

Derrida, Jacques. "The Ends of Man," in *Margins of Philosophy*, tr. Alan Bass (Chicago, Il.: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

First Published in France in *Marges de la philosophie* (1972), this lecture was given in New York in October 1968 at an international colloquium. The theme proposed was "Philosophy and Anthropology."

The Ends of Man

"Now, I say, man and, in general, every rational being exists as an end in himself and not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will. In all his actions, whether they are directed to himself or to other rational beings, he must always be regarded at the same time as an end . . ."

Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*¹

"Ontology . . . has merely enabled us to determine the ultimate ends of human reality, its fundamental possibilities, and the value which haunts it."

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*²

"As the archeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end."

Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*³

Every philosophical colloquium necessarily has a political significance. And not only due to that which has always linked the essence of the philosophical to the essence of the political. Essential and general, this political import nevertheless burdens the a priori link between philosophy and politics, aggravates it in a way, and also determines it when the philosophical colloquium is announced as an international colloquium. Such is the case here.

The possibility of an international philosophical colloquium can be examined infinitely, along many pathways, and at multiple levels of generality. In its greatest extension, to which I will return in a moment, such a possibility implies that contrary to the essence of philosophy—such as it has always represented itself at least—philosophical nationalities have been formed. At a given moment, in a given historical, political, and economic context, these national groups have judged it possible and necessary to organize international encounters, to present

1. In *The Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings on Moral Philosophy*, trans. Lewis White Beck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), p. 86. Further references are to this edition.

2. Trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Pocket Books, 1966), p. 784.

3. (*Les mots et les choses*) (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), p. 387.

themselves, or to be represented in such encounters by their national identity (such, at least, as it is assumed by the organizers of the colloquium), and to determine in such encounters their proper difference, or to establish relations between their respective differences. Such an establishment of relations can be practiced, if at all, only in the extent to which national philosophical identities are assumed, whether they are defined in the order of doctrinal content, the order of a certain philosophical "style," or quite simply the order of language, that is, the unity of the academic institution, along with everything implied by language and institution. But the establishing of relations between differences is also the promised complicity of a common element: the colloquium can take place only in a medium, or rather in the representation that all the participants must make of a certain transparent ether, which here would be none other than what is called the universality of philosophical discourse. With these words I am designating less a fact than a project, which is linked by its essence, (and we should say by essence itself, by the thought of Being and of truth), to a certain group of languages and "cultures." For something must happen or must have happened to the diaphanous purity of this element.

How else are we to understand that international colloquia—which aim to repair, to surmount, to erase, or simply to relate national philosophical differences one to another—seem possible and necessary? Conversely, and above all, how are we to understand that something like an international philosophical encounter is an extremely rare thing in the world? The philosopher knows, and today can say to himself, that this extremely recent and unexpected thing, which was unimaginable a century ago, becomes a frequent phenomenon—of a disconcerting facility, I even would say—in certain societies, but is of a no less remarkable rarity in the greater part of the world. On the one hand, as far as thought—which perhaps is repulsed by this haste and volubility—is concerned, what is disquieting has to do more with the fever for colloquia and the multiplication of organized or improvised exchanges. On the other hand, it remains no less the case that the societies, languages, cultures, and political or national organizations with which no exchange in the form of an international philosophical colloquium is possible are of considerable number and extent. Nor must we hasten to interpret this impossibility. Essentially, it does not have to do with a prohibition overtly deriving from politico-ideological jurisdiction. For when this prohibition exists, there is every chance that this issue already has become meaningful within the occidental orb of metaphysics or philosophy, that it already has been formulated in political concepts drawn from the metaphysical reserve, and that the *possibility* of such a colloquium henceforth is apparent. Without this no overt prohibition could be articulated. Also, speaking of the noncolloquium, I was not alluding to some ideologico-political barrier which would sector, with borders or curtains, an already philosophical field. I was thinking, first of all, of all those places—cultural, linguistic, political, etc.—where the organization of a philosophical colloquium simply would have no meaning,

where it would be no more meaningful to instigate it than to prohibit it. If I permit myself to recall this obvious fact, it is because a colloquium which has chosen *anthropos*, the discourse on *anthropos*, philosophical anthropology, as its theme, must feel bearing down on its borders the insistent weight of this difference, which is of an entirely other order than that of the internal or intra-philosophical differences of opinion which could be freely exchanged here. Beyond these borders, what I will call the philosophical *mirage* would consist as much in perceiving philosophy—a more or less constituted and adult philosophy—as in perceiving the desert. For this other space is neither philosophical nor desert-like, that is, barren. If I recall this obvious fact, it is also for another reason: the anxious and busy multiplication of colloquia in the West is doubtless an effect of that difference which I just said bears down, with a mute, growing and menacing pressure, on the enclosure of Western collocation. The latter doubtless makes an effort to interiorize this difference, to master it, if we may put it thus, by affecting itself with it. The interest in the universality of the *anthropos* is doubtless a sign of this effort.

Now I would like to specify, still as a preamble, but in another direction, what appears to be one of the general political implications of our colloquium. While refraining from any precipitous appreciation of this fact, simply rendering it for all to reflect upon, I will indicate here what links the possibility of an international philosophical colloquium with the form of democracy. I am indeed saying with the *form*, and with the form of *democracy*.

Here, *democracy* must be the *form* of the political organization of society. This means at least that:

1. The national philosophical identity accommodates a nonidentity, does not exclude a relative diversity and the coming into language of this diversity, eventually as a minority. It goes without saying that the philosophers present here no more identify with each other in their thought (why else would they be several?) than they are mandated by some unanimous national discourse. As for the fact that the totality of this diversity might be exhaustively represented—this can only remain problematical, and in part depends upon the discourses to be proffered here.

2. No more than they identify with each other, the philosophers present here do not assume the official policies of their countries. Let me be permitted to speak in my own name here. Moreover, I will do so only insofar as the problem before me refers in truth to an essential generality; and it is in the form of this generality that I wish to state it. When I was invited to this meeting, my hesitation could end only when I was assured that I could bear witness here, now, to my agreement, and to a certain point my solidarity with those, in this country, who were fighting against what was then their country's official policy in certain parts of the world, notably in Vietnam. It is evident that such a gesture—and the fact that I am authorized to make it—signifies that those who are welcoming my discourse do not identify with the policies of their country

any more than I do, and do not feel justified in assuming those policies, at least insofar as they are participating in this colloquium.

And yet it would be naive or purposely blind to let oneself be reassured by the image or appearance of such a freedom. It would be illusory to believe that political innocence has been restored, and evil complicities undone, when opposition to them can be expressed in the country itself, not only through the voices of its own citizens but also those of foreign citizens, and that henceforth diversities, i.e. oppositions, may freely and discursively relate to one another. That a declaration of opposition to some official policy is authorized, and authorized by the authorities, also means, precisely to that extent, that the declaration does not upset the given order, is not *bothersome*. This last expression, "bothersome," may be taken in all its senses. This is what I wished to recall, in order to begin, by speaking of the *form of democracy* as the political milieu of every international philosophical colloquium. And this is also why I proposed to place the accent on *form* no less than on *democracy*. Such, in its most general and schematic principle, is the question which put itself to me during the preparations for this encounter, from the invitation and the deliberations that followed, up to acceptance, and then to the writing of this text, which I date quite precisely from the month of April 1968: it will be recalled that these were the weeks of the opening of the Vietnam peace talks and of the assassination of Martin Luther King. A bit later, when I was typing this text, the universities of Paris were invaded by the forces of order—and for the first time at the demand of a rector—and then reoccupied by the students in the upheaval you are familiar with. This historical and political horizon would call for a long analysis. I have simply found it necessary to mark, date, and make known to you the historical circumstances in which I prepared this communication. These circumstances appear to me to belong, by all rights, to the field and the problematic of our colloquium.

Humanism or Metaphysics

Thus the transition will be made quite naturally between the preamble and the theme of this communication, as it was imposed upon me, rather than as I chose it.

Where is France, as concerns man?

The question "of man" is being asked in very current fashion in France, along highly significant lines, and in an original historico-philosophical structure. What I will call "France," then, on the basis of several indices and for the time of this exposition, will be the nonempirical site of a movement, a structure and an articulation of the question "of man." Following this it would be possible, and doubtless necessary—but then only—rigorously to relate this site with every other instance defining something like "France."

Where then is France, as concerns man?

After the war, under the name of Christian or atheist existentialism, and in conjunction with a fundamentally Christian personalism, the thought that dominated France presented itself essentially as humanist. Even if one does not wish to summarize Sartre's thought under the slogan "existentialism is a humanism," it must be recognized that in *Being and Nothingness*, *The Sketch of a Theory of the Emotions*, etc., the major concept, the theme of the last analysis, the irreducible horizon and origin is what was then called "human-reality." As is well known, this is a translation of Heideggerian *Dasein*. A monstrous translation in many respects, but so much the more significant. That this translation proposed by Corbin was adopted at the time, and that by means of Sartre's authority it reigned, gives us much to think about the reading or the nonreading of Heidegger during this period, and about what was at stake in reading or not reading him in this way.

Certainly the notion of "human-reality" translated the project of thinking the meaning of man, the humanity of man, on a new basis, if you will. If the neutral and undetermined notion of "human reality" was substituted for the notion of man, with all its metaphysical heritage and the substantialist motif or temptation inscribed in it, it was also in order to suspend all the presuppositions which had always constituted the concept of the unity of man. Thus, it was also a reaction against a certain intellectualist or spiritualist humanism which had dominated French philosophy (Brunschvig, Alain, Bergson, etc.). And this neutralization of every metaphysical or speculative thesis as concerns the unity of the anthropos could be considered in some respects as the faithful inheritance of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and of the fundamental ontology in *Sein und Zeit* (the only partially known work of Heidegger's at the time, along with *What Is Metaphysics?* and *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*). And yet, despite this alleged neutralization of metaphysical presuppositions,⁴ it must be recognized that the unity of man is never examined in and of itself. Not only is existentialism a humanism, but the ground and horizon of what Sartre then called his "phenomenological ontology" (the subtitle of *Being and Nothingness*) remains the unity of human-reality. To the extent that it describes the structures of human-reality,

4. The humanism which marks Sartre's philosophical discourse in its depths, however, is very surely and very ironically taken apart in *Nausea*: in the caricature of the Autodidact, for example, the same figure reassembles the theological project of absolute knowledge and the humanist ethic, in the form of the encyclopedic epistemophilia which leads the Autodidact to undertake the reading of the world library (which is really the Western library, and definitely the municipal library) in alphabetical order by author's name, and in areas where he is able to love Man ("There is an aim, sir, there is an aim . . . there are men . . . one must love them, one must love them") in the representation of men, preferably young men. It is in the dialogue with the Autodidact that Roquentin levels the worst charges against humanism, against all humanist styles; and at the moment when nausea is slowly rising in him, he says to himself, for example, "I don't want to be integrated, I don't want my good red blood to go and fatten this lymphatic beast: I will not be fool enough to call myself 'anti-humanist.' I am not a humanist, that's all there is to it." *Nausea*, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions, 1959), p. 160.

phenomenological ontology is a philosophical anthropology. Whatever the breaks marked by this Hegelian-Husserlian-Heideggerian anthropology as concerns the classical anthropologies, there is an uninterrupted metaphysical familiarity with that which, so naturally, links the *we* of the philosopher to "we men," to the *we* in the horizon of humanity. Although the theme of history is quite present in the discourse of the period, there is little practice of the history of concepts. For example, the history of the concept of man is never examined. Everything occurs as if the sign "man" had no origin, no historical, cultural, or linguistic limit. At the end of *Being and Nothingness*, when Sartre in programmatic fashion asks the question of the unity of Being (which in this context means the totality of beings), and when he confers upon this question the rubric "metaphysical" in order to distinguish it from phenomenological ontology which described the essential specificity of regions, it goes without saying that this metaphysical unity of Being, as the totality of the in-itself and the for-itself, is precisely the unity of human-reality in its project. Being in-itself and Being for-itself were of *Being*; and this totality of beings, in which they were effected, itself was linked up to itself, relating and appearing to itself, by means of the essential project of human-reality.⁵ What was named in this way, in an allegedly neutral and undetermined way, was nothing other than the metaphysical unity of man and God, the relation of man to God, the project of becoming God as the project constituting human-reality. Atheism changes nothing in this fundamental structure. The example of the Sartrean project remarkably verifies Heidegger's proposition according to which "every humanism remains metaphysical," metaphysics being the other name of ontotheology.

Thus defined, humanism or anthropologism, during this period, was the common ground of Christian or atheist existentialisms, of the philosophy of values (spiritualist or not), of personalisms of the right or the left, of Marxism

5. "Each human reality is at the same time a direct project to metamorphose its own For-itself in an In-itself-For-itself and a project of the appropriation of the world as a totality of being-in-itself, in the form of a fundamental quality. Every human reality is a passion in that it projects losing itself so as to found being and by the same stroke to constitute the In-itself which escapes contingency by being its own foundation, the *Ens causa sui*, which religions call God. Thus the passion of man is the reverse of that of Christ, for man loses himself as man in order that God may be born. But the idea of God is contradictory and we lose ourselves in vain. Man is a useless passion." *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Pocket Books, 1966), p. 784. This synthetic unity is determined as *lack*: lack of totality in beings, lack of God that is soon transformed into a lack in God. Human-reality is a *failed* God: "Also the *ens causa sui* remains as the *lacked* . . ." (p. 789). ". . . the for-itself determines its being as a *lack* . . ." (p. 795). As concerns the meaning of the Being of this totality of beings, as concerns the history of this concept of negativity as a relationship to God, the meaning and origin of the concept of (human) reality, and the reality of the real, no questions are asked. In this respect, what is true of *Being and Nothingness* is even more so of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. The concept of *lack*, linked to the non-self identity of the subject (as consciousness) and to the desire and agency of the Other in the dialectic of the master and the slave, was then beginning to dominate the French ideological scene.

in the classical style. And if one takes one's bearings from the terrain of political ideologies, anthropologism was the unperceived and uncontested common ground of Marxism and of Social-Democratic or Christian-Democratic discourse. This profound concordance was authorized, in its philosophical expression, by the *anthropologicistic* readings of Hegel (interest in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as it was read by Kojève), of Marx (the privilege accorded the *Manuscripts of 1844*), of Husserl (whose descriptive and regional work is emphasized, but whose transcendental questions are ignored), and of Heidegger, whose projects for a philosophical anthropology or an existential analytic only were known or retained (*Sein und Zeit*). Of course, here I am picking out the dominant traits of a period. The period itself is not exhausted by these dominant traits. Nor can one say in absolutely rigorous fashion that this period started after the war, and even less that it is over today. Nevertheless, I believe that the empiricism of this cross-section is justifiable here only insofar as it permits the reading of a *dominant* motif and insofar as it takes its authority from indices which are unarguable for anyone approaching such a period. Further, the cross-section is provisional, and in an instant we will reinscribe this sequence in the time and space of a larger totality.

In order to mark in boldface the traits that opposed this period to the following one, the one in which we are, and which too is probably undergoing a mutation, we must recall that during the decade that followed the war we did not yet see the reign of the all-powerful motif of what we call today, more and more, and even exclusively, the "so-called *human sciences*," the expression itself marking a certain distance, but a still respectful distance. On the contrary, the current questioning of humanism is contemporary with the dominating and spellbinding extension of the "human sciences" within the philosophical field.

The Relève of Humanism

The anthropologicistic reading of Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger was a mistake in one entire respect, perhaps the most serious mistake. And it is this reading which furnished the best conceptual resources to postwar French thought.

First of all, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which had only been read for a short time in France, does not have to do with something one might simply call man. As the science of the experience of consciousness, the science of the structures of the phenomenality of the spirit itself relating to itself, it is rigorously distinguished from anthropology. In the *Encyclopedia*, the section entitled *Phenomenology of Spirit* comes after the *Anthropology*, and quite explicitly exceeds its limits. What is true of the *Phenomenology* is a fortiori true of the system of the *Logic*.

Similarly, in the second place, the critique of anthropologism was one of the inaugural motifs of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. This is an explicit critique, and it calls anthropologism by its name from the *Prolegomena to Pure*

Logic on.⁶ Later this critique will have as its target not only empirical anthropologism, but also transcendental anthropologism.⁷ The transcendental structures described after the phenomenological reduction are not those of the intrawordly being called "man." Nor are they essentially linked to man's society, culture, language, or even to his "soul" or "psyche." Just as, according to Husserl, one may imagine a consciousness without soul (*seelenlos*),⁸ similarly—and a fortiori—one may imagine a consciousness without man.

Therefore it is astonishing and highly significant that at the moment when the authority of Husserlian thought was asserted and then established in postwar France, even becoming a kind of philosophical mode, the critique of anthropologism remained totally unnoticed, or in any event without effect. One of the most paradoxical pathways of this motivated misconstruing passes through a reductive reading of Heidegger. Because one has interpreted the analytic of Dasein in strictly anthropological terms, occasionally one limits or criticizes Husserl on the basis of Heidegger, dropping all the aspects of phenomenology that do not serve anthropological description. This pathway is quite paradoxical because it follows the itinerary of a reading of Heidegger that was also Husserl's. In effect, Husserl precipitously interpreted *Sein und Zeit* as an anthropologicist deviation from transcendental phenomenology.⁹

In the third place, immediate following the war and after the appearance of *Being and Nothingness*, Heidegger, in his *Letter on Humanism*, recalled—for all those who did not yet know, and who had not even taken into account the very first sections of *Sein und Zeit*—that anthropology and humanism were not the milieu of his thought and the horizon of his questions. The "destruction" of metaphysics or of classical ontology was even directed against humanism.¹⁰ After the tide of humanism and anthropologism that had covered French philosophy, one might have thought that the antihumanist and antianthropologist ebb that followed, and in which we are now, would rediscover the heritage of the systems of thought that had been disfigured, or in which rather, the figure of man too quickly had been discerned.

Nothing of the sort has happened, and it is the significance of such a phenomenon that I now wish to examine. The critique of humanism and anthro-

6. Chapter 7, "Psychologism as Sceptical Relativism," sec. 39, "Anthropologism in Sigwart's Logic," sec. 40, "Anthropologism in Erdmann's Logic."

7. *Ideas I*, see e.g. secs. 49 and 54.

8. *Ibid.*

9. See the Afterword to *Ideas*, and the marginal notes in the copy of *Sein und Zeit* (Husserl Archives, Louvain).

10. "Every humanism is either grounded in a metaphysics or is itself made to be the ground of one. Every determination of the essence of man that already presupposes an interpretation of being without asking about the truth of Being, whether knowingly or not, is metaphysical. The result is that what is peculiar to all metaphysics, specifically with respect to the way the essence of man is determined, is that it is 'humanistic.' Accordingly, every humanism remains metaphysical." "Letter on Humanism," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 202.

pologism, which is one of the dominant and guiding motifs of current French thought, far from seeking its sources or warranties in the Hegelian, Husserlian, or Heideggerian critiques of the same humanism or the same anthropologism, on the contrary seem, by means of a gesture sometimes more implicit than systematically articulated, to *amalgamate* Hegel, Husserl, and—in a more diffuse and ambiguous fashion—Heidegger with the old metaphysical humanism. I am purposely using the word "amalgam" which in its usage unites references to alchemy, which is the primary one here, with a strategic or tactical reference to the domain of political ideology.

Before attempting to interpret this phenomenon of paradoxical demeanor, we must take several precautions. First of all, this amalgam does not exclude that some progress has been made in France in the reading of Hegel, Husserl, or Heidegger, nor that this progress has led to questioning the humanist insistence. But this progress and questioning do not occupy center stage, and this must be significant. Conversely and symmetrically, among those who do practice the amalgamation, the schemas of the anthropologicist misinterpretation from Sartre's time are still at work, and occasionally it is these very schemas which govern the rejection of Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger into the shadows of humanist metaphysics. Very often, *in fact*, those who denounce humanism at the same time as metaphysics have remained at the stage of this "first reading" of Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger, and one could locate more than one sign of this in numerous recent texts. Which leads us to think that in certain respects, and at least to this extent, we are still on the same shore.

But no matter, as concerns the question I would like to ask, that such and such an author has read such and such a text poorly, or simply not at all, or that he remains, as concerns systems of thought he believes he has surpassed or overturned, in a state of great ingenuousness. This is why we shall not concern ourselves here with any given author's name or with the title of any given work. What must hold our interest, beyond the justifications which, as a matter of fact, are most often insufficient, is the kind of profound justification, whose necessity is subterranean, which makes the Hegelian, Husserlian, and Heideggerian critiques or *de-limitations* of metaphysical humanism appear to belong to the very sphere of that which they criticize or de-limit. In a word, whether this has been made explicit or not, and whether it has been articulated or not (and more than one index leads us to believe that it has not), what authorizes us today to consider as essentially *anthropic* or anthropocentric everything in metaphysics, or at the limits of metaphysics, that believed itself to be a critique or delimitation of anthropologism? What is the *relève* of man in the thought of Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger?

The Near End of Man

Let us reconsider, first of all, within the order of Hegelian discourse, which still holds together the language of our era by so many threads, the relations between

anthropology on the one hand and phenomenology and logic on the other.¹¹ Once the confusion of a purely anthropological reading of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* has been rigorously avoided, it must be recognized that according to Hegel the relations between anthropology and phenomenology are not simply external ones. The Hegelian concepts of truth, negativity, and *Aufhebung*, with all their results, prevent this from being so. In the third part of the *Encyclopedia* which treats the "Philosophy of Spirit," the first section ("Philosophy of Spirit") inscribes the *Phenomenology of Spirit* between the "Anthropology" and the "Psychology." The *Phenomenology of Spirit* succeeds the Anthropology and precedes the Psychology. The Anthropology treats the spirit—which is the "truth of nature"—as soul or as natural-spirit (*Seele* or *Naturgeist*). The development of the soul, such as it is retraced by the anthropology, passes through the natural soul (*natürliche Seele*), through the sensible soul (*fühlende Seele*), and through the real or effective soul (*wirkliche Seele*). This development accomplishes and completes itself, and then opens onto consciousness. The last section of the Anthropology¹² defines the general form of consciousness, the very one from which the *Phenomenology of Spirit* will depart, in the first chapter on "Sensuous Certitude."¹³ Consciousness, i.e. the phenomenological, therefore, is the truth of the soul, that is, precisely the truth of that which was the object of the anthropology. Consciousness is the truth of man, phenomenology is the truth of anthropology. "Truth," here, must be understood in a rigorously Hegelian sense. In this Hegelian sense, the metaphysical essence of truth, the truth of the truth, is achieved. Truth is here the presence or presentation of essence as *Gewesenheit*, of *Wesen* as having-been. Consciousness is the truth of man to the extent that

11. Without neglecting the complexity of the relations between the *Logic* and the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the question we are asking authorizes us to consider them together at the point of opening where Absolute Knowledge articulates them one with the other.

12. "The actual soul with its sensation and its concrete self-feeling turned into habit, has implicitly realised the 'ideality' of its qualities; in this externality it has recollected and inwardized (*errinert*) itself, and is infinite self-relation. This free universality thus made explicit shows the soul awaking to the higher stage of the ego, or abstract universality, in so far as it is for the abstract universality. In this way it gains the position of thinker and subject—specially a subject of the judgment in which the ego excludes from itself the sum total of its merely natural features as an object, a world external to it—but with such respect to that object that in it it is immediately reflected into itself. Thus soul rises to become *Consciousness*. (Die wirkliche Seele in der *Gewohnheit* des Empfindens und ihres konkreten Selbst gefühlt ist an sich die für sich seiende *Idealität* ihrer Bestimmtheiten, in ihrer Äusserlichkeit *erinnert* in sich und unendliche Beziehung an sich. Die Fürsichsein der freien Allgemeinheit ist das höhere Erwachen der Seele zum *Ich*, der abstrakten Allgemeinheit, insofern sie für die abstrakte Allgemeinheit ist, welche so *Denken* und *Subjekt* für sich und zwar bestimmt Subjekt seines Urteils ist, in welchem es die natürliche Totalität seiner Bestimmungen als ein Objekt, eine ihm *äussere* Welt, von sich ausschliesst und sich darauf bezieht, so dass es in derselben unmittelbar in sich reflektiert ist, das *Bewusstsein*.)" *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), sec. 412, p. 151.

13. That is, objectivity in general, the relation of an "I" in general with a being-object in general.

man appears to himself in consciousness in his Being-past, in his to-have-been, in his past surpassed and conserved, retained, interiorized (*erinnert*) and *relevé*. *Aufheben* is *relever*, in the sense in which *relever* can combine to relieve, to displace, to elevate, to replace and to promote, in one and the same movement.¹⁴ Consciousness is the *Aufhebung* of the soul or of man, phenomenology is the *relève* of anthropology. It is *no longer*, but it is *still* a science of man. In this sense, all the structures described by the phenomenology of spirit—like everything which articulates them with the Logic—are the structures of that which has *relevé* man. In them, man remains in relief. His essence rests in *Phenomenology*. This equivocal relationship of *relief* doubtless marks the end of man, man past, but by the same token it also marks the achievement of man, the appropriation of his essence. *It is the end of finite man* [*C'est la fin de l'homme fini*]. The end of the finitude of man, the unity of the finite and the infinite, the finite as the surpassing of the self—these essential themes of Hegel's are to be recognized at the end of the Anthropology when consciousness is finally designated as the "infinite relationship to self." The *relève* or *relevance* of man is his *telos* or *eschaton*. The unity of these two ends of man, the unity of his death, his completion, his accomplishment, is enveloped in the Greek thinking of *telos*, in the discourse on *telos*, which is also a discourse on *eidōs*, on *ousia*, and on *alētheia*. Such a discourse, in Hegel as in the entirety of metaphysics, indissociably coordinates teleology with an eschatology, a theology, and an ontology. *The thinking of the end of man, therefore, is always already prescribed in metaphysics, in the thinking of the truth of man*. What is difficult to think today is an end of man which would not be organized by a dialectics of truth and negativity, an end of man which would not be a teleology in the first person plural. The *we*, which articulates natural and philosophical consciousness with each other in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, assures the proximity to itself of the fixed and central being for which this circular reappropriation is produced. The *we* is the unity of absolute knowledge and anthropology, of God and man, of onto-theo-teleology and humanism. "Being" and language—the group of languages—that the *we* governs or opens: such is the name of that which assures the transition between metaphysics and humanism via the *we*.¹⁵

14. TN. This passage should be read in conjunction with the discussion of *relève* in "La différence," note 23, "Ousia and Grammē," note 15, and "The Pit and the Pyramid," note 16, above.

15. We could verify the necessity of the framework of this ambiguity or *relevance*, which is accomplished in Hegelian metaphysics and persists wherever metaphysics—that is, our language—maintains its authority, not only in our immediate vicinity, but already in all pre-Hegelian systems. In Kant, the figure of finitude organizes the capacity to know from the very emergence of the anthropological limit.

A. On the one hand, it is precisely when Kant wishes to think something like the *end*, the pure *end*, the *end* in itself, that he must criticize anthropologism, in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. One cannot deduce the principles of morality on the basis of a knowledge of the nature of a particular being named *man*: "But a completely isolated metaphysics of morals, mixed with no anthropology, no theology, no physics or hyperphysics, and even less with

We have just perceived the necessity which links the thinking of the *phainesthai* to the thinking of the *telos*. The teleology which governs Husserl's transcendental phenomenology can be read in the same opening. Despite the critique of anthropologism, "humanity," here, is still the name of the being to which the transcendental *telos*—determined as Idea (in the Kantian sense) or even as Reason—is announced. It is man as *animal rationale* who, in his most classical metaphysical determination, designates the site of teleological reason's unfolding, that is, history. For Husserl as for Hegel, reason is history, and there is no history but of reason. The latter "functions in every man, the *animal rationale*, no matter how primitive he is . . ." Every kind of humanity and human sociality has "a

occult qualities (which might be called hypophysical), is not only an indispensable substrate of all theoretically sound and definite knowledge of duties; it is also a desideratum of the highest importance to the actual fulfilment of its precepts" ("Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals," in *The Critique of Practical Reason* . . . , p. 70). "Furthermore, it is evident that it is not only of the greatest necessity in a theoretical point of view when it is a question of speculation but also of the utmost practical importance to derive the concepts and laws of morals from pure reason and to present them pure and unmixed, and to determine the scope of this entire practical but pure rational knowledge (the entire faculty of pure practical reason) without making the principles depend upon the particular nature of human reason, as speculative philosophy may permit and even sometimes find necessary. But since moral laws should hold for every rational being as such, the principles must be derived from the universal concept of a rational being generally. In this manner all morals, which need anthropology for their application to men, must be completely developed first as pure philosophy, i.e. metaphysics, independently of anthropology" (*ibid.*, p. 71). "With a view to attaining this, it is extremely important to remember that we must not let ourselves think that the reality of this principle can be derived from the particular constitution of human nature (aus der besondern Eigenschaft der menschlichen Natur). For duty is practical unconditional necessity of action; it must, therefore, hold for all rational beings (to which alone an imperative can apply), and only for that reason can it be a law for all human wills" (*ibid.*, p. 83). We see in these three passages that what is always of the "greatest importance" (*von der höchsten Wichtigkeit* . . . *von der grössten praktischen Wichtigkeit* . . . *von der äussersten Wichtigkeit*) is to determine the end in itself (as an unconditioned principle of morality), independently of any anthropological givens. One cannot think the purity of the end of the basis of man.

B. But, on the other hand, and inversely, man's specificity, man's essence as a rational being, as the rational animal (*zōon logon ekhon*), announces itself to itself only on the basis of thinking the end in itself; it announces itself to itself as the end in itself; that is, equally, as an infinite end, since the thinking of the unconditioned is also the thinking which raises itself above experience, that is, above finitude. Thus is explained the fact that despite the critique of anthropologism, of which we have just given a few indices, man is the only example, the only case of a rational being that can ever be cited at the very moment when by all rights one distinguishes the universal concept of a rational being from the concept of the human being. It is through the offices of this fact that anthropology retains all its contested authority. This is the point at which the philosopher says "we," and at which in Kant's discourse "rational being" and "humanity" are always associated by the conjunction "and" or *vel*. For example "Now, I say, man and in general (und überhaupt) every rational being, exists as an end in himself, and not merely as a means" (*Foundations* . . . , p. 86). [Note that this phrase is from the passage that serves as the first epigraph to this text. The deconstruction of the end and of man takes place on the margins of philosophy: in titles and footnotes.] "This principle of humanity and of every rational creature as an end in itself" (*ibid.*, pp. 88–89).

root in the essential structure of what is generally human, through which a teleological reason running throughout all historicity announces itself. With this is revealed a set of problems in its own right related to the totality of history and to the full meaning which ultimately gives it its unity.¹⁶ Transcendental phenomenology is in this sense the ultimate achievement of the teleology of reason that traverses humanity.¹⁷ Thus, under the jurisdiction of the founding concepts of metaphysics, which Husserl revives and restores (if necessary affecting them with phenomenological brackets or indices), the critique of empirical anthropologism is only the affirmation of a transcendental humanism. And, among these metaphysical concepts which form the essential resource of Husserl's discourse, the concept of *end* or of *telos* plays a decisive role. It could be shown that at each stage of phenomenology, and notably each time that a recourse to the "Idea in the Kantian sense" is necessary, the infinity of the *telos*, the infinity of the end regulates phenomenology's capabilities. The end of man (as a factual anthropological limit) is announced to thought from the vantage of the end of man (as a determined opening or the infinity of a *telos*). Man is that which is in relation to his end, in the fundamentally equivocal sense of the word. Since always. The transcendental end can appear to itself and be unfolded only on the condition of mortality, of a relation to finitude as the origin of ideality. The name of man has always been inscribed in metaphysics between these two ends. It has meaning only in this eschato-teleological situation.

Reading Us

The "we," which in one way or another always has had to refer to itself in the language of metaphysics and in philosophical discourse, arises out of this situation. To conclude, what about this *we* in the text which better than any other has given us to read the essential, historical complicity of metaphysics and humanism in all their forms? What about this *we*, then, in Heidegger's text?

This is the most difficult question, and we will only begin to consider it. We are not going to imprison all of Heidegger's text in a closure that this text has delimited better than any other. That which links humanism and metaphysics as ontotheology became legible as such in *Sein und Zeit*, the *Letter on Humanism*, and the later texts. Referring to this acquisition, attempting to take it into account, I would like to begin to sketch out the forms of the hold which the "humanity" of man and the thinking of Being, a certain humanism and the truth of Being,

16. "The Origin of Geometry," in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 378.

17. In a brief fragment from 1934 (*Stufen der Geschichtlichkeit. Erste Geschichtlichkeit*, Beilage XXVI, in *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954], pp. 502–3) Husserl distinguishes between three levels and three stages of historicity: culture and tradition as human sociality in general; European culture and the theoretical project (science and philosophy); "the conversion of philosophy into phenomenology."

maintain on one another. Naturally, it will not be a question of the falsification which, in opposition to Heidegger's most explicit warnings, consists in making this hold into a mastery or an ontic relationship in general. What will preoccupy us here will concern, rather, a more subtle, hidden, stubborn privilege, which, as in the case of Hegel or Husserl, leads us back to the position of the *we* in discourse. Once one has given up positing the *we* in the metaphysical dimension of "*we men*," once one has given up charging the *we men* with the metaphysical determinations of the proper of man (*zōon logon ekhon*, etc.), it remains that man—and I would even say, in a sense that will become clear in a moment, the *proper of man*—the thinking of the proper of man is inseparable from the question or the truth of Being. This occurs along the Heideggerian pathways by means of what we may call a kind of magnetic attraction.

Here, I can only indicate the general rubric and several effects of this magnetization. In the effort to disclose it at the continuous depth at which it operates, the distinction between given periods of Heidegger's thought, between the texts before and after the so-called *Kehre*, has less pertinence than ever. For, on the one hand, the existential analytic had already overflowed the horizon of a philosophical anthropology: *Dasein* is not simply the man of metaphysics. On the other hand, conversely, in the *Letter on Humanism* and beyond, the attraction of the "proper of man" will not cease to direct all the itineraries of thought. At least this is what I would like to suggest, and I will regroup the effects or indices of this magnetic attraction beneath the general concept of *proximity*. It is in the play of a certain proximity, proximity to oneself and proximity to Being, that we will see constituted, against metaphysical humanism and anthropologism, another insistence of man, one which relays, relieves, supplements that which it destroys, along pathways on which we are, from which we have hardly emerged—perhaps—and which remain to be examined.

What about this proximity? First, let us open *Sein und Zeit* at the point at which the question of Being is asked in its "formal structure" (sec. 2). Our "vague average" understanding of the words "Being" or "is" finds itself acknowledged as a Fact (*Faktum*): "Inquiry (*Suchen*), as a kind of seeking, must be guided beforehand by what is sought. So the meaning of Being must already be available to us in some way. As we have intimated, *we always already* conduct our activities in an understanding of Being. Out of this understanding arise both the explicit question of the meaning of Being and the tendency that leads us toward its conception. We do not know what 'Being' means. But even if we ask, 'What is "Being"?' we keep within an understanding of the 'is,' though we are unable to fix conceptually what that 'is' signifies. We do not even know the horizon in terms of which that meaning is to be grasped and fixed. *But this vague average understanding of Being is still a Fact.*"¹⁸ I have italicized the *we (us)* and the

always already. They are determined, then, in correspondence with this understanding of "Being" or of the "is." In the absence of every other determination or presupposition, the "we" at least is what is open to such an understanding, what is always already accessible to it, and the means by which such a factum can be recognized as such. It automatically follows, then, that this *we*—however simple, discreet, and erased it might be—inscribes the so-called formal structure of the question of Being within the horizon of metaphysics, and more widely within the Indo-European linguistic milieu, to the possibility of which the origin of metaphysics is essentially linked. It is within these limits that the factum can be understood and accredited; and it is within these determined, and therefore material, limits that the factum can uphold the so-called formality of the question. It remains that the meaning of these "limits" is given to us only on the basis of the question of the meaning of Being. Let us not pretend, for example, to know what "Indo-European linguistic milieu" means.

This "formal structure of the question of Being" having been asked by Heidegger, the issue then, as is well known, is to acknowledge the exemplary being (*exemplarische Seiende*) which will constitute the privileged text for a reading of the meaning of Being. And I recall that according to Heidegger the formal structure of the question, of any question, must be composed of three instances: the *Gefragte*, that which is asked about, here the meaning of Being; the *Erfragte*, that which is to be found out insofar as it is properly targeted by a question, the meaning of Being as what is questioned; finally the *Befragte*, that which is interrogated, the being that will be interrogated, to which will be put the question of the meaning of Being. The issue then is to choose or to recognize this exemplary *interrogated* being with one's sights set on the meaning of Being: "In which entities is the meaning of Being to be discerned (*abgelesen*)? From which entities is the disclosure of Being to take its departure? Is the starting-point optional, or does some particular entity have priority (*Vorrang*) when we come to work out the question of Being? Which entity shall we take for our example, and in what sense does it have priority?"¹⁹

What will dictate the answer to this question? In what milieu of evidentiality, of certitude, or at least of understanding must it be unfolded? Even before claiming the phenomenological method (sec. 7), at least in a "provisional concept," as the method for the elaboration of the question of Being, the determination of the exemplary being is in principle "phenomenological." It is governed by phenomenology's principle of principles, the principle of presence and of presence in self-presence, such as it is manifested to the being and in the being that *we* are. It is this self-presence, this absolute proximity of the (questioning) being to itself, this familiarity with itself of the being ready to understand Being, that intervenes in the determination of the *factum*, and which motivates the

19. TN. *Ibid.*, p. 26. Note that Macquarrie and Robinson translate *Seiend* (which we give as "being," as do most of the recent Heidegger translations) as "entity."

18. TN. *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 25.

choice of the exemplary being, of the text, the good text for the hermeneutic of the meaning of Being. It is the proximity to itself of the questioning being which leads it to be chosen as the privileged interrogated being. The proximity to itself of the inquirer authorizes the identity of the inquirer and the interrogated. We who are close to ourselves, *we* interrogate *ourselves* about the meaning of Being. Let us read this protocol of reading: "If the question about Being is to be explicitly formulated and carried through in such a manner as to be completely transparent to itself, then any treatment of it in line with the elucidations we have given requires us to explain how Being is to be looked at, how its meaning is to be understood and conceptually grasped; it requires us to prepare the way for choosing the right entity for our example, and to work out the genuine way of access to it. Looking at something, understanding and conceiving it, choosing access to it—all these ways of behaving are constitutive of our inquiry, and therefore are modes of Being for those particular entities which we, the inquirers, are ourselves (*eines bestimmten Seienden, des Seienden, das wir, die Fragenden, je selbst sind*). Thus to work out the question of Being adequately, we must make an entity—the inquirer—transparent in his own Being. The very asking of this question (*das Fragen dieser Frage*) is an entity's mode of Being; and as such it gets its essential character from what is inquired about (*gefragt*)—namely, Being. *This entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term 'Dasein' (fassen wir terminologisch als Dasein)*. If we are to formulate our question explicitly and transparently, we must first give a proper explication of an entity (Dasein) with regard to its Being."²⁰

Doubtless this proximity, this identity or self-presence of the "entity that we are"—of the inquirer and of the interrogated—does not have the form of subjective consciousness, as in transcendental phenomenology. Doubtless too, this proximity is still prior to what the metaphysical predicate "human" might name. The *Da-* of *Dasein* can be determined as a coming presence only on the basis of a rereading of the question of Being which summons it up. Nevertheless, the process of disengaging or of elaborating the question of Being, as a question of the meaning of Being, is defined as a *making explicit* or as an interpretation that makes explicit. The reading of the text *Dasein* is a hermeneutics of unveiling or of development (see sec. 7). If one looks closely, it is the phenomenological opposition "implicit/explicit" that permits Heidegger to reject the objection of the vicious circle, the circle that consists of first determining a being in its Being, and then of posing the question of Being on the basis of this ontological pre-determination (p. 27). This style of a reading which makes explicit, practices a continual bringing to light, something which resembles, at least, a coming into consciousness, without break, displacement, or change of terrain. Moreover, just as *Dasein*—the being which *we ourselves are*—serves as an exemplary text,

20. TN. *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27. Further references are to this edition.

a good "lesson" for making explicit the meaning of Being, so the name of man remains the link or the paleonymic guiding thread which ties the analytic of *Dasein* to the totality of metaphysics' traditional discourse. Whence the strange status of such sentences or parentheses as: "As ways in which man behaves, sciences have the manner of Being which this entity—man himself—possesses. This entity we denote by the term '*Dasein*' (*Dieses Seiende fassen wir terminologisch als Dasein*)" (p. 32). Or again: "The problematic of Greek ontology, like that of any other, must take its clues from *Dasein* itself. In both ordinary and philosophical usage, *Dasein*, man's Being (*das Dasein, d.h. das sein des Menschen*), is 'defined' (*umgrenzt*) as the *zōon logon ekhon*—as that living thing whose Being is essentially determined by the potentiality for discourse (*Redenkönnen*)" (p. 47). Similarly, a "complete ontology of *Dasein*" is posited as the prerequisite condition for a "philosophical anthropology" (p. 38). We can see then that *Dasein*, though *not* man, is nevertheless *nothing other* than man. It is, as we shall see, a repetition of the essence of man permitting a return to what is before the metaphysical concepts of *humanitas*. The subtlety and equivocality of this gesture, then, are what appear to have authorized all the anthropologic deformations in the reading of *Sein und Zeit*, notably in France.

The value of proximity, that is, of presence in general, therefore decides the essential orientation of this analytic of *Dasein*. The motif of proximity surely finds itself caught in an opposition which henceforth will unceasingly regulate Heidegger's discourse. The fifth section of *Sein und Zeit* in effect seems not to contradict but to limit and contain what was already gained, to wit that the *Dasein* "which we are" constitutes the exemplary being for the hermeneutic of the meaning of Being by virtue of its proximity to itself, of our proximity to ourselves, our proximity to the being that we are. At this point Heidegger marks that this proximity is *ontic*. Ontologically, that is, as concerns the Being of that being which we are, the distance, on the contrary, is as great as possible. "Ontically, of course, *Dasein* is not only close to us—even that which is closest: we *are* it, each of us, we ourselves. In spite of this, or rather for just this reason, it is ontologically that which is farthest."²¹

The analytic of *Dasein*, as well as the thinking which, beyond the *Kehre*, will pursue the question of Being, will maintain itself in the space which separates and relates to one another such a proximity and such a distance. The *Da* of *Dasein* and the *Da* of *Sein* will signify as much the near as the far. Beyond the common closure of humanism and metaphysics, Heidegger's thought will be

21. "In demonstrating that *Dasein* is ontico-ontologically prior, we may have misled the reader into supposing that this entity must also be what is given as ontico-ontologically primary (*primär*), not only in the sense that it can itself be grasped 'immediately,' but also in that the kind of Being which it possesses is presented just as 'immediately.' Ontically, of course, *Dasein* is not only close to us—even that which is closest: we *are* it, each of us, we ourselves. In spite of this, or rather for just this reason, it is ontologically that which is farthest . . . *Dasein* is ontically 'closest' (*am nächsten*) to itself and ontologically farthest; but pre-ontologically it is surely not a stranger (*nicht fremd*)" (pp. 36–37).

guided by the motif of Being as presence—understood in a more originary sense than it is in the metaphysical and ontic determinations of presence or of presence as the present—and by the motif of the proximity of Being to the essence of man. Everything transpires as if one had to reduce the ontological distance acknowledged in *Sein und Zeit* and to state the proximity of Being to the essence of man.

To support this last proposition, several indicative references to the *Letter on Humanism*. I will not insist upon the major and well-known theme of this text: the unity of metaphysics and humanism.²² Any questioning of humanism that does not first catch up with the archeological radicalness of the questions sketched by Heidegger, and does not make use of the information he provides concerning the genesis of the concept and the value man (the reedification of the Greek *paideia* in Roman culture, the Christianizing of the Latin *humanitas*, the rebirth of Hellenism in the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, etc.), any meta-humanist position that does not place itself within the opening of these questions remains historically regional, periodic, and peripheral, juridically secondary and dependent, whatever interest and necessity it might retain as such.

It remains that the thinking of Being, the thinking of the truth of Being, in the name of which Heidegger de-limits humanism and metaphysics, remains as thinking of man. Man and the name of man are not displaced in the question of Being such as it is put to metaphysics. Even less do they disappear. On the contrary, at issue is a kind of reevaluation or revalorization of the essence and dignity of man. What is threatened in the extension of metaphysics and technology—and we know the essential necessity that leads Heidegger to associate them one to another—is the essence of man, which here would have to be thought before and beyond its metaphysical determinations. “The widely and rapidly spreading devastation of language not only undermines aesthetic and moral responsibility in every use of language; it arises from a threat to the essence of humanity (*Gefährdung des Wesens des Menschen*).”²³ “Only thus does the overcoming of homelessness (*Überwindung der Heimatlosigkeit*) begin from Being, a homelessness in which not only man but the essence of man (*das Wesen der Menschen*) stumbles aimlessly about.”²⁴ Therefore, this essence will have to be reinstated. “But if man is to find his way once again into the nearness of

22. “Every humanism is either grounded in a metaphysics or is itself made to be the ground of one. Every determination of the essence of man that already presupposes an interpretation of being without asking about the truth of Being, whether knowingly or not, is metaphysical. The result is that what is peculiar to all metaphysics, specifically with respect to the way the essence of man is determined, is that it is ‘humanistic.’ Accordingly, every humanism remains metaphysical. In defining the humanity of man humanism not only does not ask about the relation of Being to the essence of man; because of its metaphysical origin humanism even impedes the question by neither recognizing nor understanding it.” “Letter on Humanism,” in *Basic Writings*, ed. Krell, p. 202.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

Being (*in die Nähe des Seins*) he must first learn to exist in the nameless (*im Namenlosen*). In the same way he must first recognize the seductions of the public realm as well as the impotence of the private. Before he speaks (*bevor er spricht*) man must first let himself be claimed again (*wieder ansprechen*) by Being, taking the risk that under this claim (*Anspruch*) he will seldom have much to say. Only thus will the preciousness of its essence be once more bestowed upon the word (*dem Wort*), and upon man a home (*Behausung*) for dwelling in the truth of Being. But in the claim (*Anspruch*) upon man, in the attempt to make man ready for this claim, is there not implied a concern about man? Where else does ‘care’ tend but in the direction of bringing man back to his essence (*den Menschen wieder in sein Wesen zurückzubringen*)? What else does that in turn betoken but that man (*homo*) becomes human (*humanus*)? Thus *humanitas* really does remain the concern of such thinking. For this is humanism: meditating and caring (*Sinnen und Sorgen*) that man be human and not inhumane (*unmenschlich*), ‘inhuman,’ that is, outside his essence. But in what does the humanity of man consist? It lies in his essence.”²⁵

Once the thinking of essence is removed from the opposition *essential/existentia*, the proposition according to which “‘man ek-sists’ is not an answer to the question of whether man actually is or not; rather, it responds to the question concerning man’s ‘essence’ (*Wesen*).”²⁶

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 199–200. In the same sense, one could cite many other passages of the *Letter*. Thus, for example, “But we must be clear on this point, that when we do this we abandon man to the essential realm of *animalitas* even if we do not equate him with beasts but attribute a specific difference to him. In principle we are still thinking of *homo animalis*—even when *anima* is posited as *animus sive mens*, and this in turn is later posited as subject, person or spirit. Such positing is the manner of metaphysics. But then the essence of man is too little (*zu gering*) heeded and not thought in its origin, the essential provenance that is always the essential future for historical mankind (*geschichtliche Menschentum*). Metaphysics thinks of man on the basis of *animalitas* and does not think in the direction of his *humanitas*.”

“Metaphysics closes itself to the simple essential fact that man essentially occurs only in his essence (*in seinem Wesen west*) where he is claimed (*angesprochen*) by Being. Only from that claim ‘has’ he found that wherein his essence dwells. Only from this dwelling ‘has’ he ‘language’ as the home that preserves the ecstatic for his essence. Such standing in the lighting of Being (*Lichtung des Seins*) I call the ek-sistence of man. This way of Being is proper (*eignet*) only to man. Ek-sistence so understood is not only the ground of the possibility of reason, *ratio*, but is also that in which the essence of man preserves (*wahrt*) the source that determines him.

“Ek-sistence can be said only of the essence of man, that is, only of the human ‘to be.’ For as far as our experience shows, only man is admitted to the destiny of ek-sistence (*in das Geschick der Eksistenz*).” “Letter,” pp. 203–4.

The motif of the *proper* (*eigen, eigentlich*) and the several modes of *to appropriate* (particularly *Ereignen* and *Ereignis*), both of which thematically dominate the question of the truth of Being in *Zeit und Sein*, has long been at work in Heidegger’s thought. In the “Letter on Humanism” in particular. The themes of the *house* and of the *proper* are regularly brought together: as we will attempt to show later, the value of *oikos* (and of *oikēsis*) plays a decisive, if hidden, role in the semantic chain that interests us here. [See above, “La différence,” note 2, on *Oikos* and *Oikēsis*.]

26. “Letter,” p. 207.

The restoration of the essence is also the restoration of a dignity and a proximity: the co-responding dignity of Being and man, the proximity of Being and man. "What still today remains to be said could perhaps become an impetus (*Anstoss*) for guiding the essence of man to the point where it thoughtfully (*denkend*) attends to that dimension of the truth of Being which thoroughly governs it. But even this could take place only to the honor of Being and for the benefit of Dasein which man ek-sistently sustains (*nur dem Sein zur Würde und dem Da-sein zugunsten geschehen, das der Mensch existierend aussteht*); not, however, for the sake of man so that civilization and culture through man's doings might be vindicated."²⁷

The ontological distance from *Dasein* to what *Dasein* is as ek-sistence and to the *Da* of *Sein*, the distance that first was given as ontic proximity, must be reduced by the thinking of the truth of Being. Whence, in Heidegger's discourse, the dominance of an entire metaphoricity of proximity, of simple and immediate presence, a metaphoricity associating the proximity of Being with the values of neighboring, shelter, house, service, guard, voice, and listening. As goes without saying, this is not an insignificant rhetoric; on the basis of both this metaphoricity and the thinking of the ontico-ontological difference, one could even make explicit an entire theory of metaphoricity in general.²⁸ Several examples of this language, so surely connoted by its inscription in a certain landscape: "But if man is to find his way once again into the nearness of Being (*in die Nähe des Seins*), he must first learn to exist in the nameless." "The statement 'The "substance" of man is ek-sistence' says nothing else but that the way that man in his proper essence (*in seinem eigenen Wesen*) becomes present to Being (*zum Sein anwesend*) is ecstatic inherence in the truth of Being. Through this determination of the essence of man the humanistic interpretations of man as *animal rationale*, as 'person,' as spiritual-ensouled-bodily being, are not declared false and thrust aside. Rather, the sole implication is that the highest determinations of the essence of man in humanism still do not realize the proper dignity of man (*die eigentliche Würde des Menschen*). To that extent the thinking in *Being and Time* is against humanism. But this opposition does not mean that such thinking aligns itself against the humane and advocates the inhuman, that it promotes the inhumane and deprecates the dignity of man. Humanism is opposed because it does not set the *humanitas* of man high enough."²⁹ "Being"—that is not God and not a cosmic ground. Being is farther than all beings and is yet nearer (*näher*) to man than every being, be it a rock, a beast, a work of art, a machine, be it angel or God. Being is the nearest (*Das Sein ist das Nächste*). Yet the near remains farthest from man. Man at first clings always and only to beings."³⁰ "Because man as the one who ek-sists comes to stand in this relation that Being destines

(*schickt*) for itself, in that he ecstatically sustains it, that is, in care takes it upon himself, he at first fails to recognize the nearest (*das Nächste*) and attaches himself to the next nearest (*das Übernächste*). He even thinks that this is the nearest. But nearer than the nearest and at the same time for ordinary thinking farther than the farthest is nearness itself: the truth of Being."³¹ "The one thing (*das Einzige*) thinking would like to attain and for the first time tries to articulate in *Being and Time* is something simple (*etwas Einfaches*). As such, Being remains mysterious, the simple (*schlicht*) nearness of an unobtrusive governance. The nearness occurs essentially as language itself."³² "But man is not only a living creature who possesses language along with other capacities. Rather, language is the house of Being in which man ek-sists by dwelling, in that he belongs to the truth of Being, guarding it (*hütend gehört*)."³³

This proximity is not ontic proximity, and one must take into account the properly ontological repetition of this thinking of the near and the far.³⁴ It remains that Being, which is nothing, is not a being, cannot be said, cannot say itself, except in the ontic metaphor. And the choice of one or another group of metaphors is necessarily significant. It is within a metaphorical insistence, then, that the interpretation of the meaning of Being is produced. And if Heidegger has radically deconstructed the domination of metaphysics by the *present*, he has done so in order to lead us to think the presence of the present. But the thinking of this presence can only metaphorize, by means of a profound necessity from which one cannot simply decide to escape, the language that it deconstructs.³⁵

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 211–12.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

34. "The 'Introduction' to *Being and Time* says simply and clearly, even in italics, 'Being is the *transcendens* pure and simple (*das Transcendens schlechthin*).' Just as the openness of spatial nearness seen from the perspective of a particular thing exceeds all things near and far, so is Being essentially broader than all beings, because it is the lighting (*Lichtung*) itself. For all that, Being is thought on the basis of beings, a consequence of the approach—at first unavoidable—within a metaphysics that is still dominant." "Letter," p. 216.

35. Several examples of the predominance granted to the value of ontological proximity: "This destiny comes to pass as the lighting of Being (*Lichtung des Seins*), as which it is. The lighting grants nearness to Being. In this nearness, in the lighting of the *Da*, man dwells as the ek-sisting one without yet being able properly to experience and take over this dwelling. In the lecture on Hölderlin's elegy 'Homecoming' (1943) this nearness 'of' Being, which the *Da* of Dasein is, is thought on the basis of *Being and Time* . . . it is called the 'homeland' " (*ibid.*, p. 217). "The homeland of this historical dwelling is nearness to Being" (*ibid.*, p. 218). "In his essential unfolding within the history of Being, man is the being whose Being as ek-sistence consists in his dwelling in the nearness of Being (*in der Nähe des Seins wohnt*). Man is the neighbor of Being (*Nachbar des Seins*)" (*ibid.*, p. 222). " 'Ek-sistence,' in fundamental contrast to every *existentia* and 'existence,' is ecstatic dwelling in the nearness of Being" (*ibid.*). "Or should thinking, by means of open resistance to 'humanism,' risk a shock that could for the first time cause perplexity concerning the *humanitas* of *homo humanus* and its basis? In this way it could awaken a reflection (*Besinnung*)—if the world-historical moment did not itself already compel such a reflex-

27. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

28. See below, "White Mythology."

29. "Letter," pp. 209–10.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 210–11.

Thus, the prevalence granted to the *phenomenological* metaphor, to all the varieties of *phainesthai*, of shining, lighting, clearing, *Lichtung*, etc., opens onto the space of presence and the presence of space, understood within the opposition of the near and the far—just as the acknowledged privilege not only of language, but of spoken language (voice, listening, etc.), is in consonance with the motif of presence as self-presence.³⁶ The near and the far are thought here, conse-

tion—that thinks not only about man but also about the 'nature' of man, not only about his nature but even more primordially about the dimension in which the essence of man, determined by Being itself is at home" (ibid., p. 225). "Thinking does not overcome metaphysics by climbing still higher, surmounting it, transcending it somehow or other; thinking overcomes metaphysics by climbing back down into the nearness of nearest (*in die Nähe des Nächsten*)" (ibid., p. 231).

To destroy the privilege of the present-now (*Gegenwart*) always leads back, on the Heideggerian pathway, to a presence (*Anwesen*, *Anwesenheit*) that none of the three modes of the present (present-present, past-present, future-present) can exhaust or terminate, but which, on the contrary, provides their playing space, on the basis of a fourfold whose thinking entirely informs what is at stake in our question. The fourfold can be maintained or lost, risked or reappropriated—an alternative always suspended over its "own proper" abyss—never winning except by losing (itself). It is the text of dissemination.

Now this presence of the fourfold, in turn, is thought, in *On Time and Being* notably, according to the opening of propriation as the nearness of the near, proximation, approximation. Here we will refer to the analysis of the four-dimensionality of time and of its play. "True time is four-dimensional . . . For this reason we call the first, original, literally incipient extending (*Reichen*) in which the unity of true (*eigentlichen*) time consists 'nearing nearness,' 'nearhood' (*Nahheit*), an early word still used by Kant. But it brings future, past and present near to one another by distancing them." *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 15. "In the sending of the destiny of Being (*Im Schicken des Geschickes von Sein*), in the extending (*Reichen*) of time, there becomes manifest a dedication (*Zueignen*), a delivering over (*Übereignen*) into what is their own (*in ihr Eigenes*), namely of Being as presence (*Anwesenheit*) and of time as the realm of the open. What determines both, time and Being, in their own, that is in their belonging together, we shall call: *Ereignis*, or event of Appropriation" (ibid., p. 19). "What the name 'event of Appropriation' (*Ereignis*) names can no longer be represented by means of the current meaning of the word; for in that meaning 'event of Appropriation' is understood in the sense of occurrence and happening—not in terms of Appropriating (*Eignen*) as the extending and sending which opens and preserves" (ibid., p. 20).

The facility, and also the necessity, of the transition from the near to the proper will have been noticed. The Latin medium of this transition (*prope*, *proprius*) is lost in other languages, for example in German.

36. On the topic of what unites the values of self-presence and spoken language, I permit myself to refer to *Of Grammatology and Speech and Phenomena*. Implicitly or explicitly, the valorization of spoken language is constant and massive in Heidegger. I will study it elsewhere in and of itself. Having reached a certain point in the analysis, it is necessary to measure the extent of this valorization rigorously: if it covers almost the entirety of Heidegger's text (in that it leads all the metaphysical determinations of the present or of being back to the matrix of Being as presence, *Anwesenheit*), it is also erased at the point at which is announced the question of a *Wesen* that would not even be an *Anwesen*. (On this subject, see "Ousia and Grammê," above.) Thus is explained, for example, the disqualification of literature, which is opposed to thinking and to *Dichtung*, and also to an artisan- and "peasant"-like practice of the letter: "In written form thinking easily loses its flexibility . . . On the other hand, written composition exerts a wholesome pressure toward deliberate linguistic formulation" ("Letter," p. 195). "The truth of Being . . . would thus

quently, before the opposition of space and time, according to the opening of a spacing which *belongs* neither to time nor to space, and which dislocates, while producing it, any presence of the present.

Therefore, if "Being is farther than all beings and is yet nearer to man than every being," if "Being is the nearest," then one must be able to say that Being is *what is near* to man, and that man is *what is near* to Being. The near is the proper; the proper is the nearest (*prope*, *proprius*). Man is the proper of Being, which right near to him whispers in his ear; Being is the proper of man, such is the truth that speaks, such is the proposition which gives the *there* of the truth of Being and the truth of man. This proposition of the *proper*, certainly, is not to be taken in a metaphysical sense: the proper of man, here, is not an essential attribute, the predicate of a substance, a characteristic among others, however fundamental, of a being, object or subject, called man. No more can one speak in this sense of man as the proper of Being. Propriety, the co-propriety of Being and man, is proximity as inseparability. But it is indeed as inseparability that the relations between being (substance, or *res*) and its essential predicate were thought in metaphysics *afterward*. Since this co-propriety of man and of Being, such as it is thought in Heidegger's discourse, is not ontic, does not relate two "beings" one to the other but rather, within language, relates the *meaning* of Being and the *meaning* of man. The proper of man, his *Eigenheit*, his "authenticity," is to be related to the meaning of Being; he is to hear and to question (*fragen*) it in ek-sistence, to stand straight in the proximity of its light: "Das Stehen in der Lichtung des Seins nenne ich die Ek-sistenz des Menschen. Nur dem Menschen eignet diese Art zu sein" ("Such standing in the lighting of Being I call the ek-sistence of man. This way of Being is proper only to man").³⁷

Is not this security of the near what is trembling today, that is, the co-belonging and co-propriety of the name of man and the name of Being, such as this co-propriety inhabits, and is inhabited by, the language of the West, such as it is buried in its *oikonomia*, such as it is inscribed and forgotten according to the history of metaphysics, and such as it is awakened also by the destruction of ontotheology? But this trembling—which can only come from a certain outside—was already requisite within the very structure that it solicits.³⁸ Its margin was

be more easily weaned from mere supposing and opining and directed to the now rare handicraft of writing" (ibid., p. 223). "What is needed in the present world crisis is less philosophy, but more attentiveness in thinking; less literature, but more cultivation of the letter" (ibid., p. 242). "We must liberate *Dichtung* from literature" (text published in *Revue de poésie*, Paris, 1967).

37. Elsewhere ("La parole soufflée," in *Writing and Difference*, and in *Of Grammatology*) I have attempted to indicate the passage between the near, the "proper" and the erection of the "standing upright."

38. TN. Derrida is using "to solicit" in its etymological sense here, as he often does elsewhere. "To solicit" derives from the Latin *sollus*, whole, and *ciere*, to move, and thus has the sense of "to make the whole move." The reference to *oikonomia* and burial in the preceding sentence is explained in "La différence," note 2, above.

marked in its own (*propre*) body. In the thinking and the language of Being, the end of man has been prescribed since always, and this prescription has never done anything but modulate the equivocality of the *end*, in the play of *telos* and death. In the reading of this play, one may take the following sequence in all its senses: the end of man is the thinking of Being, man is the end of the thinking of Being, the end of man is the end of the thinking of Being. Man, since always, is his proper end, that is, the end of his proper. Being, since always, is its proper end, that is, the end of its proper.

To conclude I would like to reassemble, under several very general rubrics, the signs which appear, in accordance with the anonymous necessity that interests me here, to mark the effects of the total trembling as concerns what I have called, for convenience, and with the necessary quotation marks or precautions, "France" or French thought.

1. *The reduction of meaning.* The attention given to system and structure, in its most original and strongest aspects, that is, those aspects which do not immediately fall back into cultural or journalistic gossip, or, in the best of cases, into the purest "structuralist" tradition of metaphysics—such an attention, which is rare, consists neither (a) in restoring the classical motif of the system, which can always be shown to be ordered by *telos*, *alētheia*, and *ousia*, all of which are values reassembled in the concepts of essence or of meaning; nor (b) in erasing or destroying meaning. Rather, it is a question of determining the possibility of meaning on the basis of a "formal" organization which in itself has no meaning, which does not mean that it is either the non-sense or the anguishing absurdity which haunt metaphysical humanism. Now, if one considers that the critique of anthropologism in the last great metaphysical systems (Hegel and Husserl, notably) was executed in the name of truth and meaning, if one considers that these "phenomenologies"—which were metaphysical systems—had as their essential motif a *reduction to meaning* (which is literally a Husserlian proposition), then one can conceive that the reduction of meaning—that is, of the signified—first takes the form of a critique of phenomenology. Moreover, if one considers that the Heideggerian destruction of metaphysical humanism is produced initially on the basis of a *hermeneutical* question on the meaning or the truth of Being, then one also conceives that the reduction of meaning operates by means of a kind of break with a thinking of Being which has all the characteristics of a *relève* (*Aufhebung*) of humanism.

2. *The strategic bet.* A radical trembling can only come from the *outside*. Therefore, the trembling of which I speak derives no more than any other from some spontaneous decision or philosophical thought after some internal maturation of its history. This trembling is played out in the violent relationship of the whole of the West to its other, whether a "linguistic" relationship (where very quickly the question of the limits of everything leading back to the question of

the meaning of Being arises), or ethnological, economic, political, military, relationships, etc. Which does not mean, moreover, that military or economic violence is not in structural solidarity with "linguistic" violence. But the "logic" of every relation to the outside is very complex and surprising. It is precisely the force and the efficiency of the system that regularly change transgressions into "false exits." Taking into account these effects of the system, one has nothing, from the inside where "we are," but the choice between two strategies:

a. To attempt an exit and a deconstruction without changing terrain, by repeating what is implicit in the founding concepts and the original problematic, by using against the edifice the instruments or stones available in the house, that is, equally, in language. Here, one risks ceaselessly confirming, consolidating, *relifting* (*relever*), at an always more certain depth, that which one allegedly deconstructs. The continuous process of making explicit, moving toward an opening, risks sinking into the autism of the closure.

b. To decide to change terrain, in a discontinuous and irruptive fashion, by brutally placing oneself outside, and by affirming an absolute break and difference. Without mentioning all the other forms of *trompe-l'oeil* perspective in which such a displacement can be caught, thereby inhabiting more naively and more strictly than ever the inside one declares one has deserted, the simple practice of language ceaselessly reinstates the new terrain on the oldest ground. The effects of such a reinstatement or of such a blindness could be shown in numerous precise instances.

It goes without saying that these effects do not suffice to annul the necessity for a "change of terrain." It also goes without saying that the choice between these two forms of deconstruction cannot be simple and unique. A new writing must weave and interlace these two motifs of deconstruction. Which amounts to saying that one must speak several languages and produce several texts at once. I would like to point out especially that the style of the first deconstruction is mostly that of the Heideggerian questions, and the other is mostly the one which dominates France today. I am purposely speaking in terms of a dominant style: because there are also breaks and changes of terrain in texts of the Heideggerian type; because the "change of terrain" is far from upsetting the entire French landscape to which I am referring; because what we need, perhaps, as Nietzsche said, is a change of "style"; and if there is style, Nietzsche reminded us, it must be *plural*.

3. *The difference between the superior man and the superman.* Beneath this rubric is signaled both the increasingly insistent and increasingly rigorous recourse to Nietzsche in France, and the division that is announced, perhaps, between two *relèves* of man. We know how, at the end of *Zarathustra*, at the moment of the "sign," when *das Zeichen kommt*, Nietzsche distinguishes, in the greatest proximity, in a strange resemblance and an ultimate complicity, at the eve of the last separation, of the great Noontime, between the superior man (*höhere Mensch*) and the superman (*Übermensch*). The first is abandoned to his distress in a last

movement of pity. The latter—who is not the last man—awakens and leaves, without turning back to what he leaves behind him. He burns his text and erases the traces of his steps. His laughter then will burst out, directed toward a return which no longer will have the form of the metaphysical repetition of humanism, nor, doubtless, “beyond” metaphysics, the form of a memorial or a guarding of the meaning of Being, the form of the house and of the truth of Being. He will dance, outside the house, the *aktive Vergesslichkeit*, the “active forgetting” and the cruel (*grausam*) feast of which the *Genealogy of Morals* speaks. No doubt that Nietzsche called for an active forgetting of Being: it would not have the metaphysical form imputed to it by Heidegger.

Must one read Nietzsche, with Heidegger, as the last of the great metaphysicians? Or, on the contrary, are we to take the question of the truth of Being as the last sleeping shudder of the superior man? Are we to understand the eve as the guard mounted around the house or as the awakening to the day that is coming, at whose eve we are? Is there an economy of the eve?

Perhaps we are between these two eves, which are also two ends of man. But who, we?

May 12, 1968