasein is always characterized by «Being-in-the-world» and is involved in a great variety of essential relationships with all sorts of other beings with which it cannot exist. These beings and the world are dependent for their mode of Being on Dasein's relation to them. Neither they, nor Dasein would be what they are without their relationship to each other which is essential, not only to Dasein but to everything in its world. «Being-in-the-world» is a self disclosure, it is in an ontological

sense finding oneself, that is, Dasein's self-awareness, uncovering itself (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 79).

The logos has an important position as the essential power of Dasein thus functions as the primary mode of Being-in-the-world, even though Being-in-the-world does not as such get conceived» (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 85). In the analysis of «Da» is known through two main stages: first, finding itself in the world (Befindlichkeit) — which is its basis in the world, and, secondly, understanding or knowing it; and for Heidegger a third is pointed out: the logos. Thus, the logos, as well as the feeling and understanding of Dasein, are closely related to the world or «Being-in-the-world». That is, that the logos is the «openness» of the «Da», that is, the reason which comes into contact with it and set in movement the language (logos) as speech, written word and dialogue. The logos is the written expression of the synthesis of the past as basic event of the present existence and for the future as the unfolding reality fulfillment of Dasein.

Being-in-the-world is not a theoretical concept, empty of reality; rather it is a pregnant symbol of man's involvement in the world. The Dasein or man as man is involved in the world not in a physical sense but in an ontological understanding that, the «Dasein is a thinking subject that somehow has to go out and relate itself to a world of objects». Even though «Being outside» «alongside» the object, Dasein paradoxically somehow is «inside» (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 89).

Dasein is in the world, that is, its mode of Being is disclosing and is disclosed to itself. Dasein is wordly, the «cosmos» belongs to it as it is disclosed by and to it. Being is «physis», the unfolding into the light of all that is. Dasein is «thrown projection» and existentiality. Being is the «thrower» that projects Dasein into its disclosure. Dasein's essence is to be concerned about its own Being and thus to be open toward and related to being itself.

The reality of Dasein is expressed in its ability to utilize language (logos-logic) in its various aspects (*ibid.*, p. 133). The concept of man being in the world is for Heidegger the beginning of all philosophizing. Man's ability to speak is in the same time an ability to think, which is a gift possessed only by man. He says, «...it is considered more correct to say that language is in the service of thinking rather than that thinking, as correspondence, is in the service of language» (Heidegger, *What is Philosophy?* p. 93).

Heidegger conceives truth as unfolding in the process of reality. Man does not learn the truth as objective but he conceives it as free being. He claims that the essence of truth is freedom in relation to Dasein. This is not subjectivism because freedom does not depend only on the subject, it is also transcendental. Freedom means to be able to act or not, the ability to move

within the unfolding Dasein which is related to the universal Being, the ability to extend human existence.

Phenomenology

The phenomenological method of Heidegger leads to the basic analysis of the concept of being (Seiendes). His intention is not the abstract form of Being as highest and final form of being, but the true answer to the question: «What is being?» This question is related to the basis of the concept of ontology. Ontology for Heidegger is the analysis of the principle itself (Fundamentalontologie), which remains always hidden and inconceivable, challenged constantly with new questions concerning the basis of ontology. In the traditional classical philosophy Heidegger appears as the philosopher of metaphysics, seeking not Being but Its basis. Bringing to mind Descartes whose claim was that philosophy is a tree, its roots are metaphysics, its trunk is physics, and all other sciences make up the branches. His inquiry is in what field are the basis of the roots of philosophy to be found? The ability to ask the question gives man value and places philosophy —as «first philosophy»— in a dominant position among the sciences. (The discussion of phenomenology is found in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, pp. 49-63). Heidegger goes beyond the conscience of man, to the transcendent «ego» and subjectivity and makes a serious attempt, through the use of phenomenology for the analysis of the basic principles of Being. To achieve this, he introduces the term «Dasein» (Being-there). With this term it is possible to ask the question properly concerning the idea concept of Being.

This Dasein is simple existence, as opposed to the Existenz as higher existence. For Heidegger Dasein is the higher existence, and the lower existence is Seiendes, that is being —*öν*— the immediately existent, that which is becoming, the immediately sensible, the particular appearance of Being, for which we are compelled to ask concerning Its essence. The conception of Being (Sein) is not possible without the becoming of being (Seiendes). Ontology for Heidegger is not abstract, but the interpretation of reality through Dasein.

Here is a crucial point and a special attempt should be made to understand the difficult thought of this philosopher. Even though it appears that Heidegger does not differ from the idealistic metaphysicians and the phenomenologists, because of his introduction into his thought of Dasein, his phenomenology, however, is freed from subjectivism and rationalism... because the Dasein (Being-there) is a paradoxical concept, which can be identified only with human existence. This Dasein points to the space where existence moves. This should not be called simply Existenz, but Ek-sistenz, because it moves out-

wardly, as eccentric, as separating itself from the lower existence —Seiendes— to return to the original of all existence and in the vagueness of the non-existent Non-Being will find the existent Being. Dasein is not a definite existence or thing, but the possibility of the extension or the deeper meaning in which every existent can be conceived. Dasein is not existence, but its essence lies in its existence. That is, Dasein is *modus vivendi* of every existent, is that which every existence ought to capture and develop as its essence, it is a possibility in itself. Dasein is its possibility which means every existence has the possibility to exist, to be created through this Dasein as its essence, that is, not to be extended through logical categories, but through one existential experience. Man only exists. The rock is, but does not exist; the tree is, but does not exist. It is apparent why the inquiry of Being by Dasein is the best way to conceive its essence; because Dasein is a possibility of being, which exists within its Being the question of its existence.

These characteristics of Dasein, as dynamic and creative, are evident, that they are attributed *par excellence* of human existence. Heidegger accepts that the Dasein always appears under the characteristic of an Ego. This subject is not self-existent, but is the appearance of Being in the sense of being-there. (the Sein in the Dasein). In the Dasein, man discovers the voice of Being and ultimately his origin. The Da (= there) is a local limitation of is, of being, and at the same time a call to transcend it. The Da is called the opening (*Erschlossenheit*) of existence to the external world and through it to Being and the opening of Being in the world and through it to man. It is the meeting place of the extended Ego with the apparently absent Being. Being, that is, Da, joins the concrete reality, those invisible powers directed to Being and its mysterious appearance to the world. This Da points out that the human being is not self-existent. We have thrown into this Da to live our existence through it to succeed our contact with Being, that is, «*mas as esse participatum*». That is the meaning of *Gewordenheit*, that we are thrown into this world, which we did not create.

Man appears in the philosophy of Heidegger as a guard, protector of Being, as well as receiving life from Being. As we do not know our origin and our destiny, we receive self-awareness (or self-consciousness) every moment of our existence within the Da, where we are stationed. This Da as «being-in-the-world: (*Das-in-der-Welt-sein*) is a throw into the world, a meeting, a discovery of oneself. The world is an instrument where man is thrown into the opening of Da and is created as Dasein, understanding the deeper meaning of his necessary relation to the world, which simply pre-exists and awaits to be changed by man into a reality.

Everything depends on being-in-the-world, on the Da of every concrete

existence, with which appears a priori indissolubly connected. Man co-exists with the world and depends on it. Everything that is real is in this world or related to it. Outside of this world is self-deception and imagination.

Heidegger's major work of *Being and Time* in the first sight is depressive, because it compels one to accept thought within the enslavement of the finite. Heidegger essentially is a philosopher of Being and struggles to conceive the universal concept of being, but not for syllogisms, but for the ascending, of man's existence to a higher experience of life in the world. Ontology for Heidegger is not the study of Being (or logos), but the discovery of existence as Dasein. He is self-enslaved within the world to understand it as unavoidable companion of existential experience of the world. There is no danger of arbitrary subjectivism, because existence is Ek-sistenz moving toward the objective as necessary elements to understand itself and finally opposite of the Ego stands the world as co-existent (Mit-sein). To be in the world means to share and to co-exist with others in the world. The world compels the object to communicate with it and to share in its existence which is the true sociability or community. Evidently this pressure of the temporal, is for Heidegger primarily avoiding the arbitrary subjectivism, and at the same time the cause of the realistic confrontation of the world and the understanding of the given matter in the possibility of existence. Phenomenology leads not to the analysis of the phenomena but the basis of analysis of the existential experience.

Heidegger finds the phenomenological method as the complete adjustment in the human existence. This does not mean, however, the abandonment of the objective world. For Heidegger the world in its broad meaning is an incontestable event and necessary condition for the analysis of Dasein. In such an adjustment of the phenomenological method, the world takes an existential content, it is understood in relation to existence and existence is understood in relation to the world. Philosophy studies the human Dasein in relation to the world, to discover the universal concept of Being and not only the analysis of existence and without this concept leads us to the existential philosophy which Heidegger considers as philosophical anthropology. The main topic for «existential philosophy» is not existence, as is the case with the «existential Philosophy» but the analysis of the foundation of Existenz, which can be attained authentically through the Dasein as concrete and experienced, formation between the human existence and the immediate existence (Seiendes).

Heidegger claims that, not only existential philosophy, but all philosophy from Plato to Nietzsche has been anthropocentric and subjectivistic, because it perceives that which exists (Seiendes) not as «being qua being» (ὅν ἢ ὅν).

Seiendes als Seiendes (ὄν ἢ ὄν) should be considered as a factor of the mind and is dealt with in metaphysics.

Time

In order to understand the concept of time and temporality in the philosophy of Heidegger, one must realize that the Dasein coexists with time. The expression of the temporality of the Dasein is its being-in-the-world of man, because he does not live only in time, but also in temporality as understood in the three dimensions of time as ecstatic, that is, the «forever», the «now» and the «later» are organically related. The Dasein cares for the future because it is always becoming, encountering the possibility of an ecstasy of its own existence which moves forward, which is not merely rational but an understanding of our existence as existing «beforehand», that is, its being is historically related with the past. The unity of these two ecstasies takes place in the temporality of the Dasein, especially the «now» of the present is the authentic expression and that moment exists. When we say «now», we understand being-in-the-present. «In the 'now that...' lies the ecstatic character of the Present». For that reason, the «now» or Present is the link between the other two dimensions, the past and the future which is a priority. Everything is changed to the present and become, always, reality in reference to the present moment (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 457-461).

The deep philosophy of time gives to the system of Heidegger a paradoxical dynamism. His greatest task was to explain his theory of time. Every existential philosophy must be developed closely with the concept of time, because existence is in time and in it can be understood. This is opposite to the idealists, who spend less time on this problem because of their transcendental tendencies. Heidegger speaks of the Repetition and Present, which I think, offers an ontology, that can have an immediate influence, first on the philosophy of history, and secondly, especially on theology. Because the dominance of the «now» (or «Present») offers to man a dynamic extension into the future on the basis of that which is dead, but revives in us the existence past, making possible the presuppositions for deeper understanding of the historicity of the existent historicity of man.

At this point we are able to conceive the criterion of the authentic and unauthentic existence, which is the right use of the uncovering temporality that exists in us and its dynamic extension to history. Here the harmony of the objective and subjective is achieved and idealism is avoided. History is given and is understood in relation to man. The historical things —this object, this land— is historically objective, given as an event through a historical

person. Our relation, though it is objective, puts us in a dynamic way, related by our participation in our being-in-the-world. The completion of the being-there or Dasein, is accomplished in the finality of time - death. Thus, temporality is understood from its opposite — the future; because of the extension of my existence as the possibility of development of the content of my static past I experience the dynamic present as historical movement and my fear of the ambiguity of nihilism in the future.

Historicity appears under two forms in man: 1) unauthentic existence which is a succession of events lacking direct relation with the subject and 2) authentic existence, man is free to choose. History, as well as the entire cosmos, changes from pre-existent event to an extension of existence, that is, the events that took place in the past are extended to the present by the word «now» or Present.

It is obvious that Heidegger's book on *Being and Time* is concerned only with man in this world. Heidegger is not concerned with the world beyond nor about the timeless or the eternal.

Bultman attempted to transfer the existential principles to the theological spheres. Bultman distinguishes between history (storytelling), «Historie» — and history as event, «Geschichte». Bultman is interested in finding an existential contact between the Christian theology and contemporary man. The New Testament language is mythical and does not correspond to the supernatural objects which it describes. It is man's way of expressing the relation of the transcendental with the world. For this reason, myth is the most authentic means or language-communication of God's energies in this life. In the sacred writings, Bultman tries to show to contemporary man in an existential way, that is, the objective tendencies of conscience toward the phenomena, which reveal their existence in the subjective logos. In this way the myths provide space and time, even though each lives separate; for him in an existential subjective way it comes in contact with the divine. The mythical language is representative of the transcendental through which the success of coming into contact with it is made possible and its understanding by the human mind. That is, the existence of the «thought-existent» through myth —not allegorical-visions— but as «openness» to the possibility of existence conceived by the subject, and co-existence in it (subject) in the continuous existential relation with the world which is beyond. This is the result of salvation in Christ. This salvation did not happen only historically, but must be attained by each individual separately, which in a mythical existential way seal in the cross of Christ his judgment and his salvation by Him above. The cross is a historical event, it is «historie» but creates in faith and through revelation in the existent of the subjective concept of the event of salvation as

a moment; the «kerygma» is Present event and dynamic, as «Geschichte». This, however, can reduce religion to individualistic religion and the crucifixion of Christ loses its significance when it is made an objective event which took place in a definite time and space. The Heideggerian existential thought when used in the Christian theology, which is based on historical events in history and which is the center of all history, can be destructive (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 430). For this reason, Heidegger keeps silent concerning God and the world beyond, philosophizing only on the existence of this world.

The greatest task of the philosopher, for Heidegger, is to transport the great (philosopher) of the historical moment and live this moment himself; only then their true thought is revealed. As we saw above, Bultman applied this to his New Testament hermeneutics, reducing Christianity to a system of mythical ideas. Heidegger is one of the most influential thinkers of our time, who influenced today's philosophical and theological thought.

For Heidegger, time is of basic significance in his philosophical system. This is true because existence is not a force to transcend the temporality of time—as logic and the ideas try to attain; to the contrary, existence is conceived only in time—since death terminates its moments. Time and existence cannot be conceived apart from each other. Time is not something objective; we do not live in time, but we live it, because we are «temporal». The three «horizons» of time are not its categories, but three processes of existence; in the past; in the present; and the future in the concept of the moment as unifying forces in the existence of man. Time is in us as a dynamic, necessary repetition in reference to the past and as a creative forwardness of the extended existence in reference to the future. We, as men, live constantly in the Present moment of our existence. The past and the future are expressed in us as «now» or present. Our reality as existence in this world we experience as true «Present». The existential philosophy of Heidegger, as all existential philosophy, is based on the experience of the moment of history—that is, events of history—as present; we know historical reality «now» in our present existential moment.

Death

The human existence is the «being-in-the-world» and the duty of the philosopher is to study the «being as being» (das Seiende als Seiendes) in «time» and what is beyond that, is Nothingness. Being (Sein) has its roots in time but man is called to use his past existence as a starting point for its extension to the future (Das Sich-vorwegsein). The Dasein, especially the Da, that which

is here, has limitations of time and space and at the same time has the possibility of extending human existence without metaphysical presumptions and idealistic modality, toward the future. That is, it is not extreme to say that man, according to Heidegger, lives in the future. The future is a break up of time, in which Dasein has the possibility to develop. Nothing pre-exists. Everything will take place in this world, to which the philosopher is called upon of become an interpreter. The «Beyond» is non-existent for Heidegger. That which exists is «rooted» here in the world — in space and time. This inevitable reality is for man the «fall» in the closed and limited every-day existence. This «fall» points to the existence of progress and to the decay of existence (das Verfallen). This «fall» is within the impersonal mass, within the anonymous «they», where the «authentic» existence is transformed to one necessary social being, the «they», that is, «the Dasein with others in the 'they'... is absorbed in a world» (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 219-220).

This inevitable state of being of the world should not be understood as a result of an «original sin» —which philosophers cannot take seriously— but it is a reality for which existence includes the possibility to alienate itself from its own. Evil is destroyed by the progress of civilization, because the «fall» of the existence is in its essence; for that reason every progress brings new alienation between the authentic and non-authentic existence. The Dasein is a possibility of authentic existence, but in the «fall» of Nothingness (Nichtigkeit) of everyday life (Alltäglichkeit) one understands its existence to be in the danger of new «fall» (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 222-223). Life in its personal «they» is non-authentic existence. The one «fall» is co-existent with existence and the other «fall» is a result of the first, as well as externalization of it. This is a flight from nihilism and the finiteness of life, that is, a flight from death.

«Death, in the widest sense, is a phenomenon of life». Heidegger interprets death in an ontological way, that is, death is defined in terms of life as biological-ontical reality (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 290-291). Everything comes to an end, especially the human existence, which appears always lacking something and lives, however, never as a whole. The wholeness of Dasein, that is, of the human existence, is equated with its disappearance. «But as soon as Dasein 'exists' in a way that absolutely nothing more is still outstanding in it, then it has already, for this very reason, become 'no-longer-being- there' (Nicht-mehr-da-sein). Its Being is annihilated when what is still outstanding in its Being has been liquidated. As long as Dasein is an entity, it has never reached its 'wholeness'. But if it gains such 'wholeness', this becomes the utter loss of Being-in-the-world. In such a case, it can never again be experienced as entity» (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 280). No one can experience this

because this is the end and absolute loss. Death is a subjective event, and Dasein lives only in the disappearing Ego. Those who are left behind understand it as an objective event; but this is an illusion because being in the impersonal «they» is non-authentic existence, and objectifies death completely. Death is isolated, no one dies with or sacrifices his life instead of another. In death is reflected the impossibility of co-existence, but in it is found the common end of the existence of man. Death is a witness that human existence lives as «Being-toward-the-end» (Sein-zum-Ende), as «Being-toward-death» (Sein-zum-Tode) (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 293). «Death is not something not yet present-at-hand, nor is it that which is ultimately still outstanding but which has been reduced to a minimum. Death is something that stands before us — something impending» (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 293-294). «Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein». (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 294). «In this state-of-mind, Dasein finds itself face to face with the Nothing of the possible impossibility of its existence» (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 310). Death in «being-toward-the-end», however, is not an absolute end nor is it to complete maturity to existence; «...death is not an end in the sense of rounding off existence, for death frequently strikes before man's powers have matured, and perhaps even more often it delays until after a man's powers have declined. Death does not complete existence in the sense of bringing it to the ripeness of its potentialities. But death sets a boundary. It marks off the Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, from the nothing into which he disappears when he ceases to be in the world; and to be marked off from nothing in this way is precisely to stand out from it, that is to say, to 'ex-sist',... Heidegger does in fact often talk of death as one's ownmost possibility ; and an existence that is authentic is exactly an existence that has been made one's very own» (Macquarrie, *Martin Heidegger*, p. 30).

Conclusion

Martin Heidegger sought to understand authentic Being and the interpretation of Being-toward-death. Philosophy for him is a phenomenological method in a search for truth. The ontological approach to the self understanding is an existential discovery of the authentic Shelf. Everything comes to an end including the human existence. The following statement summarizes Heidegger's philosophy: «The existential-ontological constitution of Dasein's totality is grounded in temporality. Hence the ecstatic projection of being must be made possible by some primordial way in which ecstatic temporality temporalizes» (*Being and Time*, p. 488). This expresses a philosophical understanding of man limited within the boundries of this world. God and his



transcendent reality are absent from the philosophy of Heidegger. His atheistic philosophy has as a basis the notion or «nothingness» (*Being and Time*, pp. 330-331). The essence of «nothingness» is anxiety as well as the basis for personal existence and freedom. His philosophical conclusion that all things come into being from «nothing» and return to «nothingness» leads to human hopelessness and despair.

ΣΚΕΨΕΙΣ ΓΥΡΩ ΑΠΟ ΤΙΣ ΑΠΟΨΕΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΧΑΪΝΤΕΓΚΕΡ ΠΕΡΙ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΥ, ΦΑΙΝΟΜΕΝΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ, ΧΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ

Περίληψη

Ἡ φιλοσοφία τοῦ Χαϊντεγκερ εἶναι πάντα ἐγκόσμιος καὶ ἔχει ὡς κέντρο τὸν ἄνθρωπο. Σκοπὸς τῆς φιλοσοφίας εἶναι ἡ ἀλήθεια. Ἡ φαινομενολογία τῆς ἀλήθειας εἶναι νὰ ξεσκεπάσει τὴν πραγματικότητα τοῦ ὄντος. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐντὸς τοῦ κόσμου σημαίνει τὴν ὀντολογικὴ σχέση μετὰ τὸν ἑαυτό του.

Μὲ τὴν φαινομενολογικὴ μέθοδο ὁ Χαϊντεγκερ θέτει ὡς σκοπὸ νὰ ἀποκαλύψει τὸν ἄνθρωπο ὡς ἐμπειρικὸ ὄν καὶ ὄχι ὡς κάτι τὸ ἀφηρημένο. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος συνυπάρχει μετὰ τὸν κόσμον ὡς κοινὴν ἀνθρώπων. Αὐτὸ ποὺ δίνει νόημα στὴν ὑπαρξὴ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἶναι τὸ παρόν. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐμπειρικῶς ἀντιλαμβάνεται τὴν ὑπαρξὴ ἐντὸς τόπου καὶ χρόνου. Ἡ παρούσα στιγμή εἶναι αὐτὸ ποὺ ἐνώνει τὸ παρελθὸν μετὰ τὸ μέλλον.

Τὰ πάντα ἔχουν τέλος καθὼς καὶ ἡ ἀνθρώπινη ὑπόστασις. Τὸ τέλος εἶναι τέλεια ἀπώλεια. Ὁ θάνατος θέτει ὅρια στὴν ὀντολογικὴ ὑπόστασις τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐντὸς τοῦ χώρου καὶ χρόνου. Τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα εἶναι μηδενισμὸς καὶ ἀνυπαρξία. Γιὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον σημασία ἔχει μόνο τὸ παρόν. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὡς *Dasein* εἶναι ἐντὸς τοῦ κόσμου. Αὐτὸ ἀντανακλᾷ τὴν ὅλην φιλοσοφίαν τοῦ Χαϊντεγκερ καὶ μπορεῖ νὰ χαρακτηριστεῖ ὡς μηδενιστικὴ καὶ ἀνθρωποκεντρικὴ φιλοσοφία ποὺ φθάνει στὴν ἀπελπισία.

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