

THE PROBLEM OF EMBODIMENT IN
HEIDEGGER'S FUNDAMENTAL ONTOLOGY

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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BRIAN REDEKOPP



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**THE PROBLEM OF EMBODIMENT
IN HEIDEGGER'S FUNDAMENTAL ONTOLOGY**

by

© Brian Redekopp

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School of Graduate Studies
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Abstract

Fundamental ontology is Heidegger's attempt to clarify the meaning of being through a descriptive analysis of human existence, which he conceives as a system of intentional relations that precedes the subject/object dichotomy. His interpretation of human being seems to promise an innovative solution to the problem of how we are corporeally immanent in nature at the same time as we transcend nature in our understanding. Yet Heidegger pays little attention to the problem of embodiment in fundamental ontology. This thesis addresses the question of what accounts for his neglect. In Chapter One, I formulate the problem in terms of Heidegger's ontological concepts. Chapter Two shows that despite appearances to the contrary, the problem of embodiment is crucial for fundamental ontology. Chapter Three develops the central claim of the thesis, which is that Heidegger neglects embodiment because to treat it adequately threatens to undermine the transcendental character of fundamental ontology.

Acknowledgements

I must first of all extend my thanks to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Richard Matthews, whose insight, diligence and encouragement have been invaluable in my attempt to understand Heidegger. I would also like to acknowledge the faculty, students and other members of the philosophy community in St. John's for providing an atmosphere so congenial to intellectual and personal growth. A special thanks to Dr. James Bradley in this regard. Finally I would like to thank my family, and especially my mother, for their encouragement.

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Key to References to Works of Heidegger

- BPP* *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Trans. Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.
- BT* *Being and Time*. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. San Francisco: Harper, 1962.
- CT* *The Concept of Time*. Trans. William McNeill. Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1992.
- FCM* *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. Trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- HCT* *History of the Concept of Time*. Trans. Theodore Kisiel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.
- KPM* *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Trans. Richard Taft. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.
- MFL* *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. Trans. Michael Heim. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- WM* *Was ist Metaphysik?* Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1969.
- ZS* *Zollikon Seminars*. Trans. Franz Mayr and Richard Askay. Ed. Medard Boss. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001.

Introduction

Wittgenstein defined a philosophical problem as one for which we know the solution provided no one asks it of us, but which throws us into a muddle the moment it is explicitly raised.¹ Considered in this light, the problem of embodiment is philosophically exemplary. For while we go about our lives with an implicit understanding of the fact that, as bodily beings, we are subject to the natural laws of the world we perceive, this situation becomes problematic upon reflection. In our role as the subjects of perception, knowledge and action, we experience ourselves as transcending nature, where nature is understood, following Merleau-Ponty, as a multiplicity of events bound together by relations of causality.² Transcending the network of causal relations, we are somehow brought into communion with it by means of our bodies. But since our bodies are integrated into the network of causal relations, we also experience ourselves as the objects of perception and knowledge and as the recipients of action. The problem of embodiment is the problem of how to render intelligible our immanence in the natural order we transcend.

Heidegger's project of fundamental ontology seems to promise an innovative solution to the problem of embodiment. Heidegger argues that whereas traditional ontology has endeavoured to distinguish the various kinds of beings (*res extensa* and *res cogitans* in modern ontology) and to explicate their ontological constitution (*existentia*

¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), 42 (#89).

² Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, trans. Alden L. Fisher (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 3.

and *essentia* in medieval ontology), it has failed to elucidate *being*, that which somehow belongs to all beings.³ Indeed, the tradition has viewed such a task as unnecessary, since the meaning of “being” has been taken as self-evident.⁴ For Heidegger, the apparent self-evidence of the meaning of “being” conceals an important philosophical problem. Clearly we understand what we mean by “being” to some extent, since we use the verb “to be” constantly and successfully. Yet despite such constant usage, we find ourselves at a loss when asked to explain what we mean by it. The understanding of being implicit in such utterances as “It *is* raining” or “I *am* happy” remains conceptually unclarified, or, as Heidegger puts it, “pre-ontological.”⁵ The purpose of fundamental ontology is to bring our pre-ontological understanding of the meaning of being, or of what it means for beings to be, to conceptual clarity.⁶

For Heidegger, the meaning of something is the condition of the possibility of its intelligibility.⁷ Thus, for example, the meaning of a glass is its use as an implement for drinking—were it not for our practice of drinking (and of other activities in which glasses

³ “Beings” translates *das Seiende*, which could also be rendered as “entities” or as “that which is.” “Being” translates *Sein*, the infinitive form of the verb “to be.” The fact that “being” translates a verb is important. When Heidegger investigates being, he is not investigating a thing or substance that beings have, but the event by virtue of which beings are encountered in human thought and practice.

⁴ *BT*, 22, 23/H3, 4. *H* indicates the original German pagination.

⁵ *BT*, 32/H12. Like the problem of embodiment, Heidegger’s question of the meaning of being exemplifies Wittgenstein’s description of the nature of a philosophical problem.

⁶ One might object that fundamental ontology presents an impossible task, since being, as the most general of concepts, is indefinable. Heidegger responds to this objection by arguing that the indefinability of being does not render the meaning of being unproblematic. On the contrary: the indefinability of being makes the question of its meaning even more worthy of philosophical attention, for the universality of being is not merely that of a genus. Being somehow “transcends” the universality of genus. *BT*, 22/H3. What this “transcendence” amounts to is obscure, and it can only be clarified once the meaning of being is discovered.

⁷ *BT*, 371/H324.

play a role) the glass would not be intelligible. Fundamental ontology, as an attempt to clarify our understanding of the meaning of being, seeks to discover what makes our understanding of being possible. The first step in this endeavour is to gain a comprehensive picture of our understanding of being by discerning how this understanding manifests itself in the various ways we relate to beings. Fundamental ontology proceeds as an analysis of human existence, as what Heidegger terms an “existential analytic.”⁸ Existential analysis uncovers *Existenzialen*, or the ways of relating to beings constitutive of any human existence whatsoever.⁹ Once these *Existenzialen* are described, our understanding of being will be grasped more precisely, and Heidegger will be in a position to uncover what makes it possible. This condition of possibility is transcendental. That is, it lies beyond the domain of what is—it lies beyond the domain of beings. The meaning of being is not itself a being. Heidegger will argue that this transcendental ground of possibility is temporality, the nature of which will be explained in Chapter One. As that which makes possible the intelligibility of being implicit in our ways of relating to beings, temporality is the meaning of being.

The relevance of fundamental ontology for the problem of embodiment emerges when one considers Heidegger’s interpretation of human existence as *Dasein*.¹⁰ Heidegger takes the term “Dasein,” an everyday German word for “existence,” and

⁸ *BT*, 34/H16.

⁹ *BT*, 38/H17. Understanding, mood and spatiality are three of the basic ways of relating to beings that Heidegger will analyze. These *Existenzialen* will be explained in Chapter One.

¹⁰ It should be noted that “Dasein” is not straightforwardly synonymous with “human existence.” A more precise account of the meaning of “Dasein” will be provided in Chapter Two.

invests it with special significance by emphasizing its components, *Da* (“there”) and *Sein* (“being”). Human existence is “there-being,” which means that to be a human being is to be wholly constituted by one’s engagement with beings, to be one’s “there.” As Dasein, human existence is not a matter of one term, a subject, entering into relations with other terms, or objects. Instead, to be a human being is to be these relations themselves.¹¹ In other words, a human being is not a subject who, amongst other acts of cognition, sometimes understands the meaning of being. Instead, to be a human being means to be this understanding of being itself. The account of Dasein presented so far is preliminary. Some of the *Existenzialen* will be explained in Chapter One, and the complexity of the concept of Dasein will emerge more fully in Chapter Two. But already one can see why the notion of Dasein seems to offer an innovative solution to the problem of embodiment. Under such a conception of human existence, the human body would be neither an object somehow attached to a transcendent subject standing outside of the totality of objects, nor would it be a conglomeration of objective causal relationships that somehow gives rise to consciousness. Both subject and object would be secondary moments of a prior relational structure, a structure that would somehow involve corporeity.

But despite the apparent promise the concept of Dasein holds for the problem of embodiment, Heidegger explicitly refuses to discuss embodiment in the existential

¹¹ Criticizing the theory of knowledge according to which knowing involves a subject’s transcending itself and “crossing over” to objects, Heidegger writes that “Dasein does not sort of exist and then occasionally achieve a crossing over outside itself, but existence originally means to cross over. Dasein is itself the passage across.” *MFL*, 165.

analytic.¹² Heidegger does not even include embodiment as an *Existenzial*—a surprising omission, since the body, as that through which we sense and manipulate beings, would seem to be essential to human existence. Heidegger’s neglect of embodiment has been noted by such prominent philosophers as Jean-Paul Sartre, who complains that there are barely six lines on the body in *Being and Time*, and by David Farrell Krell, who wonders whether Dasein is “destined to share the fate of the cherubim and seraphim.”¹³ Emmanuel Levinas criticizes Heidegger for neglecting to consider the bodily enjoyment involved in our relations with beings.¹⁴ Tina Chanter observes that it is remarkable that a work expounding a notion of the human being as constituted by its engagement with beings, and not as a subject standing over and against beings, would deny attention to how the body enters into this engagement.¹⁵ But as frustrating or puzzling as Heidegger’s

¹² *BT*, 143/H108.

¹³ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), 323; David Farrell Krell, *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 52.

¹⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press 1969), 133.

¹⁵ Tina Chanter, *Time, Death and the Feminine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 83. There is at least one significant voice of dissent amongst those who have looked to *Being and Time* for an account of bodily experience. In his *The Body’s Recollection of Being* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), Michael Levin argues that even though Heidegger declines undertaking a thematic treatment of our bodily nature, he offers many insights into our bodily *capacities*. As examples of such capacities, Levin cites passages in *Being and Time* in which Heidegger discusses the bodily activity of hammering, the experience of hardness and resistance, the condition of the possibility of being physically touched by something, sight and hearing and their various modalities, and the sensuous character of speech. (39)

But Levin’s references prove to be disappointing. The cited discussion of the experience of hardness and resistance takes place in the context of Heidegger’s critical discussion of Descartes’ notion of substance. Heidegger argues that by construing the sensation of resistance in terms of the relative motion of things in space, Descartes completely neglects the revelatory character of sensation. *BT*, 130/H97. But Heidegger himself does not go on to offer an account of sensation or of the experience of resistance. As for the discussion of the possibility of being touched by something, it is just that: Heidegger here is not discussing affectivity proper but only its conditions of possibility. *BT*, 177/H137. And while Heidegger does *mention* seeing colours in the context of a discussion of the Greek conception of truth as perception, the phenomenon of bodily seeing is not made the theme of investigation. *BT*, 54/H31. The same goes for

neglect of embodiment may be, the question remains as to whether and in what sense this neglect constitutes a flaw in fundamental ontology. Heidegger explicitly states that he only carries out existential analysis to the extent required to elucidate our understanding of being, and that a comprehensive description of human existence is beyond the scope of his project.¹⁶ Perhaps a treatment of the problem of embodiment is not required for Heidegger's purposes.

The central importance of the problem of embodiment for fundamental ontology is shown by Alphonse de Waelhens, who argues that Heidegger's neglect of the problem of embodiment renders his analysis of Dasein essentially incomplete. De Waelhens points out that the problem of how we can be immanent in that which we transcend must be addressed if the relational structure of human existence is to be made intelligible. Since the body is implicated in our relations with beings, and since the body participates in the causal order of nature, human existence is somehow constituted by the intersection of two orders of relations: the order of causal relations, in terms of which we are *in* nature, and the order of what one might call "meaning relations," or those relations in terms of which nature is constituted as a meaningful system *for* us. Putting pen to paper, the force my hand exerts on the page via the pen causes ink to spread; at the same time, I understand the pen and paper as instruments to be used for writing. De Waelhens argues

Levin's reference to hearing and speech: Heidegger merely mentions the sensuous aspects of linguistic expression in the course of a discussion of the conditions of possibility of language. *BT*, 205/H162. Following up on Levin's citations reveals that he overemphasizes the significance of Heidegger's references to the body. In each case, one discovers that Heidegger merely mentions aspects of bodily experience in the context of discussions concerned with other themes.

¹⁶ *BT*, 38/H17, 170/H131, 227/H183, 238/H194.

that by neglecting embodiment in the existential analytic, Heidegger proceeds as if the problem of how the two orders of relations can intersect were resolved.¹⁷ But as long as this problem is not addressed, the relational structure of human existence, and the understanding of being operative therein, remain fundamentally opaque.

In spite of the importance of the problem of embodiment for fundamental ontology, and in spite of fundamental ontology's promise of an innovative solution to this problem, Heidegger devotes very little attention to it. This thesis addresses the question of what motivates Heidegger's neglect. I will argue that Heidegger's neglect of the problem of embodiment is motivated by the peculiar difficulty it presents for fundamental ontology: the risk of falling into what Husserl calls "transcendental realism."¹⁸ Transcendental realism is the idea that the transcendental structures that make possible the intelligibility of the real are themselves real, or that the transcendental can be located within the realm it renders intelligible. The mistake in this thought lies in its misunderstanding of the very nature of transcendental philosophy. In seeking that which makes possible the intelligibility of reality as such, transcendental philosophy explores a realm outside the domain of the real, which means that one goes fundamentally astray by calling "real" whatever such inquiry discovers.¹⁹ Fundamental ontology is transcendental

¹⁷ Alphonse de Waelhens, "A Philosophy of the Ambiguous," in Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, trans. Fisher, xviii.

¹⁸ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 24.

¹⁹ Kant also uses the term "transcendental realism," and in basically the same sense as in Husserl. For Kant, transcendental realism is the idea that space and time, which as the forms of intuition belong to the transcendental realm, describe the structure of the in-itself. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 346, 439, 470.

philosophy: in seeking the conditions of the possibility of the intelligibility of being, it seeks to comprehend something that lies beyond the domain of all that is. Formulated in terms of fundamental ontology, transcendental realism is the mistake one makes in thinking that the meaning of being, the transcendental condition of possibility of being's intelligibility, can itself be situated in the domain of beings. This thesis will account for Heidegger's surprising neglect of embodiment by showing that it is difficult to offer a satisfactory account of Dasein's embodiment without falling into this error.

For the purposes of this thesis, "fundamental ontology" covers Heidegger's work between 1924 and 1930, a period in which he pursues existential analysis as the best way to uncover the meaning of being.²⁰ The thesis is comprised of three chapters. Chapter One formulates the problem of embodiment in terms of Heidegger's ontological concepts. Chapter Two examines and ultimately rejects the possibility that Heidegger's concept of Dasein allows fundamental ontology to evade the problem of embodiment. It thereby secures de Waelhens' demonstration of the central importance and inevitability of this problem in the pursuit of the meaning of being. Chapter Three examines the viability of some basic approaches to the problem of embodiment for fundamental ontology, showing the inadequacy of a purely naturalistic or a purely transcendental approach. Fundamental ontology demands an approach to the problem that avoids both extremes while also

²⁰ The chronology of these works runs as follows: *CT* (Lecture, 1924), *HCT* (Lecture Course, 1925), *BT* (Manuscript published 1927), *BPP* (Lecture Course, 1927), *KPM* (Manuscript published 1929), *FCM* (Lecture course, 1929/30), *WM* (Lecture, 1930).

avoiding transcendental realism—a difficult challenge. The thesis concludes by raising the question of whether this challenge can be met by the approach to embodiment sketched by Heidegger in the recently published *Zollikon Seminars*, a series of seminars led by Heidegger in the 1960s.

Chapter One

The Heideggerian Version of the Problem of Embodiment

1.1 Introduction

In section 23 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger acknowledges that Dasein's "'bodily nature' (*Leiblichkeit*) hides (*birgt*) a whole problematic of its own" but excuses himself from taking it up as a theme of investigation, writing that "we shall not treat it here."²¹ In this passage, not only does Heidegger announce his intention to pass over the phenomenon of Dasein's corporeity, but he also leaves unclarified the precise nature of the problem sheltered therein. The reader is thus left with the question of what this problem amounts to. Alphonse de Waelhens has articulated it in a general way as a central enigma of human existence: how a being can be within the world that it constitutes for itself. The task of this chapter is to articulate this problem, the basic problem of embodiment, in terms of Heidegger's ontological categories. I will show that the problematic concealed in Dasein's bodily nature is the problem of how to conceive of the intersection of extantness (*Vorhandenheit*) and ek-sistence (*Existenz*) in the human body.²²

²¹ *BT*, 143/H108.

²² Heidegger's term *Vorhandenheit* is variously translated. Macquarrie and Robinson render it as "presence-at-hand" in *BT*, and Joan Stambaugh renders it as "objective presence" in her translation of the same work. Albert Hofstadter often opts for "extantness" in *BPP*, as does Michael Heim in *MFL*. In this thesis, I employ both "extantness" and "presence-at-hand" as translations of *Vorhandenheit* in order to distinguish between two senses of this term. I use "extantness" to translate *Vorhandenheit* when it is used in the broad sense of describing all beings other than Dasein, and "presence-at-hand" when *Vorhandenheit* is used in the narrower sense of designating a way in which beings are encountered by Dasein. Support for distinguishing between a broad and narrower sense of *Vorhandenheit* is found in *BT*. In the context of a discussion of how Dasein's ontological characteristics (*Existentialia*) are to be sharply distinguished from the ontological characteristics of beings without the character of Dasein (categories), Heidegger writes,

The articulation of this problem proceeds in three stages. First, I explain Heidegger's concepts of extantness and ek-sistence. After noting that Heidegger does not include the body as an *Existenzial*, or as an essential structure of ek-sistence, I proceed with the second stage, an investigation of the adequacy of the concepts of presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*) and readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*), the two primary modes in which extant beings are encountered in ek-sistence, as ways of conceiving of the human body. Drawing on some insights of Merleau-Ponty, I conclude that neither concept adequately describes the phenomenon of human embodiment on account of the body's constitutive role in ek-sistence. However, the fact that the human body *can* be conceived in terms of presence-at-hand or readiness-to-hand indicates its immanence in the realm of the extant. Stated in terms of Heidegger's ontological categories, the problem of embodiment is how to conceive of the intersection of ek-sistence and extantness in the human body. In the third and final stage of the chapter, I distinguish the problem of embodiment from three other problems implicit in Dasein's corporeity.

1.2 Ek-sistence and Extantness

Ek-sistence can be defined as the mode of being of beings who, in their concern for their own being, constitute time. Extantness is the mode of being of beings which, unconcerned about their own being, enter into time.²³ These preliminary definitions

"*Existentialia* and categories are the two basic possibilities for characters of Being. The entities which correspond to them require different kinds of primary interrogation respectively: any entity is either a "*who*" (existence) or a "*what*" (presence-at-hand in the broadest sense)." *BT*, 71/H45. "Extantness," with its connotation of something's being "out there" or "around" and available for Dasein to encounter in different ways, captures the broader sense of *Vorhandenheit* well.

²³ *CT*, 3, 20.

require elaboration. Because Heidegger's concepts of ek-sistence and extantness are essentially bound up with each other and with his concept of temporality, none of the three concepts can be adequately explained in isolation from the other two. Temporality is the meaning or the ontological condition of the possibility of ek-sistence. Extantness is the ontic condition of the possibility of ek-sistence; that is, it makes ek-sistence possible not by constituting its structure, but by furnishing that out of which and onto which ek-sistence (and therefore temporality) operates. These initial remarks will be clarified in this section in three stages. First, I provide an initial account of ek-sistence as care (*Sorge*). Second, I elucidate two key aspects of care, understanding and attunement. In the third and final stage, I turn to an exposition of the temporality manifested in care and explain the concepts of ek-sistence and extantness in their full temporal significance.

1.2.1 Ek-sistence as Care

Ek-sistence is the mode of being of beings for whom their own being is an issue. This self-concern reveals itself in big questions—What will I do with my life? Will we humans end up destroying ourselves?—as well as in small—Is there enough gas in the car for our trip tomorrow? Will I get to the meeting on time? The use of the future tense in these questions indicates the essentially temporal nature of self-concern: to be concerned about one's own being is to encounter beings in terms of their relevance for one's future. In their concern with the future, self-concerned beings project themselves beyond the present. Heidegger reserves the term "ek-sistence" (*Existenz*) to describe the mode of

being of self-concerned beings; all other beings are extant (*vorhanden*).²⁴ Trees, rocks and houses do not ek-sist; as extant beings, they are beings for which their own being is not an issue.²⁵

In its concern for its own being, the ek-sisting being is constantly occupied with other ek-sisting beings and with the extant beings it encounters in the world, thereby forming a web of relations that Heidegger calls “being-in-the-world” (*In-der-Welt-Sein*). The use of a hyphenated compound to describe the system of relations established in ek-sistence indicates that the being of the ek-sisting being is inseparable from its relating itself to a world. The ek-sisting being is not to be construed as a subject that could in principle have its being independently of the world, or as a being for which perception is a matter of transcending an inner realm in order to access external objects.²⁶ To understand the ek-sisting being in such a way is to understand it as a “what” or as something extant, when the ek-sisting being can only be properly understood as a “how,” that is, in terms of its ways of relating to beings.²⁷ After describing , in the first five chapters of Division One of *Being and Time*, the essential ways of relating to beings that

²⁴ I follow the convention of translating *Existenz* as “ek-sistence” rather than as “existence” because of the former term’s capacity to capture the temporal essence of self-concern through its evocation of the Greek term *ekstatikon* (“stepping-outside-self”). Heidegger points out the connection between *Existenz* and *ekstatikon* in *BT*, 377/H329 and in *BPP*, 267.

²⁵ Heidegger maintains that beings that are merely alive do not ek-sist, since their responsiveness to the beings that surround them does not spring from a self-concern that discloses them *as* beings, i.e. in terms of an understanding of being, but from instinctive striving. *FCM*, 259. Heidegger’s concept of life and its relevance for the problem of embodiment will be discussed in section 1.4.

²⁶ *MFL*, 165/H210-211.

²⁷ *BT*, 67/H42; *CT*, 12-13. In response to thinkers such as Husserl and Scheler who insist that the subject is not to be understood as a thing, Heidegger asserts that as long as the being of this subject is not clearly distinguished from extantness, the interpretation of the human being as a subject fundamentally remains an idea of the human being as something extant. *BT*, 73/H47-48.

make up the phenomenon of being-in-the-world, Heidegger in Chapter Six discerns their common meaning in the phenomenon of care (*Sorge*), thereby articulating self-concern as a formal ontological concept. Heidegger defines care as “ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world).”²⁸ To be constituted by care means to find oneself already relating to the beings one presently finds alongside of oneself in terms of concern for one’s future.²⁹ The revelation of temporality as the condition of the possibility of care is clearly foreshadowed in this definition. I will elucidate ek-sistence and the temporality it manifests by explaining how the phenomenon of understanding embodies the “ahead-of-itself,” that of attunement the “already-in,” and their unity the “along-side.”

1.2.2 Understanding and Attunement

Heidegger conceives of understanding (*Verstehen*) primarily in the sense of “being able to manage something,” “being a match for it,” or “being competent to do something” and not in the sense of cognition.³⁰ We say that someone is competent in an activity when he engages with the beings in question in terms of a familiarity with how these beings are appropriately handled. Thus a competent pilot is someone who deals

²⁸ *BT*, 237/H192.

²⁹ It is on account of the dynamic, temporal nature of care that a definition of being-in-the-world as a complex in which relations exhaustively define their terms can be misleading. Such a definition, while capturing the notion of ek-sistence as a “how” rather than as a “what,” tends to misrepresent being-in-the-world as a static phenomenon on account of the mathematical and logical senses of the concept of relation. Heidegger is recorded as saying, “I myself am the *relationship* [*Beziehung*] to something or to someone with whom I am involved in each case. However, “relationship” is not to be understood here in the modern logical-mathematical sense of relation... Its basic essence is one’s being concerned and letting oneself be concerned....” *ZS*, 185.

³⁰ *BT*, 183/H143.

with the controls in terms of his familiarity with using them to fly planes. As an ontological term, that is, as a term describing an essential structure of ek-sistence, “understanding” does not refer to competence in this or that particular task, but to competence in ek-sisting as such.³¹ Just as the pilot manages flying by engaging with the controls in terms of his previously acquired familiarity with flying planes, so the ek-sisting being “manages” ek-sistence in terms of an implicit “familiarity” with beings as pertaining to its self-concern. All ontic understanding, including the cognition of beings, is made possible by this basic ontological competence.³²

A closer examination of what is involved in competence reveals the phenomenon of projection (*Entwerfen*), thereby providing insight into how temporality is manifested in understanding. Projection is the ontological phenomenon that makes possible the ek-sisting being’s reckoning with the future. Once again we can elucidate an ontological phenomenon by beginning with one of its ontic instantiations. When the pilot reaches for the joystick, he has an expectation of how the airplane will respond to its manipulation. In his competence, he runs ahead of himself; he projects the joystick onto the expectation that lies before him in thought.³³

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Heidegger argues that the theoretical comprehension of beings derives from practical activity. His conception of how this is so will be discussed in the next section, in the context of a discussion of his concepts of presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand.

³³ The pilot thereby encounters the joystick as *meaningful*. Heidegger’s initial definition of meaning in *Being and Time* is “‘the upon which’ of a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something....” *BT*, 193/H151. The activity of flying a plane, as that upon which the pilot projects the controls, constitutes their meaning. Heidegger’s definition of meaning in Division II, section 65, cited in the Introduction, follows naturally from the initial definition. As that upon which the joystick is projected, the activity of flying is the condition of the possibility of the joystick’s intelligibility.

More precisely, the pilot projects the joystick onto his own possibility of flying a plane, where “possibility” refers neither to what is logically possible for the pilot nor to what may contingently befall the pilot, but to a way of being he is in the process of undertaking. While it is logically possible that I could become prime minister, and while I may fall victim to the contingent possibility of becoming ill, the possibilities proper to me as an ek-sisting being are solely those ways of being I actively undertake.³⁴ Thus being prime minister is a possibility for me only to the extent that I have dedicated myself to this goal and am taking steps to attain it. If I merely note that it is not inconceivable that I should one day become prime minister, or if I make my becoming prime minister the object of idle daydreaming, becoming prime minister ceases to be one of my possibilities.³⁵ In its self-concern, the ek-sisting being always already finds itself living out possible ways of being and is continually pushing forward into further possible ways for it to be. Ek-sisting beings are nothing over and above their possibilities; to ek-sist means that one is what one can be. This apparent identification of actuality and possibility is nonsensical only if we think of a human being as something extant. Whereas what is possible for an extant being pertains to it as a contingent property, what is possible for an ek-sisting being is that in terms of which it is projecting itself into the future. Since the essence of ek-sistence is temporalizing, the ek-sisting being is constituted by its projection, entailing that it *is* what it can be. The standing-outside-self of temporality constitutes each individual human being, resulting in the fact that

³⁴ BT, 183/H143.

³⁵ BT, 185/H145.

individual human beings are their possibilities. Whereas for extant beings, actuality takes precedence over possibility, the converse holds true for ek-sisting beings.³⁶

All ontic projection onto one's own possibilities involves the ontological projection of being upon beings: presupposed in the pilot's understanding of the joystick is an understanding that the joystick *is*, though the precise meaning of this "is" is enigmatic. Heidegger writes that the "understanding of Being has already been taken for granted in projecting upon possibilities. In projection, Being is understood, though not ontologically conceived."³⁷ Beings are disclosed (*erschlossen*) as beings in the light of the ek-sisting being's projection of being. The essence or meaning of this projection of being is the temporal dimension of the future. The dimension of the future thus manifests itself, via the understanding of being, in all ontic projection. Though phenomena more explicitly geared towards the future such as planning, worrying and gambling manifest the futural dimension especially clearly, all human comportment towards beings embodies the futural dimension of ek-sistence.³⁸

Ek-sistence manifests the temporal dimension of the past, or of having-been (*Gewesenheit*) in the phenomenon of attunement. "Attunement" is a translation of Heidegger's term *Befindlichkeit*, a play on the German expression "*Wie befinden Sie*

³⁶ *BT*, 183/H144.

³⁷ *BT*, 187/H147.

³⁸ Even comportment that at first glance seems geared wholly towards the past manifests futurity. For instance, when I remember a past experience, the content of my memory is meaningful only insofar as it is tacitly projected upon one of my own possibilities. In other words, my memories gain their significance from an understanding of who I am and where I am going.

sich?” which means “How do you find yourself?” or, more simply, “How are you?”³⁹ Every encounter with beings involves finding oneself amongst them in a certain way, e.g. in an indifferent, light-hearted, or fearful mood (*Stimmung*). Attunement is the ontological structure of ek-sistence that makes moods possible.⁴⁰ Whereas understanding discloses beings as things to be employed for the sake of the ek-sisting being’s possibilities, attunement discloses how beings matter to the ek-sisting being as well as the range of possibilities open to it.⁴¹ For example, a rain shower “matters” in the mode of undesirability when it annuls one’s plans to go to the ballgame. Thus thrown into a grumpy, unresponsive mood, the possibilities offered by the people and things nearest one go largely ignored. Attunement, in disclosing how one is, also discloses *that* one is. Moods bring the ek-sisting being before its “that it is and has to be” or before the bare, inexplicable facticity of its ek-sistence.⁴² Finding itself thrown (*geworfen*) into circumstances upon which it projects its possibilities, the ek-sisting being cannot recall ever having chosen to ek-sist, nor could it—the bare fact of existence, as the ground of all possibilities, itself can never be a possibility upon which one could project oneself. The projection of any possibility presupposes that one already ek-sists. The temporal

³⁹ Macquarrie and Robinson translate *Befindlichkeit* as “state of mind.” I prefer Stambaugh’s “attunement” because it better captures the impersonal nature of *Befindlichkeit*. “State of mind” misleads one into conceiving of *Befindlichkeit* in terms of individual minds, which, as will be shown in the next chapter, is not Heidegger’s intention.

⁴⁰ One might well ask if it is not rather human sensibility that makes moods possible. Heidegger’s response is that it is only possible for sensibility to disclose beings as imbued with an emotional tenor or to disclose *Dasein* as thrown if sensibility is determined by the *a priori* structure of attunement. *BT*, 177/H137. More on this in Chapter Two.

⁴¹ *BT*, 175, 176/H136, 137.

⁴² *BT*, 174/H135.

dimension of the past manifests itself in this uncanny experience of finding oneself in the midst of a life already underway.

Attunement and understanding, as aspects of the single phenomenon of care, are essentially unified: attunement always has its understanding, and understanding is always attuned.⁴³ Together, understanding and attunement disclose the present situation of the ek-sisting being. At present I am sitting in front of my computer, mentally drained. Understanding discloses my computer as a writing instrument; attunement discloses my fatigue, my own facticity, my computer as tiresome, and a definite range of possibilities that includes continuing to write or taking a break. My present situation is thus disclosed: finding myself doggedly writing a thesis, I can continue to project the computer upon the possibility of writing, or I can project the television set upon the possibility of taking a break.⁴⁴ This disclosure of the present through the unity of the future and of having-been in ek-sistence manifests primordial temporality, the exposition of which will allow us to grasp ek-sistence and extantness more profoundly.

1.2.3 Ek-sistence and Extantness in the Light of Temporality

Thus far ek-sistence has been explained as attuned, understanding self-concern. The temporal essence of ek-sistence already indicated in the discussion so far can now be made explicit. Heidegger articulates his concept of temporality in contrast to what he

⁴³ *BT*, 182/H142-143.

⁴⁴ While such concrete, ontic situations can be used to clearly illustrate how ontological structures condition our possible ways of dealing with beings, it should be borne in mind that these same structures also condition possible ways of understanding *being*. For Heidegger, the aim of philosophy is not merely to discover the conditions of the possibility for our dealings with beings, but to elicit a transformation in

calls the ordinary (*vulgär*) notion of time. According to this ordinary notion, time is understood “as a succession, as a ‘flowing stream’ of ‘nows’” without beginning or end.⁴⁵ Under this conception of time, only the present can properly be said to exist. Saint Augustine expresses the notion of the primacy of the present in his famous meditation on time: “If the future and past do exist, I want to know where they are.... For if, wherever they are, they are future, they do not yet exist; if past, they no longer exist. So wherever they are and whatever they are, it is only by being present that they *are*.”⁴⁶ For the ordinary understanding, the “now” arises from the nothingness of the not-yet into the being of the present, only to vanish into the nothingness of the no-longer, making way for the next “now.” Such a conception of time betrays an ontological bias towards presence in two ways: the “now” is both the ever-present window through which the succession of “nows” passes, and the momentarily present “now” that passes through this window. In both senses, time is implicitly thought as something that is somehow present in the way that objects are present for a subject.⁴⁷

Heidegger argues that the ordinary notion of time conceals a primordial temporality from which it is derived.⁴⁸ Temporality is neither a succession of beings (“nows”) nor a being (the “window”) through which these beings pass. Temporality, as that in terms of which not only beings, but being itself, is understood, “is” not a being.

our understanding of being. In other words, Heidegger’s ultimate concern is with *ontological* possibility, and not merely with the ontic variety.

⁴⁵ *BT*, 474/H422.

⁴⁶ Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), 271.

⁴⁷ *BT*, 475/H423.

Here Heidegger runs into the same linguistic difficulty encountered in discussing being, namely the need to use the verb “to be” to describe what makes the use of this verb possible. He writes, “Temporality ‘is’ not an *entity* [a being] at all. It is not, but it *temporalizes* itself [*zeitigt sich*].”⁴⁹ Temporalizing “is” a singular event in which future, present and past differentiate themselves from one another while maintaining an inner unity. In differentiating itself into future, present and past, temporality is constituted by an *ekstatikon*, a stepping-outside-self.⁵⁰ With this Greek term in mind, Heidegger calls the phenomena of the past, present and future the “ecstases” (*Ekstasen*) of temporality.⁵¹ In this process, the ecstasis of the future, and not that of the present, is primary. As manifested in the unity of understanding and attunement, temporalizing gives birth to the present when, in the inner unity of temporalizing, the futural ecstasis is drawn back towards the ecstasis of “having-been” (*Gewesenheit*).⁵² Heidegger’s analysis of temporality strips presence of its ontological priority, not by asserting that the future or the past *are*, but by uncovering a futural, ecstatic temporality that, properly speaking, is not, but in terms of which being is understood.

The ordinary understanding’s failure to distinguish ek-sistence as a distinct mode of being stems from the same ontological bias towards presence that is behind its failure to see the phenomenon of primordial temporality. Failing to see the phenomenon of ek-

⁴⁸ Since a discussion of how primordial temporality generates the ordinary conception of time is not required in order to explain the concepts of ek-sistence and extantness, I will forego such a discussion here. The interested reader is referred to Section 81 of *Being and Time*.

⁴⁹ *BT*, 377/H328.

⁵⁰ *BPP*, 267. Cf. also *BT*, 377/H329.

⁵¹ *BT*, 377/H329.

sistence, the ordinary understanding conceives of all beings as extant. *Vorhandenheit*, like *Existenz*, has a temporal connotation: extant beings are *present*, and in two senses. Taken in themselves, extant beings are present in the sense that, unconcerned with their own being, they do not ecstatically project themselves upon a future. The presence of extant beings taken in themselves is wholly negative: lacking a temporal horizon, extant beings are atemporal.⁵³

The presence of extant beings takes on a positive sense when they are considered in their relation to ek-sistence. In its self-concern, the ek-sisting being projects these beings onto its own ecstatic temporal horizon, thereby making them present to itself. The ordinary understanding, having missed the phenomenon of primordial temporality, interprets the presence of extant beings as their momentary appearance in the present. Extant beings are interpreted as being “within” time: having made their brief appearance in the “now” segment of the timeline, they move further along into the obscurity of the past. Since ek-sistence is the manifestation of ecstatic temporality, a failure to see the latter phenomenon entails a failure to see the former. Thus ek-sisting beings are also interpreted as being present in the same way: they, like all beings, pass through time. As for the ek-sisting being’s awareness of a temporal horizon, it is interpreted as something “subjective.” The temporal horizon is the subject’s perspective on the real, objective time through which it passes. The uniform interpretation of the relation between beings and time as one of “within-time-ness” (*Innerzeitigkeit*) entails the uniform interpretation of

⁵² BT, 374/H326.

⁵³ BT, 472/H420.

being as extantness. Ek-sisting beings are reduced to the level of extantness by interpreting them as present both in the sense of having being only insofar as they appear in the “now,” and in the sense of atemporality—not by denying that they are temporal, but by denying that their temporality constitutes their essence.

1.3 The Inadequacy of the Concepts of Presence-at-Hand and Readiness-to-Hand as Descriptions of Bodily Experience

Given that Heidegger does not count corporeity as an essential structure of ek-sistence in *Being and Time*, it would seem that the body must be conceived as something extant. The body would be one more being, albeit a privileged one, that the ek-sisting being projects onto its own possibilities. One is inclined to reject such a notion from the outset since it might imply some sort of dualism, an implication seemingly at odds with the anti-Cartesian import of Heidegger’s philosophy.⁵⁴ But before raising the question of whether and in what sense fundamental ontology entails mind/body dualism, one must first understand the precise nature of the problem to which dualism would be a response. In this section I will show that the concept of extantness cannot adequately describe the phenomenon of embodiment. The body is not only encountered as something exterior to the ek-sisting being, but as constitutive of ek-sistence itself. This means that the problem of embodiment in Heidegger is not a problem of how the ek-sisting being projects itself upon its body as something wholly extant, but is rather the problem of how ek-sistence and extantness converge in the human body itself. This section proceeds first by

⁵⁴ David Cerbone, “Heidegger and Dasein’s ‘Bodily Nature’: What is the Hidden Problematic?” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 8, no. 2 (2000): 217.

explaining Heidegger's concepts of presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand as the primary modes in which extant beings are encountered, and then by demonstrating the inadequacy of these concepts as descriptions of bodily experience.

Heidegger identifies two main modes in which extant beings are encountered in ek-sistence: presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand.⁵⁵ Beings are encountered as ready-to-hand when they are understood as having a practical function. To return to the example of the pilot: when he encounters the joystick as something to be used for flying, he encounters it as something ready-to-hand. Ready-to-hand beings are always encountered in terms of a network of references grounded in a goal. The primary relationships that make up this network are the "in-order-to" (*das Um-zu*), a being's immediate purpose within an activity, the "towards-which" (*das Wozu*), the intended product of an activity, be it a manufactured thing or a state of affairs, and the "for-the-sake-of-which" (*das Um-willen*), the existential possibility for which the activity is undertaken.⁵⁶ The pilot understands the joystick as being *in order to* manoeuvre, manoeuvring is undertaken *towards* the goal of reaching a destination, and flying, with its complex network of references, is undertaken *for the sake of* being a pilot. Taken in isolation from other things, a being can never be ready-to-hand. As something for flying, the joystick is only functional insofar as it refers to other instruments and mechanical parts with which it forms a system (the "with-which," *das Wobei*).⁵⁷ Because everyday

⁵⁵ Heidegger also mentions life, language and space as exhibiting ambiguous modes of being that fall outside of ek-sistence, presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand. *BT*, 75/H50, 209/H166, 147/H112.

⁵⁶ *BT*, 98-101/H69-72.

⁵⁷ *BT*, 117/H85.

ek-sistence is a primarily a matter of making use of beings (doorknobs, stairs, and so on), readiness-to-hand is the basic mode in which beings are encountered.

Beings are encountered as present-at-hand when they are encountered without regard to their involvement in the referential totality constitutive of practical activity, thus revealing the properties they possess independently of the use we make of them.⁵⁸ Since, for Heidegger, the ek-sisting being is originally and for the most part oriented towards other beings in a practical mode, the encounter with beings as present-at-hand is derivative upon encountering them as ready-to-hand—beings emerge as present-at-hand when something goes wrong in practical activity. When, for example, a tool breaks, goes missing, or gets in the way, it emerges from its embeddedness in a referential system and emerges as a naked thing, as something that is stubbornly “just there.”⁵⁹ When we examine beings theoretically, we encounter them as present-at-hand, though encountering one being as present-at-hand often requires engaging with others as ready-to-hand. Ascertaining the nature of something present-at-hand underneath the microscope involves dealing with ready-to-hand beings such as the microscope, slides, saline, and so forth.⁶⁰

Neither readiness-to-hand nor presence-at-hand are appropriate categories for describing the body’s role in ek-sisting. Conceived as something present-at-hand, my own body would be encountered as the one object in my perceptual field that remains

⁵⁸ *BT*, 101/H71.

⁵⁹ *BT*, 102-103/H73-74.

⁶⁰ It is perhaps in ontology, beginning as it does with *thaumazein*, “observing entities and marvelling at them” and in which we step back from beings and behold them in their totality, that we experience our most radical break with beings as ready-to-hand. *BT*, 216/H172. In its purely theoretical attitude, ontology

with me throughout all the changes of my location. On the surface, such a description of the body seems plausible, since it is undeniable that whereas things come and go throughout the flux of experience, my body remains with me throughout. But a closer examination of the body's constant presence reveals that this presence is of a fundamentally different kind than that of beings present-at-hand. Whereas present-at-hand beings continually emerge into presence and fall back into absence, the body functions as what Maurice Merleau-Ponty calls the "primordial field" by which beings become present.⁶¹ The position of my body determines the perspective in which beings are present to me; with bodily motion new perspectives unfold; the range and clarity in which beings can become present to me depends on the strength of the body's powers of perception. Merleau-Ponty calls the body, as that by which objects are given to me, the "lived body" (*le corps vécu*) in distinction from the body taken as an object amongst others, which he calls the "objective body" (*le corps objectif*). The objective body is itself one of the objects given on the basis of the lived body. We experience this vividly in the phenomenon of "double sensation": grasping my right arm with my left hand, I experience my arm as an object of perception and my hand as that through which I perceive, or alternately, my hand as an object of perception and my arm as that through

tends to miss the phenomenon of readiness-to-hand, since beings are ready-to-hand precisely insofar as they withdraw from theoretical view. *BT*, 99/H69.

⁶¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), 92.

which I perceive.⁶² As long as one takes the body as something present-at-hand and nothing more, one fails to see the body as the primordial field in terms of which beings appear as present-at-hand.⁶³

The category of readiness-to-hand seems a more promising way to describe the ek-sisting being's relation to its body, and for three reasons. First, one could construe the body as a ready-to-hand being insofar as it takes its place alongside of other ready-to-hand beings in a referential totality.⁶⁴ When I reach for a glass of wine, I understand my arm as something to be used *in order to* reach for things, reaching is undertaken *towards* the goal of taking a sip, and my reaching is undertaken *for the sake of* my being a wine connoisseur. As a (very versatile) item of equipment, my arm would inhere in the practical system that includes the corkscrew, the cork, the bottle, and so on. Second, one could construe the body as constituting a referential totality of its own.⁶⁵ A hand can only function as a hand insofar as it belongs to an arm, an arm insofar as it is connected to a torso, and so on. Third, the body, like a tool, is inconspicuous when it functions

⁶² The term "double sensation" is slightly misleading here. At any given moment, one can either be aware of one's own body as the object or as the channel of perception, but never as both. There is no double sensation in a single moment; the double sensation is constituted by alternating the object of attention from moment to moment. Merleau-Ponty, 93.

⁶³ Whereas beings that are present-at-hand are always potentially absent, it is perhaps the case that, as Merleau-Ponty claims, the absence of one's own lived body is inconceivable. Merleau-Ponty, 91. When one imagines or dreams that one perceives beings without oneself being perceived, as in the fantasy of being invisible, the lived body is still implicated, insofar as such fantasies still involve finding oneself situated in the midst of beings, sensing and engaging with them in terms of a medium intimately present to oneself. The invisible or permeable body is simply a body with fantastic powers. To attempt to imagine oneself as completely disembodied is to attempt to imagine oneself as free of perspective. Were it possible to imagine this vividly, one would catch a glimpse of what it is like to be God, who, as a completely self-coincident being that immediately intuits the totality of beings in an eternal now, does not *ek-sist*. The absence of one's own body and one's being in a mode other than that of ek-sisting are conceivable to the same degree.

⁶⁴ Cerbone, 218.

smoothly. The pilot uses his hands as easily and unreflectively as he handles the radio, and, like a radio, his hand only emerges as something stubbornly present-at-hand when it goes missing (falls asleep), gets in the way (as it did when he was a clumsy adolescent) or breaks (gets injured).

Considering each of these three reasons in turn reveals the inadequacy of the category of readiness-to-hand as a description of the lived body. The first reason fails to take into account an essential difference between my own body and a tool: whereas a tool can be employed by anyone, my body is solely *mine*. A hammer can be used in the same way by anyone who chances to come across it, but the way I use my arm and the way someone else might use it are essentially distinct. Whereas I move my own arm directly, without requiring any intermediate device for doing so, I can only move someone else's arm indirectly, via my own body.⁶⁶ The parts of my body, unlike the tools that surround me, are incorporated into myself. Heidegger states that it belongs to the essence of equipment *not* to be so incorporated; the public availability of something for a definite purpose—its “readiness” (*Fertigkeit*)—is an essential aspect of equipment.⁶⁷ The body, as I live it, is not publicly available for use and is not ready-to-hand.

The second reason for the readiness-to-hand of the body fails because it draws a false distinction between the lived body and the world. I experience my own body and the publicly accessible world as facets of a single system.⁶⁸ Merleau-Ponty writes,

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Cerbone, 220.

⁶⁷ *FCM*, 220.

⁶⁸ Merleau-Ponty, 106.

“Every external perception is immediately synonymous with a certain perception of my body, just as every perception of my body is made explicit in the language of external perception.”⁶⁹ When I lean over a table with the intention of grasping a glass of water, the glass momentarily forms the focal point of my world, and my lived body, falling into line behind my intention, is experienced as trailing behind the outward movement of my hand. Although the degree to which the lived body or the world dominates one’s attention constantly fluctuates, one is rarely, if ever, experienced in complete independence from the other. Further, in those cases in which the lived body dominates to a high degree, such as in a case of intense pain, one experiences the formlessness of the lived body taken in itself. In a pain so extreme as to block out all awareness of the external world, consciousness is dissolved into an amorphous mass. It is only with the alleviation of the pain and the re-emergence of consciousness of my being situated in a world that the structure of my own body re-asserts itself. Lacking structure in isolation, the lived body cannot constitute a referential totality of its own.

The third reason for the readiness-to-hand of the body involves drawing an unwarranted conclusion from a true premise. While it is true that the smoothly functioning body is inconspicuous, this fact does not provide a sufficient basis for classifying the body solely as a ready-to-hand extant being. The inconspicuousness of the body is not that of a good tool, but that of the horizon in terms of which beings emerge both as tools and as objects of contemplation. The lived body is like “the darkness

⁶⁹ Merleau-Ponty, 206.

needed in the theatre to show up the performance”; like any good backdrop, it escapes attention in its function as that by which beings are presented for attention.⁷⁰ To infer from the body’s inconspicuousness that it is a ready-to-hand being is to fail to consider the unique nature of this inconspicuousness.⁷¹

1.4 The Intersection of Ek-sistence and Extantness in the Human Body and Other Problems Pertaining to Dasein’s Corporeity

The upshot of all of the above arguments against the concepts of presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand as adequate descriptions of our bodily experience is that the body is not something incidental to ek-sistence, but partially constitutive of it.⁷² Nevertheless, it is clear that neither concept is *completely* inadequate as a description of the human body since we encounter the body as something extant in both modes all the time. It is on the basis of its present-at-hand dimension that the ek-sisting being can be made the object of the natural and social sciences. And, though it requires violence to do so, the body can certainly be approached as something ready-to-hand, as slavery and other forms of subjugation demonstrate.⁷³ The human body can be encountered as present-at-hand and

⁷⁰ Merleau-Ponty, 100.

⁷¹ Brian Bowles argues that the body should not be conceived as something ready-to-hand because this would entail that the body properly is as long as we do not pay attention to it, with the result that “falling into ditches, tripping over obstacles, and getting hit by things in the world would be the norm for human existence, which is obviously an absurdity.” Bowles, “Heidegger and the Absence of Body: The *Zollikoner Seminare*,” *International Studies in Philosophy* 33, no. 2 (2001): 6. The problem with this argument is that it assumes that the readiness-to-hand of a being entails not paying attention to it. But to engage with a being as ready-to-hand is to be oblivious not to the being itself, but to its present-at-hand properties, and both hammers and the body function well insofar as they do not emerge as present-at-hand.

⁷² The body’s status as a constitutive element in ek-sistence accounts for the peculiar, unarticulated ubiquity of the body in the existential analytic, a ubiquity noted by Bowles (3).

⁷³ The body is also encountered as ready-to-hand in the much more benign context of gesturing. David Cerbone rightly argues that approaching the other’s body as something present-at-hand conceals the gestural character of its movements. Approached wholly as something present-at-hand, the waving arm of

as ready-to-hand because it is extant; neither category is sufficient as a description of the body because it is integrated into ek-sistence. Ek-sistence and extantness somehow intersect in the human body—rendering this intersection intelligible is the Heideggerian version of the problem of embodiment.

The problem of embodiment is not the only problem sheltered in Dasein's bodily nature. The corporeity of Dasein means not only that the ek-sisting being is extant, but also that it is alive. For Heidegger, ek-sistence and life are distinct modes of being. Whereas ek-sisting beings project beings upon possible ways of being, thereby understanding them *as* beings, merely living beings are constituted by a collection of drives that are automatically activated by coming into contact with the appropriate stimuli.⁷⁴ Whereas a flower instinctively reacts to the sun as the occasion for blooming, human beings understand the sun as the herald of a new day of work, as the eye of the god Varuna, or as a ball of burning gas. Only human beings encounter the sun in terms of these economic, religious or scientific possibilities. Given Heidegger's strict distinction between ek-sistence and life, and given the fact that embodied, ek-sisting beings are subject to instinctual drives and biological processes, the problem arises as to how life

another person could be understood as traversing a certain path through space at a definite velocity, but the significance of this motion as a wave or as an attempt to hail a cab would be missed. Cerbone, 217. What Cerbone does not note is that this argument, while demonstrating that the other's body is not encountered as something present-at-hand in everyday life, indicates that the gesturing body is rather encountered as something ready-to-hand. How the understanding of gestures involves approaching the other's body as something present-at-hand is shown by considering gestures that provide direction. When the other directs my attention to an object by pointing at it, his arm functions as a sign, that is, as a ready-to-hand being whose function in a referential totality is to make the totality of references explicit so that one can find one's way about in it. *BT*, 110/H80.

⁷⁴ *FCM*, 259.

and ek-sistence are related in the living, ek-sisting being.⁷⁵

Some commentators argue that this problem is the only one sheltered in Dasein's bodily nature. In his study of the concept of life in Heidegger's thought, David Farrell Krell asserts that "the only real problem with the body of Dasein is that it is alive."⁷⁶ David Cerbone makes the same claim when he identifies the problem hinted at in section 23 of *Being and Time* as that of sorting out "what features of our embodiment mark our kinship with the beast, as opposed to what in or about our bodies is 'essentially other' than animal."⁷⁷ If Cerbone and Krell are right in their claims that the problem of the intersection of ek-sistence and life in the human body is *the* problem posed by Dasein's corporeity, then my formulation of the Heideggerian version of the problem of embodiment either misses the problem entirely or, insofar as living beings are also extant, approaches the problem in a roundabout way.

This chapter's explication of ek-sistence and extantness and its demonstration of their necessary and problematic coincidence in the body of the ek-sisting being should be sufficient to fend off the first charge. With regard to the second, one must note that although the relation between ek-sistence and life in the human body is a genuine

⁷⁵ A second ontological problem resulting from Heidegger's sharp distinction between ek-sistence and life is how to conceive of the temporality of life. Since ek-sistence is essentially temporality, the non-ek-sistence of plants and animals entails their non-temporality. But since living beings, unlike extant beings, do encounter beings in their environment, their relation to time cannot be the within-time-ness of the extant. Heidegger's notion of life as a mode of being distinct from both ek-sistence and extantness thus requires the positing of some mysterious third form of time specific to life. Didier Franck, "Being and Living" in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, ed. Eduardo Cadava et. al (New York: Routledge, 1991), 145. Heidegger himself raises this murky idea: "It remains a problem... how and where the Being of animals, for instance, is constituted by some kind of 'time'." *BT*, 396/H346.

⁷⁶ Krell, 54.

⁷⁷ Cerbone, 225.

problem resulting from Dasein's corporeity, it does not constitute the problem of embodiment proper. The problem of embodiment is that of how a being is immanent in the world it constitutes for itself. Even if Heidegger were able to provide an account of the temporality of life and to explain how life and ek-sistence are related in the ek-sisting being, the problem would remain of how both living and ek-sisting/living beings are immanent in the non-temporal extant upon which they project themselves. While the relations between ek-sistence and life and between life and extantness are also problems sheltered in Dasein's bodily nature, the problem of the relation between ek-sistence and extantness is more fundamental.

Another problem resulting from Dasein's corporeity is that of the relation between spatiality and temporality in Heidegger's thought. The ek-sisting being's engagement with beings is ineliminably spatial. The spatiality proper to the ek-sisting being is not that of an extant being that occupies a volume of space at a unique set of spatial coordinates. Rather, the ek-sisting being's spatiality, like every other essential characteristic of this being, is to be conceived ek-sistentially, or in terms of this being's *how*. Heidegger describes the spatiality of ek-sistence as de-distancing (*Ent-fernung*) and directionality (*Ausrichtung*). The ek-sisting being encounters beings first and foremost as ready-to-hand, and in this encounter, it reduces the "distance" separating it from a being when the being becomes the object of concerned attention. Heidegger illustrates the difference between extant and ek-sistential spatiality in his example of spotting a friend approaching in the distance: at the moment I wave to my friend, he, as the object of my

concern, is “closer” to me than is the sidewalk beneath my feet.⁷⁸ Further, de-distancing always involves directionality: to engage with beings means to find them to the left or the right, above or below, and so on.⁷⁹ My friend approaches me from a definite direction.

In Division Two of *Being and Time*, having shown that the meaning of existence is temporality, Heidegger must show how all of the *Existenzialen* uncovered in Division One, including spatiality, are grounded in temporality. He argues that existential spatiality must be understood in terms of temporality because to de-distance a being always means to bring it into the horizon of the present.⁸⁰ But it is noteworthy that in this section Heidegger explains the temporality of spatiality primarily with reference to de-distancing, and not with reference to directionality. While he asserts that making-present also makes directionality possible, he does not specify how this is so.⁸¹ It seems likely that a major reason for Heidegger’s emphasis on de-distancing over directionality in this section is the latter’s implication of embodiment. In *History of the Concept of Time*, Heidegger had admitted the link between directionality and embodiment with surprising frankness:

It is because Dasein in its being is oriented in-being that there is *right* and *left*. More accurately put, *because oriented Dasein is corporeal Dasein* [italics mine], corporeality is necessarily oriented. The orientation of apprehension and looking articulates the ‘straight ahead’ and the ‘to the right and left.’ Dasein is oriented as corporeal, as corporeal it is in each instance its right and left, and that is why the parts of the body are

⁷⁸ BT, 141-142/H107. While such de-distancing often involves reducing the objective distance between a being and one’s own body, as when our pilot reaches for the joystick, this need not always be the case, as when, for example, one de-distances a friend by making a telephone call.

⁷⁹ BT, 143/H108.

⁸⁰ BT, 420/H369.

⁸¹ BT, 420/H369.

also right and left parts. Accordingly, it belongs to the being of bodily things that they are co-constituted by orientation.⁸²

The directionality of ek-sistential spatiality means that the ek-sisting being is one extant, corporeal being amongst others. Since ek-sistential spatiality entails the extantness of the ek-sisting being, and since extant beings are atemporal, the spatiality of ek-sistence resists being reduced to temporality. The irreducibility of spatiality to temporality raises important issues in the overall development of Heidegger's thought.⁸³ But since the present work is confined to the fundamental ontological works of the mid- to late 1920s, and since the problem of embodiment, as the problem of the relation between ek-sistence and extantness, is at any rate fundamental to the larger question of the relation between temporality and spatiality in Heidegger's thought, this work ignores the latter question.

A complete study of the problems sheltered in Dasein's bodily nature would examine the intersection not only of ek-sistence and extantness, but of ek-sistence and life and of life and extantness, as well as the problematic relation between spatiality and temporality that arises from these intersections. The present work, as a study of the problem of embodiment in fundamental ontology, limits itself to the most basic problem: how to conceive of the intersection of ek-sistence and extantness in the human body.

The task of this chapter has been to articulate the problem of embodiment in terms of Heidegger's fundamental ontology. At the beginning of the chapter, ek-sistence was

⁸² *HCT*, 232. This passage shows that it is no accident that the issue of Dasein's "bodily nature" should arise in *Being and Time* just where it does, in the context of the analysis of spatiality.

defined as the mode of being constitutive of time and extantness as the mode of being of beings that enter into time. By way of an explication of understanding and attunement, two basic structures of care, these initial definitions were elaborated and reformulated: ek-sistence is essentially ecstatic temporality, and extantness atemporality. Having explicated these two modes of being, I turned to the question of whether the human body can be adequately accounted for wholly in terms of either mode. Drawing on the phenomenological insights of Merleau-Ponty, I showed that the body is not something wholly extant and external to ek-sistence, but a constitutive factor of ek-sistence itself. Nevertheless, the body is also extant. Extantness thus reveals itself to be essential to ek-sistence, giving rise to the Heideggerian version of the problem of embodiment: how are we to conceive of the intersection of ek-sistence and extantness in the human body?

Now that this problem has been articulated and distinguished from other problems involved in Dasein's bodily nature, we can turn to an examination of how Heidegger deals with this problem. Since being extant is a necessary condition of ek-sistence, it would seem that fundamental ontology cannot ignore embodiment. The ek-sisting being, ostensibly identical with Dasein, can only encounter beings insofar as it shares in their extantness, which means that being extant must belong to the essence of Dasein, and that embodiment must therefore be included as one of the essential structures of Dasein described in fundamental ontology. Once embodiment is admitted as an *Existenzial*, the problem of embodiment becomes crucial for the existential analytic. To make Dasein

⁸³ Didier Franck explores these issues in his *Heidegger et le Problème de l'Espace* (Paris: Les éditions de minuit, 1986), as does Craig Cramm in his "Time, Event, Place: Heidegger on Spatiality" (M.A. thesis,

intelligible Heidegger must explain how its body marks the coincidence of the order of meaning relations involved in ek-sistence with the order of causal relations involved in extantness. But it remains to be seen exactly what Heidegger means by “Dasein,” and whether the meaning of this crucial term allows Heidegger to skirt the problem of embodiment. If Dasein is not identical with the ek-sisting being, Dasein may not need to be embodied. And since it is Dasein that is the object of analysis in the existential analytic, the problem of embodiment may not be central to fundamental ontology after all. In order to secure the importance of the problem of embodiment is central to fundamental ontology, the precise meaning of “Dasein” must be determined.

Chapter Two

The Concept of Dasein and the Inevitability of the Problem of Embodiment for Fundamental Ontology

2.1 Introduction

Alphonse de Waelhens points out the central importance of the problem of embodiment for fundamental ontology: as long as Heidegger does not explain how ek-sistence and extantness coincide in Dasein's body, ek-sistence, and the understanding of being it elaborates, remains fundamentally opaque. De Waelhens' argument rests on the apparently unproblematic assumption that Dasein is indeed embodied. If we take "Dasein" to function simply as Heidegger's name for the ek-sisting human being, then the necessity of Dasein's embodiment would have been demonstrated in the previous chapter, where it was shown that the ek-sisting being must be extant in order to ek-sist. But, as this chapter will show, Heidegger's use of the term "Dasein" is not so straightforward. Whereas Heidegger often uses "Dasein" to denote individual, ek-sisting human beings, his frequent use of such phrases as "the Dasein of man" suggests that Dasein is something singular that is distinct from individual human beings and to which human beings somehow relate.⁸⁴ Such a distinction between human beings and Dasein raises the

⁸⁴ Examples of Heidegger's use of "Dasein" to refer to individual human beings are his references to "any Dasein" in *BPP*, 221, "Daseins" in *BPP*, 289, "one Dasein and another" in *BPP*, 210, and "every Dasein" in *BT*, 84/H57, 206/H163. In addition to his phrase "the Dasein of man," in *KPM*, 177, 178, in *FCM*, 255, and in *WM*, 31, 32, 33, other examples of Heidegger's use of "Dasein" as something distinct from human beings are his references to "our Dasein," in *FCM*, 100, 114, 115, 117, 162 and in *WM*, 30, 40, "human Dasein," in *CT*, 6 and in *BPP*, 221, and to Dasein as "human life" in *CT*, 6, 12. Heidegger also indicates that Dasein is distinct from human beings in his description of Dasein in *WM*, 14 as the region of being in which man stands and in his remark that "Dasein as such is demanded of man...." *FCM*, 165. Heidegger's

possibility that being extant, though essential to human ek-sistence, is not essential to Dasein. Whereas human beings can be seen, touched and heard alongside of other extant beings, the Dasein they share eludes the senses. Since it is Dasein that is the object of the existential analytic, extantness could therefore be justifiably excluded as an *Existenzial*, and the problem of embodiment relegated away from fundamental ontology proper and to some other ontological discipline that would have fundamental ontology as its basis.

In this chapter, I argue that although Heidegger indeed distinguishes Dasein from human beings, this distinction is not sufficient to undermine the requirement that Dasein be extant, and that embodiment therefore requires explication in fundamental ontology proper. The development of this argument proceeds in three main stages. In the first stage, I distinguish two senses of “Dasein.” In the first sense of the term, “Dasein” denotes the ecstatically temporal event of the manifestation of beings as beings, or the event of ontological difference. In its second sense, “Dasein” denotes the human being, one of the beings manifested in this event. After showing that the first sense of “Dasein” is primary in fundamental ontology, I proceed with the second stage, which is to point out how the distinction between the two senses of “Dasein” and Heidegger’s emphasis on Dasein as the event of ontological difference might lead one to conclude that this event could occur independently of extant human bodies. Were this the case, being extant would be contingent to Dasein—one could, with Hubert Dreyfus, maintain that Dasein is

ambivalent use of “Dasein” is noted by de Waelhens in *La Philosophie de Martin Heidegger* (Louvain: Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1971), 311.

essentially disembodied.⁸⁵ A consequence of maintaining Dreyfus' position is that the problem of embodiment would be most properly addressed not within the existential analytic, but within the metaphysics of Dasein, a secondary stage in fundamental ontology.

In the third stage, I argue against Dreyfus' interpretation of Dasein as essentially disembodied by showing that spatiality and attunement, two essential structures of the event of ontological difference, would not be possible without the presence of the human body. The extantness of the human being is thus a necessary condition for the event of ontological difference. The first sense of "Dasein" presupposes the second, and the problem of embodiment cannot be evaded in fundamental ontology proper.

2.2 The Two Senses of "Dasein" and the Primacy of the First Sense in Fundamental Ontology

Dasein is the being we in each case are.⁸⁶ The being here referred to is not something extant, as if each human being were ultimately identical with a world-soul or participated in a "sea of Dasein."⁸⁷ When Heidegger describes Dasein as the being we in each case are, he is not referring to anything extant, but to our way of being, or ek-sistence. "*The 'essence' of Dasein lies in its existence [Existenz].*"⁸⁸ Heidegger places "essence" in scare quotes to indicate his uneasiness with the term in its traditional sense:

⁸⁵ Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 41, 137,

⁸⁶ *BT*, 27/H7.

⁸⁷ I take this expression from Rebecca Kukla, "The Ontology and Temporality of Conscience" in *Continental Philosophy Review* 35 (2002): 16.

⁸⁸ *BT*, 67/H42.

although it is true that *what* we are, or that which makes us what we are, is ek-sistence, this “what” is not a “what” at all, but a “how.” Ek-sistence is a way of being marked by self-concern, understanding and attunement and made possible by ecstatic temporality. Since this way of being means to be in such a way that one is nothing over and above one’s engagement with beings, to ek-sist means to be *Dasein*—to ek-sist means to be (*Sein*) one’s “there” (*Da*), or to be constituted by the web of relations that define one’s ek-sistential situation. *Dasein* is made the object of analysis for fundamental ontology because its occurrence involves a non-conceptual, pre-ontological understanding of the meaning of being. That in terms of which beings are encountered as familiar is ultimately always *being*, and that in terms of which being is familiar is the futural ecstasis of temporality. But what is it by virtue of which we are familiar with temporality? Heidegger responds to this question by stating that here the sequence of aprioricity comes to an end, since we, as *Dasein*, just are temporality.⁸⁹ *Dasein*, then, is a way of being constituted by the occurrence of primordial temporality in which beings become manifest in terms of being.

Dasein can be described more succinctly as the event of ontological difference. The ontological difference is the difference between *beings* (*das Seiende*), or that which is, and *being* (*Sein*), or that in terms of which we understand what it means for beings to be. As that which renders beings intelligible, being is different than beings. Yet being is

⁸⁹ *BPP*, 308/H437.

also inseparable from beings—since it is not itself something which is, being can never be encountered on its own, in isolation from beings.⁹⁰ Being always belongs to beings, not in the sense that beings somehow contain being in any literal, spatial sense, but in the sense that beings only have being insofar as they are encountered in Dasein.⁹¹ It is only with the occurrence of Dasein that beings emerge in the light of being, or that being and beings become differentiated. As the occurrence of primordial temporality in which the difference between being and beings happens, Dasein is the event of ontological difference.

In addition to denoting the event of ontological difference, “Dasein” also denotes human beings. For Heidegger, “this human Dasein is itself a being and thus also falls under the question of the being of beings.”⁹² In this second sense of the term, “Dasein” sometimes refers to the human individual, and sometimes to a plurality of individuals.⁹³ Since Dasein, as an individual human being or as a human collective, is a being amongst others, Heidegger can speak of Dasein as the ontic condition of possibility of the manifestation of beings.⁹⁴ Human beings are required in order for the event of the manifestation of all beings, including human beings themselves, in the light of being.

⁹⁰ To say that being is not sounds paradoxical, but is a necessary consequence of the idea of ontological difference. As different than beings, being cannot be found in the domain of that which is. Whereas beings are, “there is,” or better, “it gives” (*es gibt*) being. Being is given when Dasein occurs.

⁹¹ Whether or not Heidegger’s notion of ontological difference commits him to idealism will be discussed in Chapter Three.

⁹² *MFL*, 16.

⁹³ “Dasein” refers to human individuals when Heidegger writes that “even in its fullest concretion Dasein can be characterized by inauthenticity—when busy, when excited, when interested, when ready for enjoyment.” *BT*, 68/H43. “Dasein” refers to humanity in general when Heidegger speaks of a “primitive stage of Dasein.” *BT*, 76/H51.

⁹⁴ *BT*, 120/H87, 255/H212.

Heidegger uses “Dasein” in this second sense when he states that being-in-the-world, the web of relations that is the elaboration of the understanding of being, is a basic state or constitution (*Verfassung*) of Dasein, and that being-in-the-world is “a state of Dasein which is necessary *a priori*, but it is far from sufficient for completely determining Dasein’s Being.”⁹⁵ When “Dasein” refers to human beings, it refers to beings that are constituted not only by ek-sistence, but by life and extantness.

By keeping the twofold sense of “Dasein” in mind, light can be shed on some apparently contradictory statements made by Heidegger with regard to Dasein. On the one hand, Heidegger writes that “Dasein cannot be proven as an entity, it cannot even be pointed out. The primary relation to Dasein is not that of contemplation, but ‘*being it*.’”⁹⁶ Dasein is not something we come across alongside of other beings; it is not something that can be looked at. Rather, Dasein is only known insofar as it is our way of being. Thus the fact that Dasein is not present-at-hand within space and time “needs no further discussion.”⁹⁷ On the other hand, Heidegger writes that Dasein involves “simultaneously being present at hand for Others, namely, just as a stone is there which neither has nor is concerned with a world there” and that “like any other entity, *Dasein* too is *present-at-hand*....”⁹⁸ Such apparently contradictory statements can be reconciled by interpreting the former statements as referring to Dasein as the event of ontological difference, and the

⁹⁵ *BT*, 86/H59, 79/H54.

⁹⁶ *HCT*, 9.

⁹⁷ *BT*, 418/H367.

⁹⁸ *CT*, 7-8; *BT*, 245/H201.

latter as referring to Dasein as one of the beings made manifest in this event, that is, to extant, living human individuals.⁹⁹

Although Heidegger, especially in *Being and Time*, often uses “Dasein” to refer to human beings, the primary sense of the term throughout the fundamental ontological writings is the event of ontological difference.¹⁰⁰ Heidegger emphasizes the latter sense at the outset of the existential analytic:

The ‘essence’ of Dasein lies in its existence. Accordingly those characteristics which can be exhibited in this entity are not ‘properties’ present-at-hand of some entity which ‘looks’ so and so and is itself present-at-hand; they are in each case possible ways for it

⁹⁹ Keeping the twofold sense of “Dasein” in mind also sheds light on the debate as to whether Dasein is to be identified with the human individual. Dasein can be identified with the human individual or with humanity in general, provided one remembers that this sense of Dasein is secondary to the sense of Dasein as the event of ontological difference. Theodor Schatzki and Mariana Ortega are right to claim that “Dasein” refers to individual human beings. Schatzki, “Early Heidegger on Being, The Clearing, and Realism” in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, ed. Dreyfus, Hall (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 82; Ortega, “Dasein Comes after the Epistemic Subject, But Who is Dasein?” in *International Philosophical Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (2000): 59. But it would be a mistake to argue that Dasein is only the human being, or, following Schatzki, to argue from the fact that “Dasein” refers to the human being that there is a plurality of “clearings” or events in which beings are manifested in terms of being. Schatzki, 96. To infer a plurality of events of ontological difference from the plurality of human beings is to make the mistake of taking Dasein’s extantness to be more fundamental than its ek-sistence. Schatzki assumes that the event of ontological difference is conditioned or pluralized by the plurality of extant human beings, when Heidegger wants to maintain that even the plurality of extant human beings is made possible by the singular event of ontological difference. *MFL*, 138.

¹⁰⁰ Whereas Heidegger in *BT* calls Dasein “man himself,” in *BPP* Dasein is identified with “man’s Being.” *BT*, 32/H11; *BPP*, 16. The shift in emphasis to Dasein as the event of ontological difference is also well-illustrated by a marginal note to *BT* made by Heidegger after its publication in 1927. In section 10 of that work, in which Heidegger distinguishes the existential analytic from anthropology, psychology and biology, he writes that “we must show that those investigations and formulations of the question which have been aimed at Dasein heretofore, have missed the real *philosophical* problem....” *BT*, 71/H45. The natural and social sciences investigate Dasein insofar as “Dasein” refers directly to human beings, but they ignore Dasein’s status as the understanding of being, or as the event of ontological difference. Heidegger would later note in the margin that the natural and social sciences “did not aim at Da-sein at all.” *BT*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 43. Heidegger’s remark here stems from his later conception of Dasein as primarily the event of ontological difference: the natural and social scientific approaches to the human being miss Dasein altogether because they interpret the human being as something extant and ignore Dasein, the event of ontological difference in which human beings are manifested.

to be, and no more than that.... So when we designate this entity with the term 'Dasein', we are expressing not its "what" (as if it were a table, house or tree) but its Being.¹⁰¹

Although "Dasein" does refer to the human being, it does not refer to it as something that is extant along with tables, houses or trees. Instead, "Dasein" refers to ek-sistence, the distinctive way of being of human being. The possible ways of being of this being, such as practical engagement with beings and theoretical contemplation of them, are characteristics of ek-sistence. Ek-sistence in turn is the "explicit accomplishment and the development of the ontological difference"—ek-sistence is essentially the temporally ecstatic event of ontological difference.¹⁰² The existential analytic aims to articulate the essential structures of this event, or the essential aspects of the manifestation of beings in terms of being.

Heidegger makes the primacy of the latter sense of "Dasein" more explicit in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. In section 10 of that work, Heidegger states that the first principle of the existential analytic is that "Dasein," and not "man" is the term used to denote its object.¹⁰³ To call this being "man" would be to risk confusing an inquiry into the essential structures of the event of ontological difference with an anthropology of the being partially constituted by this event.¹⁰⁴ In addition to the concept of ek-sistence introduced in *Being and Time*, Heidegger here introduces another characteristic of Dasein: neutrality. Whereas "factual Dasein," or Dasein as one being amongst others,

¹⁰¹ *BT*, 67/H42.

¹⁰² *BPP*, 319/H455.

¹⁰³ *MFL*, 136.

has a gender,” neutral Dasein “is neither of the two sexes.”¹⁰⁵ The event of ontological difference does not have a gender; Dasein is gendered only insofar as it is an extant, living being. By introducing the concept of Dasein’s neutrality, Heidegger makes it explicit that in fundamental ontology, “Dasein” refers primarily to the event of ontological difference.

2.3 The Question of Whether Dasein is Essentially Disembodied

Once the two senses of “Dasein” are distinguished and their order of priority in fundamental ontology established, Heidegger’s exclusion of embodiment as an *Existenzial* becomes more comprehensible. As Heidegger makes clear in section 10 of *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, his aim in the existential analytic is to articulate the essential structures of Dasein insofar as it is the event of ontological difference. Since Dasein’s status as a bodily being, or as a being that is alive and extant, is not the focus of the investigation, embodiment can be justifiably excluded as an *Existenzial*. But the fact that embodied Dasein is not the object of the existential analytic need not mean that fundamental ontology would ignore Dasein’s embodiment altogether. The existential analytic is a preparatory stage in fundamental ontology, and in two senses. It is preparatory in the sense that it prepares the way for the articulation of the meaning of being as temporality, after which the structures of Dasein uncovered in Division One of *Being and Time* can be re-interpreted in terms of temporality in Chapter Four of Division

¹⁰⁴ Heidegger emphasizes the distinction between the existential analytic and anthropology repeatedly in *Being and Time*. Cf. *BT*, 74-75/H47-49, 170/H131, 227/H183, 238/H194.

¹⁰⁵ *MFL*, 136.

Two.¹⁰⁶ But the analytic is also preparatory “with regard to an ontology, a metaphysics of Dasein,” an undertaking which in the preparatory existential analytic “is not yet the central focus.”¹⁰⁷ The existential analytic does not aspire to a complete ontology of Dasein; it analyzes Dasein only insofar as it is constituted by the understanding of being, or insofar as Dasein marks the event of ontological difference.¹⁰⁸ In the event of ontological difference, Dasein appears not only as a being constituted by this event, but also as a being that is alive and extant. A complete ontology of Dasein would examine Dasein not only with regard to its understanding of being, but also with regard to these other ontological characteristics.

Such an ontology can be deemed a “metaphysics” since for Heidegger, metaphysics aims to grasp the defining characteristics of beings without regard to the event of disclosure that makes such an inquiry possible.¹⁰⁹ It would be the task of a complete ontology or metaphysics of Dasein to provide a comprehensive account of the ontological characteristics that make Dasein the being that it is and that distinguish it from other beings.¹¹⁰ Since a central and distinctive aspect of Dasein is the intersection of ek-sistence and extantness in its body, a chief task of the complete ontology of Dasein would be to provide an account of how this intersection is to be understood. In the overall project of fundamental ontology, the proper place for addressing the problem of embodiment would be not in the preparatory existential analytic, but in the metaphysics

¹⁰⁶ *BT*, 38/H17.

¹⁰⁷ *MFL*, 101, 136.

¹⁰⁸ *BT*, 38/H17.

¹⁰⁹ *WM*, 8-9.

of Dasein.¹¹¹ Thus while Alphonse de Waelhens would be correct to point out that Heidegger's neglect of the problem of embodiment renders the existential analytic incomplete, he would be mistaken in his judgment that this incompleteness renders the analytic essentially flawed. The absence of the body in *Being and Time* would appear to be problematic only if one mistakenly takes the analytic to have embodied Dasein as its object.

But while such a sharp distinction between Dasein as the event of ontological difference and as an embodied being may seem to justify Heidegger's exclusion of embodiment as an *Existenzial*, it also raises the question of whether Dasein can take place independently of the presence of human bodies. Now, Heidegger makes it clear that Dasein in fact never occurs independently of human bodies: "neutral Dasein is never what exists; Dasein exists in each case only in its factual concretion."¹¹² It is a matter of fact that the manifestation of beings in terms of being always takes place in conjunction with extant, living human bodies. This fact dictates the manner of approach of the existential analytic. The essential structures of Dasein to be unearthed in the analytic are "not just any accidental structures, but essential ones which, in every kind of Being that *factual*

¹¹⁰ *BT*, 169/H131.

¹¹¹ Since it is factual Dasein, or humanity, that is embodied, one might also be inclined to identify philosophical anthropology as the proper place for addressing the problem of embodiment. For Heidegger, anthropology would be philosophical were it to study humanity in the light of insights drawn from the complete ontology of Dasein. *BT*, 38/H17. Such a discipline would examine, amongst other things, the basic features and interconnections of the possibilities of concrete human life. *BT*, 348/H301. One such question it would consider would be how necessary interpersonal relationships are for human beings. *BPP*, 278/H394. But since embodiment is not one ek-sistential possibility amongst others, but a condition of the possibility of ek-sistence, a treatment of the problem of embodiment would belong in the metaphysics of Dasein, the stage of fundamental ontology in which the conditions of the possibility of human ek-sistence are comprehensively described.

Dasein [italics mine] may possess, persist as determinative for the character of its Being.”¹¹³ Since the event of Dasein is always conjoined with Dasein as the concrete human being, the existential analytic must begin with the manifold phenomena of human ek-sistence in order to discern their essential structures. When Heidegger states in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* that the existential analytic has neutral, as opposed to factual, Dasein as its object, he does not mean that the analytic begins by disregarding Dasein in its concrete, factual dimension in order to focus attention on the event of ontological difference. The analytic does not *begin* with a clear view of neutral or essential Dasein; but aims to *arrive* at such a view through phenomenological description of factual Dasein. As William McNeill writes, “in *Being and Time* Dasein does indeed come into view to some extent as a being, but *only* insofar as is phenomenologically necessary to gain access to its being...”¹¹⁴ Since factual and neutral Dasein are always found together, fundamental ontology must begin with the former in order to discern the latter.

While it is clear that Dasein as the event of ontological difference always occurs in conjunction with the presence of human bodies, it is less clear why this is so. Is the presence of human bodies necessary for the occurrence of this event, or is it merely accidental that human bodies are present wherever Dasein occurs? Heidegger’s exclusion of embodiment as an *Existenzial* suggests that the latter is the case, or that Dasein is

¹¹² *MFL*, 137.

¹¹³ *BT*, 38/H17.

¹¹⁴ William McNeill, “Metaphysics, Fundamental Ontology, Metontology 1925-1935,” *Heidegger Studies* 8 (1992): 75.

essentially disembodied. Dasein's apparent disembodiment does not go unnoticed by Hubert Dreyfus, who notes that "Heidegger seems to suggest that having a body does not belong to Dasein's essential structure" and that Heidegger "holds that the body is not essential."¹¹⁵ Dreyfus goes on to assert that the idea of a disembodied Dasein is a logical consequence of Heidegger's concept of Dasein, writing that "it no doubt follows from the generality of Dasein's way of being as essentially self-interpreting activity that Dasein is not necessarily embodied."¹¹⁶ As self-interpreting activity, or as the process of understanding in which Dasein is disclosed to itself as, for example, an immortal soul or a living organism, Dasein does not require embodiment. Heidegger's use of scare quotes in his deferral of the problem of Dasein's "bodily nature" in *Being and Time* would thus be invested with a special significance: Dasein's "bodily nature" would only arise in the existential analytic on the basis of a failure to appreciate that the Dasein here under consideration need not be tied to a body at all. Such an interpretation of Dasein raises the possibility that Heidegger, despite his opposition to the Cartesian conception of the human being as a combination of an extant body with an extant soul, maintains a variety of dualism no less radical than that of Descartes.

2.4 The Necessity of Human Bodies for the Occurrence of Ontological Difference

In order to assess the possibility of a disembodied Dasein, the nature of the relation between the two senses of "Dasein" must be determined. Dasein could be disembodied if the first sense of "Dasein," in which Dasein is the event of ontological

¹¹⁵ Dreyfus, 41, 137.

¹¹⁶ Dreyfus, 41.

difference, does not necessarily imply the second, in which Dasein is the living, extant human being. It would be possible for Dasein to be disembodied if human bodies are not required for the event of ontological difference to occur. In this section I will argue that the notion of a disembodied Dasein is not coherent. As *Existenzialen*, attunement and spatiality are essential to the event of ontological difference, and neither spatiality nor attunement are possible without extant human bodies. Thus the conjunction of human bodies with the event of ontological difference is not contingent: the extant human body, with its powers of sensibility and motility, is a necessary condition for the event of Dasein to occur.

Dasein's attunement presupposes the presence of the body in three ways. First, embodiment is presupposed in attunement's disclosure of *how* Dasein is. At first glance, this seems obvious. Only corporeally individuated human beings find themselves in moods such as fear, boredom, cheerfulness, and so on—it is difficult to conceive of a mood belonging to the event of ontological difference abstracted from the presence of human bodies. Yet, as Michel Haar points out, for Heidegger, mood or *Stimmung* does not refer in the first instance to the interior emotional state of an individual human being.¹¹⁷ Heidegger writes that “having a mood is not related to the psychical in the first instance, and is not itself an inner condition which then reaches forth in an enigmatical way and puts its mark on Things and persons.”¹¹⁸ Rather, “only because the “there” has already been disclosed in a state-of-mind [attunement] can immanent reflection come

¹¹⁷ Haar, “Le primat de la Stimmung sur la corporéité du *Dasein*,” *Heidegger Studies* 2 (1986): 70.

¹¹⁸ *BT*, 176/H137.

across ‘Experiences’ at all.”¹¹⁹ *Stimmung* denotes first and foremost the ambiance or affective tone that characterizes the “there,” or an overall situation in which beings present themselves, and not an interior emotional state. The interiorization of a mood, the experience of the mood as belonging to me, is a secondary moment that follows upon the initial, primordial, impersonal attunement of the event.¹²⁰ It would thus seem that the event of ontological difference is itself attuned independently of its conjunction with the presence of human bodies.

Yet even in the initial, impersonal moment of mood, before the mood is experienced as a state of one’s own organism, the presence of the body is presupposed. Accompanying the manifestation of beings in terms of mood are physiological modifications of the human body. Now one could, following Haar, deny that physiological factors determine attunement.¹²¹ On Haar’s reading of Heidegger, it is rather the case that the human body and its physiological processes are “inserted” (*inséré*) into the ontological structures of Dasein, and that these structures are sufficient to account for the phenomenon of attunement.¹²² Haar’s metaphor of insertion expresses the idea that the causal processes of nature play no constitutive role in ek-sistential phenomena. Stripped of any explanatory role, the body merely accompanies experience, which is entirely explicable in terms of ontological structures such as understanding, attunement and spatiality. But such a position is inconsistent with Heidegger’s own statement that

¹¹⁹ *BT*, 175/H136

¹²⁰ Haar, 72.

¹²¹ Haar, 71.

¹²² Haar, 69

physiological processes condition mood. In his discussion of anxiety (*Angst*), he writes that “anxiety is often conditioned by ‘physiological’ factors,” adding that “only because Dasein is anxious in the very depths of its Being, does it become possible for anxiety to be elicited physiologically.”¹²³ For Heidegger, physiology alone is not sufficient to account for attunement. Only a being constituted by the event of ontological difference relates to beings in an attuned manner—the physiological constitution of a dog, for example, is never sufficient to allow it to undergo anxiety. Nevertheless, the fact that anxiety can be physiologically conditioned indicates that the human body, while not a sufficient condition for attunement, is a necessary one. By acknowledging that some moods would not be possible without physiological phenomena, Heidegger effectively acknowledges that the presence of the human body is necessary for any mood whatsoever. It would be implausible and highly problematic for Heidegger to assert that while some moods are physiologically conditioned, others are not, since the question would then arise as to how it is that at certain phases of the physiological process, states of the organism temporarily cease to give rise to moods. It is much more plausible that all moods, and not merely some instances of anxiety, are conditioned by physiological factors, and consequently that the human body is necessary for attunement’s disclosure of how Dasein is.

The presence of the human body is also presupposed in attunement’s disclosure *that* Dasein is. In the event of ontological difference, the range of possibilities in terms of

¹²³ *BT*, 234/H190.

which beings manifest themselves is determined by pre-given social and cultural circumstances. Dasein has always already been, and to be in a mood is to experience the burden of finding oneself in the midst of a life that is ultimately not of one's own choosing. One cannot choose to be born, and, having been born, one cannot undo the circumstances of one's birth. Birth, or the emergence of the human body into the realm of the extant, thus reveals itself as the natural event without which the event of ontological difference would not be possible. Finding oneself thrown into a set of cultural, social and historical circumstances is rooted in the fact that one ek-sists through a body generated at a definite point in time.

Now one could draw on Haar's notion of the body's "insertion" into Dasein to interpret birth not as a necessary condition for thrownness, but as one instance of thrownness alongside of others.¹²⁴ Dasein would not find itself thrown because it was born, but would find itself born only because it is thrown. But the denial of any determinate role to the natural event of birth runs into the problem of why it is that only human bodies are inserted into Dasein. What is it about animal bodies that precludes their birth from being conditioned by thrownness? If the physiological constitution of the human body is denied any determinate role in attunement, there can be no explanation for the fact that only human birth is an instance of thrownness. If one is not to maintain that Dasein could just as easily determine non-human bodies, one must grant that the constitution of the extant human body accounts for its status as the sole kind of living

¹²⁴ Haar, 69.

body that is conjoined with the event of ontological difference. Once again the human body reveals itself to function as a constitutive factor in the occurrence of the event of ontological difference.

In addition to disclosing how and that Dasein is, attunement also discloses the ways in which beings can matter, and this aspect of attunement presupposes the body as well. As attuned, the event of ontological difference manifests beings as threatening, auspicious, gloomy, and so on. Dasein involves being affected by beings, and such affects can only arise insofar as “Dasein” denotes *sensing* beings able to suffer the presence of the beings that surround them. While acknowledging that the senses are involved in attunement, Heidegger emphasizes that they are not sufficient to account for it:

And only because the ‘senses’ [die “Sinne”] belong ontologically to an entity whose kind of Being is Being-in-the-world with a state-of mind, can they be ‘touched’ by anything or ‘have a sense for’ [“Sinn haben für”] something in such a way that what touches them shows itself in an affect. Under the strongest pressure and resistance, nothing like an affect would come about, and the resistance itself would remain essentially undiscovered, if Being-in-the-world, with its state-of-mind, had not already submitted itself [sich schon angewiesen] to having entities within-the-world “matter” to it in a way which its moods have outlined in advance.¹²⁵

While the extant body, through its senses, is constituted so as to be responsive to the beings that surround it, this constitution is never sufficient to allow beings to matter. Only a being constituted by the event of ontological difference, or by being-in-the-world, senses other beings in an attuned way. But although the senses are not sufficient to give rise to attunement, they are nonetheless necessary for it. Beings could never appear, let

alone matter, were it not for the senses of the extant body through which they become manifest.

Heidegger's inclusion of spatiality as an *Existenzial* also precludes the possibility of disembodied Dasein. As noted in Chapter One, Heidegger himself suggests that the spatiality pertaining to the event of ontological difference implicates the presence of human bodies, stating in *History of the Concept of Time* that "oriented Dasein is corporeal Dasein."¹²⁶ However, he does not state that there is a necessary connection between the spatiality and corporeality of Dasein. Such a connection reveals itself when we consider de-distancing and directionality, the two major features of Dasein's spatiality. The de-distancing of beings requires the body's powers of motility: the workman in his workshop brings the beings around him to bear on his project by walking over to them, by raising his arm to reach for them, and so on. As Didier Franck writes, "Now it is essential... that *Dasein* have hands so that, all metaphors aside, the being of the being that it is could be named being-at-hand."¹²⁷ Since de-distancing involves, amongst other bodily actions, reaching for and grasping beings with one's hands, the term "readiness-to-hand" should be taken literally: beings present themselves as ready for use to an embodied Dasein endowed with hands. The second major feature of Dasein's spatiality, directionality, also presupposes the presence of the body, since having a perspective on beings—finding them, for example, in the "fixed directions of right and

¹²⁵ *BT*, 176-177/H137.

¹²⁶ *HCT*, 232/H319.

¹²⁷ Franck, "Being and the Living," 144.

left”¹²⁸—requires that one find oneself corporeally situated in their midst. The division of space into right and left, front and back, up and down is rooted in the fact that the extant body functions as the zero-point of spatial experience.

A consideration of the phenomena of spatiality and attunement has shown that the human body is a constitutive factor of the event of ontological difference, or that the conjunction of this event with the presence of bodies is not contingent. When Dreyfus claims that “it no doubt follows from the generality of Dasein’s way of being as essentially self-interpreting activity that Dasein is not necessarily embodied,”¹²⁹ he fails to consider this self-interpreting activity with sufficient care. The self-interpreting activity, or being-in-the-world, that is constitutive of Dasein is essentially spatial and attuned, and as such, it is necessarily embodied. It should be noted, however, that Dasein’s essential embodiment is rather peculiar. Whereas the event of ontological difference is singular and unique, there is a plurality of human bodies. This means that there is no one to one correspondence between Dasein as the embodied human being and Dasein as the event of ontological difference. Instead, the singular event of ontological difference somehow occurs through a plurality of extant human bodies.

The purpose of this chapter has been to secure the central importance of the problem of embodiment for the existential analytic. After showing in Chapter One that being extant is essential to the ek-sisting human being, this chapter began by raising the possibility that since Heidegger distinguishes between Dasein and the ek-sisting being,

¹²⁸ *BT*, 143/H108.

being extant, though necessary for ek-sistence, may not be necessary for Dasein. Were this the case, Heidegger would be justified in excluding embodiment as an essential structure of Dasein, and a discussion of embodiment could be relegated to the metaphysics of Dasein, a secondary discipline in fundamental ontology. Though Dasein as the event of ontological difference always occurs in conjunction with Dasein as the embodied human being, there would be no necessary connection between the two, and Dasein would be essentially disembodied. By showing that spatiality and attunement, two essential structures of the event of ontological difference, both require the presence of the human body, a necessary connection between Dasein and the human body has been established. Insofar as the body is partially constitutive of the occurrence of ontological difference, the extantness of the body is a necessary but insufficient condition for the latter. Now that extant human beings have been identified with factual Dasein and ek-sistence with neutral Dasein, the Heideggerian version of the problem of embodiment can be reformulated: how can we render intelligible the occurrence of the event of ontological difference through one of the beings it makes manifest? The next chapter will examine the possibilities fundamental ontology has at its disposal to deal with this problem and will reveal the central difficulty it encounters—the risk of falling into transcendental realism.

¹²⁹ Dreyfus, 41.

Chapter Three

Dasein's Embodiment and Transcendental Realism

3.1 Introduction

The human body presents fundamental ontology with a crucial problem it cannot evade: how does the human body function as the medium for the manifestation of all beings, including itself, in the light of being? In this chapter, I will examine some possible solutions to this problem and reveal a major difficulty that helps to account for its neglect in Heidegger's project: Dasein's embodiment threatens to lead fundamental ontology into transcendental realism. Any account of Dasein's embodiment that remains faithful both to the phenomenon of embodiment and to Heidegger's ontological categories runs the risk of grounding temporality, that which makes possible the intelligibility of the being of beings, in the domain of what is. A transcendental condition of possibility would be situated within the domain of that which it conditions, thereby losing its transcendental status, and being would be situated at the level of beings, thereby violating ontological difference.

The development of this claim proceeds in three main stages. In the first stage, I explain why fundamental ontology cannot admit a naturalistic solution to the problem of embodiment. To explain all meaning relations in terms of causal relations, or to reduce ek-sistence to extantness, would entail locating the meaning of being entirely within the realm of beings. Heidegger calls such a move "telling a story" about being, and rejects it as an adequate approach to the question of the meaning of being on account of the

transcendental nature of his project.¹³⁰ In the second stage, I explain why fundamental ontology cannot admit a purely transcendental solution to the problem of embodiment either. As the phenomenon of the lived body reveals, and as Heidegger himself suggests, the body is not merely the outcome of the operation of transcendental structures.¹³¹ Instead, the body is itself transcendentially constitutive. Fundamental ontology thus requires an approach to the problem of embodiment that would chart a middle course between the extremes of naturalism and transcendentalism, at the same time as avoiding the error of transcendental realism. In the third stage, I explore the potential of Heidegger's proposed project of a "metontology" to provide such an approach and argue that metontology fails as a way of addressing Dasein's embodiment because it falls into transcendental realism. Having shown that Heidegger's neglect of embodiment can be accounted for by the threat of transcendental realism, the chapter concludes by evaluating some explanations for this neglect that have been offered by other commentators.

3.2 The Impermissibility of a Purely Naturalistic Solution to the Problem of Embodiment in Fundamental Ontology

One strategy for tackling the problem of embodiment is to take a naturalistic approach, in which the coincidence of the order of causes and the order of meaning in the human body is made intelligible by reducing the latter to the former. Conceived naturalistically, the experience of the world as meaningful is a function of nature, the multiplicity of causally related events. Thus the intersection of nature and meaning in the

¹³⁰ *BT*, 26/H6.

¹³¹ *MFL*, 138.

human body is only apparent, since all phenomena are ultimately mere manifestations of a more fundamental natural substratum. From a naturalistic perspective, the differentiation of being from beings constitutive of human understanding is completely explicable in terms of causal relations that obtain in the domain of beings. Seen in this light, Heidegger's analyses of understanding and attunement would be descriptions of subjective states that result from neurological events, and his analysis of spatiality a description of the subjective experience of extant bodies in motion. In a naturalistic approach to the problem of embodiment, all ek-sistential phenomena would be reducible to the natural realm of the extant, and the extantness of the human body would be not only necessary for ontological difference, but sufficient as well.

Fundamental ontology rules out a naturalistic approach to the embodiment problem in principle. The aim of fundamental ontology is to articulate the meaning of being, or the condition of the possibility of our pre-ontological understanding of what it means for beings to be. For Heidegger, nature, whether it is understood as a ready-to-hand resource or as "the aggregate of the present-at-hand," is one of the beings whose being fundamental ontology investigates.¹³² Thus to maintain that the intelligibility of being is made possible entirely by nature is to locate this condition of possibility within

¹³² *BT*, 100/H70, 413/H362. For Heidegger, nature, like all beings, is initially encountered as ready-to-hand: "The wood is a forest of timber, the mountain a quarry of rock; the river is water-power, the wind is wind 'in the sails'." *BT*, 100/H70. Only when its readiness-to-hand is disregarded is nature understood as present-at-hand, as it is, for example, in Merleau-Ponty's definition of nature as a multiplicity of causally related events. Heidegger also mentions an aesthetic understanding of nature, writing that when nature is understood as present-at-hand, "the Nature which 'stirs and strives', which assails us and enthrals us as landscape, remains hidden." *BT*, 100/H70. He does not, however, include the aesthetic understanding of nature (or of beings in general) as a mode of understanding distinct from presence-at-hand and readiness-

the domain of beings. The meaning of being would be constituted by one of the beings that make up the domain of what is. Heidegger, borrowing an expression from Plato's *Sophist*, calls the attempt to elucidate being through an account of its origin in beings telling a story about being, and he argues that such an approach is doomed to failure.¹³³ All ontological story-telling remains open to the fundamental ontological question: what does it mean for the origin of being to be? What exactly do we understand when we understand that nature *is*? Within the framework of fundamental ontology, a purely naturalistic solution to the embodiment problem is impermissible, since the meaning of being must be a *transcendental* condition of the possibility of its intelligibility.¹³⁴

To attempt to account for being in terms of beings would mean conducting fundamental ontology in what Heidegger calls an inauthentic mode of understanding. Dasein occurs in two basic modes: authentically (*eigentlich*) or inauthentically (*uneigentlich*). It occurs inauthentically when human beings, absorbed in their everyday lives, remain unmoved by the groundlessness of their own ek-sistence, or by the

to-hand. This omission is criticized by Michel Haar in *The Song of the Earth*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 17.

¹³³ BT, 26/H6.

¹³⁴ Another story about being is that beings were established and are maintained in their being through the creative act of God, who endowed the human mind with its implicit understanding of the being of creation. Like the naturalistic story, this story of the intelligibility of being is open to the fundamental ontological question of what it means for God to be. By arguing that any relation to a supreme being presupposes the more fundamental question of the meaning of being, Heidegger undermines the sense of meaning provided by the idea of God. As constituted by Dasein, human beings are "metaphysically isolated." MFL, 137. Since Dasein is the event of the manifestation of beings as beings, any being to which human beings relate, including God, is grounded in Dasein itself and therefore cannot provide the human being with an ultimate ground. We are isolated in the sense that we cannot with ontological clarity seek guidance for our ek-sistence from any divine power. Since Heidegger understands metaphysics to have for its object beings as such and in their totality without regard for the Dasein that makes such an inquiry possible, the human being's isolation in the midst of the totality of beings is called a metaphysical isolation. WM, 8-9.

astonishing and terrifying fact that there are beings at all, and not rather nothing.¹³⁵ In the inauthentic mode of understanding, the possibilities upon which beings are projected are ways of ek-sisting that, as much as they may alter ontic states of affairs, leave unquestioned what it means for beings to be. In inauthentic attunement, it is merely *beings* that matter as, for example, fearful or inspiring. The authentic occurrence of Dasein is first made possible when, assailed by profound anxiety or boredom, we no longer find our everyday concerns fulfilling or relevant.¹³⁶ These authentic modes of attunement wrench us from our absorption in beings, making us aware of the uncanny fact of ek-sistence, which at bottom is the differentiation of beings from being that occurs in temporality. Authentic Dasein occurs when we affirm the ultimate groundlessness of ek-sistence and ek-sist in terms of possibilities we have explicitly chosen for ourselves, thereby making ek-sistence our own (*eigen*).¹³⁷ In authentic understanding, human beings project possibilities upon beings in an awareness of the mystery of being. Authenticity, by maintaining the mystery of being as the primary concern, makes it possible to raise the

¹³⁵ Whereas authentic Dasein is characterized by *thaumazein*—"observing entities and marvelling at them.... to be amazed to the point of not understanding"—inauthentic Dasein remains at the level of mere curiosity, or the desire for change and novelty in the encounter with beings. *BT*, 216/H172.

¹³⁶ For Heidegger's analysis of anxiety (*Angst*), cf. *BT*, 228-234/H184-190. For his analysis of boredom, cf. *FCM*, 132-160.

¹³⁷ *BT*, 68/H42-43. Richard Cohen notes that while some commentators interpret Heidegger's concept of authentic Dasein as radical wilfulness, others see it as a quasi-religious submission. Cohen, "Dasein's Responsibility for Being," *Philosophy Today* 27 (1983): 317. Keeping in mind the twofold sense of "Dasein," one can see how authenticity is both simultaneously. Human beings wilfully take up ek-sistence and create their own meaning by virtue of submitting themselves to the meaningless event of ontological difference. To own ek-sistence is also to be "owned" by this event.

A detailed account of Heidegger's concept of authenticity would include accounts of his analyses of death, conscience, guilt and social life (being-with, or *Mitsein*), a task that exceeds the scope of the present study.

question of the meaning of being.¹³⁸ In the grip of authentic Dasein and intent on the meaning of being, fundamental ontology does not permit the ontological story-telling implicated by a naturalistic solution to the problem of embodiment.

3.3 The Inappropriateness of a Purely Transcendental Solution to the Problem of Embodiment in Fundamental Ontology

Given the transcendental nature of fundamental ontology, it would seem that Heidegger is committed to a purely transcendental solution to the problem of embodiment. From a transcendental perspective, the coincidence of the order of causes and the order of meaning in the human body is made intelligible by interpreting the former as a function of the latter. That is, all experience, including the experience of ourselves as immanent in the natural order, results from the imposition of transcendental structures on something that is unknowable in itself. Since this something can only be given content insofar as it is transcendently conditioned, *what* it is apart from the operation of the transcendental machinery cannot be determined. The existence of this something can only be posited—we can only say *that* it is. Whether or not we are somehow immanent in this something can only be a matter of speculation. Both the idea of the real as an order of causally related events and our experience of immanence in this order result from transcendental structures. Like the naturalistic approach, the

¹³⁸ For Heidegger, the question of the meaning of being is not a matter of mere curiosity or idle speculation, but vitally important to human culture and history: "...the question of being, the striving for an understanding of being, is the basic determinant of existence.... Because it belongs to the essential constitution of man to understand being, the question of being, taken in the way mentioned, is a question, even *the* question, about man himself." *MFL*, 16.

transcendental approach to embodiment makes intelligible the intersection of nature and meaning in the body by accounting for one order in terms of the other.

Already with Heidegger's concept of nature, we see in fundamental ontology a tendency towards a purely transcendental solution to the embodiment problem. Nature, far from constituting a ground for the intelligibility of being, is rather to be conceived as one of the beings whose intelligibility is made possible by the transcendental occurrence of temporality. Heidegger's tendency towards a transcendental approach to embodiment is further confirmed by the limited conception of the body hinted at in *Being and Time*. To put the point in Merleau-Ponty's terms, Heidegger in that work seems to conceive of the body solely as objective, and not as lived.¹³⁹ Thus while Heidegger rejects a conception of being-in-the-world as a compound of two extant beings, one spiritual and the other corporeal, he does not explore how the lived body enters into the constitution of being-in-the-world.¹⁴⁰ Heidegger suggests that the body, like nature, is one of the beings made intelligible by the event of ontological difference, and does not itself enter into the constitution of this event.

Fundamental ontology's tendency towards a purely transcendental approach to the problem of embodiment is perhaps best revealed by Heidegger's discussion of idealism in *Being in Time*. Since the being of beings is a function of the event of ontological difference, and since this event is constitutive of human understanding, it would appear that Heidegger is committed to idealism. Since the being of beings is dependent on

¹³⁹ Franck, *Heidegger et le problème de l'espace*, 58.

¹⁴⁰ *BT*, 82/H56.

Dasein, the absence of Dasein would seem to entail the absence of all beings. Can fundamental ontology avoid such a radical consequence? Heidegger responds:

Of course only as long as Dasein *is* (that is, only as long as an understanding of Being is ontically possible), 'is there' Being. When Dasein does not exist, 'independence' 'is' not either, nor 'is' the 'in-itself'. In such a case this sort of thing can be neither understood nor not understood. In such a case even entities with-the-world can neither be discovered nor lie hidden. *In such a case* it cannot be said that entities are, nor can it be said that they are not. But *now*, as long as there is an understanding of Being and therefore an understanding of presence-at-hand, it can indeed be said that *in this case* entities will still continue to be. As we have noted, Being (not entities) is dependent upon the understanding of Being....¹⁴¹

As he does elsewhere, Heidegger maintains that there are beings independently of Dasein, but qualifies this statement with the observation that the statement itself is only intelligible in terms of Dasein's understanding.¹⁴² Any characterization of beings, including statements concerning their reality or ideality, is only possible in terms of Dasein's understanding of being. However, beings themselves, the bare *x* upon which the understanding of being operates, are not dependent upon Dasein. Whether or not Dasein's body somehow inheres in this *x* cannot be determined, since to affirm or deny such inherence would be to qualify that which can only be posited. In the light of a purely transcendental approach to embodiment, the necessity of the extant body for ontological difference does not mean that the body precedes the occurrence of temporality in a real, natural time. Rather, the necessity of the extant body means that,

¹⁴¹ *BT*, 255/H212.

¹⁴² *MFL*, 153.

within the understanding of being made possible by temporality, a disembodied Dasein cannot be conceived.

Yet in spite of the transcendental idealism Heidegger expresses in *Being and Time*, Heidegger voices a commitment to realism elsewhere in the fundamental ontological writings. For example, he states: “it is not intrinsic to the essence of Dasein as such that it factually exist; it is, however, precisely its essence that in each case this being can also not be extant. The cosmos can be without humans inhabiting the earth, and the cosmos was long before humans ever existed.”¹⁴³ Here Heidegger suggests that temporality arises in the course of a real, natural time, a suggestion that is bolstered in the following passage: “When, in the universe of beings, a being attains more being [seiender] in the existence of Dasein, i.e. when temporality temporalizes, only then do beings have the opportunity to enter the world.”¹⁴⁴ Beings enter the world—that is, they become meaningful in terms of Dasein’s understanding of being—when temporality arises from a pre-existent realm of beings. In addition to applying a temporal predicate to that which temporality conditions, Heidegger also describes its ontological constitution. He states, “World-entry and its occurrence is the presupposition *not* for extant things to become first extant and enter into that which manifests itself to us as its extantness and which we understand as such. Rather, world-entry and its occurrence is solely the presupposition for extant things announcing themselves in their not requiring world-entry

¹⁴³ *MFL*, 169.

¹⁴⁴ *MFL*, 193.

regarding their own being.”¹⁴⁵ Here Heidegger is not content merely to posit an independent something called “beings,” but describes this something as real and extant. Elsewhere, Heidegger goes further and describes it as nature, stating that “nature can also be when no Dasein exists” and that “the possibility that being is there in the understanding presupposes the factual existence of Dasein, and this in turn presupposes the factual extantness of nature.”¹⁴⁶ Heidegger’s attempts to describe that which temporality conditions reveal that there is a tension between realism and idealism in fundamental ontology: Heidegger exhibits a desire to describe the nature of beings taken in themselves at the same time as the transcendental nature of his project rules out such a move in principle.

The tension between realism and idealism also emerges in Heidegger’s brief discussion of Dasein’s embodiment in section 10 of *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. In this section, as we have seen, Heidegger makes the twofold sense of “Dasein” clear by distinguishing between neutral Dasein, or the event of ontological difference, and Dasein as the human being, which he calls “factual Dasein.”¹⁴⁷ As the event of ontological difference, neutral Dasein is the transcendental condition of possibility of

¹⁴⁵ *MFL*, 195.

¹⁴⁶ *BPP*, 170; *MFL*, 156.

¹⁴⁷ In section 10 of *MFL*, Heidegger fails strictly to observe the distinction between “factual” and “factual” that he draws in *BT*. In the latter work, “facticity” denotes the “thatness” of the ek-sisting being, whereas “factuality” denotes the “thatness” of beings that are merely extant. *BT*, 82/H56. In section 10, however, Heidegger uses both “factual” and “factual” to describe Dasein as it occurs through human beings, referring to factual Dasein as “concrete factual humanity.” *MFL*, 137. This blurring of the factual/factual distinction is an indication of the difficulty Dasein’s embodiment presents for Heidegger. As embodied, Dasein is both ek-sistent and extant, or factual and factual.

factual Dasein's ek-sistence.¹⁴⁸ Whereas factual Dasein is plural, neutral Dasein is singular and unique. In a purely transcendental approach to the problem of embodiment, the plurality of bodies making up factual Dasein would result solely from the transcendental structures of neutral Dasein, and would not pertain to any multiplicity inherent in that which neutral Dasein conditions. This is indeed the approach Heidegger seems to take, stating that neutral Dasein “harbours the intrinsic possibility for being factually dispersed into bodiliness and thus into sexuality.”¹⁴⁹ Neutral Dasein harbours this possibility through a transcendental structure called “bestrewal” (*Streuung*).¹⁵⁰ Since bestrewal characterizes neutral Dasein, it is not to be understood as the division of some primordial being into parts—to think this way would be to construe neutral Dasein as something extant.¹⁵¹ Dasein's bestrewal means that the event of ontological difference always makes manifest a multiplicity of beings, and never just one. This primordial bestrewal is what makes possible the various modes of the ek-sisting human being's “dissemination” (*Zerstreuung*), or its concern with a plurality of beings in its day to day affairs.¹⁵² The ek-sisting being “never relates only to a particular object; if it relates solely to one object, it does so only in the mode of turning away from other beings that

¹⁴⁸ *MFL*, 137.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*.

¹⁵⁰ *MFL*, 138.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.* The relation between bestrewal and dissemination is unclear. Heidegger uses “dissemination” throughout the rest of section 10, not mentioning “bestrewal” again. He also distinguishes between “factual” and “transcendental” dissemination. I take “transcendental dissemination” to refer to the ontological structure of Dasein called “bestrewal,” and “factual dissemination” to refer to the ontic manifestations of this structure.

are beforehand and at the same time appearing along with the object.”¹⁵³ The plurality of human beings is to be understood in a similar way: the human being’s dissemination in its relations with other human beings, including its sexual relations, are not the result of a plurality of extant human bodies preceding the event of ontological difference. It is rather the case that “the species-like unification metaphysically presupposes the dissemination of Dasein as such.”¹⁵⁴ In line with a purely transcendental approach to embodiment, Heidegger suggests that the human being’s or factual Dasein’s status as an individual that relates to both extant and ek-sisting individuals is made possible not by any multiplicity to be found in that which neutral Dasein conditions, but solely by the transcendental structure of bestrewal.

Yet the realist strain in fundamental ontology emerges here as well. Heidegger indicates that Dasein’s embodiment cannot be made entirely intelligible solely in terms of transcendental structures when he remarks that embodiment functions as “an organizing factor” in bestrewal.¹⁵⁵ Bestrewal on its own is not sufficient to account for the plurality of factual Dasein. It is also necessary that a plurality of extant bodies organize neutral

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* Heidegger’s concept of dissemination also appears in *Being and Time*: “Dasein’s facticity is such that its Being-in-the-world has always dispersed [zerstreut] itself or even split itself up into definite ways of Being-in. The multiplicity of these is indicated by the following examples: having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining....” *BT*, 83/H56.

¹⁵⁴ Another mode of the human being’s dissemination is its understanding of itself in terms of the multiplicity of events that have occurred within time. A third mode of dissemination is the human being’s involvement with beings spread out in space. By including spatiality as a concrete manifestation of a more fundamental structure of Dasein, Heidegger seems to displace spatiality from its status as an *Existenzial*. This move may be motivated by the necessary link between spatiality and embodiment and by Heidegger’s discomfort with the latter.

¹⁵⁵ *MFL*, 138.

Dasein, though exactly what “organization” means in this context is unclear. It cannot mean division, since only extant beings can be divided. The plurality of bodies organizes neutral Dasein in the sense that it somehow localizes the occurrence of this transcendental event. The one event of ontological difference occurs through many bodies—each human being understands itself and other beings in terms of an understanding of being. How the event of ontological difference can be singular and unique at the same time as it occurs through a plurality of human beings is problematic—Frederick Olafson identifies this problem as a central paradox in Heidegger’s philosophy.¹⁵⁶ Heidegger’s notion of bodies as organizing neutral Dasein also threatens to lead him into transcendental realism, since this notion involves the idea that the transcendental event of ontological difference is itself conditioned by a pre-existent ontic plurality. But for now it is sufficient to note that with his notion of organization, Heidegger reveals a realist tendency by not only positing something external to temporality, but by describing it as well.

The fact that the tension between realism and idealism in fundamental ontology is manifested in a discussion of Dasein’s embodiment is no accident. The phenomenon of embodiment resists a purely transcendental interpretation. Chapter One showed that the body, as something recalcitrant to the categories of presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand, is not merely something that emerges in terms of the transcendental structures of ek-sistence. Instead, the body also somehow enters into ek-sistence itself. Chapter Two confirmed the body’s transcendentially constitutive status by showing that factual Dasein

¹⁵⁶ Frederick Olafson, *Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 226.

is not something contingent to neutral Dasein, but is somehow integrated into the latter. Since the body belongs both to the realm of the transcendental and to the realm of that which the transcendental conditions, a fundamental ontological approach to the problem of embodiment must somehow mediate between the naturalistic and the transcendental approaches.

3.4 The Idea of Metontology and its Relevance for the Problem of Embodiment

Heidegger sketches a possible middle way between realism and idealism, and between the transcendental and naturalistic approaches to embodiment, in his proposed project of a “metontology.” Like metaphysics, metontology would have for its subject matter the totality of what is (*das Seiende im Ganzen*).¹⁵⁷ But unlike traditional metaphysics, which investigates beings without regard for the ontological difference that makes this investigation possible, metontology would investigate beings in the light of fundamental ontological insights into the meaning of being.¹⁵⁸ Metontology can thus be described as a metaphysics that proceeds with an understanding of its transcendental condition of possibility. Such an enlightened metaphysics stems from fundamental ontology’s awareness of its own ontic conditions of possibility:

Since being is there only insofar as beings are already there [im Da], fundamental ontology has in it the latent tendency toward a primordial, metaphysical transformation which becomes possible only when being is understood in its whole problematic. The intrinsic necessity for ontology to turn back to its point of origin can be clarified by reference to the primal phenomenon of human existence: the being “man” understands being; understanding-of-being effects a distinction between being and beings; being is there only when Dasein understands being.... Right within the horizon of the problem of

¹⁵⁷ *MFL*, 157.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

being, when posed radically, it appears that all this is visible and can become understood as being, only if a possible totality of beings is already there.¹⁵⁹

Fundamental ontology, the attempt to clarify our understanding of being, is only possible insofar as the human being and the beings to which it relates somehow precede the ontological difference. Turning its attention to beings and transforming into metontology, fundamental ontology undergoes an “overturning” (*Umschlag*) or “turning” (*Kehre*) that marks the beginning of a new, more ontologically enlightened metaphysics.¹⁶⁰

But what is the relevance of metontology for the problem of embodiment? First, although Heidegger himself does not identify embodiment as a problem to be treated in metontology, mentioning only ethics and spatiality as specific areas of its investigation, his mention of each of these areas indicates that embodiment would also be treated.¹⁶¹ A careful study of spatiality would inevitably involve considerations of Dasein’s embodiment, since “oriented Dasein is corporeal Dasein”—that is, since Dasein’s spatiality requires that it be an extant being amongst others.¹⁶² Heidegger’s mention of ethics as an area of metontological inquiry confirms his characterization of metontology as *existentiell* thinking, a mode of thought concerned not with discerning the

¹⁵⁹ MFL, 156-157.

¹⁶⁰ MFL, 154. *Umschlag* corresponds to the Greek *metabole* and gives metontology its name. Robert Bernasconi, “The Double Concept of Philosophy and the Place of Ethics in *Being and Time*,” *Research in Phenomenology* 18 (1988): 50. Fundamental ontology’s need for a metontological turn-around is also mentioned in *Being and Time*: “Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology, and takes its departure from the hermeneutic of Dasein, which, as an analytic of *existence*, has made fast the guiding-line for all philosophical inquiry at the point where it *arises* and to which it *returns*.” BT, 62/H38.

¹⁶¹ MFL, 138, 157.

¹⁶² HCT, 232.

transcendental structures of ek-sistence, but with gaining insight into particular ek-sistential situations and how best to respond to them.¹⁶³ Metontology's existentiell character indicates that in its study of beings as a whole, it would devote special attention to Dasein as a being.¹⁶⁴ In other words, as metontology, fundamental ontology shifts its focus from neutral to factual Dasein. The metaphysics of Dasein would be an important component of metontological thinking, and an important question in the metaphysics of Dasein would be how to conceive of the intersection of ek-sistence, extantness and life in its body.

But metontology's relevance for the problem of embodiment does not consist primarily in the likelihood that embodiment would be one of the issues up for metontological investigation. Metontology's real significance for the problem of embodiment is that it involves the notion of a metaphysical ground for the understanding of being. That is, metontology involves the idea that the understanding of being can be situated within the domain of beings, or that the same sorts of relations that obtain between beings can also obtain between beings and the understanding of being. This idea is expressed in Heidegger's remark that "the possibility that being is there in the understanding presupposes the factual existence of Dasein, and this in turn presupposes the factual extantness of nature."¹⁶⁵ In the interpretation of this remark, much depends on the sense of "presupposes." The first use of this word is consistent with the transcendental nature of fundamental ontology. The understanding of being's

¹⁶³ *MFL*, 157; *BT*, 33/H12.

¹⁶⁴ William McNeill, "Metaphysics, Fundamental Ontology, Metontology 1925-1935," 75.

presupposition of the factual ek-sistence of Dasein means that the understanding of being is made possible by temporality: the facticity of Dasein manifests the ekstase of alreadiness, ek-sistence that of futurity.¹⁶⁶

The second use of “presupposes” is more significant. In what sense is temporality made possible by the factual extantness of nature? One might respond that temporality can only be effective in rendering being intelligible insofar as there are beings upon which the understanding of being can operate. Being is inseparable from beings. But if this were the sense in which the factual extantness of nature were presupposed, there would be no need for Heidegger to specify that upon which the understanding of being operates as *nature*—all that Dasein would presuppose would be an ontic *something*. Heidegger defines nature in two senses: as the material made use of in fashioning and using beings as ready-to-hand, and as the “aggregate of the present-at-hand.”¹⁶⁷ For the understanding of being to presuppose the materiality of nature suggests that this understanding stands in a relation of material dependence on nature. It would thus have the same relation to beings as living beings have to each other and to the earth. In nature understood as the aggregate of the present-at-hand, beings are bound together by causal and temporal relations. For the understanding of being to presuppose nature as the aggregate of the present-at-hand suggests that this understanding arises *after* other events in nature and is in some sense causally grounded in nature. Heidegger relates the

¹⁶⁵ *MFL*, 156.

¹⁶⁶ Steven Galt Crowell, “Metaphysics, Metontology, and the End of *Being and Time*,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 60, no. 2 (2000): 321.

¹⁶⁷ *BT*, 100/H70, 413/H362.

understanding of being to beings in this way when he writes that “When, in the universe of beings, a being attains more being [seiender] in the existence of Dasein, i.e. when temporality temporalizes, only then do beings have the opportunity to enter the world.”¹⁶⁸ Heidegger’s use of “when” and “then” to refer to temporality suggests that the event of temporalizing occurs within time. Heidegger thus situates temporality within a nexus of natural before and after relations, and, if the arising of temporality is to be made at all explicable, within the nexus of causal relations as well. In both senses of “nature,” then, the understanding of being’s presupposition of the factual extantness of nature means that this understanding itself participates in the same order of relations that it reveals.

The significance of metontology for the problem of Dasein’s embodiment lies in its positing of an ontic ground for the understanding of being. If there is a way in which such a grounding can be made intelligible, the result would be an approach to the problem of embodiment that would skirt the extremes of naturalism and transcendentalism. For although metontology attempts to ground the understanding of being in nature, it avoids naturalism by maintaining the transcendental status of this understanding. At the same time, it also avoids a purely transcendental account of embodiment by grounding the transcendental structures of the understanding of being in the beings it renders intelligible.¹⁶⁹ Nor would a metontological solution to the problem of Dasein’s

¹⁶⁸ *MFL*, 193.

¹⁶⁹ A metontological approach to the embodiment problem might also grant the phenomenon of resistance a more important role than Heidegger is willing to grant it in *BT*. There Heidegger argues that the experience of resistance alone can never give rise to being-in-the-world, since the latter is presupposed in any understanding of a being as providing resistance. *BT*, 176-177/H137.

embodiment be merely an afterthought to fundamental ontology. Heidegger emphasizes that “to think being as the being of beings and to conceive the being problem radically and universally means, *at the same time* [italics mine], to make beings thematic in their totality in the light of ontology.”¹⁷⁰ The attempt to uncover the meaning of being is simultaneously a metaphysical interpretation of beings. Heidegger’s concept of Dasein exemplifies this. In his attempt to find the meaning of being in the conditions of the possibility of Dasein’s understanding of being, Heidegger at the same time interprets factual Dasein metaphysically as the coincidence of ek-sistence, extantness and life.¹⁷¹ Addressing the problem of Dasein’s embodiment in metontology does not mean that the problem is relatively unimportant. Rather, a metontological treatment of embodiment turns attention back to a problem central to fundamental ontology all along.

3.5 Metontology and Transcendental Realism

The obvious difficulty encountered in a metontological approach to the problem of embodiment is transcendental realism. To maintain that the understanding of being is

Max Scheler reverses this order of priority, arguing that “the suffering of resistance is simultaneously the basis of the subsequent perceptive and pictorial clarification of *what* we suffer and of the self we become and, secondarily, of the self-consciousness which, as a Dasein-structure that is present as completed, is Heidegger’s point of departure. The being of the world... arise[s] out of resistance, the cancellation of resistance, and the subsequent view of what *has come about*.” Scheler, “Reality and Resistance: On *Being and Time*, Section 43), *Listening* 12 (1977): 67. By situating the understanding of being in the realm of beings, metontology might allow ontic resistance this genetic function.

Metontology would also be able to accommodate the Levinasian interpretation of attunement offered by Theodore De Boer, who argues that affects such as fatigue and indolence are manifestations of the subject’s immanence in the something that precedes temporality, a something that is overcome through effort and in enjoyment. De Boer, *The Rationality of Transcendence* (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1997), 122.

¹⁷⁰ MFL, 157.

¹⁷¹ The intertwining of metaphysics and fundamental ontology is shown in Heidegger’s statement that fundamental ontology, “the laying of the ground for metaphysics” is itself “grounded in a metaphysics of

related to beings in the same ways as beings are related to each other is to undermine the nature of fundamental ontology, which, as a transcendental inquiry, explores a realm beyond the domain of what is. But what could lead Heidegger to flirt with such a basic error? Stephen Galt Crowell and Joanna Hodge argue that in the years immediately following the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger hopes to reinstate the legitimacy of metaphysics. Heidegger's ambition is to formulate a mode of inquiry into the totality of beings that would not only take into account the meaning of being, but that would also show how the transcendental inquiry into the meaning of being is grounded in the ontic whole.¹⁷² Heidegger reveals this belief when he questions Kant's purely negative assessment of dogmatic metaphysics in his Transcendental Dialectic. While agreeing with Kant that metaphysical understanding is illusory when it fails to reflect on its transcendental conditions of possibility, Heidegger asks whether these transcendental conditions might themselves in some sense presuppose a metaphysical ground.¹⁷³ Might it be possible to grasp Dasein's understanding of being within the context of beings as a whole?

The understanding of being is certainly grounded in beings in a *hermeneutical* sense. Heidegger makes it clear that the attempt to interpret the meaning of being cannot help but proceed through the use of ideas inherited from tradition. Thus, for example, Heidegger acknowledges that his notion of authentic Dasein is developed on the basis of

Dasein." He goes on to state, "Is it astonishing, then, that a laying of the ground for metaphysics at the very least must itself be metaphysics, and indeed a preeminent one?" *KPM*, 157.

¹⁷² Crowell, 311; Joanna Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 177.

¹⁷³ *KPM*, 167-168.

the idea of “authentic self-choice,” an inherited ek-sistential possibility.¹⁷⁴ Insofar as metontology thematizes the hermeneutical presuppositions of fundamental ontology, it is, as Robert Bernasconi puts it, “a consequence of the fact that the philosopher cannot jump over his or her own shadow.”¹⁷⁵ But if metontology is to provide a third approach to the problem of embodiment, the understanding of being must be grounded in beings not only in a hermeneutical sense, but in a metaphysical sense as well.

Here metontology runs into the dead end of transcendental realism because of its conflation of metaphysical and transcendental philosophy. From a metaphysical perspective, the basic question of philosophy is: Why is there anything at all and not rather nothing?¹⁷⁶ A positive answer to this question must posit an ontic ground for the totality of beings. But in the transcendental perspective of fundamental ontology, the basic metaphysical question leads back to one still more original: what is the meaning of being, that in terms of which we understand that there is something rather than nothing? An answer to this question must posit a different kind of ground: a ground for intelligibility, which, as transcendental, lies beyond the ontic realm. In the question of why there is something rather than nothing, temporality must remain outside of what is called into question. When Heidegger remarks that “the primal fact, in the metaphysical sense, is that there is anything like temporality at all,” he includes temporality within the domain of beings, or the domain of all that is not nothing, thus conflating the

¹⁷⁴ *MFL*, 190.

¹⁷⁵ Bernasconi, “Fundamental Ontology, Metontology, and the Ethics of Ethics,” in *Irish Philosophical Journal* 4 (1987): 84.

¹⁷⁶ Crowell, 317.

metaphysical and transcendental perspectives.¹⁷⁷ When the purity of the transcendental perspective is maintained, Heidegger's realist tendency must give way to his transcendental idealism: only insofar as the understanding of being occurs can beings be understood as Dasein-independent. To situate the understanding of being within beings as a whole is to conflate metaphysical and transcendental inquiry. Locating the understanding of being within beings also undermines the ontological difference, according to which "Being and the structure of Being lie beyond every entity and every possible character which an entity may possess."¹⁷⁸ Thus while fundamental ontology can rest content neither with a purely naturalistic nor with a purely transcendental approach to embodiment, neither does it seem capable of finding a middle way between the two. After his brief flirtation with the idea of metaphysically grounding transcendental inquiry, Heidegger himself seems to have accepted the incoherence of such a project, abandoning the notion of metontology in his later work in favour of an exclusively phenomenological approach.¹⁷⁹ Metontology fails as a way to understand the body of factual Dasein as an ontic ground for neutral Dasein since this means falling into transcendental realism, thereby transgressing the ontological difference.

3.6 Other Explanations for the Neglect of Embodiment in Fundamental Ontology

In spite of the importance of the problem of embodiment for fundamental ontology, and despite fundamental ontology's apparent promise to offer an innovative solution to this problem, Dasein's corporeity is largely ignored by Heidegger. Having

¹⁷⁷ *MFL*, 209.

¹⁷⁸ *BT*, 62/H38.

examined the viability for fundamental ontology of some basic approaches to the problem of embodiment, Heidegger's neglect is now more comprehensible. While neither the purely naturalistic nor the purely transcendental approach to embodiment is adequate within the framework of fundamental ontology, the metontological approach, a middle way between the two extremes, gets stranded on the reef of transcendental realism. Having erected a system of concepts that stands in the way of a satisfactory account of Dasein's embodiment, Heidegger allows the intersection of ek-sistence and extantness, or of neutral Dasein and factual Dasein, to remain obscure.

Other writers on Heidegger have also commented on his neglect of the body, and it remains to be seen how their explanations for this neglect complement my own. Didier Franck argues that Heidegger is forced to neglect Dasein's embodiment because it involves a coincidence between life and ek-sistence that simply cannot be made intelligible in terms of the conceptual framework of fundamental ontology. Franck writes that "since we *are* incarnate, the body ought to be rooted, in the manner of everything that results from our Being, in existence, but as *alive* it cannot be so."¹⁸⁰ The living body resists integration into ek-sistence because for Heidegger, life is a mode of being distinct from ek-sistence that is constituted by a unique, though mysterious, mode of time.¹⁸¹ Life, like extantness, is made manifest by ek-sistence, and does not ground the latter.¹⁸² Franck argues that an adequate account of Dasein's embodiment must reverse this order

¹⁷⁹ Crowell, 331.

¹⁸⁰ Franck, "Being and Living," 146.

¹⁸¹ *BT*, 396/H346; *FCM*, 259.

¹⁸² *BT*, 75/H50.

of priority: attunement, one of the essential aspects of ek-sistence, arises on the basis of biological drives.¹⁸³ But for Heidegger to posit life, a mode of being that emerges in the light of ek-sistence, as the ground for ek-sistence would mean grounding the understanding of being in the realm of what is. This would violate the ontological difference, a consequence Franck explicitly acknowledges, writing that “only the relegation of ontological difference can render our bodily animality thinkable.”¹⁸⁴ Since, in the context of fundamental ontology, transcendental realism means undermining ontological difference, Franck’s criticism of Heidegger’s neglect of embodiment obliquely points to the risk of transcendental realism that the problem of embodiment poses for Heidegger.

Paul Ricoeur argues that Heidegger neglects embodiment in *Being and Time* because addressing it would lead the existential analytic into an inauthentic understanding of Dasein.¹⁸⁵ Inauthentic understanding devotes its attention to beings at the expense of being, and since the body is one being amongst others, an examination of Dasein as embodied might threaten to lead the existential analytic away from neutral Dasein and to ensnare it in factual Dasein instead. Further, Heidegger seems to view Dasein’s embodiment as a major culprit in its tendency towards inauthentic understanding. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger remarks that Dasein should not allow itself to be governed by its urge to live. Instead, the urge to live is to be directed by the possibilities revealed in

¹⁸³ Franck, 145.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

authentic understanding.¹⁸⁶ In the Davos Disputation with Ernst Cassirer, Heidegger states, “What [Dasein] depends on is the original unity and the immanent structure of the relatedness of a human being which to a certain extent has been fettered [*gefesselt*] in a body and which, in the fetteredness [*Gefesseltheit*] in the body, stands in a particular condition of being bound up with beings.”¹⁸⁷ Heidegger’s use of the word “fettered” to describe Dasein’s embodiment suggests a negative assessment of this phenomenon. Bound up with beings through its body, Dasein’s absorption in beings is encouraged by bodily drives, making it even more difficult to raise the question of what it means for beings to be. Though Heidegger’s neglect of embodiment can be explained as the result of his concern to foster authentic understanding, it is also important to recognize that a satisfactory account of Dasein requires that Dasein come into thematic view as a being. As shown in Chapter Two, the structures of neutral Dasein presuppose the extantness of factual Dasein, which means that both aspects of Dasein, and especially their relation, must be explained in order for Dasein to be made intelligible. Heidegger, even granted the importance of authentic understanding, cannot evade the task of accounting for Dasein’s embodiment, a task difficult to accomplish without running aground on transcendental realism. Ricoeur’s account of why Heidegger neglects embodiment in fundamental ontology, like Franck’s, complements my own.

¹⁸⁵ Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 328.

¹⁸⁶ *BT*, 240/H196.

¹⁸⁷ *KPM*, 181.

David Cerbone argues that Heidegger's neglect of embodiment in the existential analytic is warranted by the fact that Dasein's embodiment can only be explicated after the explication of being-in-the-world.¹⁸⁸ Only once the various structures of ek-sistence have been discerned does the body come into proper phenomenological view. Heidegger himself makes this argument. In the *Zollikon Seminars*, he states that "the phenomena of the body cannot be adequately treated without a sufficient elaboration of the basic characteristics of existential being-in-the-world."¹⁸⁹ But metontology would seem to involve just such an approach to Dasein's embodiment: after fundamental ontology has explicated being-in-the-world through the existential analytic, it is to recoil into a metontological investigation of its ontic roots. And, as this chapter has shown, the body can only be construed as a natural ground for Dasein at the risk of falling into transcendental realism. Ultimately Heidegger neglects the problem of embodiment in fundamental ontology because this inevitable problem threatens his project with transcendental realism. Avoiding this error is the major challenge a fundamental ontological solution to the problem of embodiment must overcome.

¹⁸⁸ Cerbone, "Heidegger and Dasein's 'Bodily Nature': What is the Hidden Problematic?" 225.

¹⁸⁹ *ZS*, 202.

Conclusion

Heidegger's Approach to Dasein's Embodiment in the *Zollikon Seminars*

A study of the problem of embodiment in fundamental ontology would be incomplete without an examination of the *Zollikon Seminars*, which Heidegger, at the behest of the Swiss psychiatrist Medard Boss, gave to a group of doctors between 1959 and 1969 in the town of Zollikon, Switzerland. In these seminars, Heidegger returns to the concept of being-in-the-world he had developed in *Being and Time* and finally addresses the question of body's role in Dasein. As if in response to critics such as de Waelhens and Franck, who argue that ek-sistence presupposes the extant body, Heidegger acknowledges that being-in-the-world would not be possible if Dasein were not embodied.¹⁹⁰ In response to Sartre, who had complained that Heidegger hardly devotes any attention to the body in *Being and Time*, Heidegger states, "I can only counter Sartre's reproach by stating that the bodily [das Leibliche] is the most difficult [to understand] and that I was unable to say more at that time."¹⁹¹ This thesis concludes with an account of what Heidegger says about the body when he finally devotes his attention to it in the 1960s. Does he provide an account of Dasein's embodiment that is consistent with the transcendental project of fundamental ontology while also avoiding transcendental realism? An examination of Heidegger's remarks on embodiment in the *Zollikon Seminars* reveals that although Heidegger provides some interesting phenomenological insights into the experience of embodiment, the problem of

¹⁹⁰ ZS, 231.

¹⁹¹ ZS, 231.

embodiment is once again largely ignored. While Heidegger does develop an ek-sistential conception of being embodied, he neglects the problem of how the body functions as the point of intersection between ek-sistence and extantness, or between neutral and factical Dasein.

Central to Heidegger's discussion of the body in the seminars is the distinction between the body as a corporeal object amongst others (*Körper*, or what, following Merleau-Ponty, I call the objective body) and the body as it emerges in pre-reflective experience (*Leib*, or what, following Merleau-Ponty, I call the lived body). According to Heidegger, if we are to understand the body's role in being-in-the-world, we must be careful that we conceive of the body not as *Körper*, but as *Leib*.¹⁹² As *Körper*, or as objective, the body occupies a volume of space and is perceptible by the senses. As *Leib*, or as lived, the body is neither an object within space nor something that can be presented to the senses.¹⁹³ Instead, the body as lived is the aspect of Dasein that provides access to beings through its powers of motility and sensibility. Every encounter with beings involves the lived body: I see beings through bodily vision, I hear them through bodily hearing, I manipulate them through the body's powers of motility.¹⁹⁴ Even in imagining beings I experience them in terms of my lived body, insofar as I imagine myself sensing and moving them.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² ZS, 86.

¹⁹³ ZS, 82.

¹⁹⁴ ZS, 96, 108.

¹⁹⁵ ZS, 162.

But how exactly does this lived body function as an aspect of Dasein? In a move that recalls the metontological program of interpreting factual Dasein in the light of temporality, Heidegger conceives the lived body as a “bodying” (*Leiben*) of the body.¹⁹⁶ Interpreted in terms of being-in-the-world, the lived body is not one of the beings encountered in Dasein, but an aspect of the event of ontological difference. Like the *Existenzialen* described in *Being and Time*, Dasein’s body is not a “what,” but a “how.” The body, as one of the manifestations of temporality, functions as that in terms of which beings are disclosed, and thus cannot be properly described as something that is. Neither temporality nor the body *are*; instead, temporality temporalizes, and the body bodies. The way the body bodies is determined by the way beings emerge in ek-sistence.¹⁹⁷ When a being emerges as a flicker of candlelight, my body bodies in the mode of seeing.¹⁹⁸ When a being emerges as a spoken word, my body bodies in the mode of hearing.¹⁹⁹ In any encounter with beings, the body bodies. Thus Heidegger states that bodying “co-determines” being-in-the-world.²⁰⁰ But Heidegger is also careful to emphasize that while bodying is necessary for being-in-the-world, it only suffices for the emergence of beings as beings on the basis of the understanding of being, which is ontologically more primordial.²⁰¹ Richard Askay explains Heidegger’s position well: “Bodily being is necessary for us to be related to the world in any situation. Being-in-

¹⁹⁶ ZS, 86.

¹⁹⁷ ZS, 86.

¹⁹⁸ ZS, 108.

¹⁹⁹ ZS, 96.

²⁰⁰ ZS, 86, 199.

²⁰¹ ZS, 81, 186, 197, 200.

the-world is necessary for there to be *any relations at all* since it is primarily an understanding of being in which anything else is possible, i.e., existence is ontologically more primordial than bodily being.”²⁰² For Heidegger, the body only bodies insofar as it is taken up into the transcendental event of temporality.

Heidegger’s conception of the body as a necessary but insufficient aspect of being-in-the-world raises the question of how temporality operates through the body, which is also an extant being amongst others. The body not only bodies, thereby helping to reveal a world, but is also subject to forces exerted upon it by other bodies—it is only in our dreams that the body opens up a world without itself being subject to corporeal limitations.²⁰³ In sensing and manipulating beings, their resistance to my effort testifies to the extantness of my body. Resistance is a necessary and constitutive aspect of being-in-the-world, for if nothing resisted my effort, beings would never emerge for me.²⁰⁴ I am only aware of acting through my body insofar as it, along with the corporeal nature into which I am incarnated, resists my effort. Without this resistance, I, imagining I could speak of an “I” at all, would be a sort of dormant consciousness floating through a void. The bodying of the body can only contribute to being-in-the-world insofar as the body is also extant. As this thesis has shown, how to conceive of the body’s double status without falling into transcendental realism is the problem Dasein’s embodiment poses for fundamental ontology.

²⁰² Richard Askay, “Heidegger, the Body, and the French Philosophers,” in *Continental Philosophy Review* 32, no. 1 (1999): 33.

²⁰³ Alice Holzhey-Kunz, “Der Leib als Existenzial,” in *Studia Philosophica* 46 (1987): 61.

²⁰⁴ Maine de Biran, *L’Effort*; ed. A. Drevet (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), 133.

In the *Zollikon Seminars*, Heidegger does not address this problem. Indeed, at the outset of his discussion of the body, he states: “We will now try to move somewhat closer to the *phenomenon of the body*. In doing so, we are not speaking of a solution to the problem of the body. Much has already been gained merely by starting to see this problem.”²⁰⁵ Both the seminars and the project of fundamental ontology leave the problem of embodiment largely unaddressed. The challenge of rendering intelligible Dasein’s embodiment at the same time as avoiding transcendental realism still stands.

In closing, I would like to address what may be a lingering suspicion: Is Heidegger, despite his criticisms of the Cartesian picture of the human being as a combination of an extant body and soul, committed to some form of mind/body dualism? Several commentators have raised this possibility.²⁰⁶ And Heidegger indeed makes some remarks that evoke the Cartesian specter. Medard Boss records Heidegger as saying:

Then everything we call our bodiliness, down to the last muscle fiber and down to the most hidden molecule of our hormones, belongs essentially to existing..... This bodily [nature] develops in such a way that it can be used in dealing with the inanimate and animate “material things” which are encountered. Yet, in contrast to a tool, the bodily spheres of existing are not set free [*entlassen*] from being-human. They cannot be cared for in a toolbox. Rather, they remain in the sway of being human, held in it, and belong to it so long as the human being lives. Of course, in dying this bodily domain changes its way of being into that of an inanimate thing, into the substance of a corpse, which drops out [*herausfallen*] from existence.²⁰⁷

Heideggerian dualism would not be a matter of causal relations obtaining between a corporeal and a spiritual substance, but of one mode of being, ek-sistence, supervening on

²⁰⁵ ZS, 81.

²⁰⁶ Chanter, 84; Cerbone, 217; Dreyfus, 41.

another, extantness. Death would not be the separation of body and soul, but the cessation of the extant body's participation in ek-sistence. A dualistic conception of human being is also suggested in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, where Heidegger states that "Dasein is thrown, factual, throughly amidst nature through its bodiliness, and transcendence lies in the fact that these beings, among which Dasein is and to which Dasein belongs, are surpassed by Dasein. In other words, as transcending, Dasein is beyond nature, although, as factual, it remains environed by nature. As transcending, i.e., as free, Dasein is something alien to nature."²⁰⁸ In Heideggerean dualism, as in the Cartesian variety, the human being is free at the same time as it is subject to the laws of nature. But whereas for Descartes human freedom consists in the free will of the *res cogitans*, for Heidegger it consists in the human being's status as that through which the spontaneous event of ontological difference occurs.

But in spite of such similarities between the ontologies of Descartes and Heidegger, the transcendental nature of fundamental ontology makes it inappropriate to characterize Heidegger's account of the human being as dualistic in the Cartesian sense. For Descartes, the incommensurables that must relate to one another both belong to the same ontological realm—mind and body are both finite substances. But for Heidegger, the incommensurables are not found in the same ontological domain and cannot condition one another. Whereas the extant body belongs to the realm of beings, ek-sistence, the elaboration of ontological difference, is a transcendental event, something that lies

²⁰⁷ *ZS*, 232.

²⁰⁸ *MFL*, 166.

beyond the domain of what is. To ask how ek-sistence and extantness can condition each other is to situate ek-sistence within the extant, thereby violating the purity of ontological difference and slipping into transcendental realism. Thus while the mind/body problem in Descartes shares certain affinities with the neutral Dasein/factual Dasein problem in Heidegger, the latter problem, as a problem that runs up against the limits of transcendental philosophy, is of a different kind. Heidegger's neglect of the problem of embodiment is motivated not by a latent Cartesian dualism, but by the threat of transcendental realism this problem presents for fundamental ontology. In light of Heidegger's strict distinction between being and beings, the inevitable problem of embodiment presents fundamental ontology with a formidable challenge. In the attempt to discover the meaning of being, embodiment is, as Heidegger describes it, "the most difficult problem."²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink, *Heraclitus Seminar*, trans. Charles H. Seibert (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 146.

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