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THE ENDS OF MAN

JACQUES DERRIDA

"Now, I say this: Man, and in general every reasonable being, *exists* as end in itself, and *not merely as means*, of which such and such a will can make use as it pleases; in all of his actions, in those which concern himself as well as in those which concern other reasonable beings, he should always be considered *at the same time as end.*"

Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*

"Ontology abandons us here: it has simply permitted us to determine the last ends of human reality, its fundamental possibles and the value which haunts it."

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*

"Man is an invention whose recent date, and whose nearing end perhaps, are easily shown by the archeology of our thought."

Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*

Every philosophical congress has by necessity a political significance. This is not only due to what has always bound the essence of the philosophical to the essence of the political. Essential and general, this political implication adds weight to it, renders it more serious, and determines its character, especially when the philosophical congress is also an international one.

The possibility of an international philosophical conference can be investigated endlessly, along different lines and on multiple levels of generality. In its most general sense, such a possibility implies that, contrary to the essence of philosophy, philosophical nationalities have been formed. At a given moment in a given historical, political and economic context, these national groups have deemed it necessary to organize international meetings, and to be represented by their national identities, and there to determine or relate their respective differences. Such a meeting of differences can take place only to the extent that national philosophical identities are presupposed that are defined by their doctrinal content or by a certain philosophical "style." But the relating of differences also presupposes a common element: a meeting can take

place only through a common image which all the participants share, which in this case would be the so-called universality of philosophical discourse. By these words I designate less a fact than a project which is associated by its essence (indeed by the essence and the idea of Being and of truth) with a certain group of languages and "cultures." For it is evident that something has happened to the diaphanous purity of this element.

How should we understand otherwise the fact that it seems necessary to hold international meetings, which have as their aim to repair, overcome, or relate national philosophical differences? Inversely, how should we interpret the fact that an international philosophical meeting is an extremely rare thing throughout the world? The philosopher knows that this recent occurrence, which was beyond imagination a century ago, is becoming a frequent and easy phenomenon in certain societies, though it is rare, surprisingly and admirably, in most of the world. In regard to philosophical thought, which is adverse to haste and volubility, it seems that what is disquieting about many congresses is the often feverish quality and proliferation of improvised exchanges. The fact remains that there are numerous societies, languages, cultures, political or national organizations in which no exchange in the form of international philosophical conventions are possible. This impossibility should not be hastily interpreted. It is not essentially the result of an intentional political-ideological interdiction. In those instances where such an interdiction exists, it is quite likely that this disagreement has already taken on meaning in Western metaphysics or philosophy, that it has already been formulated in political concepts drawn from metaphysics. Speaking of the nonconventions, I am not alluding to ideologico-political fences or barriers which divide a field which is already philosophical. I am thinking first of those cultural, linguistic, and political areas where the organizing of a philosophical convention would simply make no sense. If I take the liberty of reminding you of this obvious point, it is because I believe that a conference which has chosen "anthropos," philosophical anthropology, as its theme must be feeling at its borders the persistent weight of differences which are of another order than internal or intra-philosophical disputes.

I should like to point to what seems to me to be one of the general political implications of this conference. Taking care not to hastily evaluate this point, I wish to indicate the connection between the possibility of an international philosophical convention and the *form of democracy*.

Democracy must be the form of the political organization of the society in which the members of this convention live. This means, at the least, that:

1. The philosophical national identity come to terms with a non-identity, that it does not exclude the existence of a relative diversity and the expression of this diversity, possibly as a minority. It is obvious that the philosophers here present naturally no more identify themselves with one another in their thinking than they are representative of some unanimous national discourse.

2. The philosophers here do not identify with the official political policy of their country. Permit me to speak here in my name. When I had the honor of being invited to this meeting, my hesitation could be overcome only when I was assured that I would be able to bear witness here to my agreement with those in the United States who were struggling against what was then the official policy of their country in certain areas of the world, notably in Vietnam. It is clear that such an action, and the fact that I have been allowed to perform it, signifies that those who hear my speech no more identify with the policy of their country than I do and feel no obligation to uphold it, at least insofar as they participate in this conference.

And yet, there would be a sort of naiveté in letting oneself be reassured by the appearance of such freedom. It would be an illusion to believe that political innocence is restored and collusion stopped as soon as oppositions can be expressed in the country itself, not only through the voices of the citizens but also through those of foreigners, and that from then on diversity or even oppositions can come together freely in discursive relations. That a statement opposing some official policy is authorized by the authorities, indicates that it does not upset the social order; it *does not disturb*. This last expression, "it does not disturb," can be understood in all of its meanings. This is what I wanted to remind you of at the beginning when speaking of the *form of democracy* as being the political milieu of any international philosophical conference. And it is also the reason for which I proposed to emphasize *form* no less than *democracy*. Such is the question which posed itself to me during the preparations for this meeting, from the time of receiving the invitation and deliberating upon it to the writing of this paper, which I date very precisely the month of April 1968 — these were also the weeks when the Vietnam peace talks began and when Martin Luther King was assassinated. A little later, while I was typing this text, for the first time in history, the universities of Paris were invaded at the request of a rector by the forces of social order, then reoccupied by the students in the upheaval. Because of its indetermination or its complexity, this political and historical horizon would call for interminable analysis. It is not to be undertaken here. I simply felt obliged to note and date the

incertitude and anxiety in which I prepared this paper. These feelings seem to me to belong by right to the essential domain and the general problematics facing this conference.

I

Where does France stand with regard to man?

This question seemed to me to command our attention for two reasons. For one, a Frenchman participating in an international scholarly conference on philosophical anthropology should, according to a tradition of the three preceding centuries of philosophical interchange, give the latest views prevalent in his country. Secondly, the question of "man" is currently being raised in France along highly significant lines and in an original historico-philosophical structure. Thus, on the basis of a few indications, what I will call "France" in the course of this paper will be only the non-empirical locus of a movement, a structure, and an articulation of the question of "man." Later it will be possible and probably necessary — but only then — rigorously to relate this position to any other instance defining something such as France. Naturally this cannot be discussed here.

Where, then, does France stand with regard to man?

After the war, under the name of existentialism, either Christian or atheistic, and conjointly with a fundamentally Christian personalism, the dominant school of thought in France professed to be essentially humanistic. Even if one does not wish to summarize Sartre's thought in the slogan "existentialism is a humanism," one has to acknowledge that in *Being and Nothingness*, *L'esquisse d'une théorie des émotions* (*Outline of a Theory of Emotions*), etc., the major concept, the theme in the last analysis, the irreducible horizon and origin, is what is then called "human-reality." This is, as we know, a translation of Heidegger's "Dasein." A terrible translation in many ways, but all the more significant. That this translation which was proposed by Corbin was adopted, that it was dominant through the authority of Sartre, leads one to give much thought to the reading or non-reading of Heidegger at that time and to the interest that existed in reading him or in not reading him in this way.

Certainly, the notion of "human-reality" expressed the project of rethinking at new costs, if I may say so, the humanity of man. If one substituted for the idea of man, with all its metaphysical heritage, with the substantialist motif or temptation that is included with it, the neutral and indeterminate idea of human-reality, it was also in order to suspend

all the presuppositions which had always constituted the concept of the unity of man. It was thus as well a reaction against a certain intellectual or spiritual humanism which had dominated French philosophy (Brunschvicg, Alain, Bergson, etc.) And this neutralization of any metaphysical or speculative theses with regard to the unity of the anthropos could be considered in some ways as the faithful heritage of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and of the fundamental ontology of *Sein und Zeit* (the only Heidegger known at that time, along with *What is Metaphysics?* and *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*). And yet, in spite of this supposed neutralizing of metaphysical presuppositions,¹ we have to admit that the unity of man is not in itself called into question. Not only is existentialism a humanism, but the ground and horizon of what Sartre then called his "phenomenological ontology" (this is the subtitle of *Being and Nothingness*) remains the unity of human-reality. In so far as it describes the structures of human-reality, phenomenological ontology is a philosophical anthropology. Whatever decisive breaks from classical anthropologies may be indicated by this Hegelian-Husserlian-Heideggerian anthropology, there is no interruption in a metaphysical familiarity which so naturally relates the *we* of the philosopher to "we-men," to the *we* of the total horizon of humanity. Although the theme of history is present in the discourse of this period, the history of concepts is not studied; and, for example, the history of the concept of man is never questioned. Everything takes place as though the sign "man" had no origin, no historical, cultural, linguistic limit, not even a metaphysical limit. At the end of *Being and Nothingness*, when Sartre poses programmatically the question of the unity of Being (which in this context means the totality of being), when he titles this question "metaphysics" in order to distinguish it from phenomenological ontology, which

¹ The humanism which in its depth characterizes the philosophical theses of Sartre is nevertheless most unerringly and ironically dismantled in *Nausea*. In the caricature of the Autodidact, for example, the same figure joins together the theological objective of absolute knowledge and the humanistic ethic, as one and the other is put into practice in the form of an encyclopedic love of knowledge (epistemophilia). This causes the Autodidact to undertake the reading of the universal library (actually Western and in the final analysis parochial) in alphabetical order in order to locate the sections in which he can love Man ("There is a goal, sir, there is a goal . . . there are men . . . we have to love them . . ."), through the representation of men, preferably young men. It is in the conversation with the Autodidact that Roquentin attacks humanism most severely. For example, at the moment when nausea is rising slowly within him, he says to himself: "I do not want to be identified with it or to have my good red blood go to fattening this lymphatic creature: I will not commit the stupidity of calling myself 'anti-humanistic.' I am not humanistic, that is all there is to it."

itself described the essential specificity of regions, it is obvious that this metaphysical unity of Being, as a totality in itself and of itself is precisely the unity of the human-reality in its final project. Being in itself and Being for itself were *Being* and this totality of being within which they were put together was linked to itself, referred to itself, became apparent to itself by the essential project of human-reality.² That which was thereby named, in a supposedly neutral and indeterminate way, was none other than the metaphysical unity of man and God, the project of becoming God as a final objective constituting human-reality. Atheism changes nothing in this fundamental structure. Sartre's attempt is a remarkable example verifying Heidegger's proposition according to which "all humanism remains metaphysical," metaphysics being the other name for onto-theology.

Defined in this way, humanism or anthropologism was at this time a sort of common ground of existentialisms whether Christian or atheist, of the philosophy of values, whether spiritualistic or not, of personalisms, whether rightist or leftist, and of Marxism in the classical style. And if one's references is on the ground of political ideologies, anthropologism was the unnoticed and uncontested common ground of Marxism, of social-democratic or democratic-Christian discourse. This profound agreement, in its philosophical expression, was based on the authority of anthropologistic readings of Hegel (interest in *The Phenomenology of Mind* as it was read by Kojève), of Marx (special attention to the *Manuscripts of '44*), of Husserl (whose descriptive regional work was

² "Every human-reality is at once a direct project of metamorphosing its own For-self into In-self-For-self, and the project of appropriating the world as totality being- in-self, in the patterns of a fundamental quality. All human-reality is a passion, in that it projects losing itself in order to found Being and to constitute, at the same time, the In-self which avoids contingency by being its own foundation, the *Ens cause sui* that religions call God. And thus the passion of man is the opposite of that of Christ, for man loses himself as man in order that God be born. But the idea of God is contradictory and we lose ourselves in vain; man is a useless passion" (p. 707-8). The unity of the totality of being is bound up and appears to itself in human-reality as consciousness for-self: "For-self and In-self are joined by a synthetic union which is none other than the For-self itself." (*In-self and For-self: metaphysical glimpses*, p. 711). This synthetic unity is determined as *lack*: lack of totality of being, lack of God, which could have easily been transformed into lack in God. Human-reality is *missing* God: "The *ens causa sui* then remains as the missing" (p. 714). "...The for-self is determined in its Being as *lack*" (p. 720). As for the sense of the Being of this totality of being, as for the history of this concept of negativity as relation with God, as for the sense and the origin of the concept of (human) reality, as for the reality of the real, no question is raised. In this respect, that which is true of *Being and Nothingness* is even more true of *Critique de la raison dialectique*.

emphasized and the transcendental questions neglected), and of Heidegger, in whose work only a project for a philosophical anthropology or an existential analytics was known or retained (*Sein und Zeit*). Of course, what I am pointing out here are the dominant characteristics of a period. This period is not exhausted in its dominant characteristics. And it is impossible to say, absolutely strictly speaking, that it began after the war; and even less that it has today completed its cycle. I feel, nevertheless, that empirical cuts are justified in this case to the extent that they alone can permit the reading of a dominant motif and that they are backed by fairly incontestable signs for anyone approaching such a period. Furthermore, this cutting is provisional, and in a moment we are going to reinsert this period in the time and space of a larger totality.

To set off in heavy type the opposing characteristics between this period and the following, the one in which we are now and which is probably also undergoing a mutation, we have to remember that during the ten years which followed the war there did not yet reign this all-powerful theme which is now more and more prominent, and given the name of the "so-called sciences of man," indicating by this expression a certain distance, but a still respectful distance. On the contrary, the current questioning of humanism is contemporaneous with the dominating and fascinating extension of the "behavioral sciences" within the philosophical field.

II

As we know, an entire aspect of the anthropological reading of Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger was a misinterpretation, perhaps of the most serious sort. It is this reading which provided French post-war thought with its best conceptual resources.

First of all, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, which had only begun to be read in France, is in no way concerned with something which could be called man. A science of the experience of consciousness, a science of the structures of the phenomenality of the mind in reference to itself, it is strictly distinct from anthropology. In *The Encyclopedia*, the section entitled "Phenomenology of Mind" comes after "Anthropology" and very explicitly exceeds its limits. What is true of *The Phenomenology* is *a fortiori* true of the system of *The Logic*.

Similarly, in the second place, the criticism of anthropologism is one of the inaugural motives of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. This criticism is explicit and calls anthropologism by its proper name beginning with *The Prolegomena to Pure Logic*.³ Later it aims not only

³ Ch. 7, "Psychologism as Sceptic Relativism"; 39, "Anthropologism in the Logic of Sigwart"; 40, "Anthropologism in the Logic of B. Erdmann."

at empirical or empiricist anthropologism, but also at transcendental anthropologism.⁴ The transcendental structures described after the phenomenological reduction are not those of that intra-mundane being called "man." They are not essentially linked with society, culture or language, or even with man's "soul" or his "psyche." And just as, according to Husserl, a consciousness can be imagined without soul (*seelenloses*),⁵ so can — and *a fortiori* — a consciousness be imagined without man.

It is therefore surprising and very significant that at the same time that the authority of Husserl's thought was introduced and becoming established in France after the war, and even became a sort of philosophical fashion there, its criticism of anthropologism went completely unnoticed, or in any event was without effect. One of the most paradoxical paths of this misinterpretation passes through an equally distorted reading of Heidegger. It is because the analytics of the *Dasein* interpreted in strictly anthropological terms that Husserl is sometimes limited or criticized from a Heideggerian viewpoint and everything in phenomenology which is not useful for anthropological description is put aside. I say that this is a very paradoxical path because it follows the same line of reading as Husserl. Indeed, Husserl precipitously interpreted *Sein und Zeit*⁶ as an anthropological deviation of transcendental phenomenology.

Thirdly, directly after the war and after the appearance of *Being and Nothingness*, Heidegger recalled in his *Letter on Humanism* to anyone who still was not able to get the point, who had not even been able to take account of the very first paragraphs of *Sein und Zeit*, that anthropology and humanism were not the milieu of his thought and the horizon of his questions. The "destruction" of metaphysics or classical ontology is, indeed, directed against humanism.⁷ After the humanist and anthropological wave which swept over French philosophy, it might have been expected that the anti-humanist and anti-anthropological reflux which was to follow, and in which we now are, would come to rediscover the

⁴ *Ideen 1*, cf. 49 and 54.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Cf. *Nachwort zur meiner Ideen* and marginal notes from the edition of *Sein und Zeit* at the Husserl Archives in Louvain.

⁷ "Every humanism is founded on a metaphysics or makes itself that foundation. Every determination of the essence of man which already presupposes, consciously or not, the interpretation of beings without raising the question concerning the truth of Being, is metaphysical. This is why, if we consider the manner in which the essence of man is determined, the characteristic of every metaphysics is revealed in that it is "humanistic." In the same way, every humanism remains metaphysical, etc. (*Letter on Humanism*).

heritage of thought which had thus been disfigured, or rather in which the figure of man had been too quickly recognized. Would there not be a return to Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger? Would there not be a more rigorous reading of their texts, removing the interpretation from the humanist and anthropological schemas?

This was not to be the case, and I should like now to question the significance of this phenomenon. The criticism of humanism and anthropologism, which is one of the dominant and guiding motifs of current French thought, far from seeking its sources or its guarantee in Hegel's, Husserl's or Heidegger's criticism of this very humanism and this very anthropologism, seems, on the contrary, in a gesture which is sometimes more implicit than systematically articulated, to *amalgamate* Hegel, Husserl and, in a more diffuse and ambiguous manner, Heidegger, with the old humanist metaphysics. I purposely use the word "amalgam," which joints the alchemic reference, which is primary here, with strategical or tactical reference in the realm of political ideology.

Before trying to interpret this seemingly paradoxical phenomenon, some precautions must be taken. First of all, this amalgamation does not mean that no progress has been made in France in the reading of Hegel, Husserl or Heidegger, nor that this progress has not led to a questioning of the humanist distortion. But this progress and this questioning are not in the forefront, and this should prove significant. Inversely and symmetrically, for those who effect this amalgamation the schemas of the anthropological misinterpretation of Sartre's time are still at work, and it is these schemas which sometimes are responsible for Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger being consigned to the shadows of humanist metaphysics. Very often, in fact, those who denounce humanism as well as metaphysics have remained at this "first reading" of Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger, and more than one example of this could be cited from among numerous recent texts. This tends to suggest that, in certain respects and at least in this measure, we have remained in the same camp.

But it is of little matter, for the question I would like to raise, whether a certain author has badly read or simply has not read a certain text, or that he has remained, in regard to thoughts which he believes himself to have surpassed or overturned, in a state of great foolishness. And this is why such and such an author's name or such and such a work will not be cited here. What should concern us, beyond justifications which, *de facto*, are most often insufficient, is the sort of deep and necessarily subterranean justification which makes apparent the connection between Hegel's, Husserl's and Heidegger's criticism or *delimitations* of meta-

physical humanism and precisely the sphere of that which they criticize or delimit. In a word, whether the right has been made explicit or not, whether it has been articulated or not (and I personally believe that it has not), what authorizes us today to consider as essentially anthropic or anthropocentric all that which, in metaphysics or at the limits of metaphysics, has presumed to criticize or to delimit anthropologism? What remains of the “relève,”⁸ of man in the thought of Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger?

III

First of all let us reconsider, in the order of Hegelian discourse which still holds together by so many threads the language of our time, the relations between anthropology on one hand, and phenomenology and logic⁹ on the other. Once the confusion of a merely anthropological reading of the *Phenomenology of Mind* has been rigorously avoided, it must be recognized that the relations between anthropology and phenomenology are not, according to Hegel, relations of mere exteriority. With all that they introduce, the Hegelian concepts of truth, negativity and *Aufhebung* (relève) prevent this from being so. In Part Three of the *Encyclopedia*, which treats of the *Philosophy of Mind*, the first section (*Philosophy of Mind*) places the *Phenomenology of Mind* between *Anthropology* and *Psychology*. The *Phenomenology of Mind* follows *Anthropology* and precedes *Psychology*. *Anthropology* deals with mind — which is the “truth of nature” — as soul or natural mind (Seele or Naturgeist). The development of the soul, as it is traced by anthropology, passes through natural soul (natürliche Seele), sensitive soul (fühlende Seele), and real and effective soul (wirkliche Seele). This development is carried out, completed, and opens on consciousness. The last paragraph of the *Anthropology*¹⁰ defines the general form of con-

⁸ The word “relève — a tentative translation of *Aufhebung* — cannot be translated into English. It means both to elevate, and to replace as in “to relieve one of one’s functions.”

⁹ Without neglecting the complexity of the relationship between *Logic* and *The Phenomenology of Mind*, the question we raise authorizes us to consider them together at that point of opening where Absolute Knowledge joins them.

¹⁰ “The effective soul, in the *habit* of feeling and of its concrete feeling-of-self is in itself the ideality existing for itself of its determinations, interiorized, recalled (erinnert) in itself in its exteriority and in an infinite relation to itself. This Being-for-self of free universality is the superior watch over the I by the soul, abstract

sciousness, precisely that form from which proceeds the *Phenomenology of Mind*, in the first chapter on *Sense-Certainty*.¹¹ Consciousness, the phenomenological element, is thus the truth of the soul; that is, of that which is precisely the object of anthropology. Consciousness is the truth of man; phenomenology is the truth of anthropology. "Truth" should be understood here in a strictly Hegelian sense. In this Hegelian sense the metaphysical essence of truth — the truth of truth — is arrived at. Truth is here the presence or the presentation of essence as *Gewesenheit*, of *Wesen* as having-been. Consciousness is the truth of man inasmuch as man appears there in his being-past, in his having-been, in his surpassed and preserved, retained, interiorized (*erinnert*) and taken over (*relevé*) past. "Aufheben" is to take over, in the sense that "to take over" means at once to displace, to elevate, to replace and to promote in one and the same movement. Consciousness is the *Aufhebung* of the soul or of man; phenomenology is the "relève" of anthropology. Phenomenology is *no longer* but it is *still* a science of man. In this sense all of the structure described in the *Phenomenology of Mind* — just as everything which links them with Logic — are the structures of what has taken over for man. Man remains there in his "relève". His essence lies in the phenomenology. This equivocality of the relation of "relève" undoubtedly marks the end of man, of man past, but at the same time it marks the completion of man, the appropriation of his essence. This is the end of finite man, the end of the finitude of man, the unity of the finite and the infinite, the finite as surpassing of oneself; these essential themes of Hegel are recognized at the end of the Anthropology when consciousness is finally designated as "infinite relation with oneself." The "relève" of man is his *telos* or his *eschaton*. The unity of these two ends of man, the unity of his death, of his termination, of his completion, is enveloped

universality, inasmuch as it is for this abstract universality, which is thus *thought* and subject for itself and precisely the subject of its judgment in which it [the I] excludes the natural totality of its determinations as an object, a world *exterior* to it, and refers to it, so that it is reflected in it in itself immediately: this is *consciousness*.

"Die wirkliche Seele in der *Gewohnheit* des Empfindens und ihres *konkreten* Selbstgefühl ist an sich die für sich seiende *Idealität* ihrer Bestimmtheiten, in ihrer *Aüsserlichkeit* *erinnert* in sich und unendliche Beziehung auf sich. Dies Fürsichsein der freien Allgemeinheit ist das höhere Erwachen der Seele zum *Ich*, der abstrakten Allgemeinheit, insofern sie für die abstrakte Allgemeinheit ist, welche so *Denken* und *Subjekt* für sich und zwar bestimmt Subjekt seines Urteils ist, in welchem es die natürliche Totalität seiner Bestimmungen als ein Objekt, eine ihm *äussere* Welt, von sich ausschlieszt und sich darauf bezieht, so dasz es in derselben unmittelbar in sich reflektiert ist, — das *Bewusstsein*" (412).

¹¹ That is, objectivity in general; the relationship of an "I" in general with a being-object in general.

in the Greek idea of *telos*, in the discourse on *telos*, which is also discourse on *eidos*, on *ousia* and on *aletheia*. Such a discourse, for Hegel as in all metaphysics, indissociably coordinates teleology with an eschatology, a theology and an ontology. The idea of the end of man is then always already prescribed in metaphysics, in the thought of the truth of man. What is difficult to conceive of today is an end of man which is not organized by a dialectic of truth and of negativity, an end of man which is not a teleology in the first person plural. The *we* which in the *Phenomenology of Mind* joins natural consciousness and philosophical consciousness and assures the proximity to oneself of that fixed and central being for which this circular reappropriation is produced. The *we* is the unity of absolute knowledge and anthropology, of God and man, of onto-theo-teleology and humanism. "*Being*" and language — the group of languages — which it governs or which it opens, such is the name of that which assures this passage by the *we* between metaphysics and humanism.¹²

¹² The necessity of the schema of this ambiguity or of this "relevance" which is completed in Hegelian metaphysics and which persists everywhere where metaphysics — that is, our language — maintains its authority, could have been verified in all of the pre-Hegelian systems, and especially in Kant.

A) *On the one hand*, it is precisely when Kant wants to conceive of something as the *end*, the pure *end*, the *end* in itself, that he must criticize anthropologism, in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. The principles of morality cannot be deduced from the knowledge of the nature of a particular being called man: "Such a Metaphysics of morals completely isolated, joined neither with anthropology, theology, physics or hyperphysics, and even less with occult qualities (which could be called hypophysics) is not merely an indispensable substratum of every theoretical knowledge of duties defined with certitude; it is even a desideratum of the greatest importance for the effective accomplishment of their stipulations" . . . "It is still of the greatest practical importance that these concepts and laws be derived from the source of pure reason, that they be presented pure and uncombined and, moreover, that the breadth of all of this rational, practical, and yet pure knowledge; that is, the entire strength of pure practical reason, be determined; yet it is important here to abstain, even though speculative philosophy permits and even sometimes finds it necessary, from making the principles depend upon the particular nature of human reason, but rather, since moral laws must be valid for every reasonable being in general, they should be deduced from the universal concept of a reasonable being in general, thus laying out all of ethics, which in its *application* to men needs anthropology, independently of the latter science, as pure philosophy; that is, as metaphysics . . . etc." . . . "When carrying out such an undertaking, it is of the greatest importance to remember that: trying to derive the reality of this principle from the *particular constitution of human nature* (aus der besondern Eigenschaft der menschlichen Natur) must never even be considered. For duty must be a practical and unconditioned necessity of action; it must consequently be valid for all reasonable beings (the only ones to which an imperative can absolutely be applied), and it is *only as such* that duty is also a law for all human will" (*Foundations of the Metaphysics*

We have just perceived the necessity which links the idea of *phainesthai* with the idea of *telos*. In the same horizon we can read the theory of teleology which commands Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. Despite the criticism of anthropologism, "humanity" is still, here, the name of the being to which transcendental *telos*, determined as Idea (in the Kantian sense), or as Reason, is announced. It is man as *rational animal* which, in its most classical metaphysical determination, designates the place of deployment of teleological reason; that is, history. For Husserl as for Hegel, reason is history and there is no history except that of reason. The latter functions in every man, no matter how primitive he may still be, in that he is "the rational animal" (*Origin of Geometry*). Every type of humanity and human sociality "has a root in the essential component of the human universal, a root in which a teleological Reason which passes throughout historicity is announced. Thus is indicated an original problematic which relates to the totality of history and to the total sense which, in the last instance, gives it its unity" (*Origin of Geometry*).¹³ Transcendental phenomenology would be

of Morals, Part Two). In these three passages we see that that which is always of the "greatest importance" (von der höchsten Wichtigkeit . . . von der grossten praktischen Wichtigkeit . . . von der aussersten Wichtigkeit) is to determine the end in itself (as the unconditioned principle of morality) independently of any anthropological given. The purity of the end cannot be thought on the basis of man.

B) But on the other hand, inversely, the specificity of man, his essence of reasonable being, of rational animal (*zōon logon ekon*) is only announced to itself on the basis of the thought of the end in itself; it is announced to itself as the end in itself; that is, as infinite end as well, since thought of the unconditioned is also thought which rises above experience, or finitude. Thus is explained that despite the criticism of anthropologism of which we have just given some indications, man is the only example, the only case of a reasonable being that can ever be cited at that very point at which the universal concept of reasonable being can justifiably be distinguished from the concept of human being. It is at the point of this fact that anthropology recovers all of its authority which had been contested. It is at this point that the philosopher says "we" and that, in Kant's discourse, "reasonable being" and "humanity" are always associated by the conjunction "and" or "vel." For example: "I say this: man, *and in general* (und überhaupt) every reasonable being, exists as the end in itself, and not merely as means . . . This principle according to which humanity and all reasonable beings in general are considered as ends in themselves" . . . etc.

A similar, although essentially distinct ambiguity could be cited in the *Critique of Pure Reason* every time there is a question of defining the finitude of the state of being and the receptivity of the *intuitus derivativus*.

¹³ "Philosophy in all its aspects is therefore nothing other than rationalism diversifying itself according to the different planes at which intention and accomplishment take place; it is the *Ratio* in its incessant movement towards elucidating itself (*Selbsterhellung*), beginning with the first eruption of philosophy in humanity, the

the ultimate completion of this teleology of reason which passes through humanity.¹⁴ Thus, under the auspices of the founding concepts of metaphysics, which Husserl revives and restores, assigning them if necessary an index or phenomenological quotation marks, criticism of empirical anthropologism is but the affirmation of a transcendental humanism. And among these metaphysical concepts which form the essential resources of Husserl's discourse, that of *end*, or *telos*, plays a decisive role. It could be shown that, at every stage of phenomenology, and notably every time that recourse to "the Idea in the Kantian sense" is necessary, the infinity of *telos*, the infinity of end, regulates the power of phenomenology. The end of man (as factual anthropological limit) is announced to thought with the end of man. Man is that which is relative to his end, in the fundamentally equivocal sense of the word. This has always been so. The transcendental end can appear to itself and unfold before itself only in the condition of mortality, of relation to finitude as the origin of ideality. The name of man has always been inscribed in metaphysics between these two ends. It has meaning only in this eschato-teleological situation.

IV

From this situation arises the "we" which, in one manner or another, has always had to refer back to itself in the language of metaphysics and in philosophical discourse. Where do we stand with this *we*, finally, in the text which, better than any other, has put before us the essential and historical complicity of metaphysics and humanism in all their forms? Where, then, does this *we* stand in Heidegger's text?

This is the most difficult question and we shall only begin to take it up. There is no question here of sealing off all of Heidegger's text inside an enclosure which he better than anyone delimited. What links humanism and metaphysics as ontotheology has become readable as such since *Sein und Zeit*, *Letter on Humanism*, and later texts. Referring to this gain, trying to take a faithful account of it, I should like to begin to outline the forms of the hold which the "humanity" of man and the thought of

rational of which . . . had remained until that time inaccessible to itself, plunged in confusion and night." (*La philosophie comme prise de conscience de l'humanité*, translated by P. Ricoeur.)

¹⁴ In a short 1934 fragment (*Stufen der Geschichtlichkeit. Erste Geschichtlichkeit*, Beilage XXVI in *Krisis*, pp. 502-3), Husserl distinguishes three levels and three stages of historicity: culture and tradition as human sociality in general; European culture and theoretical scheme (science and philosophy); "conversion of philosophy to phenomenology."

Being, a certain humanism and the truth of Being, have over one another. Naturally there will be no place here for the falsification which, against Heidegger's most explicit warnings, would consist of making of this hold an ontical control or relation in general.

What will concern us here is rather a more subtle, more hidden, more unprovable privilege which, as in the case of Hegel or Husserl, takes us back to the position of the *we* in the discourse. Once we have given up the idea of placing the *we* in the metaphysical dimension of "we-men," once we have given up investing the *we-men* with metaphysical determination of the property of man (*zôon logon ekon*, etc.), the fact remains that men — and I would even say, in a sense which will be cleared up in a moment, that which is *the property of man*, or the idea of that which is man proper — is inseparable from the question or from the truth of Being. This is so for the paths followed by Heidegger, by what we could call a sort of magnetic attraction.

I can only indicate here the title and some of the effects of this magnetization. In order to unearth it at the continuous depth at which it operates, the distinction between such and such a period of Heidegger's thought, between the texts which are anterior and those which are posterior to the so-called *Kehre*, is less pertinent than ever. On one hand, existential analysis had already gone beyond the horizon of a philosophical anthropology; *Dasein* is not merely the man of metaphysics. And on the other hand, inversely, in the *Letter on Humanism* and beyond, the magnetic attraction of that which is the "property of man" will not cease to direct all of the various paths of Heidegger's thought. This is, at least, what I would like to suggest, and I shall regroup the effects or the indications of this magnetic attraction under the general concept of *proximity*. It is within the enigma of a certain proximity, a proximity to itself and a proximity to Being that we shall see constituting itself against humanism and against metaphysical anthropologism, another instance and another insistence of man, relaying, "relevant," replacing that which it destroys according to the channels in which we are, from which we will no doubt emerge and which remain to be questioned.

Where does this proximity stand? First of all, let us open *Sein und Zeit* to where the question of Being is raised in its "formal structure" (§ 2). Our "vague and common" comprehension of the sense of the word "Being" or "is" is recognized there as a fact (*Faktum*):

Inquiry as a kind of seeking, must be guided beforehand by what is sought. So the meaning of Being must *already* be available to *us* in some way. As *we* have intimated, *we always* conduct our activities in an understanding of Being. Out of this understanding arise both the explicit question of the meaning of Being and the tendency that leads us towards its conception. We do not *Know*

what 'Being' means. But even if we ask, "What is 'Being'?", we keep within an understanding of the 'is,' though we are unable to fix conceptually what that 'is' signifies. We do not even know the horizon in terms of which that meaning is to be grasped and fixed. *But this vague average understanding of Being is still a Fact.* (*Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson).

I have underlined *we*, *always* and *already*. They are, then, in depth determined in correspondence with this understanding of "Being" and of "is." In the absence of every other determination or presupposition, the "we" is at least that which is open to such an understanding, and that which is always accessible to it and that by which such a factum can be recognized as such. It therefore follows that this *we*, as simple, as discreet, and as effaced as it may be, places what is called the formal structure of the question of Being within the horizon of metaphysics and, in a larger sense, within the Indo-European linguistic milieu, the possibility of which is essentially linked with the origin of metaphysics.

It is within these limits that the *factum* can be understood and accredited. It is within these limits, which are determined and therefore material, that it can support the so-called formality of the question.

This "formal structure of the question of Being" having been raised by Heidegger, it is next a matter, as we know, of recognizing the "exemplary being" (*exemplarische Seiende*) which will constitute the privileged text for a reading of the sense of Being. Let me recall that the formal structure of the question, of any question according to Heidegger, should include three necessary elements: the *Gefragte*, that which is asked, here the sense of Being; the *Erfragte*, which is the asked inasmuch as it is properly aimed at by a question; the sense of Being as questioned; and finally, the *Befragte*, the interrogated, the being which will be interrogated, to which the question of the sense of Being will be posed. It is thus a matter of choosing or of recognizing the paradigm being which is interrogated with a view to the sense of Being: "Into what being should the sense of Being be read (*abgelesen*) from what being will the opening of Being take its departure? Is this point of departure arbitrary, or has some being privilege (*Vorrang*) in the elaboration of the question of Being? What is this exemplary being and in what sense has it a privilege?"

By what will the answer to this question be dictated? In what milieu of evidence, certitude, or at least understanding is it to be unfolded? Even before the phenomenological method is appealed to (§ 7), at least in a "provisional concept," as the method of the elaboration of the question of Being, the determination of this exemplary being is "phenomenological" in its principle. It is ordered by the principle of phenomenology, the principle of presence and of the presence within the presence

to itself, such as it is manifest to being and in the being which *we* are. It is this presence to itself and this absolute proximity of the questioning being to itself, this proximity to itself of the being which opens itself to the understanding of Being and which intervenes in the determination of the *factum*; it is this proximity to himself of the questioner which motivates the choice of the exemplary state of being, of the text, of the correct text for the hermeneutics of the sense of Being. It is the proximity to itself of the questioning being which results in its being chosen as privileges for being interrogated. The proximity to himself of the questioner authorizes the identity of the questioner and of the interrogator. We, who are near to ourselves, interrogate *ourselves* concerning the sense of Being.

If the question about Being is to be explicitly formulated and carried through in such a manner as to be completely transparent to itself, then any treatment of it in line with the elucidations we have given requires us to explain how Being is to be looked at, how its meaning is to be understood and conceptually grasped; it requires us to prepare the way for choosing the right entity for our example, and to work out the genuine way of access to it. Looking at something, understanding and conceiving it, choosing, access to it — all these ways of behaving are constitutive for our inquiry, and therefore are modes of Being for those particular entities which we, the enquirers, are ourselves (eines bestimmten Seienden, *des* Seienden, *das* wir, *die* Fragenden, *je* selbst sind). Thus to work out the question of Being adequately, we must make an entity — the enquirer — transparent in his own Being The very asking of this question (Das Fragen dieser Frage) is an entity's mode of *Being*; and as such it gets its essential character from what is inquired (gefragt) about — namely, Being. This entity which each of us is himself and which includes enquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term "Dasein" (fassen wir terminologisch Dasein). If we are to formulate our question explicitly and transparently, we must first give a proper explication of an entity (Dasein), with regard to its Being. (*Being and Time*, § 7).

This proximity, this identity or this presence to itself of "the being which we are" — of the questioner and of the interrogated — has not the form of subjective consciousness, as in transcendental phenomenology. Doubtless this proximity is also probably even anterior to what the metaphysical predicate "human" could name. Yet the process of extracting or of elaborating the question of Being, as the question of the *sense* of Being, is defined as *explication* or as explicating interpretation. The reading of the text, *Dasein*, is a hermeneutics of unveiling or of development. (cf. § 7). A close examination shows that it is the phenomenological "implicit-explicit" opposition which permits Heidegger to reject the vicious circle objection, which would consist of determining first of all a being in its Being and then raising the question of Being from this ontological pre-determination (§ 7). This style of explicative reading

practices a continual elucidation, something which resembles, at least, an act of consciousness (*Selbst-Besinnung*) without rupture, without movement without change of ground. On the other hand, just as the *Dasein* — the being which *we* are *ourselves* — serves as the exemplary text, as the good “lesson” for the explicitation of the sense of Being, so the name of man remains the link or the leading thread which joins the analytics of *Dasein* with the totality of the traditional discourse of metaphysics. Hence the strange status of phrases or of parentheses such as these: As different behaviours of man, sciences have the style of Being of this being (man). We assign to this being the term “*Dasein*” (*Dieses Seiende fassen wir terminologisch als Dasein*.)” Again, “The problematics of Greek ontology, just as that of any ontology, should take its leading thread from the *Dasein* itself. *Dasein*, that is, the Being of man, is understood (*umgrenzt*) in its vulgar “definition” as well as in its philosophical “definition” as that living whose Being is essentially determined by the power of speech” (of the discourse: *Redenkönnen*). In the same way, a “complete ontology of *Dasein*” is posited as the prerequisite to a “philosophical anthropology.” We see, then, that *Dasein*, if it is *not* man, is *not*, however, *other* than man. It is, as we shall see, a repetition of the essence of man permitting to go back beyond metaphysical concepts of *humanitas*. It is the subtlety and the equivocality of this gesture which have obviously led to all of the anthropological deviations in the reading of *Sein und Zeit*, notably in France.

The value of proximity, that is, of presence in general, therefore determines the essential orientation of this analytics of *Dasein*. This motif of proximity is of course held in opposition which has henceforth constantly ruled Heidegger’s discourse. The fifth paragraph of *Sein und Zeit* seems, indeed, not to contradict, but to limit and confine that which was already acquired, that is, that *Dasein* “which we are” constituted the exemplary being for the hermeneutics of the sense of Being due to its proximity to itself, to our proximity to ourselves and to this being which we are. Heidegger thus notes that this proximity is ontic. On the contrary, ontologically, that is, as regards the Being of this being which we are, the distance, is as great as it can be. “The *Dasein* in truth is not merely that which is ontically (*ontisch*) near or even nearest us — we *are* it ourselves. However, in spite of, or rather because of this, it is ontologically (*ontologisch*) the farthest.”¹⁵

¹⁵ In demonstrating that *Dasein* is ontico-ontologically prior, we may have misled the reader into supposing that this entity must also be what is given as ontico-ontologically primary not only in the sense that it can itself be grasped ‘immedi-

The analytics of *Dasein* as well as that thought which, beyond the *Kehre*, pursues the question of Being, is situated in the space which separates and which relates to one another such a proximity and such a distance. The *Da* of *Dasein* and the *Da* of the *Sein* signify the near as well as the far. Beyond the enclosure common to humanism and metaphysics, Heideggerian thought is guided by the motif of Being as presence, understood in a more original sense than in the metaphysical and ontic determinations of presence or of presence in the present, and by the motif of the proximity of Being to the essence of man. Everything takes place as if the ontological distance recognized in *Sein und Zeit* had to be reduced and the proximity of Being to the essence of man had to be said.

I should like now to support this last proposition with some indicative references to the *Letter on Humanism*. I shall not dwell on the principle and well-known theme of this text, the unity of metaphysics and humanism. Any questioning of humanism which is not coupled first of all with the archeological radicality of the questions outlined by Heidegger and which does not make use of the indications he gives the genesis of the concept and of the value of "man" (a renewal of the Greek *paideia* in Roman culture, the Christianization of the Latin *humanitas*, a renaissance of Hellenism in the XIVth and the XVIIIth centuries, etc.), any meta-humanist position not within the opening of these questions remains historically regional, periodic and peripheral, juridically secondary and dependent, regardless of its interest and its necessity as such.

The thought of Being, the thought of the truth of Being in whose name Heidegger de-limits humanism and metaphysics nevertheless remains a thought of man. In the question of Being as it is raised in metaphysics,

ately,' but also in that the kind of Being which it possesses is presented just as 'immediately.' Ontically, of course, *Dasein* is not only close to us — even that which is closest: we *are* it, each of us, we ourselves. In spite of this, or rather for just this reason, it is ontologically farthest; but pre-ontologically it is surely not a stranger.

I have four remarks to make on this subject: 1. Despite this ambiguity or this opposition it is solely the value of (ontic) proximity which determined the choice of the *Dasein* as the exemplary state of being. Exemplariness is, then, an ontic motif. 2. This proximity-distance, ontic-ontological opposition will be inseparable from the opposition between the proper and the non-proper (the authentic and the unauthentic: *eigentlich/uneigentlich*). 3. This same opposition will permit, by distinguishing between proximity and the metaphysical notion of "immediacy," the criticism of a certain style of phenomenology and the primacy of "consciousness," of the "immediate givens of consciousness." 4. The fact remains that there is an essential and explicit bond between this value of proximity — ontically given or ontologically refused, but promised — and phenomenology: the *Dasein* must "be able to show itself in itself and from itself."

man and the name of man are not displaced. And they certainly do not disappear. There is, rather, a sort of re-evaluation or revalorization of the essence and the dignity of man. In Heidegger's eyes, what is threatened in the extension of metaphysics and technique — and we know the great extent to which Heidegger associates the two — is the essence of man, which should here be considered before and beyond its metaphysical determinations: "The devastation of language which is spreading everywhere rapidly is not only a result of the responsibility for esthetic and moral order which we assume in every use we make of speech. It is caused by man's essence being put in danger (Gefährdung des Wesens des Menschen)" . . . "It is only in this way, on the basis of Being, that the absence of native land (die Ueberwindung der Heimatlosigkeit), in which not only men but the essence of man are lost (das Wesen des Menschen), begins to be surmounted." It is therefore this essence which must be re-established or restored: "But if man is one day to arrive at the proximity of Being (in die Nähe des Seins), he must first therefore learn to exist within that which has no name (im Namenlosen). He must know how to recognize the temptation of publicity as well as the impotence of private existence. Before speaking (befor er spricht) man must first let himself be appealed to, (demanded anew: wieder Ansprechen) by Being and warned by it of the danger of having little or rarely anything to say in the face of this demand (Anspruch). It is only then that the inestimable wealth is restored to the essence of speech and that man is given shelter (Behausung) to live in the truth of Being. But is there not in this demand (Anspruch) of Being on man, as in the attempt to prepare man for this appeal, an effort which concerns man? What is the orientation of the "concern," if not to re-establish man in his essence (den Menschen wieder in sein Wesen zurückzubringen)? Can this mean other than making man (homo) human (humanus)? *humanitas* remains at the heart of such thought, for humanism consists of this: to reflect and to see that man be human and not inhuman (unmenschlich); that is, outside of his essence. Of what, then, does man's humanity consist? It resides in his essence." ¹⁶

¹⁶ Many other passages of the *Letter* could be cited in the same sense, as for example: "But it must be understood that, through it [metaphysics] man is definitively pushed back into the domain of *animalitas*, even though, far from identifying him with animal, he is accorded a specific difference. As a principle, we always think of *homo animalis*, even if the *anima* is posited as *animus sive mens*, and, later, as object, person or mind. Such a position is metaphysical. But, as such, the essence of man is too poorly (zu gering) appreciated. It is not considered in its source, an essential source which, for historic humanity, (*geschichtliche Menschentum*) remains permanently essential future. Metaphysics considers man on the basis of *animalities*,

Once the notion of essence is removed from the *essentia-existentia* opposition the proposition according to which "man ek-sists is not a reply to the question as to whether man is real or not; it is a reply to the question regarding the essence of man."

The restoration of essence is also the restoration of a dignity and of a proximity: the corresponding dignity of Being and of man, the proximity of Being and of man. "What still remains to be said today and for the first time could perhaps become the impulsion (*Anstoss*) which would lead the essence of man to be attentive by thought (*denkend*) to the dimension, which is *omni-reigning* over it, of the truth of Being. Such an event could not, furthermore, be produced every time except for the dignity of the being and to the benefit of this being-there which man assumes in ek-sistence (*nur dem Sein zur Würde und dem Da-sein zugunsten geschehen, das der Mensch eksistierend aussteht*) but not to the advantage of man in order that civilization and culture shine by his action."

The ontological distance from *Dasein* to what it is as eksistence and to the *Da* of *Sein*; this distance which was given as first ontic proximity, must be reduced by the thought of the truth of Being. Hence, the predominance, in Heidegger's discourse, of a whole metaphoric of proximity, simple and immediate presence, associating with the proximity of Being the values of neighborhood, shelter, house, service, guard, voice and listening. Not only is this not insignificant rhetoric, but a whole theory of metaphor in general could even be made explicit on the basis of this metaphoric and of the thought of the ontico-ontological difference. I shall cite but a few examples of this language which is so highly connoted and so clearly inscribed within a certain landscape. "But if man is to arrive one day at the proximity of Being (*in die Nähe des Seins*), he must first of all learn to exist in that which has no name The proposition: 'The substance of man is eksistence' says nothing other than this: The manner in which man in his own essence (*in seinen eigenen Wesen*) is present to Being (*Zum Sein anwest*) is the ek-static instance

rather than with a view to his *humanitas*. Metaphysics is closed to the simple, essential notion that man is only revealed in his essence (*in seinem Wesen west*) inasmuch as he is appealed to (*angesprochen*) by Being. It is only on the basis of this claim that he has found the very dwelling place of his essence. It is only on the basis of this dwelling that he 'has' 'language' as the shelter which assures his essence its ecstatic nature. To stand within the clearing of being is characteristic (*eignet*) only of man. Ek-sistence thus understood is not only the foundation of the possibility of reason and ratio, it is precisely that in which man's essence retains (*wahrt*) the source of its determination. Ek-sistence can only be said of the essence of man; that is, of the human manner of 'being,' for only man, as far as we know, is engaged in the destiny of ek-sistence (*in das Geschick der Eksistenz*)."

in the truth of Being. Humanist interpretations of man as rational animal, as 'person,' as spiritual-being-endowed-with-a-soul-and-a-body, are not held as false by this essential determination of man, nor are they rejected by it. The sole purpose is rather that the highest humanist determinations of the essence of man do not yet experience the dignity characteristic of man (die eigentliche Würde des Menschen). In this sense, the thought expressed in *Sein und Zeit* is against humanism. But this opposition does not mean that such thought is directed in opposition to man, that it pleads for the inhuman, defends barbarism and lowers man's dignity. If we think against humanism it is because humanism does not value highly enough the humanitas of man 'Being' is not God, nor a foundation of the world. Being is more removed than every being and yet nearer (näher) to man than every being, whether it be a rock, an animal, a work of art, a machine, an angel or God. The being is that which is nearest (Das Sein ist das Nächste). This proximity remains for man, however, that which is farthest. Man holds always, and first, and only, to being It is because man, as ek-sisting, succeeds in keeping himself within this relation within which Being determines its own destiny, by supporting it ek-statically, that is to say by assuming it within concern, that he fails to recognize the nearest (das Nächste) and is contented by that which is beyond the near (das Uebernächste). He even thinks that this is the nearest. But nearer than the nearest and at the same time farther than the farthest for usual thought is proximity itself: the truth of Being The unique (das Einzige) which is aimed at by the thought attempting to express itself for the first time in *Sein und Zeit* is something simple (etwas Einfaches). Inasmuch as it is this simple, Being remains mysterious, simple proximity (schlicht) of a non-compelling power. This proximity unfolds its essence (west) as language itself But man is not only a living being who, in addition to other capacities, possesses language. Language is rather the home of Being in which man lives and thus ek-sists, belonging to the truth of Being, whose custody (hütend gehört) he assumes."

This proximity is not ontic proximity, and the characteristically ontological repetition of this thought of the near and the far ¹⁷ must be taken

¹⁷ "In the introduction of *Sein und Zeit* (p. 38) this is simply and clearly expressed, and even italicized; 'Being is pure and simple transcendent (das Transcendens schlechthin).' Just as the opening of spatial proximity surpasses all things near or far when considered from the point of view of this thing, so Being is essentially beyond every state of being because it is the clearing (Lichtung) itself. As such, Being is considered on the basis of the state of being, according to a way of looking at things which is at the outset inevitable in the metaphysics which still prevails."

into account. The fact remains that Being which is nothing, which is not a being, cannot be said, cannot say itself, except in the ontic metaphor. And the choice of such and such a metaphoric is necessarily significant. It is in the metaphoric emphasis that the interpretation of the sense of being then appears. And if Heidegger radically deconstructed the authority of the *present* over metaphysics, it was in order to lead us to think the presence of the present. But the thought of this presence only metaphorizes, by a profound necessity which cannot be escaped by a simple decision, the language it deconstructs.¹⁸

Consequently, the prevalence accorded to the phenomenological metaphor, to all of the varieties of *phainesthai*, of brilliance, of illumination, of clearing, of *Lichtung*, etc., opens on the space of presence and the presence of space, understood in the opposition of the near and the far. In the same way, the privilege accorded not only to language, but to spoken language (voice, listening, etc.) is in harmony with the motif of presence as presence to itself.¹⁹

¹⁸ A few examples of the predominance accorded to the value of ontological proximity: "This destiny appears as the clearing of Being (*Lichtung des Seins*); it is itself this clearing. It accords proximity-to-Being (*Sie gewährt die Nähe zum Sein*). In this proximity, in the clearing of the 'there' (*Da*), man dwells as ek-sisting, even though he is not yet in a position to actually experience and assume this act of dwelling. The discourse on Hölderlin's elegy *Heimkunft* (1943), which is conceived on the basis of *Sein und Zeit*, calls this proximity 'of' Being which is in itself the 'there' of being-there 'the native land'. . . . The native land of this historical dwelling is the proximity to Being. . . . In his historico-ontological essence man is that being whose Being as ek-sistence consists in that it dwells within the proximity of Being (in der Nähe des Seins wohnt). Man is the neighbor of Being (*Nachbar des Seins*). . . . Therein fundamentally different from every existentia and 'existence,' 'ek-sistence' is the ek-static dwelling within the proximity of Being. . . . Should thought not attempt, by an open resistance to 'humanism,' to risk an impulse which could finally lead to recognizing the humanitas of homo humanus and its founding principles? Thus a reflection (*Besinnung*) which would think not only man, but the 'nature' of man, not only the nature, but even more originally, the dimension within which the essence of man, determined from Being itself, feels at home could be aroused, if the present situation of history is not already leading in this direction. . . . Thought does not surpass metaphysics by surmounting it; that is, by going still higher in order to accomplish it one knows not where, but by re-descending to the nearest proximity (in die Nähe des Nächsten)."

¹⁹ On that which unites the values of presence to oneself and spoken language we take the liberty of referring back to our essays. *De la grammatologie* and *La voix et le phénomène*. Implicitly or explicitly, the valorization of spoken language is constant and massive in Heidegger. We shall study it further on for itself. Having arrived at a certain point in this analysis, such a valorization must be rigorously sized-up. Although it covers the near totality of the Heideggerian text (in that it leads all of the metaphysical determinations of the *present* or of *being* back to the original form of Being as presence (*Anwesenheit*)), it is effaced at that

If, then, "Being is farther removed than every being and yet nearer to man than every being," if "Being is that which is nearest," we should consequently be able to say that Being is *the near* of man and that man is *the near* of Being. The near is the proper; the proper is the nearest (prope, proprius). Man is that which is proper to Being, which speaks into his ear from very near. Being is that which is proper to man. Such is the truth, such is the proposition which gives the *there* to the truth of Being and the truth of man. This proposition of the proper must certainly not be taken in a metaphysical sense: the proper of man is not here an essential attribute, the predicate of a substance, one feature, as fundamental as it may be, among the others which constitute a being, object or subject, called man. Neither can we talk, in this same sense, of man as the proper of Being. The propriety, the co-propriety of Being and man, is proximity as inseparability. It is as inseparability, furthermore, that the relations of being (substance or res) with its essential predicate were conceived in metaphysics. Since this co-propriety of man and Being, such as it is conceived in Heidegger's discourse, is not ontic, it does not relate two "beings" to one another but rather, in language, relates the *sense* of Being with the *sense* of man. The proper of man, his "eigenheit," his authenticity, is to relate himself to the sense of Being, to understand it and to question (Fragen) it within ek-sistence, to stand²⁰ in the proximity of its own light: "Das Stehen in der Lichtung des Seins nenne ich die Ek-sistenz des Menschen. Nur dem Menschen eignet diese Art zu sein": "To stand within the clearing of Being, that is what I call the ek-sistence of man. Alone, man has properly this manner of being."

Is not that which is perhaps being displaced today this security of the near, this co-belonging and this co-propriety of the name of man and of the name of Being, as it inhabits and installs itself in the language of the Occident, as it is sunk therein, as it is inscribed and forgotten in

point where a *Wesen* which would not even be an *Anwesen* is announced, (Cf. our essay, *Ousia et grammè, Note sur une note de Sein und Zeit*.) And thus is explained, in particular, the contempt for literature, as opposed to thought and to *Dichtung*, but also to a craft-like practice of the letter: "In the written word, thought easily loses its mobility But on the other hand the written word offers the salutary restraint of a vigilant grasp of language It [the truth of Being] would thus be taken away from pure opinion and conjecture and given back to this craft of writing (Hand-werk der Schrift), which has become rare today And this is indeed what we need with the present world penury: less philosophy and more attention to thought; less literature and more care given to the letter as such" (*Letter on Humanism*). "The *Dichtung* must be freed from literature" (Text published by the *Revue de Poésie*, Paris, 1967).

²⁰ I have tried elsewhere (*La parole soufflée, L'écriture et la différence*) to indicate the passage between "proper" and "to-stand-up."

the history of metaphysics, and as it is also being revived in the destruction of ontotheology? But this setting in motion — which can only come from a certain outside — was already required in the very structure it solicits. In the thought and the language of Being, the end of man has always been prescribed, and this prescription has never served except to modulate the equivocality of the *end*, in the interplay of *telos* and death. In the reading of this interplay, the following chain of events can be taken in all of its senses: the end of man is the thought of Being, man is the end of the thought of Being, the end of man is the end of the thought of Being. Man has always been his proper end; that is, the end of what is proper to him. The being has always been its proper end; that is, the end of what is proper to it.

I should like now, to conclude, to assemble under some very general titles the signs which appear, at this anonymous depth which concerns me here, to mark the effects of this total setting in motion of that which, for convenience, with the necessary quotation marks or precautions, I called in the beginning France or French thought.

1. *The reduction of the sense.* The most original and the strongest attention to system and structure; that is, an attention which does not immediately degenerate into cultural or journalistic chatter or, in the best of cases, into the purest “structuralist” tradition of metaphysics. Such an attention, which is rare, does not consist of:

- a) restoring the classical motif of the system, of which it could be shown that it is always ordered to *telos*, *aletheia*, and *ousia*, which are the values assembled in the concepts of essence or of *sense*;
- b) nor of effacing or destroying the sense. It is a question, rather, of determining the possibility of the *sense* on the basis of a “formal” organization which in itself has no sense, which does not mean that it is nonsense, anguish or absurdity prowling around metaphysical humanism. If we consider that the criticism of anthropologism by recent great metaphysicians (Hegel and Husserl notably) was made in the name of truth and sense, and if we consider that these “phenomenologies” — which were actually metaphysical theories — had as their essential motif a *reduction to the sense* (this is, *literally*, Husserl’s claim), then we can see that the reduction of the sense (that is, of the signified) takes on the form of a criticism of phenomenology. If we consider, on the other hand, that Heidegger’s destruction of metaphysical humanism is first of all the result of a question concerning the *sense* or the *truth* of Being, we see that the reduction of the sense is effected by a sort of rupture with a thought of Being that has all of the traits of a “relève” (*Aufhebung*) of humanism.

2. *The strategic bet.* A radical displacement can only come from the outside. The kind I am speaking about can therefore not be attributed to some spontaneous decision of philosophical thought after some interior maturation of its history. This setting in motion takes place in the violent relationship of *all* of the Occident with its other, whether it is “linguistic” relationships (in which the question of the limits of all that which leads back to the question of the sense of Being is very quickly raised), or ethnological, economic, political, or military, relationships. This does not mean, moreover, that military or economic violence is not structurally bound up with “linguistic” violence. But the “logic” of any relationship with the outside is very complex and surprising. It is precisely the strength and the efficacy of the system which regularly transform transgressions into “false sorties.” Considering these effects of system, we now have, from the inside where we are, only two strategies from which to choose:

a) To attempt the sortie and the deconstruction without changing ground, by repeating what is implicit in the founding concepts and in original problematics, by using against the edifice the instruments or the stones available in the house, which means in language as well. The risk here is to constantly confirm, consolidate, or “relever,” at a depth which is ever more sure, precisely that which we claim to be deconstructing. A continuous explicitation which proceeds towards the opening risks falling into a closed autism.

b) To decide to change ground, in a discontinuous and eruptive manner, by stepping abruptly outside and by affirming absolute rupture and difference. Not to mention all of the other forms of perspectives in a trompe-l’oeil fashion to which such a displacement (which dwells more naively than ever within the inside it claims to desert) is susceptible, the simple use of language continually relocates the “new” ground on the older one. Numerous and precise examples could be given of the effects of such a relocation or of such a blindness.

It goes without saying that the risks of such effects are not sufficient to obviate the necessity of such a “change of ground.” It also goes without saying that the choice between these two forms of deconstruction cannot be a simple and unique one. A new writing must weave and intertwine the two motifs. That is, several languages must be spoken and several texts produced at the same time. I wanted above all to point out that the style of the first deconstruction is more that of Heidegger’s questions and that the other is more that which currently dominates France. I purposely speak here in terms of dominant style, because there are also ruptures and changes of ground in Heidegger’s type of text,

because the "change of ground" is far from upsetting all of the French landscape to which I refer, and because, as Nietzsche said, it is perhaps a change of style that we need.

3. *The difference between the superior man and the superman.* This title stresses both the recourse to Nietzsche, which is more and more prevalent and more and more rigorous in France, and the division which is perhaps being announced between two relèves of man. We know how, at the end of *Zarathoustra*, at the time of the "sign," when *das Zeichen kommt*, Nietzsche distinguishes, in the greatest proximity, in a strange resemblance and an ultimate complicity, on the eve of the last separation of the Great South, between superior man (höherer Mensch) and superman (Übermensch). The former is abandoned to his distress with a last movement of pity. The latter — which is not the last man — awakes and goes off, without turning back on what he leaves behind him. His laughter will then break out towards a return which will no longer have the form of the metaphysical repetition of humanism any more than it will undoubtedly take the form, "beyond" metaphysics, of the memorial or of the guard of the sense of the being, or the form of the house and the truth of Being. He will dance, outside of the house, this "aktive Vergeslichkeit," this active forgetfulness ("oubliance") and this cruel (grausam) feast is spoken of in *Genealogy of Morals*. No doubt Nietzsche called upon an active forgetfulness ("oubliance") of Being which would not have had the metaphysical form which Heidegger ascribed to it.

Should we read Nietzsche as the last of the great metaphysicians? Should the question of the truth of Being be understood, rather, as the last drowsy jump of superior man? Should the vigil (*veille*) be understood as the guard mounted around the house or as the awakening (*veille*) to the coming day, which is upon us?

We are perhaps between these two vigils (*veilles*) which are also two ends of man. But who, we?

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* Translated from the French with the collaboration of Edouard Morot-Sir, Wesley C. Piersol, Hubert L. Dreyfus, and Barbara Reid.